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## SCRUTINY BOARD (CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES)

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Meeting to be held in Civic Hall, Leeds, LS1 1UR on  
Monday, 12th October, 2015 at 10.00 am

*(A pre-meeting will take place for ALL Members of the Board at 9.30 a.m.)*

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### MEMBERSHIP

#### Councillors

B Anderson (Chair)	Adel and Wharfedale;
A Blackburn	Farnley and Wortley;
C Campbell	Otley and Yeadon;
Mrs A Carter	Calverley and Farsley;
R Grahame	Burmantofts and Richmond Hill;
M Harland	Kippax and Methley;
G Hyde	Killingbeck and Seacroft;
J Illingworth	Kirkstall;
K Maqsood	Gipton and Harehills;
M Robinson	Harewood;
K Wakefield	Kippax and Methley;
N Walshaw	Headingley;

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*Please note: Certain or all items on this agenda may be recorded*

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**Principal Scrutiny Adviser:**  
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# A G E N D A

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
1			<p><b>APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS</b></p> <p>To consider any appeals in accordance with Procedure Rule 25* of the Access to Information Procedure Rules (in the event of an Appeal the press and public will be excluded).</p> <p>(* In accordance with Procedure Rule 25, notice of an appeal must be received in writing by the Head of Governance Services at least 24 hours before the meeting).</p>	
2			<p><b>EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</b></p> <p>1 To highlight reports or appendices which officers have identified as containing exempt information, and where officers consider that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons outlined in the report.</p> <p>2 To consider whether or not to accept the officers recommendation in respect of the above information.</p> <p>3 If so, to formally pass the following resolution:-</p> <p><b>RESOLVED</b> – That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as containing exempt information on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the press and public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information, as follows:</p> <p><b>No exempt items have been identified.</b></p>	

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
3			<p><b>LATE ITEMS</b></p> <p>To identify items which have been admitted to the agenda by the Chair for consideration.</p> <p>(The special circumstances shall be specified in the minutes.)</p>	
4			<p><b>DECLARATION OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS</b></p> <p>To disclose or draw attention to any disclosable pecuniary interests for the purposes of Section 31 of the Localism Act 2011 and paragraphs 13-16 of the Members' Code of Conduct.</p>	
5			<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTES</b></p> <p>To receive any apologies for absence and notification of substitutes.</p>	
6			<p><b>MINUTES - 14 SEPTEMBER 2015</b></p> <p>To confirm as a correct record, the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2015.</p>	1 - 8
7			<p><b>MIGRATION AND REFUGEE UPDATE - LEEDS POSITION</b></p> <p>To consider a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) presenting an update on a range of issues relating to migration, including Leeds' position in relation to the current Middle East refugee crisis.</p>	9 - 38
8			<p><b>POVERTY TRUTH COMMISSION LEEDS</b></p> <p>To consider a report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) presenting information on the Poverty Truth Commission run by Together for Peace and supported by the Council.</p>	39 - 46

Item No	Ward/Equal Opportunities	Item Not Open		Page No
9			<p><b>WORK SCHEDULE</b></p> <p>To consider the Board’s work schedule for the forthcoming municipal year.</p>	47 - 66
10			<p><b>DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING</b></p> <p>Monday, 9 November 2015 at 10.00 am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 am)</p> <p><b>THIRD PARTY RECORDING</b></p> <p>Recording of this meeting is allowed to enable those not present to see or hear the proceedings either as they take place (or later) and to enable the reporting of those proceedings. A copy of the recording protocol is available from the contacts on the front of this agenda.</p> <p>Use of Recordings by Third Parties – code of practice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Any published recording should be accompanied by a statement of when and where the recording was made, the context of the discussion that took place, and a clear identification of the main speakers and their role or title.</li> <li>b) Those making recordings must not edit the recording in a way that could lead to misinterpretation or misrepresentation of the proceedings or comments made by attendees. In particular there should be no internal editing of published extracts; recordings may start at any point and end at any point but the material between those points must be complete.</li> </ul>	

## SCRUTINY BOARD (CITIZENS AND COMMUNITIES)

**MONDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER, 2015**

**PRESENT:** Councillor B Anderson in the Chair

Councillors A Blackburn, Mrs A Carter,  
C Dobson, R Grahame, M Harland,  
J Illingworth, K Maqsood, M Robinson,  
K Wakefield and N Walshaw

### **19 Late Items**

The Chair circulated a letter from Councillor Matthew Robinson setting out a formal request for Scrutiny.

The Board also received a copy of the draft terms of reference relating to its forthcoming inquiries on Universal Credit; the development of Community Hubs; and the development of Community Committees.

The above information was not available at the time of agenda despatch, but was subsequently made available on the Council's website (Minute No. 22 and 27 refers).

### **20 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared to the meeting.

### **21 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor C Campbell. Apologies for absence were also submitted on behalf of Councillor G Hyde, with Councillor C Dobson in attendance as substitute. Members of the Board asked that their best wishes for a speedy recovery be sent to Councillor Hyde.

### **22 Minutes - 27 July 2015**

Further to Minute no. 17 'Work Schedule', the Chair highlighted the written request made by Councillor Matthew Robinson for the Board to look, with urgency, at the matters related to Leeds on immigration, refugees and asylum seekers, particularly in response to the current crisis in the Middle East and Mediterranean. In discussion with the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities), it was agreed that an update report would be brought to the Board's October meeting.

#### **RESOLVED –**

(a) That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2015 be approved as a correct record.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Monday, 12th October, 2015

- (b) That an update report on matters related to Leeds on immigration, refugees and asylum seekers be brought to the Board's October meeting.

## **23 Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy**

The Head of Elections, Licensing and Registration submitted a report presenting details of the review of the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy. As a Budget and Policy Framework document, the Scrutiny Board was invited to consider and provide any comment on the draft revised Policy prior to it being formally approved.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Councillor James Lewis, Executive Member for Strategy and Resources
- John Mulcahy, Head of Elections, Licensing and Registration
- Susan Holden, Principal Licensing Officer

The key areas of discussion were:

- The health impacts of gambling – whilst acknowledging that health-related issues linked to gambling were being addressed under the current objective linked to protecting children and other vulnerable persons, Members questioned what work was being undertaken nationally to make public health a specific licensing objective under the Gambling Act? It was noted that the LGA continues to call for the introduction of a public health objective but also acknowledges that other new initiatives linked to local risk assessments are being progressed to help explore area-based vulnerability and gambling related harm.
- Local Area Profiles – the Board welcomed the introduction of Local Area Profiles aimed at informing local risk assessments. However, the Board identified the need for such profiles to be compiled in conjunction with local Community Committees as well as Community Hubs.
- Identifying the impacts of gambling on communities – Members agreed that further research is needed in this regard which would also help inform Local Area Profiling.
- Social Inclusion Fund – it was noted that Community Committees could apply for Social Inclusion Funding to help address any social impacts relating to gambling within their localities.
- Enforcement of the Policy – Members raised concerns regarding children accessing gaming machines and noted that applicants and existing licensees must satisfy the Council that there will be/are sufficient measures to ensure under 18 year olds do not have access to their premises. Reports of any breaches should therefore be reported to the Council.
- Members welcomed the ongoing partnership working with the LGA, the Gambling Commission and other local authorities in this regard.

### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the Scrutiny Board notes the report.

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Monday, 12th October, 2015

- (b) That the Scrutiny Board agrees with the further amendment proposed by Licensing Committee at paragraph 3.12 of the report.
- (c) That the above issues raised by the Scrutiny Board are taken forward and where appropriate included in the revised Policy Statement.

## **24 Equality Improvement Priorities 2016-2020 and Equality Framework Reaccreditation**

The Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) submitted a report on the Equality Framework Reaccreditation and invited the Scrutiny Board to consider and provide any comment on the draft Equality Improvement Priorities 2016-2020.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Councillor Mohammed Rafique, Executive Member for Employment, Enterprise and Opportunity
- Shaid Mahmood, Acting Chief Officer for Communities
- Pauline Ellis, Senior Policy and Performance Officer
- Beverley Benjamin, Executive Officer, Citizens and Communities

The key issues raised during the Board's discussion were as follows:

- Stonewall Accreditation – in response to Members' questions, it was noted that the Council had dropped out of the top 100 employers' index in 2014 as a result of more organisations, primarily private organisations, applying for accreditation and demonstrating greater progress in achieving an inclusive workplace. The Board was pleased to learn that the Council still continues to develop this area and has submitted a recent application to reapply for accreditation.
- Perinatal education – Members acknowledged the importance of improving perinatal education particularly for those in poverty and welcomed this as a new key priority.
- Developing a skilled and diverse workforce – Members felt that further work is still needed to create a diverse workforce and particularly in relation to improving opportunities to progress to middle and senior levels in the organisation. The Board was therefore pleased to note that a new Inclusion and Diversity Member Steering Group had been established to address this area.
- Sign language – Members emphasised the need to address the 2 week waiting time for an interpreter to support sign language users at Customer Services and also put forward a suggestion to provide a sign language interpreter at Full Council meetings.
- Income inequality – whilst acknowledging that the Council already monitors the diversity of its workforce based around salary grades, a suggestion was made for the Council to look into the feasibility of undertaking comparator research involving other large employers within the city.

- Inclusive design – the Board welcomed this as a key priority particularly in terms of having external input from the Council’s Equality Assembly and the Access and User-Ability Group. As part of this, particular emphasis was also made around including the Parks and Countryside programme of works.
- Children in poverty – whilst acknowledging that Free School Meals had previously correlated with many other indices, Members recognised the need to ensure that recent changes in eligibility were being reflected.
- Improving opportunities for children – in acknowledging the proactive work being undertaken by the Council around improving opportunities for Looked After Children, Members felt that this needed to be reflected more within the document.
- Learning outcomes linked to Free School Meals – Members felt that this focused heavily on GCSE outcomes and suggested exploring a broader range of progress measures.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the Scrutiny Board notes the report.
- (b) That the above issues raised by the Scrutiny Board are taken forward and where appropriate included in the revised Equality Improvement Priorities.

**25 Contact Centre Performance**

The Head of Customer Contact (Contact Centre) presented an update report on contact centre performance and the centres of excellence model.

The Chair also highlighted that he and the Principal Scrutiny Adviser visited the contact centre on Friday 11 September 2015 and shared his observations from this visit with the Board.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Adam Quesne, Head of Customer Contact

The key areas of discussion were:

- Call answer rates – some concerns were raised around the decline of call answer rates, particularly involving housing related calls. In response it was noted that staff turnover had been exceptionally high and that any new members of staff need to be appropriately trained first.
- Career progression opportunities – as highly trained staff, it was noted that many Customer Service Officers will apply for higher grade jobs elsewhere in the Council and particularly within Housing Leeds. To help retain staff, Members agreed that more career progression opportunities within the contact centre environment are needed.
- Call answer rates – Members acknowledged that there will be peak times when customers will be calling the contact centre and noted that the



service is able to monitor call answer rates by time of day and is already aware of such peak times.

- Recruitment initiatives – to help address call demands during peak times, it was noted that a new recruitment initiative based around offering flexible contracts to cover peak times was also being progressed.
- Out of Hours Service – it was highlighted that a full review of this service was now being undertaken to reflect on the demand and level of service provided in response to the floods during August.
- Digital access – in welcoming the introduction and development of the new customer portal, Members requested to be kept informed of progress in this regard.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the Scrutiny Board notes the report.
- (b) That a further update report on contact centre performance is brought back in February 2016.
- (c) That any other Board Members wishing to visit the contact centre should make arrangements through the Principal Scrutiny Adviser.

**26 Summer Budget Welfare Reforms**

Following a request from the Scrutiny Board in July, the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) provided a report setting out more detailed information about the welfare reforms announced in the Government's Summer Budget and the implications for the Council.

The following were in attendance for this item:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Steve Carey, Chief Officer Welfare and Benefits

The Chief Officer Welfare and Benefits explained that an error had been made in the report in relation to the implementation timeline for the reforms (paragraph 2.2 within the report). It was noted that the reference made to 'April 2017' should read 'April 2016'.

The key areas of discussion were:

- Universal Credit – Members acknowledged that the impact of these changes on Universal Credit entitlement will need to be considered as part of its separate inquiry this year.
- Support for children and families – it was highlighted that the proposed changes to the support provided for children and families do not acknowledge circumstances involving those families that foster and adopt children. As such, it was reported that the DWP is yet to provide clarity in this regard.

**RESOLVED –** That the Scrutiny Board notes the report.

(Councillor K Wakefield left the meeting at 11.45 am, during the consideration of this item.)

## **27 Scrutiny Reviews - draft terms of reference**

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development highlighted that the Scrutiny Board had agreed to undertake the following inquiries this year:

- Universal Credit
- The development of Community Hubs
- The development of Community Committees

Following working group meetings during August to discuss the potential scope of these inquiries, the draft terms of reference relating to the above inquiries were presented at the meeting for formal approval.

The following were in attendance during this item:

- James Rogers, Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)
- Councillor Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities
- Steve Carey, Chief Officer Welfare and Benefits
- Shaid Mahmood, Acting Chief Officer for Communities

**RESOLVED** – That the draft terms of reference relating to the Scrutiny Board's forthcoming Inquiries be approved.

## **28 Work Schedule**

The report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development invited Members to consider the Board's work schedule for the municipal year.

