
A separate report is submitted in the private part of the agenda in respect of this item, as it contains details of financial information required to be kept private in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The grounds for privacy are that it contains details relating to any individual and financial information required to be kept private in accordance with Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. The public interest in maintaining the exemption under Schedule 12A outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Cabinet

13 December 2022

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities - Councillor D Welsh

Director approving submission of the report:

Director of Public Health and Wellbeing

Ward(s) affected:

ALL

Title:

Refugee Resettlement and Newly Arrived Communities

Is this a key decision?

Yes - the proposals are likely to have a significant impact on residents or businesses in two or more electoral wards in the City.

Executive summary:

The purpose of the report is to:

1. Update Cabinet on the current position concerning the arrival and welcome of people from asylum seeking, refugee and migrant communities into the city.
2. Reflect on work done under a range of resettlement schemes as set out in Appendix 3 as well as the grant allocations awarded to the Council to support the delivery of these resettlement schemes which is shown in Appendix 1.
3. Seek confirmation of the Council's preferred position regarding the dispersal of asylum seekers in the city in line with the Government's new Full Dispersal policy. Both Coventry and the wider West Midlands are disproportionately impacted by the current dispersal of asylum seekers; the local authority along with other regional partners has for a number of years advocated for a

fairer dispersal system. The West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership has developed a regional plan of allocation as set out in Appendix 2, which should see local numbers drop, over time. However, this will require early action by the Home Office to exit contingency asylum hotels to see numbers drop more quickly. The Council has no obligation to agree the regional plan of allocation; however, it is recommended that the Council support the plan in order to establish an equitable dispersal of asylum seekers.

4. Set out the current and projected challenges and opportunities, presented by refugee resettlement, as well as the potential benefits to the local economy and communities from investing in a successful approach to resettlement, inclusion and integration.
5. The Council's Migration service also bid for and receive a range of grants which fund specific projects to support the same communities. This report therefore seeks approval to accept further grant funding under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) which will be used to extend the My Coventry project by a further 12 months.
6. Seek approval for the Council's pledge to the Government's various refugee resettlement schemes.
7. Note the acceptance of all relevant grant allocations awarded to the Council from the Home Office and Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities under the grant schemes included in Appendix 1.

Cabinet should be made aware that this report does not cover Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children as this client group are supported by Children's Services.

Recommendations:

Cabinet is requested to:

1. Approve the proposed regional model put forward by the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership to disperse people who are asylum seekers across the West Midlands region, as set out in Appendix 2. As set out in section 1.5 providing information on 'Move to Full Dispersal' policy and described in Option 2 of the Options and Recommended proposal section.
2. Reaffirm the position of Coventry as a City of Sanctuary, City of Peace and Reconciliation and continue to be a welcoming and inclusive place for people from asylum seeking, refugee and migrant communities. This is with a particular emphasis on supporting new arrivals to be able to make a positive contribution to local communities and the local economy.
3. Confirm the Council's pledge to resettle 125-150 people per annum from the Government's Resettlement Schemes. This would reflect the capacity in the city to support these very vulnerable refugees and make a positive contribution to the Government's request for support with the challenges faced particularly by the collapse of the previous Afghan regime in August 2021.
4. Delegate authority to the Director of Public Health and Wellbeing following consultation with the Chief Operating Officer and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities to be able to increase or decrease the Council's pledge to the Government's refugee resettlement schemes. This would be in accordance with Coventry's capacity to deliver effective integration support and would be based on the population size of the city.
5. Authorise the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities following consultation with the Head of Service Libraries and Migration and the Chief Legal Officer to prepare and thereafter issue a letter to the Home Secretary stating the following:

- That the City Council remains supportive of the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership's plan which reflects the move to a new and better dispersal model;
 - That the current contingency hotels are stood down in the City of Coventry; and
 - No further contingency hotels are to be created in the future within the City of Coventry
6. Accept all government grant allocations awarded to the Council per individual under the grant schemes programmes listed in Appendix 1 for current and future years and delegate authority to the Head of Service Libraries and Migration following consultation with the Chief Operating Officer and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities to take all necessary actions to bring into effect this recommendation.
7. Authorise the Council to accept additional grant funding award of £794,753 from the Asylum Migration Integration Fund (AMIF) subject to the appropriate match funding being secured by all necessary delivery partners which shall thereafter be utilised to extend the current MyCoventry programme for a third year (ending December 2023) as described in Paragraph 1.10 below.
8. Delegate authority to the Head of Service Libraries and Migration following consultation with Chief Operating Officer and Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities to enter into the appropriate agreements:
- To secure the additional grant funding; and
 - Back-to-back funding agreement with the necessary delivery partners.

