

**Report of: Director of Communities and Environment**

**Report to: Executive Board**

**Date: 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017**

**Subject: A Strategic, Co-ordinated and Inclusive Approach to Migration in Leeds**

Are specific electoral wards affected? If yes, 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

**Summary of main issues**

1. This update report seeks to provide Executive Board with an overview of the arrangements for migration activity now in place in the city since the [‘Strategic and Co-ordinated Response to Migration in Leeds’](#) report for Executive Board meeting on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2016 and seeks approval for a strengthened and more strategic, co-ordinated and inclusive approach to migration in the future.
2. It describes the arrangements for coordinating activity on migration and the programmes of work that are in progress. It further describes research work to provide an evidence base for an enhancement of our approach on migration into the future; outlines the potential challenges and opportunities; and identifies five priorities to galvanise efforts across the council and with our partners in the city.
3. The potential implications of Brexit on migration and the changes brought about by the Immigration Act 2016 are as yet unclear. As a consequence, it is important that we continue to work with partners and communities to monitor the emerging issues. So, that we are best placed to benefit from opportunities and address the challenges as they arise.
4. A separate report on the specific subject of Brexit which has implications in the context of migration is also being discussed on this Executive Board agenda.

## **Recommendations**

Members of Executive Board are recommended to:

1. Approve the strengthened arrangements developed following the Citizen's and Communities Scrutiny Board inquiry on migration for a more strategic, co-ordinated and inclusive approach to migration and endorse the current and future work that is planned.
2. Note the responsibility of the Director of Communities and Environment and the Executive Member for Communities for leading this work through the Council's Stronger Communities Breakthrough Programme.
3. To receive an update report on progress in July 2018.

## **1. Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To provide Executive Board with an overview of the arrangements that have oversight responsibility for migration activity in the city and to seek Executive Board approval for the strategic, co-ordinated and inclusive approach to migration. This builds upon the recommendations from the Citizen's and Communities Scrutiny Board and subsequent Executive Board held in September 2016.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1 Our ambition for Leeds is to be a compassionate city with a strong economy. Migrant communities are valuable contributors to the city's economy, culture and diversity and Leeds aspires to ensure people are welcomed and supported. Leeds has a long-held commitment to support asylum seekers and refugees and is dedicated to being a city of sanctuary. It is well known that many refugees play an active and invaluable role economically and whilst many asylum seekers are not permitted to work, many are active in their communities participating in volunteering and so make a huge contribution to the civic and cultural life of the city.
- 2.2 The makeup of communities in Leeds continues to change; according to the 2011 census, the number of Leeds residents born outside of the UK equated to just over 11% of the population. Of those, more than 66% were born outside of the European Union, and just over half arrived at some point in the preceding ten years. Since 2011, the number of migrants settling in Leeds, particularly from the European Union following the expansion of the European Economic Area (EEA) countries into Eastern Europe, has continued to rise. Migrants have settled in particular areas of the city where accommodation is inexpensive and easily accessible.
- 2.3 Migrants make up a significant proportion of the current labour force and employers in some sectors have a strong dependence on migrants to do particular types of job. The greater the restrictions on immigration the greater the potential risk that skills shortages may emerge in important sectors such as digital, construction, and manufacturing and for public services such as the NHS and the council. In addition, it could also impact on the ability of universities to attract and retain the best academic staff with consequential implications for the strength and diversity of this sector.
- 2.4 Migrants are employed extensively in the health and social care sector enabling care providers to keep prices low and reducing the cost to the public purse. As service users, the accessibility of migrants to health services is dependent on their status in this country and the NHS can charge for services and for additional support for adults at risk.
- 2.5 Migration into the city in recent years, including from the European Union, has created a vibrant and dynamic school population, where over 190 languages are now spoken. This increase has brought both advantages in terms of the vibrancy of the school population and also challenges with pressure on some schools to cope with additional place demands and a need to ensure that all children do well at learning. Schools have developed a broad range of quality teaching techniques that are helping to improve education for all groups in our schools.
- 2.6 For a number of years, Leeds has played an active role in the dispersal of people seeking asylum. The overall number of dispersed asylum seekers in the Yorkshire

and Humber region as a whole was 5,195 in March 2017. The number of supported asylum seekers in Leeds is currently 754. Whilst numbers in Leeds have risen over the years, they are 30% below what they would be if dispersal was spread more evenly across the region with dispersals gravitating to areas of cheaper accommodation. It is anticipated that the numbers of asylum seekers coming to the UK overall will increase later this year and this increase will also lead to a rise in Leeds.