The following updates on areas of work were noted:

- That an update report on matters related to Leeds on immigration, refugees and asylum seekers will be considered in October.
- That an update report on contact centre performance will be scheduled for February 2016.
- That the Chair will liaise with the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) to consider how best to address concerns raised by a Member of the Board around Corporate Welfare.

**RESOLVED** – That the work schedule be updated to reflect the above areas of work.

## **29 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

Monday, 12 October 2015 at 10.00 am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.30 am)

(The meeting concluded at 11.55 am)

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Monday, 12th October, 2015



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Report author: Anne McMaster  
Tel: 0113 39 50432

## Report of Assistant Chief Executive Citizens and Communities

### Report to Scrutiny Board (Citizens and Communities)

Date: 12 October 2015

### Subject: Migration and Refugee Update – Leeds’ Position

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

## 1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides Scrutiny Board with background information about the current position in relation to migration, with a view to prompting an informed discussion about the Leeds response to the current Middle East refugee crisis, within the context of the wider picture.
- 1.2 It highlights the positive response Leeds has given in relation to the Government call for support for Syrian refugees, which has been agreed by Executive Board
- 1.3 The report gives a flavour of some key areas of work and challenges within relevant services. This shows that these are being recognised and responded to and that there are overarching matters which would benefit from a wider debate. These include the potential tensions arising in communities, media portrayal of refugees. complexity of the topic, and the role and position of the third sector.

## 2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1 Members of Scrutiny Board are asked to note and comment upon the information included in the report, recognising the considerable work taking place within each service to address the issues of migration, asylum seekers and refugees.

### **3.0 Purpose of this report**

- 3.1 To provide background information to Scrutiny Board on a range of issues relating to migration in Leeds as well as Leeds' response to the current Middle East refugee crisis. Appendix 1 gives a simplified definition of terms used in relation to migration.
- 3.2 To provide an overview of how specific services are addressing the issues and the implications arising.
- 3.3 This report does not cover everything that is occurring in Leeds and more widely, but provides an overview and flavour to inform discussions, and further conversations. It provides an opportunity to take an holistic view and a discussion of the broader picture.

### **4.0 Background**

- 4.1 Our vision is for Leeds to be a compassionate, caring city that helps all its residents benefit from the effects of the city's economic growth. To support this vision we are actively engaging with the current refugee crisis. We have a long history in Leeds of being a welcoming city and we aim to continue this. In doing so we will be realistic about what is possible, recognising where there are issues and concerns and address these appropriately.
- 4.2 The 23 September 2015 report to Executive Report on migration (Appendices 2 and 2A) provides a detailed picture of:
- The history of migration
  - The demographic data for Leeds
  - Asylum dispersal
  - Ending support for refused asylum seekers – response to consultation
  - The developing refugee crisis
  - Partnership work in Leeds
  - The economic and business impact
- 4.3 The following recommendations were agreed by Executive Board:
1. authorise the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) to liaise with Home Office colleagues to support the relocation of up to 200 Syrian refugees over the next two years and;
  2. endorse the use of up to £100k of local welfare scheme funding to support third sector organisations in dealing with current capacity challenges.
- 4.4 Since the agreement by Executive Board the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) and Head of Migration Yorkshire have spoken to the Home Office and agreed in principle to support the relocation of up to 200 Syrian refugees subject to confirming detailed funding arrangements. We have also discussed relocating 25 of the 200 before the end of the year

and have agreed in principle a funding arrangement for these 25 which we believe adequately covers all of the costs involved.

4.5 Members of Executive Board also agreed to provide up to £100k of funding from the local welfare scheme to support organisations whose principle activity is providing assistance to refugees and asylum seekers. Some criteria to govern decision making for these grants has been developed and is attached at Appendix 3.

4.6 This report does not seek to duplicate the information and discussion resulting from the Executive Board report, but to build on it and to provide further additional council service information

## **5.0 Main Issues**

5.1 There are three specific but separate related types of migration which this paper seeks to address i.e. settled migrant communities, new migrants or asylum seekers to Leeds, and refugees from Syria/Afghanistan who have been granted humanitarian protection status. Whilst there are some similarities in need between these groups there are also significant differences. These are highlighted as appropriate in the following paragraphs.

5.2 **Housing** – The contract for provision of accommodation and support for Asylum Seekers was awarded to the private sector in 2012. G4S Group were the successful contractor for the Yorkshire and Humber Region. The Council, therefore, no longer has any responsibility for the Asylum contract. However, officers have continued to meet with representatives of G4S on a regular basis in order to maintain good relations, to ensure that G4S are delivering their contractual responsibilities and to ensure that properties used within the contract, which are all within the Private Rented Sector, meet the legal requirements. To date these meetings have been productive. One concern has been the concentration of Asylum Seekers in LS7, 8, 9 and 11 post codes and the impact this has on community cohesion in those areas. G4S have recently started to consider other areas of the city but rental costs restrict their ability to make significant change.

5.3 Once asylum seekers receive the outcome of their application for refugee status they leave G4S accommodation and, if granted leave to remain then they need to access mainstream benefit provision. If they are refused leave to remain then there is the potential for them to become destitute as no longer recourse to public funds.

5.4 As Members will be aware Leeds has offered to take an additional 200 Syrian refugees over the course of the next two years as part of the UK's commitment to take an additional 20,000 refugees over the next five years. Refugees to be taken are expected to be mainly families and we are expecting 200 refugees to equate to approximately 20 families for each of the next two years. They will be accommodated in a mix of private sector rented, housing association and our own council housing stock. In addition the council has received offers of vacant accommodation and are

considering the legalities of taking up these offers. A letter has been drafted asking Housing Associations to identify empty properties which might be suitable to house Syrian refugees. Whilst there are currently 21,000 on the council housing waiting list, most of these are not currently homeless and the Syrian refugee position does not conflict with this. There are 4,000 council house properties let per year and less than 10 are expected to be used to house refugees.

- 5.5 In addition it is worth reflecting that there are groups of migrant communities in the city and these are already providing a welcome to newcomers e.g. the Syrian Kitchen.
- 5.6 **Public health** - Public Health reach migrant communities either via work targeting the broader vulnerable population in areas of deprivation or with groups with a range of additional needs e.g. Baby Steps Perinatal Education Programme. There are also specific initiatives targeting migrants including work to raise awareness around health protection issues for migrants and to improve referral pathways for screening; work targeting Eastern European migrants in West Leeds; Choto Moni antenatal education and post-natal support; work to support migrant sex workers around their sexual health; and support to the Migrant Access Project.
- 5.7 **Health and social care needs** - health and social care services provide for the immediate needs of migrants/asylum seekers/refugees. Isolation, feelings of loneliness, and depression are often identified as considerable issues for some migrants, especially those in their early years of arrival. In addition we recognise that some of the Syrian refugees may be particularly vulnerable due to their traumatic experiences, which are likely to impact on their mental health. There may also be support needs arising for Syrian refugees with physical disabilities.
- 5.8 There are currently a small number of refused vulnerable asylum seekers who are being supported by Adult Social Care due to them being destitute. Whilst this is not currently a major issue due to the small number involved, there is concern that changes to legislation and immigration policy may result in larger numbers of vulnerable people being refused asylum, and becoming destitute.
- 5.9 **Community Safety** – with increasing focus on the position of refugees and information in the media there is the potential for increased far right activity and media activity may prompt demonstrations. These will undoubtedly increase tensions. There are no indications at the current time that any are planned in Leeds. Work on the prevention agenda is also an important community safety factor in considering and addressing any wider risks around exploitation and radicalisation.
- 5.10 **Community cohesion** – Leeds has one of the most diverse and changing cultural populations in the UK. The majority of our black and minority ethnic and newly arrived communities are however concentrated in the inner city and less affluent areas. This has created some tension in communities where the impact of new arrivals or changing demographics has been felt



more keenly. Whilst the overall picture is that Leeds communities are generally resilient and tolerant, the significance of intercultural tensions in some of our communities must not be underestimated. Every community in Leeds has its strengths. However, there are communities in Leeds where multiple concerns occur in the same location including poverty, crime and anti-social behaviour, unemployment, truancy and substance misuse. Where these concerns and others all exist in once place it compounds the effects of crime and anti-social behaviour, reduces respect for the environment and limits the potential benefits of community involvement and community action.

- 5.11 Newly emerging or changing communities are especially vulnerable to a range of threats, significant and regular changes in population, especially with short-term residency, inhibits the formation of strong, supportive and integrated communities – and we are working to look at what support needs to be in place to build resilience in these neighbourhoods, and with certain communities of identity.
- 5.12 Locality teams work with services, communities, third sector and other public bodies to understand any current and emerging tensions so that these can be addressed at an early stage. This is recognised as being effective in both immediate responses and also in any ongoing ‘ripples’. We continually strive to both more fully understand how to sustain cohesion and to promote this further.
- 5.13 The work of the Communities Board is likely to focus on this over the next year; informed by the work of Integration Up North project, the Young Foundation work and the knowledge and experience. .
- 5.14 **Migrant third sector** – there are a number of meetings taking place to understand and address the position of the third sector and the response to the current crisis. In addition to raising concerns about the current situation it has brought sharply into focus the precarious position of some organisations. There are therefore two critical factors to consider: working together with the third sector to respond appropriately to the immediate need, reflecting that there is no developed infrastructure to do this; and to consider the long term sustainability of the migrant third sector. In order to facilitate this work is beginning to take place to understand what the Leeds’ offer is to new migrants to the city, and then look at the best way to deliver this. In addition resources are being established to better understand the support required to sustain the migrant third sector.
- 5.15 **Children** – There has been a request from Kent to all local authorities for assistance with unaccompanied asylum seeking children coming through Dover. Children’s Services have responded positively to this and have so far taken 8 children. These are being settled and then further conversations will take place with Kent about the possibility of Leeds taking more children.
- 5.16 It has been noticed that a small number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children have been placed by other local authorities with private fostering agencies who have then located the children in Leeds. Leeds is notified when this happens and, although has no statutory responsibility for the

children, they will be accessing services in Leeds e.g. schools. Work is taking place to more fully understand the position.

- 5.17 Children's Services operates a foster care recruitment process for asylum looked after children and information about the scheme will be publicised.
- 5.18 School placements are planned based on a projections system. The current year outturn has been for slightly more placements (80) than expected. Work is underway to understand how to better capture accurate data to inform school places. Some areas of the city are experienced at dealing with children with limited/no English. Where this is not the case work is ongoing to develop and support schools in this field.
- 5.19 Children's are exploring the potential to develop a child friendly welcome pack for new children to the city. It will include crayons and art tools. This would be particularly useful to help children, coming from difficult and traumatic places to express themselves.
- 5.20 **Employment and skills** – where leave to remain has been granted, or there is freedom of movement then migrants can work. There can be particular needs associated with groups in relation to language, general education, understanding work culture, and the level of independence of young migrants. Addressing these needs is in the context of increasing volumes of learners with reduced funding for adult skills provision from the Skills Funding Agency and particularly the impact on ESOL.

## **6.0 Overview**

- 6.1 It is clear that all the service areas have particular roles to play but these cannot take place in isolation of each other. By being clear about what we are offering to migrants (whether settled community, new migrants or asylum seekers/ refugees/ those granted human protection), in addition to the offer to citizens of Leeds, we can ensure a more strategic and co-ordinated response. This will take account of the individual and the community needs and provide appropriate support to the migrant third sector in delivering agreed and necessary services. By having a holistic view we will also be able to recognise and respond to potential tensions with localities in a measured way, taking learning forward as we do so. .
- 6.2 The third sector has willingly and readily accepted a large role in addressing this area but is struggling with capacity to do so. A clear 'offer' would provide a framework within which to provide support/commissioning arrangements with the third sector. To achieve this we are considering our own capacity to provide coordination to support to the third sector infrastructure.
- 6.3 There are a number of groups which have been established over the years to coordinate work around migration. The main ones which the council are involved in are shown in Appendix 4.
- 6.4 In addition, an officer Refugee Task Force has been established, chaired by James Rogers. This draws members from the main council services

affected, and includes DWP, NHS England, West Yorkshire Police, and members of the Migration Partnership. The main purpose of this group is to:

- 6.5 Provide strategic leadership to address the challenges currently being created by the refugee crisis. The task group will oversee the programme of action which will result in:
- A multi-agency approach which develops a Leeds response to the current refugee crisis
  - Consider the impact and needs of local service provision in planning Leeds' response
  - Ensure the provision of essential services, support and advice to meet the needs of refugees being accommodated in Leeds
  - Effective communications with all interested parties
  - Maximise the contribution from interested parties and stakeholders who want to assist in the Leeds response
  - The provision of timely and effective advice to Elected Members on a proposed Leeds response
- 6.6 Conversations are continuing with the Home Office to ensure that Leeds plays an active role in the refugee crisis and is able to take full advantage of the support available through central government. These discussions are positive and supportive.
- 6.7 There has been considerable national and local media interest, and this helps inform and shape our communities responses. We continue to actively provide positive messages around migration, and to promote our work as a compassionate city. The media interest, combined with work of all sectors has raised people's awareness and information about needs and offers of support has been widely publicised. Where possible offers of support are being signposted appropriately to ensure that these are used to the best effect.
- 6.8 In considering the position of refugees and asylum seekers in Leeds the layered perspective (referenced in para 5.10) needs to be recognised. Where there are new people to Leeds, in addition to their particular specific needs arising from potentially traumatic circumstances and language considerations, they will have all the same needs as other people, and are likely to live in some of the most deprived areas, with all the challenges which these also present. From a community perspective they will also add to the complexity of the area.