List of Appendices included:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

Appendix 1: Resettlement and asylum funding

The following appendices are attached in the private element of this report:

Appendix 2: West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership - proposed model for regional allocation of dispersed asylum seekers

Appendix 3: Profile of the current schemes and projected arrivals

Background papers:

None

Other useful documents

[UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency](#)

[Ukraine Visa Schemes: visa data - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[How many people do we grant asylum or protection to? - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Coventry and Warwickshire Health Inequalities Strategic Plan 2022-2027](#)

Has it or will it be considered by scrutiny?

No

Has it or will it be considered by any other council committee, advisory panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title: Refugee Resettlement and Newly Arrived Communities

1. Context (or background)

- 1.1. Coventry is a diverse city which has a long association with inward migration, often with migrant groups finding a place of safety after conflict or persecution, but also for more economic-led reasons. The city regards itself as both a City of Sanctuary and a City of Peace and Reconciliation and has taken part in refugee relief efforts when the Government has requested assistance (e.g. refugees from Vietnam, Bosnia, Syria etc). In 1999, the city became a voluntary asylum dispersal area supporting the housing, education and integration needs of several hundred asylum seekers until this work was privatised in 2012.
- 1.2. According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), at the end of 2021 89.3 million people worldwide were forcibly displaced from their homes as a result of war, persecution and natural disasters. Whilst the majority of people are displaced within their own countries, 35% (31.7 million) fled to another country as refugees and asylum seekers, which is nearly double the number in 2011¹.
- 1.3. Reflecting what's happening internationally, the picture in the UK has changed significantly in the last ten years, still more so in the last few. In response to crises around the world the UK has created various resettlement schemes and programmes to provide safe and legal routes to the UK. Refugee resettlement plays a key role in the global response to humanitarian crises and is a key theme of the Nationality and Borders Act 2022².
- 1.4. The Council's Migration service are in the process of developing Coventry's first Integration Strategy for newly arrived communities here in the city. The strategy forms part of the City Council's Equality Objective 2³, '*Develop better understanding of our diverse communities in order to shape and deliver the Council's Integration policy and practice for the City and its residents*'. The strategy also aligns with the One Coventry Plan priority, '*Improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within our communities...supporting our most vulnerable – including the integration of our refugee and migrant communities*'⁴.
- 1.5. **Asylum Dispersal**
 - 1.5.1. The government sponsored resettlement schemes listed above all allow for legal entry into the UK for participants. Many other people choose to apply for asylum in the UK having arrived on small boats or through 'clandestine' routes (as described by the Home Office), or alternatively make asylum applications having previously arrived through legal routes (students visas, work visas, visitors etc).
 - 1.5.2. Reflecting the international picture, the number of asylum applications increased from 26,000 in 2011 to 56,000 in 2021⁵. This has placed significant pressure on the national system of dispersed accommodation and support provided by the Home Office. A large number of hotels were set up to provide additional capacity on a temporary basis (contingency accommodation) but in November 2022 it was estimated that of more than 40,000 asylum seekers remain in accommodation like this.
 - 1.5.3. Coventry currently has a significant number of asylum seekers in the city with most people accommodated in residential accommodation procured and managed by Serco (the Home

¹ [UNHCR](#)

² [The Nationality and Borders Act 2022](#)

³ [Coventry City Council Equality Objectives 2022-25](#)

⁴ [One Coventry Plan](#)

⁵ [UK Asylum Applications data](#)

Office contractor). Nationally and across the West Midlands however the large numbers of new arrivals has meant that there has been a rapid establishment of contingency hotel accommodation, with limited consultation and no formal approval process. This has also affected Coventry. Further details are set out in the private element of this report.

1.5.4. Historically, the maximum number of asylum seekers in a local authority area is based on the population size and the established 1:200 ratio. One issue of significance is the Home Office do not consider hotel residents as part of the equation; however, the Council does consider that all asylum seekers placed within a local authority boundary should be included in the ratio. Further details are set out in the private element of this report. If approved and implemented, the WMSMP model proposed for a regional allocation of asylum seekers (Appendix 2) should see procurement of accommodation continue in almost all other localities in the West Midlands apart from Coventry. As hotels are stood down and property procurement concentrated elsewhere the expectation would be that Coventry numbers will decrease albeit over time.

