

# **Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board Migration**

## **Summary Note of the Working Group Meeting held on Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> January 2016**

### Introduction

1. At its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2015, the Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board considered a report from the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) which provided background information on Leeds' position in relation to migration; the positive response from Leeds to the Government call for support for Syrian refugees; and key areas of work and challenges within relevant services.
2. In conclusion, the Scrutiny Board expressed an interest in undertaking further Scrutiny of the issues surrounding migration in Leeds and particularly in relation to the growth of EU economic migrants from Southern (Spain, Italy and Portugal) and Eastern Europe (Poland, Lithuania etc). A Scrutiny Board working group meeting was therefore held on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2016 to explore in more detail what work is taking place and what more might need to be done to alleviate pressures on services, with a particular focus on the following service areas:
  - Housing
  - Public Health
  - Health and Social Care
  - Community Safety
  - Children's Services
  - Employment and Skills
3. This working group meeting was attended by the following individuals:
  - Councillor Barry Anderson - Chair of the Scrutiny Board
  - Councillor Colin Campbell – Member of the Scrutiny Board
  - Councillor Ron Grahame – Member of the Scrutiny Board
  - Councillor Mary Harland – Member of the Scrutiny Board
  - Councillor Graham Hyde - Member of the Scrutiny Board
  - Councillor John Illingworth - Member of the Scrutiny Board
  - Angela Brogden - Principal Scrutiny Adviser
  - Shaid Mahmood, Chief Officer for Communities
  - Anne McMaster, Executive Officer (Partnerships), Citizens and Communities
  - Jane Hopkins, Head of Communities and Partnerships, Employment and Skills
  - Janette Munton, Head of Public Health Partnerships and Projects
  - Maxine Naismith, Head of Specialist Services - Adult Social Care
  - Rob McCartney Head of Housing Support, Housing Leeds
  - Jim Hopkinson, Head of Service Targeted Services, Children's Services
  - David Brown, Migration Yorkshire
  - Inspector Nick Berry, Safer Leeds
4. This summary note sets out the key issues arising from the working group's discussion and also presents proposed recommendations for consideration by the Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board.

## Summary of key issues

### The need for a strategic and co-ordinated response to migration in Leeds

5. The Citizens and Communities directorate took the lead in working with other relevant directorates to produce a briefing paper setting out key issues and challenges facing particular service areas to help inform the working group's discussion. Each service area was considered in turn and this summary note sets out the particular issues raised by the working group in relation to these separate service areas.
6. However, throughout its discussions the working group acknowledged an emerging theme around individual services having access to migrant 'families' and therefore information that other services and agencies would benefit from knowing about, particularly as many new migrants will have a range of multi-layered issues. The working group therefore agreed that further work was needed to provide a more strategic and co-ordinated response to migration in Leeds. The working group recognised the huge benefits to be gained by having a strategic oversight of the significant levels of local intelligence already available from a wide variety of evidence bases. In particular, this would provide a more comprehensive and holistic picture of the issues facing migrants in Leeds which in turn would enable services to detect gaps in provision and also provide a more robust evidence base to assist in any future funding bids or in maximising existing resources.
7. The working group therefore discussed the benefits of establishing a cross-departmental Migration Strategy Group, championed by a lead director and Executive Board Member, to provide strategic oversight and direction underpinned by robust local intelligence gathering and data sharing. Linked to this, the working group also emphasised the need to establish absolute clarity in terms of what the Leeds 'offer' would be to new migrants coming to the city.
8. By having this holistic view, the working group also acknowledged that the Council would be better equip to recognise and respond to potential tensions with localities in a measured way, taking learning forward as it goes along. Linked to this, the working group also discussed the benefits of bringing key services together in small neighbourhoods as well as acknowledging the challenges and complexities often associated with this approach.

### Improving and promoting the integration of services at a neighbourhood level

9. The working group acknowledged that there are areas within the city that are often targeted for migrants to locate due to low cost housing which can cause a range of social and economic issues for the migrants and the local communities. As such, the working group agreed that a more focused understanding of demographics and issues within an area would help to tackle a range of layered issues. In particular, the working group discussed the benefits of adopting a more localised approach in tackling emerging community safety issues such as domestic violence, Child Sexual Exploitation, missing children, human trafficking and female genital mutilation.
10. Examples were shared with the working group of the continual work in localities to promote the City's ambition and commitment to be compassionate and for communities to work well together.

11. Linked to this, reference was also made to a new 'Strong Communities Benefitting from a Strong City' Breakthrough project which aims to develop a refreshed partnership approach towards improving integration and community resilience between new and more established communities. This will involve looking more closely at the way the Council and its partners integrate services at a neighbourhood level and the associated leadership and management of these services. The working group therefore welcomed and supported this new breakthrough project and requested that the Scrutiny Board also be kept informed of its progress.