## **7.0 Corporate Considerations**

- 7.1 **Consultation and Engagement** – whilst there hasn't been any recent formal consultation on the matters considered within this report they have been subject to significant media reporting and many people have offered their thoughts on the issues, and in particular the developing refugee crisis in the Middle East.
- 7.2 **Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration** – the issue of migration, asylum and refugees clearly has significant equality and cohesion issues and these will be carefully considered in any work that is progressed on this matter.
- 7.3 **Council policies and the Best Council Plan** – Leeds is a welcoming and compassionate city and the recommendations in this support those values.
- 7.4 **Resources and value for money** – The costs of participating in the refugee relocation schemes are covered by specific grant from the Government. As regards the proposed use of local welfare funding, this funding is currently available and uncommitted. Work will be progressed to determine the appropriate criteria to support funding decisions.
- 7.5 **Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In** - There are no specific legal implications or access to information issues with this report. The report is subject to call-in.
- 7.6 **Risk Management** – Specific service risks are identified and addressed as appropriate by the service, The main risk identified in this paper is in relation to the sustainability of the third sector and

## **8.0 Conclusion**

- 8.1 Migration, asylum and supporting refugees is an important issue for the city and this report seeks to raise some of the challenges, whilst reassuring members on the work done in this area and to provide an opportunity to examine this area further.

## **9.0 Recommendation**

- 9.1 Members of Scrutiny Board are recommended to note and comment upon the information included in the report, recognising the considerable work taking place within each service to address the issues of migration, asylum seekers and refugees.

## **10.0 Background Documents<sup>1</sup>**

- 10.1 There are no specific background documents linked to this report.

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

### Simplified Definition of Terms Used

**Asylum seekers** - have applied for protection from persecution under the UN Convention and awaiting a decision from the Home Office. Those who have applied for asylum who will most likely be in receipt of housing via the G4S-held COMPASS contract plus limited financial support. Once a decision is made then:

- If granted asylum they have leave to remain in the country for 5 years. During this time they can access the mainstream benefits system. To stay beyond 5 years they must reapply.
- If refused asylum they can appeal and will receive limited financial and housing support during the process
- If appeal rights have been exhausted or they are on a country on the 'non return' list then they are refused asylum seekers and have no recourse to public funds i.e. no right to work, receive housing or financial support. Unless there are additional vulnerabilities, and support is provided via Adult Social Care, then these people often become lost to the system. The number of refused asylum seekers in Leeds is unknown.

**Refugees** – those people who have had to flee their homeland and seek sanctuary in the UK and have been granted permanent or limited leave to remain in the UK, including the right to work and to claim benefits. This includes leave to remain, and humanitarian protection.

**Migrants** – all those coming into Leeds from overseas, whether they come as economic migrants from the European Economic Area, third country nationals (those from outside the European Economic Area) joining family, or refugees. EEA nationals have 'freedom of movement' in the EEA and so they can come to live in the UK for 3 months. After 3 months, they must be working, studying, self-sufficient or a family member to continue to have a 'right to reside' in the UK.

**Settled migrant communities** – this refers to those communities who have been in Leeds for a significant amount of time and may be a combination of refugees and migrants.

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**Report of Assistant Chief Executive Citizens and Communities**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015**

**Subject: Migration and Refugee Update**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**1 Summary**

1.1 This report updates Members of Executive Board on a range of issues relating to migration in Leeds as well as Leeds' response to the current Middle East refugee crisis. It provides context on migration and asylum issues as they historically and presently affect the demography of the city as well as responding to the current refugee crisis and making proposals to ensure Leeds meets its aspirations of being a compassionate city.

**2 Recommendation**

2.1 Members of Executive Board are recommended to:

- authorise the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) to liaise with Home Office colleagues to support the relocation of up to 200 Syrian refugees over the next two years and;
- endorse the use of up to £100k of local welfare scheme funding to support third sector organisations in dealing with current capacity challenges.

### **3 Purpose of this report**

- 3.2 To update Members of Executive Board on a range of issues relating to migration in Leeds as well as Leeds' response to the current Middle East refugee crisis.

### **4 The History of Migration**

- 4.1 The UK and Leeds has a long history of migration. The city, in common with many other UK cities, saw significant levels of migration following the end of World War 2. At this time migrants predominantly came from Commonwealth countries and in particular the Caribbean, South Asia and parts of Africa. These migrants arrived to work in industry as well as parts of the public sector where there were shortages of labour.
- 4.2 During the 1990's a further wave of migration to the city occurred due to the policy of dispersing refugees and asylum seekers from London and the South East of England. This brought migrants from new areas such as French speaking Africa, Somalia and Afghanistan, making the range of communities in the city much more diverse.
- 4.3 More recently there has been a significant rise in the numbers of migrants from the European Union, particularly following the expansion of the EU into Eastern Europe.
- 4.4 Across Europe the single most significant factor currently driving change in city populations is international migration. The United Nations has concluded that countries in Western Europe will for the foreseeable future continue to see fairly stable birth rates, but will experience relatively high levels of foreign immigration leading to an estimated population growth of 15% in the UK.
- 4.5 It is important to recognise that migration is a very diverse issue. Migrants come to the city and UK to join family, to work, to study or to claim asylum.

### **5 Demographic Data for Leeds**

- 5.1 Leeds is one of the fastest growing cities in the UK, and is home to over 140 different ethnic groups – making Leeds' black and minority ethnic population the most diverse outside of London, with the single fastest growing ethnic identity in Leeds being of "mixed race".
- 5.2 Data from the 2011 Census on country of birth, together with new questions on age and year of arrival for those born overseas, provides a reliable indication of internationally migrant communities of Leeds.
- 5.3 It shows that between 2001 and 2011, the number of Leeds residents born outside of the UK almost doubled from 47,636 in 2001 to 86,144 in 2011, currently making up just over 11% of the Leeds population. Of those, more than two-thirds were born outside of the EU, and just over half arrived at some point in the last 10 years.
- 5.4 There are over three times as many residents in Leeds who were born in a "third" country, outside the EU, than were born in the EU. 77,200 compared to 20,300



respectively; this difference is common across the region, but a little more pronounced in Leeds.

- 5.5 The migrant population of Leeds is on average younger than the general population, which reflects the demography of newer communities. Many international migrants change countries for reasons of work or study and this often skews the data towards working ages – 60% of non-UK born residents were between the ages of 16 and 34 when they first arrived in the UK, and 30% arrived as children (0-15 years old). Just over 40% of people born in EU Accession countries are aged 25-34 years.
- 5.6 English is overwhelmingly the main language used in Leeds with 93% of the population using it as their main language at home as well as at work. Of the 51,221 people for who would not describe English as their main language, 39,863 speak English well or very well.
- 5.7 Currently 15,000 pupils in Leeds have a first language that is not English. This is equivalent to 18% of primary and 13% of secondary pupils. Both are a small increase on the previous year, and similar to the Yorkshire and Humber average
- 5.8 Looking forward, further work is planned to identify and understand the numbers, geography and economic circumstances of migrant populations around the City. In particular, what migrant cohorts exist, where they are located and what their priority service needs are.

## **6 Asylum Dispersal**

- 6.1 Leeds has been one of the established 90 asylum dispersal areas since they were introduced 15 years ago. Up until 2012 Leeds City Council held a contract with Government to disperse asylum seekers in the city. In 2012 this work was contracted out by Government to the private sector on a regional basis significantly reducing the Council's role and influence in dealing with asylum dispersal in the city.
- 6.2 The private sector provider is now responsible for dispersing asylum seekers across the region in agreed dispersal areas. Whilst we can still inspect properties to ensure they meet required standards, as well as being a statutory consultee when properties are being sought by the private sector provider to house asylum seekers, our wider influence and powers are limited.
- 6.3 The authority receives regular information on asylum dispersal in the city and as of August 2015 there were 563 asylum seekers being accommodated in Leeds. Whilst this figure has risen in recent months, it is still quite a bit less than the peak seen in the middle of the last decade.
- 6.4 From a regional perspective there are currently 4,000 supported asylum seekers in Yorkshire and the Humber which has increased steadily from a low of 2500 in 2012, although significantly less than the peak of 10,000 seen during the middle of the last decade. Yorkshire and the Humber currently accepts above average numbers of asylum seekers per head of population within the UK, and the three

Northern English regions currently accommodate half of all of the UK's asylum seekers.

- 6.5 It is a current priority for the Immigration Minister to widen the number of dispersal areas in the UK beyond the current 90 and Leeds is supportive of this intention.

## **7 Ending Support for Refused Asylum Seekers**

- 7.1 The Home Office recently released a consultation on 'Reforming support for failed asylum seekers and other illegal migrants'. There are a number of far-reaching changes to asylum support, mainly in ending accommodation and financial support to refused ('failed') asylum seekers, described in the consultation as 'illegal migrants'. This will primarily impact families, of which the Home Office estimate up to 10,000 family members could lose support in the UK.
- 7.2 The Home Office assumptions are that Local Authorities would have minimal responsibilities under human rights or the Children Act as the families would intentionally be making themselves destitute by not returning. The consultation suggests Local Authorities would be reimbursed for any of these minimal costs. The Home Office also assume this policy will lead to significant 'behaviour change'.
- 7.3 There are serious concerns across Local Authorities and other organisations nationally about these proposals and there is some scepticism of the validity of some of the assumptions underpinning the policy, and therefore limited chance of success. The risks of failure are high with potentially significant additional responsibilities and costs for Local Authorities, safeguarding and exploitation issues and impacts on children and families.
- 7.4 Leeds City Council in common with a number of authorities responded to this consultation which closed on the 9<sup>th</sup> September 2015. A copy of the response sent from Leeds is attached as appendix 1.

## **8 The Developing Refugee Crisis**

- 8.1 The United Nations have estimated that 9.3 million people are in need of humanitarian aid within Syria. Of these at least 6.5 million people in Syria have been forced to flee their homes and there are almost 2.7 million refugees in neighbouring countries.
- 8.2 On 29 January 2014 the Home Secretary made a statement to Parliament outlining the Government's intention to relocate 500 of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees, displaced to neighbouring countries by the ongoing conflict to the UK.
- 8.3 This initiative was known as the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation scheme and was introduced on a similar basis to the Gateway Protection Programme that has been running for the past 12 years. A separate Afghan Locally Engaged Staff Relocation Scheme was established as part of the UK's military draw down in Afghanistan in 2013.
- 8.4 After that announcement the Government asked Local Authorities to volunteer to participate in the Syrian relocation programme and Leeds City Council was one of

those authorities who did agree to participate, agreeing to take part in both Syrian and Afghan relocation schemes. Leeds City Council agreed to take 50 people under these two schemes and over the last few months we have seen the first Afghan families relocated to the city with the first Syrian refugee families expected to arrive in the next few weeks.

- 8.5 Members will also be aware that Kent County Council recently asked other authorities for assistance in accommodating unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Leeds City Council is working closely with Kent County Council and has so far agreed to accommodate eight unaccompanied children as part of our own looked after children arrangements.
- 8.6 On the 7<sup>th</sup> September 2015, David Cameron announced that the UK would take an additional 20,000 refugees over the course of the current parliament and would be looking for local authorities to volunteer to take refugees in their area. At the time of writing this report we await further detail on the proposals. However, in anticipation of the need to respond quickly the Leader of Council confirmed Leeds' commitment to support the refugee crisis in a press statement issued on the evening of the 7<sup>th</sup> September.
- 8.7 On the 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015 a further press statement was issued confirming that Leeds had established a newly-formed task force of senior officers from key partners to discuss how the city can best support plans to accommodate more refugees affected by the humanitarian crisis in the Middle East. This task force is chaired by the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) and met for the first time on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September.
- 8.8 Subject to receiving final confirmation from Government on their specific proposals, the task force have recommended that Leeds should take up to 200 additional Syrian refugees over the course of the next two years. All partners involved believe this demonstrates Leeds' firm commitment to do all that it can to support the current refugee crisis and consider it to be a manageable number in terms of finding appropriate accommodation and meeting other needs such as school places and health needs. This approach will also enable the council to review the position in two years' time to determine whether any further assistance should be provided.
- 8.9 Whilst the council has received a range of views on the refugee crisis, there has been a positive response from many individuals and organisations wishing to do their bit to assist. In response to these offers we are working closely with colleagues in the third sector to ensure offers of support and assistance are best directed to where people can most appropriately assist. The next sections details the range of partnership work undertaken in Leeds on this agenda.

## **9 Partnership Work in Leeds**

- 9.1 Leeds City Council works in partnership with a range of well-regarded Third Sector organisations across the city as well as other parts of the public sector to meet the challenges and take advantage of the many positive benefits that migration is bringing to the city.