1.5.5. Projections show that there will be up to 100,000 asylum seekers in the UK by December 2023 and the Home Office is working with local authorities to create a new model for full dispersal.

1.6. **Move to Full Dispersal**

1.6.1. In the West Midlands Coventry along with Birmingham, Dudley, Sandwell, Stoke-on-Trent, Walsall and Wolverhampton were previously regarded as voluntary asylum dispersal areas. In response to pressure from the historic authorities and sharply increased numbers of asylum seekers in the Home Office system, earlier this year the Government directed that all local authorities would be required to participate and be considered as 'dispersal areas'. Strategic Migration Partnerships have been tasked to work with local authorities and agree local models for the dispersal of asylum seekers within new regional quotas. If local authorities are unable to do this then the government will impose allocations directly through their contractors, using their own approach and methods.

1.6.2. The Government's new policy envisages a position where all local authorities will be expected to take a share of asylum seekers and thereafter receive government funding (to be finalised after undertaking a new burdens assessment). The full dispersal model is intended to reduce and end the use of hotels by allowing the Home Office to procure additional dispersal properties within the private rental sector in all local authority areas across England, Scotland and Wales rather than the minority of local authorities that currently volunteer to participate.

1.6.3. The City Council has requested for hotels to be stood down, further details are set out in the private element of this report. Hotels do not represent an appropriate option to accommodate asylum seekers. Lengths of stay can be very long, hotels can be located inappropriately (as is the case in Coventry) and are remote from relevant local services particularly specialist health care. Local authorities are often left to fill the gaps presented by the lack of Home Office provision.

1.6.4. Appendix 2 shows the proposed allocation of asylum dispersal for the West Midlands region. Further details are set out in the private element of this report.

1.6.5. Further details are set out in the private element of this report. Whilst the Home Office has committed previously to exiting hotels, there is not currently a detailed timeline for this to

happen, in fact still more hotels have been opened in the West Midlands during November 2022. The Council's view is that any hotels in Coventry should be stood down as soon as possible. Under this WMSMP proposal numbers would decrease proportionality in line with the 1:200 cap limit.

1.6.6. Appendix 2 shows the proposed allocation of asylum dispersal for the West Midlands region. Further details are set out in the private element of this report. The proposal represents a regional collaboration between local authority representatives.

1.6.7. **The City Council along with other historic dispersal areas will be monitoring closely the adoption of the full dispersal policy to ensure that Government commitments are followed through, the lack of fairness in the previous policy is removed, and pressure on local services reduced.**

1.7. Safe and Legal Routes – Refugee Resettlement Schemes

1.7.1. **There are a number of 'safe and legal' routes which allow people to travel to the UK either temporarily or with a route to settlement. Refugee resettlement schemes are funded by the Home Office and have a clear route to settlement:**

- ***UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) (2021-)***. To date this scheme has resettled over 1,500 people to the UK primarily from Syria, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen. This scheme replaced the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (2014)⁶ and was intended for use by any refugee group identified by UNHCR requiring resettlement and fulfilling the criteria of the scheme. Coventry has received the numbers of refugees under UKRS from April 2021 – Sept 2022 as stated in the private element of this report.
- ***Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (2015-2020)***. To date this scheme has resettled 20,000 people from Syria to the UK. It has helped those in the greatest need, including people requiring urgent medical treatment, survivors of violence and torture, and women and children at risk. Coventry was one of the first authorities to participate and has welcomed the numbers of people through this scheme as stated in the private element of this report, which has now closed.
- ***Afghan Relocation Assistance Policy (ARAP) (2021-)***. This Scheme offers relocation or other assistance to former Locally Employed Staff (LES) that worked as interpreters and embassy staff in Afghanistan to reflect the changing situation in the country. The Scheme launched in April 2021 and remains open.
- ***Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) (2022-)***. The UK formally opened this scheme on January 2022 following the rapid withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan and the subsequent evacuation of 'vulnerable' individuals. The government pledged to resettle 20,000 people via its Afghan resettlement schemes over the coming years. There are currently 9,667 Afghan refugees in the UK who require pledges of accommodation, many of whom have been in temporary "Bridging Hotels" for several months whilst resettlement properties are identified⁷. Coventry has received the numbers of refugees stated in the private element of this report under both Afghan schemes from June 2021 – Sept 2022.