- 2.7 Working closely with the Council's Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board, council officers have explored migration in Leeds with partners and established local structural arrangements to oversee the delivery of key strands of activity as well as informing and influencing regional and national plans. This paper seeks to inform Executive Board of these arrangements and further seeks its approval for the strategic, co-ordinated and inclusive approach adopted following recommendations at the Scrutiny Board.

### **3. Main issues**

#### **3.1 The Arrangements for Coordinating Activity on Migration in Leeds**

- 3.1.1 **The Leeds Strategic Migration Board** – is supported by the Council's Communities Team and was established in the summer of 2016 following an inquiry and a specific recommendation from the Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board to strengthen existing arrangements and provide for a more strategic, co-ordinated and inclusive approach to migration in the city. The Leeds Strategic Migration Board is chaired by the Chief Officer for Communities and oversees the work taking place across the city. Its membership is wide ranging with representation from many council services and also from the third sector working, directly with migrant communities. The objectives of the board are -

- To provide a citywide partnership approach to the work of migration activity in Leeds;
- To determine key priorities to help meet the needs of new and existing migrant communities;
- To provide citywide leadership and governance to local arrangements;
- To understand national developments and their associated implications in Leeds.

The types of activity being progressed by the board include developing a Leeds Migration Strategy; understanding the implications to Leeds of the Immigration Act; overseeing the development of the migration English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) strategy to feed into the overall ESOL strategy for the city; and supporting and guiding the work of the Leeds Migration Partnership.

- 3.1.2 **The Leeds Migration Partnership** – is led by the third sector with support from the Council and provides a forum for those working directly with migrant communities to develop and strengthen partnership working, share information effectively across the sector and influence decision making. It works closely with the Leeds Strategic Migration Board.

## 3.2 Programmes of Work in Progress

There are a range of programmes in progress across the migration agenda some of which are driven by national policy and others that have been identified locally.

- 3.2.1 **UASC (Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children) Task Group** – led by colleagues in Children Services was set up to provide support to UASCs. Leeds has been at the forefront of welcoming UASCs. Initially, to support pressures in Kent and now as required by the Immigration Act. The Act requires all local authorities to accept UASCs up to a maximum of 0.07% of the local authorities' children and young people's population. For Leeds, this calculation equates to 112 children and young people. Leeds is currently supporting 46 children in Local Authority care and a further 61 care leavers who are UASCs.
- 3.2.2 **Syrian Resettlement Programme** – In September 2015 the Government announced the UK would resettle 20,000 refugees from Syria by 2020 through the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement programme in response to the refugee crisis. Our commitment from Leeds is to support 225 over two years (2016/2017). To date, Leeds has welcomed 160 Syrian refugees and has pledged to welcome a further 65. An operational group chaired by Migration Yorkshire, provides multiagency day to day support covering key areas such as access to housing, health, education and other relevant agencies in Leeds. It aims to ensure an effective process for the resettlement of individuals and families.
- 3.2.3 **The Leeds Migrant Access Project (MAP)** – This award winning project aims to: reduce pressures on services through appropriate information, awareness and access to services for new arrivals; ensure services join up to work with migrant communities as part of their mainstream business; strengthen community relations between migrant and settled communities; and establish a team of volunteer Migrant Community Networkers to cascade information about services within their wider communities. The project won the Eurocities Award recently and it is seen as an exemplar of best practice, nationally and internationally.
- 3.2.4 Leeds City Council have recently been successful in securing grant funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Controlling Migration Fund to develop and deliver a 'Standards and Expectations Project,' now called The Leeds Migrant Access Project 'Plus'. The funding will build on the existing award-winning Leeds MAP and provide for additional satellite MAP models in West and South Leeds to address issues and concerns in relation to:
- Standards and expectations that we expect of all residents in Leeds to assist in minimising low level tensions in communities and aiding integration;
  - Ensuring migrants access services in the most efficient and effective way with a view to reducing costs and pressures on services. Thereby, also addressing the concerns of some settled communities, with a specific focus on access to GP surgeries and the role of private sector housing landlords.
- 3.2.5 **The Refugee Transition Guide** – The DCLG funding will also support progress on the Council's development of a 'Refugee Transition Guide', produced in partnership with a range of service providers and intended for use by refugees transitioning from asylum support to mainstream services and for their advisors.