- 9.2 MESH, the Migrant English Support Hub is a partnership between Leeds City Council, the University of Leeds, RETAS (Refugee Education Training Advisory Services) and LASSN (Leeds Asylum Support Seekers Network). It aims to support the coordination of adult English language provision in the community sector in Leeds. The aim is to enable thousands of people to find the right class for them to improve their written and spoken English, enabling them to access further education and employment in the future.
- 9.3 The Migrant Access Project is designed to help reduce pressures on statutory services and to help new arrivals settle in Leeds. It provides trained community people who speak the same language as new arrivals to help empower and connect people with the up-to-date information they need to successfully settle and integrate.
- 9.4 Leeds is a 'City of Sanctuary' within the UK wide network of Cities of Sanctuary. It is a mainstream, grassroots movement which works to create relationships between local people and those seeking sanctuary.
- 9.5 LASSN (Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network) has over 850 volunteers who have befriended those seeking asylum and helped them integrate into life in Leeds.
- 9.6 PAFRAS (Positive Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers) works with refugees, asylum seekers and the wider community to counter the effects of enforced destitution on vulnerable migrants. Its work includes providing immediate humanitarian relief and long-term support, advice and advocacy aimed at assisting service users to make lasting improvements to their situation.
- 9.7 The Leeds Migration Partnership is a cross sector, citywide strategic forum for those working with all migrant communities in Leeds and consists of approximately 40 organisations. It's a mechanism for developing and influencing policy and driving forward good practice in relation to migrant communities. It reports to the Communities Board.
- 9.8 Migrants are affected by many of the same issues that affect mainstream society. However there are also a number of areas of particular need for migrant groups e.g. access to English language learning, immigration advice or qualification equivalency; as well as areas where there are particular vulnerabilities for migrants from certain arrival routes e.g. specific Post Traumatic Stress counselling for those fleeing warzones or persecution, safe spaces for trafficked individuals or access to specific health services for victims of Female Genital Mutilation. Many of these support and advice services are provided by partners and third sector organisations connected through the Leeds Migration Partnership.
- 9.9 We know that the majority of migrant support organisations operating in the city work with only adults, and a small number only with women. The Children's Society have an advocacy worker who supports young people in an holistic way to access education, advice, mental health support and housing. They also provide a weekly youth programme covering rights and entitlements, education pathways, sexual health and hate crime. The programme is for 14 to 19 year olds and has a

mixture of young people in families and others who are unaccompanied. They come from Sudan, Syria, Eritrea, and Iran.

- 9.10 Nationally, advice provision for refugees and asylum seekers has also been subject to change following the review to the Home Office contract in April 2014. Previously advice was provided by a national organisation that provided a range of face-to-face services to asylum seekers, refugees and other migrants and Leeds was supported well. However, this service provision has changed and advice from the new provider is now carried out via a telephone only service with no nationally funded face-to-face services being provided locally. This has resulted in additional pressure on other advice providers in the city.
- 9.11 The council is working closely with the Migration Partnership on work it is doing on preventing destitution in Leeds, which follows on from a report to Executive Board in July 2013. This work will highlight current issues, numbers and impacts.
- 9.12 The council has also been working with a number of third sector organisations to co-locate them together in a migrant support hub, located alongside the one stop centre in 2 Great George Street. This will enable migration organisations and services to increase co-operation and partnership working to minimise back office costs as well as making it easier for clients to access services.

## **10 Economic and Business Impact**

- 10.1 The overwhelming majority of recent research shows that migrants have a positive economic impact on the UK economy paying more in taxes than taking in benefits.
- 10.2 For example, Dustman and Frattini show an overwhelming net fiscal benefit of EU migrants contributed over £20bn to public finances. ONS analysis of the census shows that a greater percentage of foreign nationals are more economically active than UK nationals. However, there are some studies with other findings, for example, Migration Watch concluded a neutral net contribution of migration.
- 10.3 The specific contribution of migration to some sectors of the economy, for example health services and social care, is significant. For example, around a quarter of doctors in the NHS are foreign nationals. New Philanthropy Capital reported that work done in Leeds to retrain refugee doctors provided a saving of nearly £240,000 compared to retraining a doctor from scratch, a return of 6,000%.
- 10.4 Skilled migrants in the workforce are shown to be positively associated with labour productivity, migrant recruitment fills skilled and specialist roles, their skills complement rather than replace those of colleagues to make for more dynamic teams, and some organisations have expanded as a consequence (e.g. NIESR report by H Rolfe et al Nov 2013).

## **11 Corporate Considerations**

- 11.1 **Consultation and Engagement** – whilst there hasn't been any recent formal consultation on the matters considered within this report they have been subject

to significant media reporting and many people have offered their thoughts on the issues, and in particular the developing refugee crisis in the Middle East.

- 11.2 **Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration** – the issue of migration, asylum and refugees clearly has significant equality and cohesion issues and these will be carefully considered in any work that is progressed on this matter.
- 11.3 **Council policies and the Best Council Plan** – Leeds is a welcoming and compassionate city and the recommendations in this support those values.
- 11.4 **Resources and value for money** – The costs of participating in the refugee relocation schemes are covered by specific grant from Government and whilst specific details are still awaited, any agreement to accommodate refugees will be subject to such funding being confirmed and being appropriate to cover the costs involved. . As regards the proposed use of local welfare funding, this funding is currently available and uncommitted. Work will be progressed to determine the appropriate criteria to support funding decisions.
- 11.5 **Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In** - There are no specific legal implications or access to information issues with this report. The report is subject to call-in.
- 11.6 **Risk Management** – The key risk is associated with ensuring that adequate grant funding is provided through the contractual arrangement with Government to cover the costs involved. These terms will be subject to further discussion with Government colleagues and we shall only proceed if terms can be agreed.

## **12 Conclusion**

- 12.1 Migration, asylum and supporting refugees is an important issue for the city and this report seeks to reassure members on the work done in this area and the positive impacts migration has on the city.

## **13 Recommendation**

- 13.1 Members of Executive Board are recommended to:
- authorise the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) to liaise with Home Office colleagues to seek to agree the terms and funding arrangements for relocating up to 200 Syrian refugees in Leeds over the next two years and;
  - endorse the use of up to £100k of local welfare scheme funding to support third sector organisations in dealing with current capacity challenges with the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) agreeing specific proposals in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.

## **14 Background Documents**

- 14.2 There are no specific background documents linked to this report.



**Leeds City Council's response to the Home Office consultation: 'Reforming support for failed asylum seekers and other illegal migrants'**

**Reforming support for failed asylum seekers and other illegal migrants**

**Language**

Before responding to the details in the document Leeds City Council want to put on record our objection to the language in the consultation document. 'Reforming support for failed asylum seekers and other migrants' is not helpful language in the current climate. Refused asylum seeker is a more accurate and a less inflammatory description.

The term illegal migrant is also inappropriate. No one is 'illegal' though they may have committed illegal acts. More appropriate terms would be undocumented or irregular migrants. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) uses the term irregular migrant highlighting that "the term "irregular" is preferable to "illegal" because the latter carries a criminal connotation and is seen as denying migrants' humanity".

**Proposals in the consultation document**

**1. The Repeal of Section 4 (1) of the 1999 Act (paragraph 16)**

The implications for individuals are significant and could lead to them seeking assistance from local authorities. Individuals affected are likely to look to local authorities for assistance and this will have financial implications for those authorities who will have to investigate their circumstances even if the application for support is unsuccessful. For the individuals concerned, if Section 4(1) is repealed, it will prevent them from obtaining a bail address and may result in their being inappropriately detained. Whether or not they are detained they may apply for asylum so they can make a bail application. This will put further pressure on the asylum system as there will be more applications to process increasing the likelihood of delays in decision making and so unnecessary costs to the public purse.

**2. The closing of support for failed asylum seekers through Section 4(2)**

Leeds City Council is convinced that removing support from refused asylum seekers will not result in any significant increased returns. Instead, it will force people into desperate situations and result in indirect costs to local authorities and other public services.

The majority of new asylum seekers in this region are from Syria, Eritrea and Sudan - all of which are extremely unstable and dangerous states. We work directly with asylum seekers and believe that is highly likely most people would prefer to remain in the UK, even without support, than return to the situations they fled from.

It is worth recalling that there has recently been a precedent to try to achieve exactly what the current proposals are aiming to achieve. In December 2004, the Home Office started piloting what was known as Section 9 which was very similar to the current proposals. 116 families were selected to take part in the pilot in Leeds, London and Manchester therefore we have recent first-hand experience of how these proposals are likely to work based on that pilot which was generally regarded as an unsuccessful and was not rolled out in any other areas of the country.

Currently most individuals who do not want, or are unable, to return home go “underground” and off the authorities’ radar. If this proposal becomes law more refused asylum seekers will become destitute and they too will have very little incentive to stay in touch with the authorities once support is withdrawn. This has actually been recognised by the Home Office in the past.

It is likely that these proposals will increase the number of destitute individuals in the towns and cities of the region – with all the attendant health and cohesion issues this will bring. It is also likely that destitute single people will gravitate to the larger cities (and in particular Leeds and Sheffield) and both these cities already have numbers of destitute people sleeping rough and presenting challenges to local statutory and voluntary services.

Denying asylum seekers financial support is also likely to compel them into illegal forms of employment to survive where the risks of exploitation and abuse are high. They will be also be forced to seek illegal forms of accommodation or will be forced to stay in overcrowded and unhealthy conditions or on friends’ floors potentially putting these friends in breach of their tenancy agreements.

West Yorkshire Police comment that if an asylum seeker is determined to remain in the UK and is not receiving support their experience is that there can be a tendency for some to turn to crime in order to live. There is also the potential that they may become involved in organising People Trafficking – or become victims of some form of modern day slavery.

Appeals against Section 4 refusals are incredibly important, as they are often successful. Between 1 September 2014 and 28 February 2015, the Asylum Support Tribunal allowed 44% of the appeal cases it decided and remitted a further 12% back to the Home Office to retake the decision. This means that in over 50% of cases in which the Tribunal made a decision, the case was either allowed or remitted. We believe that whatever reforms to the provision of asylum support may be made the right of appeal against a refusal to grant support must be upheld.

### **3. The proposed changes for failed asylum seekers with children.**

In 2013 we estimated that there were between 300-400 destitute individuals in Leeds who were reliant on support from charities and faith groups. At that time, we wrote to the Home Secretary voicing concerns that the current application of the asylum process is allowing too many people to fall destitute, and that the burden of responsibility needed to be more equally shared between local and national government. We are concerned that the proposed policies will result in higher levels of asylum-related destitution in Leeds, putting vulnerable children and families at particular risk of homelessness, poverty and exploitation. The implications of this proposal have the most significant consequences.

Leeds City Council - reforming support for failed asylum seekers and other illegal migrants  
Consultation2



As with single people we believe that removing support from failed asylum seeking families who are 'appeal rights exhausted' will not encourage those families to leave the UK. No matter how difficult living conditions are made for asylum seekers here, it will not overcome their real or their perceived fears about what would happen to them if they return to their country of origin.

In any case just because someone is refused asylum, it does not mean they do not have a protection need. Often because of poor legal advice, lack of adequate support or understanding of the asylum system, people seeking protection may have their first application refused. However, many go on to file fresh claims and receive full refugee status. It would be more beneficial to everyone if the Home Office could spend more time and resources in making better decisions in the first place.

Indeed, in the pilot in 2004/5 referred to earlier 116 refused asylum seeking families had their support withdrawn and this did not result in greater voluntary returns, forced removals or engagement with the authorities to make steps to return home. Instead, one third of the families involved in the pilot disappeared in order to avoid the risk of being returned to their country of origin.

The Home Office themselves ran an evaluation of the 2005 pilot, which compared the behaviour of the cohort of the 116 families involved against a control group of similar cases who remained on support. By 2007, the Home Office evaluation found that of the 116 cases that had support removed, there was only one case in which a family was successfully removed, in comparison to 9 successful removals in the control group. The Home Office concluded that during the pilot "there was no significant increase in the number of voluntary returns or removals of unsuccessful asylum seeking families." Similarly, the rate of absconding was 39% for those who had their support removed – nearly double the rate of those in the control group (21%) who remained supported.

The implications of these proposals for families, and particularly for the children, are immense. Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 requires the Home Office to carry out its existing functions in a way that takes into account the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the UK. It is difficult to see how the current proposals do this.

The proposals suggest statutory services will not have to assist children who become destitute when their parent's application has been refused, if there is no legal obstacle to prevent them returning home. If local children's services agree with the Home Office that they do not have any duty to intervene then there will be an immediate increase in homelessness and poverty with families, including women and children becoming vulnerable to abuse and exploitation. This would clearly not be in the best interest of the children and the family.

If families get no support children may be removed from school increasing unauthorised absences and numbers of children missing education. The potential disruption on children and young people can be extremely serious as their life chances and opportunities may be severely diminished, wherever they ultimately end up.

The negative impact of unauthorised absences on the school can be extremely counterproductive and there will be a huge impact on the work of education services

as they will still be required to track the whereabouts of children. We are concerned that if we remain unaware of the whereabouts of these children our duty and ability to safeguard and protect children, young people and vulnerable adults will be seriously undermined.

It is impossible to see how these policies, if implemented, comply with the need to safeguard vulnerable children, as reflected in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Children's Act 1989 and other national guidance, including Every Child Matters. Indeed, the Children's Act 1989 puts an obligation on the Local Authority to support the child, and not the adult.

If local children's service conclude that their obligations under the Children's Act override Home Office guidance then this is likely to result in an increase in looked-after children who may be placed in expensive homes or with foster parents. Separating families in this situation is not only costly it is also not in the child's best interests. We are extremely concerned that there will not be a massive reduction in public expenditure if these proposals are implemented, but that there will be a shift in cost from central to local government.

We are also concerned that the threat of having children taken into care may encourage families to go underground, rather than leave the country. This raises serious issues when it comes to safeguarding children as they could go off the radar of all statutory safeguarding services.