⁶ [Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme](#)

⁷ [Afghan Resettlement Programme: operational data](#)

1.8. Other recent safe and legal routes

- ***Hong Kong British Nationals Overseas (BNO) Welcome Programme (2021-)***. So far bringing nearly 120,000 people from Hong Kong to the UK⁸. The numbers of arrivals under this scheme are unlimited and based on visas being issued and individual decisions of Hong Kong people coming to the UK. Coventry has approximately the numbers of people set out in the private element of this report estimated to have settled in the city so far. The programme has only limited funding attached to support individuals when they find a home in the UK but does provide a route to settlement. The programme remains open, with regular arrivals.
- ***Homes for Ukraine Scheme (2022-)***. So far bringing 96,800⁹ people to the UK with over 231 people under this scheme arriving in Coventry so far (17.10.2022). The numbers are however unlimited depending on offers made by local residents with no government cap on the numbers of Ukrainians that can be supported at this time.
- ***Ukraine Family Visa Scheme (2022-)***, so far bringing 37,400 to the UK. This scheme allows applicants to join family members or extend their stay in the UK. Currently there is no local data available, but it is estimated that around 140 people may have arrived in Coventry through this route. However, a large majority of people are still coming via the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- The two Ukraine schemes are essentially temporary visa programmes which allow participants 3 years' leave to remain and access to work, benefits etc. They do not currently provide a route to settlement.

1.9. Government Scheme Facilitators

1.9.1. The numbers and nature of arrivals into Coventry is currently determined by the following Criteria which increasingly shows a move by Government to mandate local authorities to participate in support for newly arrived communities:

- ***Citizen or applicant led***, where local authorities have no or little input to the number of new arrivals: Hong Kong BNO Welcome Programme; Homes for Ukraine Scheme; Ukraine Family Visa Scheme.
- ***Government led***, where local authorities have been directed to participate, Asylum Dispersal; Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) via the transfer scheme.
- ***Local authority led***, where local authorities can determine the scale and scope of arrivals: ARAP; ACRS, UKRS.

1.9.2. In practice the Council needs to ensure that it has sufficient means and capacity to meet its minimum obligations, which are primarily wrapped up in various grant conditions for the funding it receives from government for individual schemes. The city needs to be prepared to meet the short-term basic needs for advice and support for newly arriving and host communities. It is also based on the Council being prepared to take a reactive approach to action by Government or individuals, depending on regional and national pressures, and international movements of people.

⁸ [British National Overseas arrivals data](#)

⁹ [Ukraine Scheme Visa data](#)

1.10. MyCoventry Project Funding Extension

- 1.10.1. On the 13th October 2020 Cabinet accepted the successful award of funds to the Council and partners under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), amounting to £1.57m for the MyCoventry project. The City Council has secured further AMIF funding to extend the project¹⁰ by a further 12 months (to run to 31.12.23) subject to all delivery partners providing their match funding. The initiative looks at addressing local, social, and economic inequalities that hinder the way young people and adults from migrant communities interact and become an integral part of Coventry. The extension will enable the project to continue to provide its existing services but with a shifted focus to include Ukrainian nationals.

2. Options and recommended proposal

- 2.1. There are two key options available to the Council in how it responds to the changing landscape and demands presented by the international displacement of people.

- 2.2. Option 1. Continue to engage with the changing landscape and demands and successfully integrate people from refugee and migrant communities - **Recommended**

- 2.2.1. Within this context, the recommended option is to continue to engage with these changing landscapes and demands and commit to a longer-term, proactive, planned approach to be managed subject to the Council's overall financial position.

- 2.2.2. This option recognises the current landscape as a new status quo and acknowledges that significant and sufficient adjustments maybe required to be able to successfully welcome, include and integrate people from refugee and migration communities. This includes proactive engagement with government and West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership to inform and shape local, regional and national approaches.

- 2.2.3. As highlighted in this report, there are already a number of people who have recently arrived who will require continued support to permanently resettle in the city. Asylum dispersal (which is now effectively mandatory) provides a flow of people who will achieve legal status and evidence suggests that many will choose to stay in the city. Others, particularly Ukrainians are more likely to be more fluid in their approach to migration with a return to Ukraine, their objective subject to the resolution of the conflict. A breakdown and details of current schemes and projected numbers of arrivals is included in the private element of the report at Appendix 3.

- 2.2.4. There are unique challenges for each of these groups and individuals in how they acclimatise and integrate into life in the UK in general and Coventry in particular. These include people's experience of authorities and public services, their English language skills, employability, underlying health conditions and their age. There are also positive opportunities for the city if collectively we can enable them to overcome initial challenges, particularly concerned with housing, education, health, employment and skills, community integration and inclusion.