#### Improving standards within the Private Rented Sector

12. The working group noted that the private rented sector (PRS) has been the fastest growing housing sector over the last decade. The 2011 census placed the sector at 18% of the Leeds housing market and this sector now outstrips the council housing sector in size.
13. Everyone who applies for social housing has to be assessed against the eligibility criteria and the working group learned that in relation to EU citizens, they would need to satisfy stringent employment criteria in order to be eligible for social housing. As such, many EU migrants will use private rented housing accommodation and in doing so, are more vulnerable to poorer housing standards.
14. There are currently in the region of 60,000 privately rented properties in Leeds of which only 2,800 of these are licensed Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs). In discussing the challenges faced by the Council's Private Rented Sector Housing Team in monitoring standards within this sector, particular reference was made to the wider work undertaken by the PRS Housing Team called 'The Leeds Neighbourhood Approach'. This is a multi-agency targeted area based initiative. This approach focuses on tackling poor standards of housing management and bringing empty homes into use in the most challenging areas of PRS housing across the city. In addition, the working group also welcomed the work being undertaken to strengthen links between the PRS Housing Team and Housing Options to ensure that whilst enforcement action is being pursued against a rogue landlord, the tenant is found suitable alternative accommodation.
15. Particular reference was also made to the new Housing and Planning Bill 2015. The private rented sector regulatory proposals in the Bill are the government's response to its consultation paper of August 2015 entitled "Tackling Rogue Landlords and Improving Standards in the Private Rented Sector. The Bill therefore contains a number of proposals to increase the regulatory responsibility of Local Authorities which includes the following:
  - A proposal to introduce Banning Orders to prevent a person from letting housing in England, engaging in letting agency work and engaging in property management. The Secretary of State will issue regulations setting out the offences that will lead to a Banning Order. The Order will be for a minimum of six months and no upper limit is set in the Bill.
  - The government proposes to establish a national database of rogue landlords and letting agents. Local Authorities will be responsible for its maintenance and editing. All landlords or letting agents subject to a Banning Order will be placed on

the database and Local Authorities can add other landlords and letting agents to the database.

- The Bill will extend Rent Repayment Orders to a Local Housing Authority so that where a landlord commits certain offences rent paid by the tenant or Housing Benefit or Universal Credit paid to the tenant can be claimed back by the Local Housing Authority.
  - The fit and proper person test for people who apply for HMO and other rented property licenses has been amended to ensure that the applicant has the right to remain in the United Kingdom and is not bankrupt.
  - The Local Authority is being given greater flexibility to issue fines as an alternative to prosecution for certain offences under the Housing Act 2004.
16. Whilst these changes are to be welcomed, the working group acknowledged that much of the detail surrounding the proposals was still missing. For example, clarity was needed about who will manage the properties of anyone receiving a Banning Order? Also in terms of the logistics of maintaining a national register of rogue landlords as landlords portfolios often cross Local Authority boundaries. It is anticipated that the production of regulations to support the Bill will add the necessary clarity.
17. In the meantime, the working group emphasised the importance of continuing the efforts of the PRS Housing Team in working with Elected Members and other key partners in being very forensic about targeting local neighbourhoods and streets where there are particular difficulties. The working group recognised the added value of conducting wider promotional work too in helping raise greater awareness and uptake of existing home improvement grants available to landlords to help bring their properties up to the decency standard. As well as targeting landlords, the working group also acknowledged the value of proactively encouraging tenants to come forward and inform the Council about poor standards of accommodation so that timely action can be taken to deal with the landlord and, if necessary, re-house the tenant in more suitable accommodation.
18. All efforts to improve the private rented sector will inevitably have an impact on safeguarding EU migrants and therefore the working group recognised Housing as being a key contributor as part of any new cross-departmental Strategy Group. In the meantime, the working group was pleased to learn that the Environment and Housing Scrutiny Board continues to regularly monitor the performance of the Environment and Housing Directorate in relation to the private rented sector and will also be maintaining a watching brief surrounding the implications arising from the Housing and Planning Bill 2015.

Promoting a collective responsibility towards identifying and signposting migrants to appropriate public health commissioned services.

19. The working group was pleased to learn that the Health Protection Board in Leeds, that is accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board, has recently identified one of its seven priorities as being Migrant Case Finding. The focus of this is around partnership working with all relevant agencies so that migrants are not just encouraged to self-refer but are helped in accessing appropriate public health services.