Following the last pilot project (which used "section 9" to increase refused asylum seekers returning home by reducing/terminating support), a report based on the casework experience of the Refugee Council and Refugee Action concluded that:

- the pilot comprehensively failed to achieve the Government's stated objective of encouraging families to return voluntarily to their home countries
- Section 9 had caused immense distress and panic amongst families who faced destitution, homelessness and having their children taken into care and;
- The policy was completely incompatible with human rights standards.

We believe that this will still be the case.

#### **4. The length of the proposed grace period in family cases**

It is proposed that there will be a 28 day grace-period following a refusal, in which the family would have to take concrete steps to leave the UK in order to be entitled to further support. If the proposals become law, 28 days does not give enough time for a family to review their options and make a decision on what their next steps could be. 28 days is the amount of time allocated by the Home Office to transfer new refugees from asylum support onto mainstream benefits. Recent reports have shown that 28 days is far too short to complete this administrative task, leaving many new refugees destitute in the process. We believe that making an informed decision following a refusal will take far longer.

Families often wait a long time for a decision on their application for refugee status, establishing connections and roots in the UK. Children may be in school, even at exam age, when the refusal letter is received. We believe that the grace period

should be comparable to the 3 months provided to asylum seekers who are engaged in the voluntary returns programme in recognition of the complex and difficult decisions refused asylum seekers will have to make. It is important that the grace period should start from the day on which the asylum seeker receives notification that their appeal had been refused, rather than the day the appeal was determined. Refused asylum seeking families should also be able to access impartial advice on their options and how to apply for a continuation of the grace period when they receive their final refusal.

There is also concern about the lack of clarity in the Home Office guidance about what constitutes taking 'concrete steps' to leave the UK. We are also concerned that many refused asylum seeking families will struggle within the proposed 28 days to gather sufficient evidence to prove their 'concrete steps' without the help of an advocate, as is the case for single refused asylum seeking adults attempting to access Section 4.

As the onus will be on the refused asylum seeking family to prove they need continued support, it is likely that there will be increased pressure on statutory and, particularly, voluntary organisations that support refugees and asylum seekers. Without personal resources and faced with the prospect of destitution it will be extremely difficult for refused asylum seeking families to rationally make the 'concrete steps' without the support of others. In this region the voluntary sector is under immense pressure already to meet increasing demands with decreasing resources.

The right of appeal against a refusal to extend support when an asylum seeker is taking reasonable steps to leave the UK, but is unable to do so due to a practical obstacle beyond their control, is an important mechanism to challenge mistakes made by the Home Office. Between 1 September 2014 and 28 February 2015, the Asylum Support Tribunal allowed 44% of the appeal cases it decided and remitted a further 12% back to the Home Office to retake the decision. This means that in over 50% of cases in which the Tribunal made a decision, the case was either allowed or remitted.

## **5. The proposed transitional arrangements**

We strongly disagree with the proposal to remove support from refused asylum seeking families. However in the event that these proposals are implemented they should not be applied retrospectively and should only be applied to those individuals and families who receive final refusals after the new legislation comes into force.

## **6. The impact of the proposals on local authorities**

The impact on local authorities is potentially huge. Whilst, in theory according to the Home Office, families may not be able to apply for support under the Children's Act there would still be a duty on local authorities to safeguard the welfare of destitute children, with the associated work and expenditure that this would incur. If, having become destitute, neither central nor local government know where children are, this is likely to give rise to a number of safeguarding concerns, with no agency or organisation able to own responsibility for safeguarding the welfare of children whose whereabouts are unknown.

We are extremely concerned about the impact of these proposals in Leeds and other local authorities across the country. Whilst the Home Office states in the consultation document that there is no general obligation on local authorities to accommodate refused asylum seekers (and therefore they do not foresee any knock on costs), it is clear that local authorities will be faced with ethical, financial and societal challenges if these changes were to come into force.

During the 2004/5 pilot, Barnardos carried out research looking at how the changes might impact on local authorities. 33 authorities took part, 18 of which were involved in the pilot. All of the local authorities interviewed were clear that the proposals ran counter to their established duties under the Children's Act 1989. More recently the guide "Working Together to Safeguard Children" was revised in 2015, reiterating that "local authorities have overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area."

As stated, the Children's Act 1989 may pose further ethical questions for local authorities. The legislation places a responsibility on the local authority to support the child, and not the parents. In extreme cases, this could result in children being taken into care, at a massive detriment to the health and wellbeing of the child and a huge cost to the public purse. Because of the lack of clarity about whether these proposals will actually eliminate a council's responsibilities under other legislation, it is important that clear, unambiguous advice and guidance, enshrined in law, should be provided to local authorities about their duties to destitute families and children.

Failure to support destitute children may result in breaches of the Human Rights Act 1998 or Children's Act 1989 and expose us to the possibility of legal challenges.

The Home Office's own review of the pilot acknowledged that the changes "place significant demands upon local authority resources." Since 2004/5, local authorities have faced significant cuts to their funding and their services. To shift the cost of supporting vulnerable refused asylum seeking families to local authorities in this economic climate will mean practitioners and service providers making difficult ethical decisions around limited resources and increased need.

Importantly, these costs will not be shouldered by all Local Authorities across the country. It is inevitable that local authorities who participate in the dispersal programme will see higher presentations at social services from destitute asylum seeking families than those which do not host people seeking asylum. In Yorkshire and Humberside only 10 council areas have asylum seekers dispersed to them. These are the 10 larger towns and cities who, arguably, currently face more serious financial challenges than other areas. Therefore it is likely that the burden on local authorities will not only be greater than predicted in the Impact Assessment, but also disproportionately felt by certain local authorities across the country.

There are currently attempts being made by the Home Office to increase the number of dispersal areas, which would reduce pressures in the current areas and be more equitable. It is unlikely any council will want to become a dispersal area if the implications of doing so are that they may have to pay for the support of refused asylum families and children.

There are also significant indirect financial and social costs to local authorities which result from leaving asylum seekers without any form of support. This includes costs to the NHS and public health budgets, policing, and the voluntary sector.

Those who are of no fixed abode seek help at a much later stage in an illness than the general population, usually through A&E departments. It is well documented that acute conditions are more expensive to treat and emergency care is far more costly than preventative care. Homelessness contributes significantly to secondary healthcare costs and if an additional 2,500 asylum seekers and their dependents becoming destitute each year it could cost potentially £4 million in additional secondary healthcare costs each year. As with local authorities, costs will not be spread evenly throughout the NHS, as they will be borne by hospitals and trusts in local authorities to which asylum seekers are dispersed.

There has been an increase in far-right activity in relation to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in dispersal cities across the UK. This has included Leeds and a number of towns and cities in this region. Forcing refused asylum seeking families into homelessness and to compete for limited statutory support has the potential to aggravate existing community tensions and damage community cohesion. This may well have knock-on costs for community policing and negative impacts on local community relations.

It is also clear that if the proposed policies are introduced the voluntary sector's resources will be redirected to assist asylum seeking families and children without support. Organisations working with refugees and asylum seekers have already faced massive cuts over the past 2 years and many are operating without any statutory funding. In April 2014, an estimated £1.5million was lost from the migrant third sector in Leeds alone and in some of the smaller towns in the region this sector is virtually non-existent.

This cut in funding has been matched by a huge increase in demand. Under these proposals, there will be a reduction in the statutory safety net for refused asylum seeking individuals or families, leaving the voluntary sector as the only avenue of support. We fear that the present refugee sector does not have the capacity to meet this potential demand.

The proposals in this consultation document run contrary to a number of cross-departmental government strategies and objectives. It is almost certain that the consequences of removing support from refused asylum seeking families will undermine the principles of a number of other key agendas including the PREVENT agenda and the Modern Slavery Act.

Forcing people into destitution increases their vulnerability and it is widely agreed that vulnerable individuals are particularly at risk of radicalisation. People in desperate situations are forced into doing desperate things to support themselves and their families. Destitution has been proven to be a key trigger for individuals ending up in exploitative working conditions or forced labour. Without avenues of alternative support, families and children may be forced to endure abusive situations in order to keep a roof over their heads.

We are far from convinced that the suggestions made in this consultation will save money. Financial savings should not be the primary criteria on which policies

regarding welfare and child protection are considered. It is inevitable that a significant part of the Home Office's "savings" will simply become costs for local authorities to shoulder - at a time when they are already spending significant amounts on children in need of care and are suffering cuts on an unprecedented scale.

These proposals are likely to place workers in local authorities in the difficult position of having to choose whether to provide vital support to families and honour laws on child protection and international conventions on human rights, or obey these proposals and possibly fail in their duty to uphold those laws.

**7. Whether and how to make it clearer for local authorities that they do not need to support migrants, including families, who can and should return to their own country**

Local authorities believe they have a continued responsibility to safeguard refused asylum seeking families with children. Ultimately our first duty is to safeguard vulnerable children and these proposals compromise our ability to fulfil this duty. It is therefore not possible to make it clear that local councils do not need to support families.

**8. Suggestions on how the Home Office, local authorities and other partners can work together to ensure the departure from the UK of those migrants with no lawful basis to remain here and minimise burdens on the public purse**

We believe that it is in everyone's interest that refused asylum seekers should be left in their Home Office accommodation until they are removed from the UK. Only in this way will local statutory and voluntary (and the Immigration Service) know where people are and therefore be able to respond to them. The current proposed policy changes will not achieve their aims and objectives and is further alienating local government from the aims of central government.

If the Government wishes to minimise costs to the tax payer and ensure refused asylum seekers with no lawful basis to remain here do leave the UK then it should review and reform ALL stages of the asylum system.

Decisions need to be taken in a reasonable time and be more consistent, fair and reliable. Addressing this will reduce the number of successful appeals, increase confidence in the asylum system and save money.

In some European countries such as Sweden, each asylum seeker is allocated a 'case-manager', who ensures they have access to legal advice, housing, welfare support, information about their case, and options for the future. This continues even after a refusal. The evidence suggests that this model of 'case-management' is effective in increasing uptakes of voluntary return, with a voluntary return rate of 82%. This is an approach which could be adopted in the UK.

**9. Information or evidence that will help us to assess the potential impacts of the changes proposed in this consultation document and to revise the consultation stage Impact Assessment**

See above response.

Leeds City Council - reforming support for failed asylum seekers and other illegal migrants  
Consultation8

## **10. Any information or evidence that will help us to assess the potential impacts of the changes proposed in this consultation document on persons who have any of the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010**

The changes outlined in the consultation will disproportionately affect all persons who have protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010, in particular race, gender, age, pregnancy and maternity.

The Home Office has a duty to regard the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Section 55 of the Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009 expressly states that this duty must be taken into account when developing policy. The government is also a signatory to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which makes the best interest of the child a primary consideration in all actions concerning children. As the proposals may result in children becoming destitute, or separated from their parents and taken into care, it is difficult to see what consideration has been given as to how these changes would impact children.

Families falling into destitution will negatively affect the health and wellbeing of both parents and children. The proposals therefore run counter to the duties in the Health and Social Care Act 2012 which require the Government to reduce health inequalities.

### **Conclusion**

Ending support for refused asylum seeking families will be ineffective and inhumane.

Evidence has shown that removing support from refused asylum seeking families will not result in significant increased returns instead the outcomes were an increase to the public purse and a large number of families choosing to disappear (rather than return to their countries of origin). There will inevitably be significant secondary costs to local communities, the health sector and the voluntary sector.

Although the proposals will force families and individuals into destitution they will still be more likely to decide to stay in the UK rather than return to the real or perceived threat of persecution in their country of origin.

Local children's services will feel they have no choice other than to pay for the care of potentially destitute children. If they decide not to, they leave themselves exposed to significant risks including legal challenge. If families and children are not cared for by local authorities or if those families chose to go "underground" we have major concerns for the safety and welfare of those children and families. The impacts of destitution on vulnerable children are huge, including worsening physical and mental health, alongside an increased risk of exploitation and abuse.

Policies that put children at risk run counter to multiple government duties and commitments to safeguard the rights of all children in the UK.

Any major reform of support for refused asylum seekers is only appropriate within a wider reform of the whole asylum system. The Government need to properly invest in all stages of the asylum system to make sure that decisions are taken in a reasonable time frame, are fair and reliable, and are properly implemented. We

strongly disagree with the proposal to remove support from refused asylum seeking families for the reasons outlined.



### Local Welfare Scheme Funding for Refugees

1. Up to £100k will be made available to support 3rd sector organisations in working with refugees and asylum seekers. Organisations to be supported are those whose principle activity is providing assistance to refugees and asylum seekers.