- 2.2.5. A further consideration is that the Council, its partners and local communities have rapidly been able to adapt and respond to the changing situation, different pressures and demands of different migrant groups. Through this response Coventry has shown that it has the capability to achieve successful resettlement, integration and inclusion of newly arriving communities. A few specific examples of this include:

¹⁰ [MyCoventry project website](#)

- **Homes for Ukraine** – this has been driven by local people opening their homes to people from Ukraine. The Council has had a role in providing advice, support for sponsors but the success of the scheme in Coventry so far has been through the community response to welcome and include arrivals in local events, networks, groups, as well as to access services. At last count more than 620 Coventry residents had ‘expressed an interest’ in hosting a Ukrainian guest.
- Further details are also set out in the private element of this report.

Key Benefits to the City

- **Enhancing the city’s reputation, social and economic prosperity:** Adopting and promoting a position where Coventry is recognised as a welcoming and inclusive place for people who have been internationally displaced will be needed. This can be with a particular emphasis on supporting new arrivals to be able to make a positive contribution to local communities and the local economy, promoting the benefits and opportunities that come with successful resettlement and integration.
 - **Contributing to the Council’s ‘One Coventry Plan’:** Adopting this approach will help to integrate activity and investment concerning refugee and migrant communities within existing Council functions, strategies and priorities. This includes contributing to the Council’s ‘One Coventry Plan’ in particular to achieve the objective of *“Improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within our communities”*. This objective focuses on supporting our most vulnerable – including the integration of our refugee and migrant communities.
 - **Building the capacity and capability in public and voluntary sector services:** It will also enable more long-term investment in local capacity and capability to meet the new demands. There are significant pressures on school places, the local housing market, homelessness and access to NHS primary care services. Whilst it is not within the Council’s gift to place any significant limit on the numbers of new arrivals, it can develop local skills, expertise, support networks and programmes to build the capacity and capability in public and voluntary sector services to better accommodate the additional and broader needs.
 - **Skills, business and cultural development:** Alongside the demands and challenges are opportunities and potential. Many new arrivals come with a range of skills and qualifications that can be deployed in the NHS, schools, and the local economy. Deployment of these skills is not automatic though and is dependent on converting qualifications for use in the UK, navigation through the UK job market, as well as reaching relevant English language competencies. There is also a much higher business start-up rate amongst people from refugee and migrant communities, which could be harnessed to contribute to the local economy. Similarly, there is the diversity that new communities bring to arts, culture and food that can contribute to local centres and tourism.
- 2.2.6. This approach does not mean the Council must adopt a passive stance when the Government makes proposals which we feel are unacceptable. This has been the case on a number of occasions when the Council has pushed back regarding what were considered inappropriate proposals, and this should remain the case, particularly as long as the number of dispersed asylum seekers remain high.

2.3. Option 2. The Council does not engage in this policy area and responds only to mandatory schemes

- 2.3.1. There is an option that the Council does not engage in this policy area, responding only to mandatory schemes and situations as they arise. The Council could opt to reduce its commitment to taking newly resettled refugees or cease this altogether.
- 2.3.2. This option has been discounted. Not only is the scale and scope of the numbers, pressures and demands changing, but so is the role and independence of local authorities in the resettlement and immigration system. Refugee resettlement is one of the most important safe and legal routes for refugees from some of the worst conflict zones (in particular Afghanistan and Syria) and without access to this opportunity these families face a perilous existence in second countries.
- 2.3.3. The system is moving from one where local authorities could opt in to support asylum dispersal and government resettlement schemes/routes, to one where the government and individuals are increasingly mandating local authorities to participate.
- 2.3.4. Where local authorities retain some degree of independence, such as in pledges to Afghan resettlement schemes, they are also coming under increasing government pressure to participate and to maximise their pledges.
- 2.3.5. It is reasonable to assume that current conflicts in Ukraine and Syria, as well as the persecution of people in Afghanistan will both prevent the return of people to their homes and continue to increase the numbers of new arrivals for several years. Even if the situations in these countries improve it is likely to take some time for the current pressures to ease, in terms of gradual decline of people requiring resettlement, additional help and support or people being able to return to their homes. As a minimum the City Council needs to be prepared to provide information, advice, support and services to new communities throughout this period.
- 2.3.6. The UK is currently faced with a national housing crisis. The supply issue in Coventry is particularly acute regarding the availability of appropriate housing, for example providing larger homes (3 bedrooms or larger) to accommodate the composition of larger families within certain groups, for example Afghan refugees. Because of the diversity of Coventry's population and the history of inward migration Coventry is a popular destination for many refugee families and on occasion we see secondary migration into the city from other localities. Our participation in refugee resettlement maximises the opportunities to draw down external funding to support families in challenging situations.

