

SUBJECT:	Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relcoation Programme – Minor Amendment to Allocation Policy
MEETING:	Single Member Cabinet Decision
DATE:	26th August 2015
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to make a minor amendment to the Council's Homeseach allocation policy to support and facilitate the Council's participation in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Programme.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 To agree to the minor amendment as detailed in Para 3.5.

3. KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 The Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme has been established by the UK Government to relocate vulnerable Syruian refugees displaced to neighbouring countries through the current conflict.
- 3.2 The Council agreed during 2015 to support and participate in the scheme. The Council will take the lead in working with other key partners to ensure that arrivals are provided with suitable accommodation and the specific need of those vulnerable individuals are met. This report deals with the accommodation element of the scheme.
- 3.3 The accommodation provision will be co-ordinated by Housing & Community Services through the Private Sector Housing Team. The Team have experience of this type of initiative through the Council's current participation in a similar Home Office scheme.
- 3.4 It is proposed that vacant social housing is utilised as the main source of accommodation for Syrian households. All of the local housing assocaitions have committed to support the Council in the scheme. However, should the Council be able to identify suitable private rented accommodation, this would also be considered as a possible option.
- 3.5 The current policy has provision for Special Management Lettings in the event of exceptional circumstances and urgent housing need. It is proposed that this policy be amended be updated as detailed below:

Special Management Lettings

We recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances where the only way an exceptionally urgent housing need can be resolved is through the use of management discretion.

There is ability in very urgent cases for MHR Operational Sub Group to exercise discretion. In the interests of fairness to all applicants these circumstances are kept to an absolute minimum. Such cases will include the following circumstances:

- a) Residents of Monmouthshire who are RSL tenants whose homes are damaged by flood, fire or other disaster may be provided with another tenancy immediately if it is not possible to repair their existing accommodation.
- b) Households who on Police advice must be moved as a matter of urgency, e.g. continued harassment, racial harassment, hate crimes, and domestic abuse.
- c) Humanitarian protection, vulnerable person schemes/resettlement schemes or where an applicant has an exceptional need that is not covered by the allocation scheme. This may Child or Public Protection issues require urgent rehousing

3.6 The accommodation provision will be overseen by a Steering Group being established to co-ordinate participation in the scheme by the Policy & Engagement Team

4. REASONS:

4.1 The Council has agreed to support the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relcoation Scheme.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Central government funding is available to cover a range of measures to assist the support to Syrian households. In the context of accommodation, the actual costs will be covered of up to two months void costs when securing accommodation plus the actual cost of adapting and furnishing properties where necessary

6. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS:

6.1 There are no negative implications relating to this report. **Please see Appendix 1.**

7 SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no Safeguarding or Corporate Parenting Implications with this report.

8. CONSULTEES: Cabinet; Senior Leadership Team; Head of Community Led Delivery; Head of Policy & Engagement; Accountant (Housing & Communities); Monmouthshire, Charter and Melin Housing Associations.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS: Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme

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