Funding will be made available for the following purposes:

- To increase capacity to provide advice and support;
- To fund goods and essentials that help asylum seekers refugees settle into Leeds;
- To deliver greater co-ordination of support across the network of organisations providing services to RAS; and
- To help address/improve community relations issues

The basic criteria for funding will include the following:

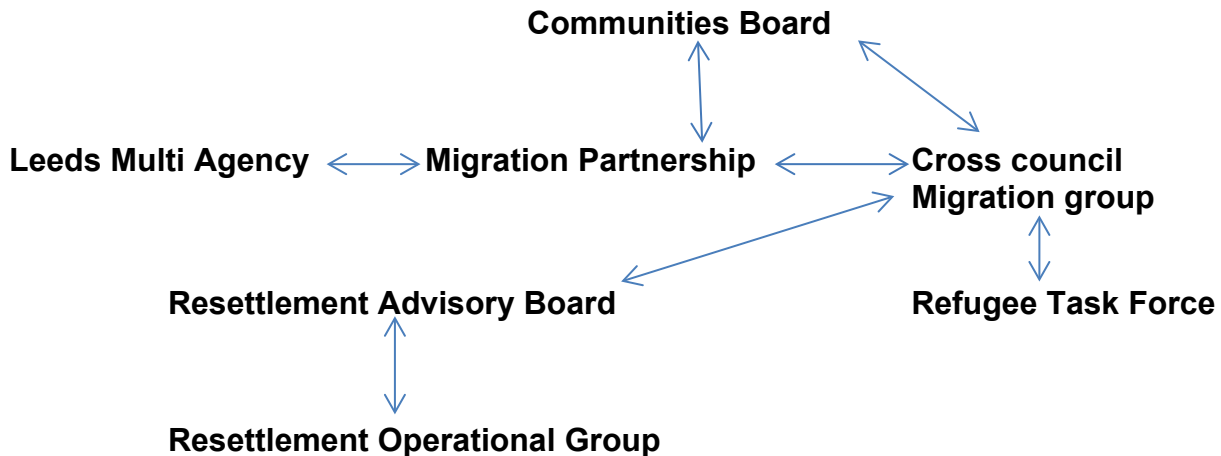
- The funding is to increase current provision
- Organisations need to be established and financially viable
- Organisations need to show how they will respond when funding stops (preference may be given to those that use funding to grow service delivery beyond the funding period)
- As part of the aim of helping to deliver greater co-ordination of support, it will be helpful for organisations to show how they will work in partnership with other organisations to increase current provision

As a guide, funding will normally be limited to £10k to enable more organisations to access the funding. Bids above £10k may be considered where:

- a) There are exceptional reasons for a higher bid;
- b) The organisation is critical to the delivery of support to Syrian refugees; and
- c) The bid is supported by other organisations in the network

The bidding process will be kept simple with decisions agreed at Citizens and Communities Leadership Team.

**Main Groups with Oversight of Migration Work**



**Communities Board** – Partnership group which is chaired by Cllr Coupar. It has a focus on providing an overview and understanding of communities, including discussions around migration. The Migration Partnership Board formally reports to this Board.

**Migration Partnership** – Currently chaired by the third sector with support from the council, with a combination of third sector and public bodies participating. The aim is to encourage strategic work in relation to migration.

**Cross council migration group** – includes representation from each directorate and is chaired by James Rogers. This group formally reports into the Equality Board and works closely with the Migration Partnership.

**Resettlement Advisory Board** – Set up to manage the Syrian/ Afghan resettlement programme to Leeds. Board includes representation from police, DWP, housing, ASC, health and chaired by Liz Cook.

**Resettlement Operational Group** – set up to deliver the Syrian/Afghan resettlement programme in Leeds. Membership replicates that on the Board at an operational level and is chaired by Charlotte Cook, Migration Yorkshire.

**Leeds Multi Agency Meeting** – a third sector led group which focusses on provision of services/advice and guidance for asylum seekers. Although council not formally involved there is cross over with the Migration Partnership.

**Refugee task force** – set up to provide strategic leadership to address the challenges currently being created by the refugee crisis. It includes representation from council directorates and is chaired by James Rogers.



Report author: S Carey

Tel: x43001

**Report of Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities)**

**Report to Citizens & Communities Scrutiny Board**

**Date: 12<sup>th</sup> October 2015**

**Subject: Poverty Truth Commission Leeds**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. The Poverty Truth Commission was launched in February 2014 with the aim of involving people who directly faced poverty in decisions about poverty. This was done by bringing together civic and business leaders with residents who were experiencing poverty and were prepared to support the Commission.
  
2. The Commission, which ran for 16 months from February 2014 to June 2015, focused in 3 key areas: stigma, achieving potential and mental health and poverty. At the closure event in June 2015, the Commission produced an innovative report in the form of a pack of postcards that set out key messages and conclusions arising from the process.
  
3. The Commission has been influential in the approach taken by the Citizens & Communities Directorate in delivering the Citizens@Leeds propositions around helping people into work, providing integrated and accessible services, tackling financial hardship and engaging with local residents.

**Recommendations:**

4. That the information supplied in this report is noted.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 The report provides information on the Poverty Truth Commission run by Together for Peace and supported by the Council.

## **2 Key messages**

- 2.1 The Poverty Truth Commission was independently led by Together For Peace (T4P) and supported by a number of organisations including the City Council. The outcomes from the Commission include a more sympathetic reporting of poverty in the local media, greater levels of understanding and awareness of the causes and impacts of poverty by businesses and civic leaders and an influence on the on-going delivery of the Citizens@Leeds proposition
- 2.2 JRF, which supported the Commission in Leeds, has agreed to commit to fund more Poverty Truth Commissions across the UK.

## **3 Background information**

- 3.1 The Poverty Truth Commission in Leeds was launched in February 2014 with the aim of addressing the question: What if people who directly faced poverty were involved in decisions about poverty? The overall approach was modelled on the Poverty Truth Commission in Scotland which adopted an approach of '*Nothing about us, without us, is for us.*' This approach ensured that those with experience of poverty were involved in exploring and designing solutions to address poverty in the city.
- 3.2 An initial launch event took place in February 2014 in the Banqueting Suite at Civic. The launch event brought together civic and business leaders with those experiencing poverty with the intention of providing a platform for participants to tell, in different and imaginative ways, their experiences and feelings of being in poverty. These 'testimonies' of the impacts and causes of poverty were 'witnessed' by civic and business leaders. The launch event can be found on Youtube at the following link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I0I0IDdWURA>
- 3.3 The launch event was not intended to deliver solutions but to encourage civic and business leaders to engage in the process and commit to working with 'testifiers' i.e. those experiencing poverty, to explore the issues more deeply. A list of those involved in the Poverty Truth Challenge is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 The issues and causes of poverty are varied and the Poverty Truth Commission agreed to focus on 3 main areas:
  1. *Stigma and perception*: this group explored the issue of why public attitudes have hardened towards people in poverty. The group met with Jobcentre Plus and had input from the Council's Benefits Service in looking at this issue.
  2. *Young people achieving potential*: this group looked at what support was available to young people and met with a number of organisations, including the Chamber of Commerce, Leeds Apprenticeship Training Agency, Leeds Community Foundation etc. to look at the barriers for young people.

3. *Relationship between mental health and poverty*: this group focused on local support and local services for people experiencing mental health problems. The group met with Workplace Leeds, Volition, Leeds Mind and Adults Social Care to discuss these issues

## 4 Main issues

- 4.1 The 3 groups continued to meet over the course of 18 months and the Commission concluded with a closing event again held at the Civic Hall. At this event, both testifiers and civic and business leaders set out some of the conclusions that had been reached. The closing event was accompanied by a report on the activity and conclusions of the Commission – this report was in the form of a pack of postcards containing relevant messages, statements and conclusions. Copies of the postcard packs will be distributed to Board members at today's meeting.
- 4.2 The Poverty Truth Commission in Leeds has been successful in raising the issue of poverty and gaining sympathetic coverage from the media. There have been articles on the Commission in the Yorkshire Evening Post and Huffington Post and the work of the Commission has been covered twice on BBC Radio Leeds Breakfast Show and also on BBC Radio Leeds Drivetime show.
- 4.3 The work of the Stigma group has also provided content for the Real Benefits Street, a YouTube channel from Church Action on Poverty which aims to show a different reality of being on benefits to that shown by Channel 4's 'Benefits Street' series. The Real Benefits Street channel features contributions, both poignant and inspiring, from Leeds residents involved in the Poverty Truth Commission.
- 4.4 Joseph Rowntree Foundation has supported the Commission in Leeds and has agreed to commit funding to support further Poverty Truth Commissions across the UK
- 4.5 Among the conclusions from the Commission are:
  - *The importance of being local*: there are real benefits from people living and working in communities delivering services in those communities, whether 3<sup>rd</sup> sector or public sector
  - *The need for benefit systems to be more human*: this means seeing a claimant as a person and providing the support they need when they need it
  - *The importance of volunteering*: this is relevant in terms of building skills, getting to know communities and becoming more work ready
  - *The need for 'breathing spaces' in localities*: this recognises the pressures that can be experienced by people with mental health problems when out and about and identifies supportive places that can help alleviate some of the pressures, whether this be a local café or a public sector service.

4.6 Ultimately, the success of the Poverty Truth Commission is dependent on what the contributors, and particularly the civic and business leaders, take from the conversations and look to address in their areas. For some, this has been about gaining a greater understanding of the barriers and impacts of the way services are delivered; for others it's been about the need to provide opportunity by looking beyond a stereotype.

#### Implications for the Council

4.7 The Council has supported the Poverty Truth Commission through the provision of facilities and some limited funding and in its role as a civic leader. This has seen involvement from the then Leader of the Council, the Chief Executive, individual elected members and officers. Involvement in the Commission has been helpful in the approach to implementing the Citizens@Leeds propositions. Evidence of the influence is shown below:

1. *Helping people into work:* many of the design features of the Council's Council Tax Support scheme for 15/16 reflect our involvement in the Commission. The scheme focuses on providing work-related support based around the needs of an individual, delivered face to face in local venues.
2. *Integrated and accessible services:* the Community Hub approach continues to grow and deliver greater partnership working with locally based 3<sup>rd</sup> sector organisations and employers. This approach supports more joined up working around the needs of users and can help to deliver better outcomes for individuals
3. *Tackling financial hardship:* Leeds is leading from the front in tackling financial hardship and high cost lending. A new initiative launched by Leeds City Credit Union provides affordable access to household goods and is a direct and considerably cheaper alternative to the rent-to-buy options on the high street. This initiative recognises a comment from one of the testifiers who used a well-known rent-to-buy shop in Leeds City Centre to buy a washing machine. She knew she would pay a lot more for the product but the most important factor in her decision was that she could afford the weekly payments.
4. *Engaging with local people:* members of the Poverty Truth Commission have attended Community Committees on issues relating to their locality and have found the process inclusive and engaging.

4.8 The overall approach of listening to service users and working locally is reflected in the values of the council across services. There is, however, more to do and more to learn from getting closer to the customers who need and use our services. It is important that key frontline services get to know their service users and continue to reflect on how they can best help.

## **5 Corporate Considerations**

### **5.1 Consultation and Engagement**

5.1.3 The report provides an update on an externally run commission and does not require consultation.

### **5.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

5.2.1 The Poverty Truth Commission involved residents and contributors from all walks of life with the aim of improving understanding and cohesion. Aspects of the work of the Commission focused on those issues that can be divisive of cause inequalities.

### **5.3 Council policies and Best Council Plan**

5.3.1 A key priority for the council is addressing poverty and deprivation. The work of the Poverty Truth Commission supports this activity and provides further opportunities to look at how best to progress this priority.

### **5.4 Resources and value for money**

5.4.1 There are no resource implications for the Council arising from this report or the work of the Poverty Truth Commission.

### **5.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

5.5.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report

### **5.6 Risk Management**

5.6.1 There is a risk that the work of the Poverty Truth Commission may not lead to lasting changes in approach across public, private and 3<sup>rd</sup> sectors. The establishment of the Citizens & Communities Directorate, with a clear focus on poverty, helps to ensure that this important work is taken forward in a strategic and meaningful way.

## **6 Conclusions**

6.1 The Poverty Truth Commission set out to see what could be achieved by involving those experiencing poverty in the decisions about potential solutions to poverty. The outcomes from this have seen much greater levels of understanding and awareness of the causes and implications of poverty across the civic and business leadership. The challenge for civic and business leaders is to take this greater level of understanding and let it influence the way organisations work.

6.2 The Citizens and Communities Directorate through the Citizens@Leeds propositions is well-placed to take this work forward.

**7 Recommendations**

7.1 That the information supplied in this report is noted.

**8 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

None

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.



Alastair Da Costa, Chief Executive, Prince's Trust International

Amina Weston, Healer & Doula

Anna Travers, original co-chair

Barry Anderson, Councillor, Adel Ward

Ben Harrison, Farsley Born & Bred

Chris Butler, Chief Executive, Leeds & York Partnership, NHS Foundation Trust

Darren Head, Hip Hop artist

Edric James, Singer/songwriter & advice worker

Emma Stone, Director of Policy and Research, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

Gary Hetherington, Chief Executive, Leeds Rhinos

Gerald Jennings, President, Leeds Chamber of Commerce

Hawa Bah, student

Hilary Benn, MP, Leeds Central

Joy Pocock, Craftswoman & student

Kalhan Barath, Poet & writer

Keith Wakefield, Council Leader to April 2015

Mabs Hussein, Superintendent, West Yorkshire Police

Mary Brennan, Community entrepreneur, Crossgreen

Nicola Swann, Former Chief Executive, Leeds Mind

Paul Money, Commander of Leeds District, West Yorkshire Police

Peter Connolly, Owner, Yorkshire Design Group

Qari Asim, MBE, Imam and solicitor

Richard Bennett, Fitness instructor

Steve Carey, Chief Officer, Welfare & Benefits

Steve Tremble, Chef and story teller

Susan Kennedy, Governor, HMP Leeds Prison

Tom Riordan, Chief Executive, Leeds City Council

Yvonne Crowther, Social entrepreneur and Community activist

Zewdu Mengiste, Director of Lucy Radio and Ethiopian Community Chairman

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Report author: Angela Brogden  
Tel: 247 4553

## Report of Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

### Report to Scrutiny Board (Citizens and Communities)

**Date: 12 October 2015**

**Subject: Work Schedule**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

### Summary of main issues

1. The Board's work schedule is attached as appendix 1. This will be subject to change throughout the municipal year.
2. Also attached at appendix 2 are the minutes of the Executive Board meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2015, for the Board's information.