3. Refugee Resettlement

- 3.1. Within the context of this report, an annual pledge of 125-150 people per annum from the Government's Resettlement Schemes (Afghan and UKRS) has been recommended. A pledge of 125 currently represents Coventry's share of the total government pledge to resettle 20,000 people via its Afghan schemes. Due to pressures of new arrivals the government has been contacting local authorities to ask them to increase their pledges so it can reduce the number of people in "bridging hotels". There are currently 9,677 who are requiring pledges of accommodation, many of whom have been in hotels for several months. Coventry's pledge will contribute to reducing the current and forecast pressures within Afghan resettlement, reflecting the city's diversity and experience in successful refugee resettlement.

4. Results of consultation undertaken

- 4.1. The Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities has been consulted on the development and presentation of this report, and a discussion was recently held with the One Coventry Leadership Team regarding the pressures of high numbers of arrivals.
- 4.2. The recommendations and options outlined in the report is a result of the Council's Migration Team experience and expertise in this area and in conjunction with key local voluntary and statutory organisations in the city. It has also taken into account from the perspectives those from refugee and newly arrived communities based on their lived experiences as part of extensive engagement process undertaken during the development of the One Coventry Together integration strategy.

5. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 5.1. Implementation of the recommendations will be imminent, and delivery will take place over the next 3-5 years. Progress will be reported annually to the relevant Cabinet Member (Housing and Communities) and to Cabinet.

6. Comments from Chief Operating Officer (Section 151 Officer) and the Chief Legal Officer

6.1. Financial Implications

Funding to support refugee resettlement is a complex mix of grants, split between those that are based on the number of people eligible for support and others that are based on grants received to deliver projects for the same client groups with more specific outputs. At the time the grants are established it is often unknown how long they will continue, and particularly for those awards based on the numbers of people, what level of grant will be ultimately received.

- a. Appendix 1 provides a breakdown of the grants currently received that are dependent upon eligible numbers alongside the grant values per individual. These grants are generally provided for the delivery of new and additional activity (rather than towards existing pressures), however can also be used to grow local capacity and capability to identify and respond to the specific needs and issues presenting from refugee and migrant communities. They can also be used to shape and grow a welcoming environment that is conducive to long-term integration and inclusion.
- b. In all these schemes, the Council is not required to bid, but to nominally accept the expected allocation of people and submit regular claims to reflect the numbers of people it is actually supporting.
- c. The funding currently contributes to the following areas:
 - Migration Team costs
 - Specific costs of other Council services directly involved providing support (Adult Education, Children's Services, EMAS, Housing)
 - Payments to schools that the children attend
 - Payments to other delivery partners (grant or contractual)
 - A general contribution to other costs incurred by the Council resulting from these schemes

- d. Whilst the above costs can be covered, there are risks surrounding some aspects of spend nationally that are not included within the grants, with local authorities continuing to highlight these issues with Government.
- e. These areas include:
 - I. Homelessness – particularly increased pressures from Ukrainian arrivals, where sponsorships breakdown or people can't be accommodated by their relatives. Whilst Coventry has had very small numbers of Ukrainian arrivals present as homeless, the final figure will depend on size of family and length of stay, etc. particularly after the end of 12-month placements.
 - II. Schools and education – unlike Homes for Ukraine and refugee resettlement schemes, for the Hong Kong British Nationals Overseas programme, where children arrive and require a school place, no extra funding is received in year to support these pressures for schools. Instead, costs will be reflected in school numbers at a later stage for funding.
- f. The report also seeks approval to accept further grant funding under the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) to extend the MyCoventry project. The total cost of the extension is £883K. Grant is provided at 90% of the cost (£795K) with the remaining 10% being based on match funding. The project will be delivered by the Council and a range of delivery partners.
- g. The Council is the lead applicant, so all grant is received and paid across to partners by the Council. The Council's element of the project is £324K, and the Council will provide £32K match funding which will be funded from the Resettlement grants. The balance of the £88k match will be required to be delivered by partners and will be built into the relevant grant agreements with them.