20. It was highlighted that migrants living in particularly deprived areas would have access to the broad services normally commissioned around healthy living and addressing the wider determinants that impact on health in those particular communities. In addition, it was noted that a wide range of frontline staff and agencies are also being encouraged to support the referral of migrants to appropriate health services using established pathways and mechanisms. However, there was also a recognition that more could be done to actively encourage more frontline staff across the council to assist in identifying vulnerable migrants and signposting them to where they can access appropriate public health commissioned services.
21. Linked to this, the working group noted that Healthy Living Services across the city are currently in the process of being re-commissioned and that the model being promoted is broad based involving agencies and partners across the city, particularly those that outreach across communities and target the needs of communities much more than they are at the moment.

#### Improving projections for future demand needs for adult social care provision

22. The working group learned that whilst the mental health of asylum seekers and migrants is not currently presenting itself as a significant issue for Adult Social Care, the service is anticipating that the demand upon assessment and support planning or appropriate sign posting will grow over time. It was also felt that many migrants may well be suspicious of presenting themselves to services such as Adult Social Care and therefore a significant number of migrants coming into Leeds may already be requiring support but are currently unknown by Adult Social Care.
23. The working group learned that the service is already projecting an influx of young adults that have previously received services from Children's Services and will now be moving into the remit of Adult Social Care. However, more generally it was recognised that the service needs to work closely with partners to gain a better understanding of future demand needs for adult social care provision and what the resource implications of this would be. Linked to the issues already raised around developing a more strategic approach towards migration, it was recognised that this service would benefit hugely from having a more comprehensive and holistic picture of the issues facing migrants in Leeds which in turn would enable it to detect service demand needs and also have the evidence base to assist in any future funding bids or in maximising existing resources.

#### Measures to help alleviate pressures within Children's Services

24. In discussing the pressures faced by Children's Services in meeting the needs of migrants, the working group acknowledged similarities with Adult Social Care in terms of the benefits of this service also having access to a more comprehensive and holistic picture of the issues facing migrants in Leeds to help plan for any influx of migration and the associated demands on its services, particularly in relation to school places.
25. The working group learned that last year there was a 25% increase in children new to Leeds, and up to 60% of these, during autumn term, were new to the country. This growth was particularly in relation to EU economic migrants, with many children joining 'in-year' which provides additional pressures for schools in respect of budgets, recruitment of staff, complexity of need and shortage of space.

26. It was also highlighted that the proportion of children and young people with English as an additional language is rising, as are the number and variety of first languages spoken. Whilst in the main this is being coped with well, there are now increasing tensions in relation to resources as there is a limited supply of translators available.
27. In addition to the challenges around language, the working group also noted an anticipated increase in the number of migrant children that will have other complex learning needs, which includes concerns around fragile emotional and social health that will also put demands on service spaces and skills, which will not be an easy task.
28. The working group also understood that schools remain mindful that the associated challenges faced by new migrant children will have an impact on their attainment targets, particularly as the current STATs system does not distinguish children who have just arrived at the school and whom may not have English as their first language.
29. Despite such challenges, the working group acknowledged that schools remain committed to work with Children's Services in helping to support new migrant children. However, it was recognised that more still needed to be done to continue to incentivise schools in this regard. In particular, the working group learned that whilst schools can access up to £4,000 towards the support costs for migrant children, this funding is not accessible all year round and so with any in-year admissions made beyond the specified cut-off date the school is unable to access this funding immediately. The working group agreed that such funding should be made accessible immediately in order to provide the necessary resources for schools to support the needs of these children. The provision of funding to help address migration issues was also addressed more broadly by the working group and is referenced again within this summary note (see paragraph 38).
30. With regards to attainment, the working group also discussed the potential merits of Children's Services working closely with local schools and colleges in exploring opportunities to provide alternative learning environments for those migrant children aged 14 and 15 who may be struggling to get a GCSE qualification, particularly when English is not their first language, and may be better suited to vocational based learning that is also ESOL related.
31. In relation to challenges associated with language, the working group also recognised the importance of encouraging parents to also learn and use English as this inevitably will support their children's learning too. As part of its broader discussions surrounding employment and skills, the working group paid particular attention to the provision of ESOL services across the city.

#### A need to clarify and promote the provision of ESOL services across the city.

32. The working group learned that the Department for Work and Pensions provides support to migrants through its Social Justice Teams and one area of support is in relation to ESOL. The DWP has contracted provision for this with Leeds City College as the key provider offering a 10 /12 week programme for up to 16 hours per week. With approximately 120 referrals per month, the DWP has confirmed that this is sufficient to meet demand.