### Recommendation

3. Members are asked to consider the work schedule and make amendments as appropriate.

### Background documents<sup>1</sup>

4. None used

<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.

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Area of review	Schedule of meetings/visits during 2015/16		
	June	July	August
Development of Community Hubs			Scoping terms of reference
Development of Community Committees			Scoping terms of reference
Universal Credit Preparations		Initial briefing and determining areas for further scrutiny SB 27/07/15 @ 10 am	Scoping terms of reference
<b>Briefings</b>	Scrutiny Board Terms of Reference and Sources of Work SB 17/06/15 @ 1.30 pm		
Budget & Policy Framework/pre-decision Scrutiny			
Recommendation Tracking			
Performance Monitoring		Quarterly Performance report SB 27/07/15 @ 10 am	

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## Scrutiny Board (Citizens and Communities) Work Schedule for 2015/2016 Municipal Year

Areas of review	Schedule of meetings/visits during 2015/16		
	September	October	November
<b>Development of Community Hubs</b>	Agreeing terms of reference SB 14/09/15 @ 10 am		Session 1 of the inquiry SB 9/11/15 @ 10 am  Session 2 of the Inquiry (tbc)
<b>Development of Community Committees</b>	Agreeing terms of reference SB 14/09/15 @ 10 am		
<b>Universal Credit</b>	Agreeing terms of reference SB 14/09/15 @ 10 am	Session 1 of the Inquiry WG 20/10/15 @ 10 am  Session 2 of the Inquiry WG 26/10/15 @ 10 am	Session 3 of the Inquiry (tbc)  Session 4 of the Inquiry (tbc)
<b>Briefings</b>	Delivering the centres of excellence model within the Corporate Contact Centre – update SB 14/09/15 @ 10 am  Summer Budget Welfare Reforms SB 14/09/15 @ 10 am	Poverty Truth Challenge – update SB 12/10/15 @ 10 am  Migration and Refugee Update – Leeds' Position SB 12/10/15 @ 10 am	Leeds City Credit Union – Partnership Work and Strategic Plan Update SB 9/11/15 @ 10 am
<b>Budget &amp; Policy Framework/pre-decision Scrutiny</b>	Revised Gambling Act Licensing Policy SB 14/09/15 @ 10 am  Equality Improvement Priorities 2016-2020 SB 14/09/15 @ 10 am		
<b>Recommendation Tracking</b>			
<b>Performance Monitoring</b>			Quarterly Performance report SB 9/11/15 @ 10 am

## Scrutiny Board (Citizens and Communities) Work Schedule for 2015/2016 Municipal Year

Area of review	Schedule of meetings/visits during 2015/16		
	December	January	February
<b>Development of Community Hubs</b>	Session 3 of the Inquiry SB 07/12/15 @ 10 am	Session 4 of the Inquiry SB 10/01/16 @ 10 am	Session 5 of the Inquiry (tbc)
<b>Development of Community Committees</b>		Session 1 of the Inquiry SB 10/01/16 @ 10 am  Session 2 of the Inquiry (tbc)	Session 3 of the Inquiry SB 15/02/16 @ 10 am
<b>Universal Credit</b>	Session 5 of the Inquiry (tbc)		
<b>Briefings</b>	Role and work of the Communities Board SB 07/12/15 @ 10 am		Delivering the centres of excellence model within the Corporate Contact Centre – update SB 15/02/16 @ 10 am
<b>Budget &amp; Policy Framework/pre-decision Scrutiny</b>		Initial budget proposals 2016-2017 SB 10/01/16 @ 10 am	
<b>Recommendation Tracking</b>			
<b>Performance Monitoring</b>		Quarterly Performance report SB 10/01/16 @ 10 am	

## Scrutiny Board (Citizens and Communities) Work Schedule for 2015/2016 Municipal Year

Area of review	Schedule of meetings/visits during 2015/16		
	March	April	May
Development of Community Hubs			
Development of Community Committees	Session 4 of the Inquiry (tbc)		
Universal Credit			
Briefings			
Budget & Policy Framework/pre-decision Scrutiny			
Recommendation Tracking			
Performance Monitoring		Quarterly Performance report SB 12/04/16 @ 10 am	

Unscheduled

Approaches in tackling begging



## EXECUTIVE BOARD

WEDNESDAY, 23RD SEPTEMBER, 2015

**PRESENT:** Councillor L Yeadon in the Chair

Councillors D Coupar, M Dobson, J Lewis,  
R Lewis and L Mulherin

**SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS:** Councillors J Bentley and J Procter

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors J Blake, A Carter, S Golton and M Rafique

**35 Chair of the Meeting**

In accordance with Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rule 3.1.5, in the absence of Councillor Blake who had submitted her apologies for absence from the meeting, Councillor Yeadon presided as Chair of the Board for the duration of the meeting.

**36 Substitute Member**

Under the terms of Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rule 3.1.6, Councillors J Procter and J Bentley were invited to attend the meeting on behalf of Councillors A Carter and Golton respectively, who had submitted their apologies for absence from the meeting.

**37 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public**

**RESOLVED** – That, in accordance with Regulation 4 of The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012, the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following parts of the agenda designated as exempt on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information so designated as follows:-

- (a) Appendix 1 to the report entitled, 'Redevelopment of Kirkstall Road Household Waste Recycling Site and Transfer Station', referred to in Minute No. 47 is designated as exempt from publication in accordance with paragraph 10.4(3) of Schedule 12A(3) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the information contained within the submitted appendix contains the price evaluation scores for each of the tenderers, and which therefore relates to the financial or business affairs of each of the tenderers. Keeping this information exempt from publication also relates to the business affairs of the Council, where the disclosure of such information could damage confidence in the Council's procurement processes. Consequently, it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption from publication outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**38 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**  
There were no declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests made at the meeting.

**39 Minutes**  
**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015 be approved as a correct record.

### **HEALTH, WELLBEING AND ADULTS**

**40 Delivering the Better Lives Strategy in Leeds - Proposed Next Steps - Progress Report**

Further to Minute No. 104, 19<sup>th</sup> November 2014, the Director of Adult Social Services submitted a report which provided an account of the further work which had been undertaken in support of the “Delivering the Better Lives Strategy in Leeds – Proposed Next Steps”. The report identified the progress which had been made since November 2014 when the Board previously considered the matter, and which also sought approval to proceed with further proposals, including the structure of the proposed consultation process.

Members noted that the purpose of the submitted report was to gain the Board’s approval to undertake a consultation exercise on the proposals detailed, with assurances being provided that such consultation would be genuine, comprehensive and would involve all relevant parties.

Furthermore, it was emphasised that whilst noting the significant reduction in the Council’s budget over the last five years, the aim was to ensure that modern, personalised services were offered which provided the individual with a range of choices and enabled them to maintain their independence for as long as possible. Also, it was highlighted that should any actions be implemented following the consultation period, the Council guarantees that individuals affected would have the same level of service, that there is sufficient residential care provision in the city and that the Council would support all relevant parties throughout the accompanying processes.

Responding to a Member’s enquiry, it was reiterated that current and projected figures indicated that there were sufficient levels of residential care provision to meet demand in Leeds. Furthermore, Members were also provided with information on the work which had been undertaken on the viability of alternative models of provision.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the work which has been undertaken in compliance with the requirements of the agreement given by the Executive Board on 19th November 2014, be noted;
- (b) That the following proposals be agreed:-
  - (i) To begin consultation on the recommended proposals to decommission the three remaining care homes (Middlecross, Siegen Manor and The Green) and associated day centres

Draft minutes to be approved at the meeting  
to be held on Wednesday, 21st October, 2015

(Middlecross, Siegen Manor and The Green) and Springfield day centre for older people, with consultation on these services commencing on 1st October 2015 and being completed on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2015. (It was noted that the related recommendation within the report remained unchanged from that which featured in the November 2014 report);

- (ii) To begin consultation on the recommended proposal to decommission Radcliffe Lane Day Centre, with consultation taking place in the same timescale as the services listed above. (It was noted that the related recommendation within the report had been altered from that which featured in the November 2014 report, with explanatory details set out at sections 3.36-3.41 of the submitted report);
- (iii) To consult on the proposal to remodel Wykebeck Valley day centre over time as a complex needs hub for the East of the city, taking a phased approach to accommodate the needs of existing and future customers, with consultation taking place in the same timescale as the services listed above. (It was noted that the related recommendation within the report had been altered from that which featured in the November 2014 report, with explanatory details set out at sections 3.42-3.45 of the submitted report);
- (iv) To continue and complete the review of the Council's long term community support service (home care) which is currently underway;
- (v) That officers be asked to submit a further report to Executive Board in Spring 2016 detailing the outcomes from the consultation process on the proposals outlined in the submitted report and in relation to the outcomes from the review of options for the residual Community Support Service and making further recommendations in relation to the next steps;
- (vi) To note that a further report has been submitted to the Executive Board that sets out proposals in relation to Frederick Hurdle and Apna Day Centres (Minute No. 53 refers);
- (vii) To note that the lead officer responsible for the implementation of such matters is the Director of Adult Social Services.

(At the conclusion of this item, the meeting was adjourned at 1.25 p.m., and subsequently reconvened at 1.35 p.m.)

## **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES**

### **41 Outcome of consultation to increase Primary School Places in Pudsey/Swinnow**

The Director of Children's Services, the Director of City Development and the Deputy Chief Executive submitted a joint report on proposals which related to the Local Authority's duty to ensure sufficiency of school places. Specifically, the report made reference to the outcome of the consultation exercise which had been undertaken on proposals to expand primary school provision at Park Spring Primary School, and sought permission to publish a statutory notice in respect of such proposals.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the publication of a Statutory Notice to expand Park Spring Primary School from a capacity of 315 pupils to 420 pupils, with an increase in the admission number from 45 to 60, with effect from September 2017, be approved;
- (b) That it be noted that the responsible officer for the implementation of such matters is the Capacity Planning and Sufficiency Lead.

### **42 Outcome of statutory notices on proposals to expand secondary provision at Roundhay Through-School**

Further to Minute No. 10, 24<sup>th</sup> June 2015, the Director of Children's Services, the Director of City Development and the Deputy Chief Executive submitted a joint report detailing the outcomes from the publication of statutory notices regarding proposals to expand secondary provision at Roundhay Through-School and which sought approval to implement such expansion.

Responding to an enquiry, Members were advised that the school's Board of Governors had considered and agreed to the proposals.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That changes to Roundhay Through-School by increasing its capacity from 1250 pupils to 1500 pupils in years 7 – 11, with an increase in the cohort sizes from 250 to 300, with effect from September 2017, be approved;
- (b) That the increase to the year 7 admissions number in 2017 and 2018 to 300, then its reduction to 240 in 2019, be approved, given that the primary children are already on the roll of the school and the admission number is the number of additional children from other primary schools that would be admitted;
- (c) That it be noted that the responsible officer for the implementation of such matters is the Head of Learning Systems.

## **COMMUNITIES**

### **43 Migration and Refugee Update**

The Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) submitted a report which provided an update on a range of issues relating to migration in Leeds as well as Leeds' response to the current Middle East refugee crisis. In addition, the report provided context on migration and asylum issues as they historically and presently affected the demography of the city as well as responding to the current refugee crisis.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, it was confirmed that the proposed use of up to £100,000 of local welfare scheme funding to support third sector organisations in dealing with capacity challenges would not impact upon the delivery of the Council's welfare service provision. Furthermore, it was noted that the Council would continue to work in partnership with the third sector in order to ensure that the outcomes provided by such organisations were maximised.

A discussion then took place on the detail of the Council's response to the Home Office's consultation paper: 'Reforming Support for Failed Asylum Seekers and other Illegal Migrants'.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) be authorised to liaise with Home Office colleagues in order to seek to agree the terms and funding arrangements for the relocation of up to 200 Syrian refugees in Leeds over the next two years;
- (b) That the Board endorse the use of up to £100,000 of local welfare scheme funding in order to support third sector organisations in dealing with current capacity challenges, with the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) agreeing specific proposals in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.

### **44 Future Policy Direction for the Regulation of the Private Rented Sector and tackling empty homes**

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report presenting the issues currently affecting the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in Leeds, and outlined a number of potential policy directions in this area. Furthermore, the report responded to the deputation presented to the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015 Council meeting by the Trade Unionist and Socialist Coalition (TUSC) regarding private sector housing and letting agencies.

In discussing the available options for the regulation of the private rented sector, and also the emerging issue of properties being purchased as part of the 'Right to Buy' initiative and subsequently being privately rented, it was noted that comments made by Members would be taken into consideration as such matters were progressed.

**RESOLVED** – That the Director of Environment and Housing be requested to report back to the February 2016 Executive Board on the development of a range of options for the improvement and the regulation of the PRS in Leeds, specifically:-

- (i) A self-regulation agreement with members of Accreditation Schemes;
- (ii) Establishing a “Rogue Landlord” unit;
- (iii) Lobbying government for changes to the operation of Housing Benefit or Universal Credit within the sector;
- (iv) Refining the approach to prosecutions of failing landlords;
- (v) Establishing an “Ethical Lettings Agency”; and
- (vi) Targeting the Leeds Neighbourhood Approach (LNA) within a Neighbourhood Improvement programme.