6.2. Legal Implications

- a. Following an announcements and changes to legislation by Government in April 2022 all local authorities are now legally required to accommodate a share of supported asylum seekers, with the share of supported asylum seekers to be agreed between the local authorities in each government region. The consultation on the implementation of this new duty is ongoing and is part of the implementation of the new Nationality and Borders Act 2022.
- b. In relation to the AMIF additional funding, the Council will retain its role as the accountable body for this AMIF project. The Council will be issued with a grant agreement from the administrators containing terms and conditions. Those terms and conditions will be devolved to any partners within the overall project. These will ensure that appropriate conditions and obligations which are imposed upon the Council are passed on to the grant recipients (delivery partners) who receive the funding for delivering projects. The council has the power to act and accept this grant under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 (General Powers of Competence).

7. Other implications

- 7.1. How will this contribute to the Council Plan (www.coventry.gov.uk/councilplan/)?

7.1.1. Inward migration into the City has been a significant factor in population growth in recent years and recommendations in this report will support the wider delivery of the Council's key objectives by supporting community cohesion and ensuring that refugees and newly arrived communities contribute to the City's economic prosperity and cultural diversity. By helping local people into jobs; reducing the impact of poverty; improving educational outcomes and improving the health and wellbeing of these communities.

7.1.2. At its highest level, this area of work makes a strong contribution to the One Coventry Council Plan, and **particularly the Council's aims of *improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within our communities*** which focuses on supporting our most vulnerable, including the integration of our refugee and migrant communities.

a. The whole of this area of work the Council is engaged in aligns with the One Coventry Plan and its objectives.

- ***Increasing the economic prosperity of the city and region.*** With directed advice and support, people from refugee and migrant communities can bring their skills, qualifications and strengths to contribute to the local economy. Similarly, the diversity different communities bring to the arts, culture and food sectors can enhance and grow the offer provided by our city centre and local neighbourhood centres.
- ***Improving outcomes and tackling inequalities within our communities.*** New arrivals face a range of barriers and disadvantages as they begin to rebuild and restart their lives in the UK. Failure to address these can reduce the life chances of first, second and potentially third generation arrivals. Whilst the response for co-ordination may be a responsibility for the Council, the success of resettlement and integration is dependent on the community response and welcome.
- ***Tackle the Causes and Consequences of Climate Change.*** Climate change is already fuelling global migration. It is crucial that we can benefit from the knowledge of climate migrants to understand and tackle the causes of climate change and confront the challenges of human displacement and forced migration.
- ***Continued financial sustainability of the Council.*** The support provided to people from refugee and migrant communities enables them to improve their standard of living. The programmes should help to support the financial sustainability of the Council by providing 100% income. A proportion of the funding would support the Council's core services.
- ***Councils' role and partner, enabler and leader.*** Coventry City Council for the past several years has become a leader in refugee resettlement work, we will continue to promote the good practice to aid others to do well. This continued work would cement our reputation as a City of Sanctuary and City of Peace and Reconciliation. Partnership working is integral to the delivery of all elements of this work. As such, the Council will have a vital role to play in facilitating strong partnerships with other support organisations and acting as an important partner to regional and national organisations in delivering priority actions.

7.2. How is risk being managed?

- a. Managing these complex resettlement and migration projects with several partners does present some risk, but the Council has a good track record for maintaining and achieving significant financial controls, including well-established procedures for handling public

funds in order to ensure the best possible value is achieved for Government's investment in local programmes and the positive integration outcomes for newly arrived communities. Risks will be managed using the following approach:

- i. **Risk registers** are currently being progressed for all of the individual resettlement and migration strands.
 - ii. **Grant Aid Agreements** will be issued to partners which will pass on the risk of any funding claw back to partners in the event of non-compliance on their part.
 - iii. There are corporate risks concerning the Homes for Ukraine scheme that are concerned with safeguarding and protecting people from harm, as well as financial risks concerned with potential excess pressures from homelessness. We have put in place **stringent safeguarding and welfare checks** in line with Government guidance, this includes our own process of regular contact and touchpoints with clients. From a homelessness prevention standpoint the Council is working hard to sustain the local accommodation offers and extend them for as long as possible, whilst also developing a set of support offers to enable Ukrainian guests to transition to independent accommodation when their sponsor provided place comes to an end.
- b. In general, the main risks to the Council and Coventry are from inaction or a failure to take action, which matches the scale of the challenges and opportunities presented by the current landscape. These include short-term risks resulting from a lack of activity that is compliant with government grant funding conditions or at sufficient scale to match to citizen-initiated demands. The long-term risks are from failures of newly arrived communities to successfully settle and integrate into the city.