33. However, the working group noted that despite the Job Seekers Allowance register reducing, the number of jobseekers with ESOL needs has not reduced proportionately as this level of referrals has remained relatively static for over a year.
34. It was highlighted that there is less ESOL provision more widely and free entitlement has also changed. As such, it was felt that there is possibly some residual reluctance about a provision that used to be free in the instances where it is no longer. Due to constraints of their finances, it was also felt that potential learners may be selective about venues and displaying an unwillingness to travel out of their locality regardless of the richness of provision available just beyond.
35. The working group agreed that it is crucial to strengthen the city's existing partnerships and task them to collectively focus on the ESOL challenge and help the city to sustainably meet the differentiated language needs of migrants in Leeds. The working group acknowledged that whilst there is considerable effort taking place in the city, this is not sufficiently coordinated. Linked to this, the Learning English in Leeds (LEL) website has been developed by the Migrant English Support Hub (MESH), a consortium of learning providers and other stakeholders set up to support adult migrants who are new to Leeds. MESH is aware that the website needs updating in order to provide a full comprehensive overview of provision in an accessible way.

#### Maximising resources to provide career advice and address work culture differences and challenges

36. The working group recognised that differences in work cultures can be challenging as new migrants can often have a lack of familiarity with social, ethical, community and political codes within the workplace and wider social networks. Linked to this, the working group learned about the Refugee Council's intentions to deliver support around the GB work culture issue, which was a welcomed initiative.
37. The working group also discussed the merits of providing additional and on-going support from within the broader Community Hub remit to supplement and complement that already offered by DWP Social Justice Team Work Coaches. The working group agreed that this warranted further exploration and referenced the Scrutiny Board's separate inquiry into the development of Community Hubs in terms of pursuing this matter further.

#### The need for a longer term national strategy on Migration that is underpinned by accessible and sustainable sources of funding.

38. During its discussions, the working group acknowledged numerous references made to short term funding bids made by individual services accessing varying sources of funding to tackle particular issues relating to migration. As such, there was a general acknowledgement, particularly from Migration Yorkshire, that future efforts in addressing this particular agenda need to be supported with the development of a longer term national strategy that is underpinned by more accessible and sustainable sources of funding. This view was also supported by the working group.

## Proposed recommendations

39. Reflecting on the above key issues, the following recommendations are proposed for the consideration of the Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board.

**Desired Outcome** – That there is a strategic and co-ordinated response to migration in Leeds that is underpinned by a cross-departmental approach towards intelligence gathering and data sharing.

**Recommendation 1** – That the Executive Board:

- (i) Supports the principle of urgently establishing a cross-departmental Migration Strategy Group to provide a strategic and co-ordinated response to migration in Leeds based on robust local intelligence gathering and data sharing.
- (ii) Nominates a Lead Director and Executive Member to establish, co-ordinate and champion the work of the Migration Strategy Group.
- (iii) Tasks the nominated Lead Director and Executive Member to establish absolute clarity in terms of what the Leeds 'offer' is to new migrants coming to the city and reports back to the Executive Board in this regard.

**Desired Outcome** – That there is greater understanding of changing demography in localities to help inform local service provision aimed at tackling a range of multi layered issues.

**Recommendation 2** – That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) leads on working closely with Community Committees to identify lessons from existing community based initiatives across the city that seek to provide localised solutions to local problems and use this knowledge to develop a model of good practice that promotes a greater understanding of changing demography in localities in order to inform local service provision aimed at tackling a range of multi layered issues.

**Desired Outcome** – That a wide range of frontline staff across the Council are equipped with the knowledge to assist in identifying vulnerable migrants and signposting them to appropriate services including those commissioned through Public Health.

**Recommendation 3** – That the Director of Public Health works closely with other directorates to identify appropriate measures for disseminating information that will encourage a wider range of frontline staff across the Council to assist in identifying vulnerable migrants and signposting them to appropriate services including those commissioned through Public Health.

**Desired Outcome** – Working in partnership with schools and colleges in providing appropriate learning environments that meet the needs of migrant children.

**Recommendation 4** – That the Director of Children’s Services engages with local schools and colleges to explore opportunities for providing alternative learning environments for those migrant children aged 14 and 15 who may be struggling to get a GCSE qualification, particularly when English is not their first language, and whom may be better suited to vocational based learning that is also ESOL related.

**Desired Outcome** – That there is a full comprehensive overview of ESOL provision in Leeds that is maintained and accessed via the Learning English in Leeds website.

**Recommendation 5** – That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) takes the lead in undertaking a full comprehensive overview of ESOL provision in Leeds and supports, as appropriate, the Migrant English Support Hub (MESH) to ensure that the details of such provision continues to be maintained and accessed via the Learning English in Leeds website.

**Desired Outcome** – That there is a shift towards the development of a longer term national strategy on Migration that is underpinned by more accessible and sustainable sources of funding.

**Recommendation 6** – That the Assistant Chief Executive (Citizens and Communities) works with Migration Yorkshire in lobbying the Immigration Minister for the development of a longer term national strategy on Migration that is underpinned by more accessible and sustainable sources of funding.