**45 Approval to grant thirteen 99 year leases at less than best consideration to Leeds Action to Create Homes (LATCH)**

Further to Minute No. 35, 4<sup>th</sup> July 2007, the Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which sought approval to surrender 13 existing leases and grant 99-year leases at ‘less than best’ consideration to LATCH (Leeds Action to Create Homes). The report detailed how this would enable LATCH to secure additional finances in order to undertake a programme of acquisition and refurbishment of privately owned empty properties across the city.

Responding to a Member’s enquiry, officers undertook to ensure that the Council would work with the relevant organisations in order to ensure that any properties involved in this and similar schemes would be brought back into use within a specified timescale.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That a recommendation to surrender 13 existing leases to LATCH, be approved;
- (b) That approval be given to enter into new 99-year Leases at ‘Less Than Best’ consideration in order to enable LATCH to secure additional finances and enter into a programme of acquisition and renovation of empty properties in Leeds;
- (c) That the necessary authority be delegated to the Director of City Development in order to approve the terms of the new leases at ‘Less than Best’ consideration, based upon a peppercorn rent calculated at £1 per annum per property by January 2016.

**ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY**

**46 Draft Safer Leeds Strategy 2015/16**

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which presented the draft Safer Leeds Strategy for 2015-2016 for the Board’s consideration and support, prior to the Strategy being submitted for the purposes of formal approval to the meeting of full Council on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, the Board was advised that although the issue of road safety was not included within the strategy, it did feature within the West Yorkshire Local Transport Plan, and it was emphasised that collaborative work between relevant partners would continue in order promote all aspects of the issue.

**RESOLVED** – That the draft Safer Leeds Strategy be supported as the city's Crime and Disorder Strategy for 2015-16, and that the Strategy be submitted to full Council on 11th November 2015 for the purposes of approval.

(In accordance with the Council's Executive and Decision Making Procedure Rules, the matters referred to within this minute were not eligible for Call In as the power to Call In decisions does not extend to those decisions made in accordance with the Budget and Framework Procedure Rules, which includes the resolution above)

#### **47 Redevelopment of Kirkstall Road Household Waste Recycling Site and Transfer Station**

Further to Minute No. 217, 5<sup>th</sup> March 2014, the Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which sought approval to proceed with the redevelopment of the Kirkstall Road recycling site. The report highlighted how the proposed scheme would provide major enhancements to recycling facilities and services for residents in this area of the city, and which aimed to support a further increase in recycling performance.

The submitted report and the exempt appendix provided Members with details of 2 options: Option 1 included the development of a 're-use shop' within the project, whilst Option 2 excluded it.

Members discussed the updated costings and the factors which had led them to be revised.

Following consideration of Appendix 1 to the submitted report, designated as exempt from publication under the provisions of Access to Information Procedure Rule 10.4(3), which was considered in private at the conclusion of the meeting, it was

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the appointment of the preferred contractor, to complete the design and carry out construction of the proposed Kirkstall Road recycling site, in accordance with the details contained within the submitted exempt appendix 1 (i.e. Option 1 - including the development of a re-use shop), be approved;
- (b) That a further injection into Capital Scheme No. 16169 of £943k, to be funded through a combination of additional unsupported borrowing and grant, be approved, giving a total approved budget of £5.243m;
- (c) That authority to spend up to a total of £5.243m on the re-development of Kirkstall Road recycling site be approved;

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to be held on Wednesday, 21st October, 2015

- (d) That the necessary authority be delegated to the Director of Environment and Housing in order to approve the completion of the contract award, and to take any necessary action associated with the contract and/or contract award.

## **ECONOMY AND CULTURE**

### **48 Best Council Plan - Strong Economy and Compassionate City**

Further to Minute No. 30, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015, the Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report which sought agreement to a renewed ambition for Leeds. In doing so, the report presented the draft 'best city' outcomes and the updated breakthrough projects, which would inform the 2016/17 Best Council Plan together with the Council's financial strategy, and which would also aim to build upon the progress previously reported to the Board.

Responding to Members' enquiries, it was emphasised that focus would be placed upon the delivery of the ambitions presented within the submitted document, and that Members would be kept informed of the progress being made against such ambitions.

### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That a renewed ambition for Leeds: to be the 'best city', as set out in the '*Vision for Leeds 2011-30*' be agreed, which means that it must be a compassionate, caring place that helps all of its residents contribute to and benefit from the effects of economy growth, thereby tackling poverty and reducing the range of inequalities that still exist;
- (b) That the draft 'best city' outcomes and updated 'breakthrough projects', as presented at Appendix 1 to the submitted report be noted, which are in support of the twin aims of Leeds having a 'strong economy' and being a 'compassionate city'. It also be noted that these will be finalised in the coming months through developing the 2016/17 Best Council Plan and aligned budget, both of which are scheduled to be presented to the Board in February 2016.
- (c) That it be noted that the officers responsible for such matters are the Chief Executive (for the Best Council Plan) and the Deputy Chief Executive (for the Council budget).

## **RESOURCES AND STRATEGY**

### **49 Financial Health Monitoring 2015/16 – Month 4**

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report presenting the Council's projected financial health position after 4 months of the 2015/16 financial year. Furthermore, the submitted report sought approval of the proposed changes to the budget and the associated savings detailed at Appendix 2, in order to reflect the potential reduction in the Public Health grant. Finally, the report provided an update on the Council's procurement activity during the first quarter of the financial year.



Responding to an enquiry, the Board received an update on the factors which had led to the current forecasting of a year-end overspend within the Children's Services directorate, together with the actions being taken to address it.

Members also received an update on the current position regarding the national in-year reduction in Public Health grant, and in relation to this, discussed the details within Appendix 2, which presented proposals to change the budget and make savings in order to accommodate such a grant reduction.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, the Board was advised that dialogue with the Home Office would continue, both on the collaborative work which the Council was undertaking to assist with the current refugee crisis and also in respect of associated Government funding to support such work.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the projected financial position of the Authority for 2015/16 be noted;
- (b) That in line with the Budget and Policy framework, approval be given to the changes to the budget in order to reflect the potential reduction to the Public Health grant, together with the proposed savings, as outlined in Appendix 2 of the submitted report, which are subject to confirmation of the final in-year grant, and which are for implementation by the Director of Public Health in line with the Council's decision-making processes.

**50 Paying a Real Living Wage**

The Deputy Chief Executive submitted a report which recommended that the Council established a real Living Wage for staff of £8.01 per hour from 1st April 2016, in line with the West Yorkshire Combined Authorities' Low Pay Charter, which the Council signed up to in April 2015 (Minute No. 191 of Executive Board, 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2015 refers).

Responding to an enquiry, it was confirmed that the real Living Wage initiative would apply to all staff, other than in exceptional circumstances, and would not include an age threshold.

In addition, Members noted the estimated financial impact that the establishment of the real Living Wage would have upon schools, and received information on the dialogue which continued with schools, together with other partners, on the wider implications of the initiative.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That it be noted that Council staff will be paid a real Living Wage at £8.01 per hour from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2016;

- (b) That the budget strategy be developed in order to accommodate this, with the minimum pay rate being annually reviewed as part of the budget strategy, and with increases being considered in terms of affordability, impact on pay structures and national pay settlements;
- (c) That it be noted that the Deputy Chief Executive is the responsible officer for the implementation of resolutions (a) and (b) (above);
- (d) That Leeds City Council engage with partners and the business community in Leeds in order to demonstrate how this change will help build a stronger economy and a compassionate city, with the Deputy Chief Executive reporting back to the Board on this, together with other key national developments regarding pay and benefit changes that affect low paid staff.

## **REGENERATION, TRANSPORT AND PLANNING**

### **51 Project to establish a Leeds domestic energy services company (LESCo)**

The Director of Environment and Housing submitted a report which introduced the underpinning concepts of the Leeds Domestic Energy Services Company (LESCo) project and which outlined the proposed next steps, with the intention of securing the support of the Executive Board to proceed as planned with the scheme. In addition, the report also focused upon some of the cross linkages and interdependencies that this project shared with the Council's wider objectives around the breakthrough projects programme.

The Board welcomed the proposals detailed within the submitted report. In addition, Members emphasised the importance of ensuring that there was transparency around the tariffs and offers provided by LESCo. Having noted that Council houses would be automatically switched to the new energy company during the voids process, it was suggested that consideration be given to the service being eventually extended to as wide a customer base as possible.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report be noted;
- (b) That approval be given to the Council conducting an open competition in order to enable the identification of a suitable organisation to partner with, under formal contract;
- (c) That the necessary authority be delegated to the Director of Environment and Housing in order to conduct the competitive process referred to above, and also to negotiate and agree the resulting formal contract and all ancillary matters/documents.

### **52 Hunslet Riverside Regeneration Plan**

Further to Minute No. 19, 15<sup>th</sup> July 2015, the Director of City Development submitted a report outlining a proposed approach which aimed to secure the

regeneration of the Hunslet Riverside area. The report highlighted the scope of the opportunities available and the need for an agreed Regeneration Plan. Additionally, the report also identified how the Council proposed to use its' assets in order to support growth aspirations in the area.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the principles as set out at section 3.7.1 of the submitted report be agreed, in order to guide the delivery of regeneration in the Hunslet Riverside area;
- (b) That approval be given for the Head of Regeneration to undertake stakeholder consultation and prepare a Regeneration Plan for Hunslet Riverside, with the associated matters being submitted to Executive Board in Spring 2016 for the purposes of approval.

**HEALTH, WELLBEING AND ADULTS**

**53 Delivering the Better Lives Strategy Adult Social Care - BME Day Services**

Further to Minute No. 104, 19<sup>th</sup> November 2014, the Director of Adult Social Services submitted a report providing an update on the progress made regarding consultation on the future of the Adult Social Care day centres for older people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities at Apna (Hyde Park & Woodhouse) and Frederick Hurdle (Chapel Allerton).

The report also provided details regarding the current and future demand for BME services and presented a number of potential options for the future delivery and management of the provision, all of which had been the subject of the associated consultation exercise.

Responding to a Member's enquiry, it was highlighted that as part of the Better Lives Strategy, the aspiration of re-designing this service model was to ensure that users were provided with a range of choices in terms of service provision.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the outcomes of the extensive consultation exercise on the future delivery of services at Apna and Frederick Hurdle day centres, be noted;
- (b) That a two stage approach to service change be approved:
  - In Phase One between October 2015 and March 2016, the service model be re-designed in co-production with service users, carers, staff, and the wider communities working with ASC Commissioning;
  - Phase Two to involve the transition to the new service model and the services being managed by one or more external providers. This phase to take place between April and December 2016;

- (c) That the new service model and costs be confirmed as the detailed proposals are developed, which will be approved through a delegated decision when the new arrangements are finalised;
- (d) That approval be given to the existing approach continuing into the Commissioning phase of the project, whereby service users, carers, staff and the wider communities work in co-production with Leeds Adult Social Care in order to develop proposals for these services;
- (e) That it be noted that the lead officer responsible for the implementation of such matters is the Director of Adult Social Services.

**54 Director of Public Health Annual Report 2014/15**

The Director of Public Health submitted a report which provided a summary of the background, context and key issues from the Director's Annual Report 2014/15. Full copies of the Director's Annual report were also provided to Board Members for their consideration.

The Board noted the objectives of the Director's report: namely the health benefits of good urban design and also to ensure that communities were able to effectively contribute towards the planning process.

In addition, Members highlighted the importance of ensuring that the necessary infrastructure, including public health provision, accompanied new housing developments. Furthermore, the Board welcomed the aspiration of ensuring that communities and stakeholders were able to have greater input into the planning process, but highlighted how current procedures did not always help to facilitate this, and as a result suggested that representations could be made to Government on such matters.

**RESOLVED –**

- (a) That the contents of the submitted report be noted;
- (b) That the recommendations, as detailed within the Director of Public Health's Annual Report 2014/15, be supported;
- (c) That the Scrutiny Board (Adult Social Services, Public Health and NHS) be recommended to receive the Director of Public Health's Annual Report 2014/15.

**55 Endorsing the national "Mental Health Challenge"**

The Director of Public Health submitted a report regarding the national 'Mental Health Challenge', which provided the Board with the opportunity to consider the commitments lying behind the initiative, and to signal its commitment to this agenda by signing up to the 'challenge'.

On behalf of the Board, the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adults highlighted the importance of promoting good mental health and wellbeing in city's schools, colleges and workplaces, and also thanked all of

those who had participated in and contributed to the recent seminar attended by Elected Members on the issue of mental health.

Furthermore, the Chief Executive highlighted that as part of the activities of National Inclusion Week this week, he had addressed senior officers on such matters, with all senior officers adopting an 'inclusion objective'. It was highlighted that these activities, together with the recent Members' seminar and the consideration of such matters by Executive Board were all part of the proactive and co-ordinated approach being taken by the Council.

In conclusion, the Chief Executive offered to take up the role of lead officer for promoting the Mental Health Challenge in Leeds, alongside the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adults' role as Member Champion for this initiative.

**RESOLVED** – That the Executive Board endorse and sign up to the 'Mental Health Challenge' initiative.

**DATE OF PUBLICATION:** FRIDAY, 25<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2015

**LAST DATE FOR CALL IN  
OF ELIGIBLE DECISIONS:** 5.00P.M., FRIDAY, 2<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2015

(Scrutiny Support will notify Directors of any items called in by 12.00noon on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015)

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