7.3. **What is the impact on the organisation?**

- 7.3.1. The recommended investment and programmes includes funding for the appropriate provision of both Council staff, and capacity in voluntary sector partners to manage these commitments. It should be noted that this will require specific and, in some cases, accelerated support from some wider Council services (e.g. Human Resources, ICT, Legal Services) for example as happened with the start-up of Homes for Ukraine at very short notice. There will still be additional possibilities for demands to be placed on Council services as a consequence of local or national decision e.g. Public Health, Welfare services, Adult Education. The Council, however, can be confident given its track record, and strong relationships with statutory partners that there is currently satisfactory funding available to meet Council commitments and an ability to secure external funding also where necessary.

7.4. **Equalities / EIA?**

- 7.4.1. This area of work aims to make a positive impact on people who are identified as more vulnerable in terms of economic wellbeing and gaining sustainable employment. Initiatives, projects and programmes will be tailored to meet those vulnerable groups. Data is regularly collected and analysed to ensure continuous improvement and effective identification of the most vulnerable groups and areas of the city.
- 7.4.2. No potential adverse impact has been identified for any specific group. However, Coventry could significantly and positively deliver equalities outcomes for a range of protected groups including young people; vulnerable people (economically disadvantaged); disabled people; people of black, Asian and minority ethnicity; women and older people.

- Linkages to our work with the WMSMP or the Coventry and Warwickshire Integrated Care System (ICS).
- There are indirect links across these areas. WMCA is responsible for the adult education budget in the West Midlands, which includes the funding of ESOL provision delivered by City College and Adult Education. There is therefore a need for WMCA to keep pace with the changing landscape and implications for the adult education budget – both from an ESOL and an employability perspective.
- Similarly, and as referenced in the report there is higher prevalence of business start-ups in refugee and migrant communities and the LEP potentially has a key role to facilitate that potential in places like Coventry.
- The diversity of new arrivals also presents new challenges to health and social care, but particularly health services. This is apparent when considering the contrast in how people engage with health services in their country of origin compared to the UK, vaccination rates, and the differences in prevalent health conditions. These create more unique health risks in these populations, challenges in promoting engagement with health services, as well as more general public health challenges.

7.5. **Implications for (or impact on) climate change and the environment?**

- 7.5.1. The international picture is a difficult one to predict, but it has long been anticipated that the wide-ranging impact of climate change will lead to global conflict over natural resources and further international displacement.
- 7.5.2. The impacts of climate change are numerous and may both trigger further displacement and worsen living conditions or hamper return for those who have already been displaced. The intense support provided by the Migration Team will include discussions with individuals and organisations about the implications of climate change and how efforts to reduce carbon omissions is important.
- 7.5.3. The International Organisation of Migration (IOM) is estimating that by 2050 between 25 million to 1 billion people¹¹ could be moving either within their countries or across borders for climate-related reasons. Most of these journeys will lead to cities.
- 7.5.4. The successful integration of newly arrived communities will have a positive impact on climate change, thus supporting both the new Climate Change Strategy and One Coventry Plan 2022-2030's priority of 'Tackling the Causes and Consequences of Climate Change'. The Equitable and People-Centred Pathway adopted by the Council aims to build just, liveable, happy and inclusive urban communities, whilst addressing the systemic causes of poverty and inequality. As a result of this work, Coventry will be enhancing socially and culturally vibrant communities, whilst also supporting those that have been most disproportionately impacted by climate change. Ensuring a more inclusive urban community also leads to further opportunities related to climate change. For example, there is currently a green skills gap (e.g. retrofit) in the UK, which needs to be closed to ultimately enable us to reach net zero. By helping newly arrived communities and migrants into jobs, this both reduces poverty whilst also enabling people to use transferrable skills to close this gap and support the region to decarbonise.

7.6. **Implications for partner organisations?**

¹¹ [Publication IOM Outlook on Migration, Environment and Climate Change](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mecc_outlook.pdf)
https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/mecc_outlook.pdf

7.6.1. The funding will have a positive implication for the voluntary sector/partners by bringing in additional resources, capacity and infrastructure into the city. Our support also aims at promoting community cohesion and enhancing the contribution residents are making towards the economy and more importantly the social fabric of the city.

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