- 3.2.6 **Richmond Hill Distribution Depot (RHD)** – was established in November 2015 following the public reaction to the refugee crisis which resulted in overwhelming generosity from the citizens of Leeds in donations of clothing and household goods. The Depot functioned under a short-term property lease provided by the Council, managed by several organisations within the refugee and asylum network. It facilitated the sorting and redistribution of clothing and household goods to those in need. The arrangement ends in summer 2017 as the depot is no longer available for use. Partners are currently assessing the continued need for a central collection/sorting centre and the council will continue to engage and support as appropriate.
- 3.2.7 **Refugee Welfare Fund** – was set up in September 2015 and provided £100,000 to support 13 organisations from the community and voluntary sector to deal with capacity challenges and provide advice and support to refugees and people seeking asylum, to settle in Leeds.
- 3.2.8 **Connecting Opportunities** – a successful application to the European Structural & Investment Fund (ESIF) will develop a project which aims to target ‘vulnerable new migrants’ (excluding asylum seekers or refused asylum seekers) to improve confidence and skills and increase employability. Partners include a number of organisations such as LASSN, Solace, The Children's Society, Touchstone and Kirklees Women Centre. It is hoped the project will start in July 2017 and will run for 2 years.
- 3.2.9 **Challenging Conversations** – is a pilot project funded by the Home Office and led by Voluntary Action Leeds alongside other Third Sector Organisations and supported by Project Support Officers from Leeds City Council's Graduate Programme. Its aim is to research means of reducing hate crime. The project worked with focus groups consisting of young people from different communities in Leeds, including newer migrant communities, to understand the nature of discourse on migration amongst young people. The report will be published in June.
- 3.2.10 **Migration research** – Scrutiny Board in March 2016 acknowledged the significant work that had taken place under pressured timescales following the refugee crisis across Europe and recommended the need for a more co-ordinated response to migration based on evidence. In response, officers have initiated a research project to better understand the city's migrant communities and determine the work that we need to do to better meet their needs and to help support them to become integrated into the city's civic and cultural life and its communities. The research project has recently been completed and highlights needs, challenges, and opportunities that are shared across all migrant communities around access to:
- Housing;
  - Welfare, employment and skills;
  - Health and mental health;
  - Language and education;
  - Advocacy, advice and legal support;
  - Integration, navigation and support networks;
  - Basic needs.

The research also included broader consultation to deepen our understanding of recent and emerging changes, for example, a consideration of the impact of Brexit

and immigration policy on migrants to better understand the potential challenges and opportunities for the future.

As part of this research project the Council are developing a toolkit that can be used by services and agencies to better understand the city's migrant communities which includes a 'migration map' as well as 'research overviews', providing in-depth information of the research findings to support a forward plan.

The changes to population in Leeds are set against a backdrop of ongoing immigration legislative changes, uncertainty following Brexit, sustained financial challenges to public sector services and a decline in migrant third sector funding. The research identified four key cross cutting challenges experienced across migrant groups which need to be addressed in order to meet shared migrant need. These are:

1. An improved understanding of migrant rights, entitlements and responsibilities by both migrants and service providers, in particular, a better understanding of immigration status. The research findings suggest that this understanding could be improved by services being more supportive in their approach to migrants and facilitating access to services helping migrants to feel more welcomed and supported.
2. Inadequate access to available services as a consequence of a lack of knowledge amongst migrants of the services that is available to them. Indeed, many services providing advice to migrants are unclear on the services that are available to meet migrant needs, including, those offered by third sector providers and community based activities.
3. Language barriers contribute to ineffective communication and present a significant hurdle to migrants when accessing services. Moreover, even when English is spoken by a migrant, or, when interpreter provision is available, there can still be gaps in communication and a fuller appreciation of the context for the migrant.
4. Lack of knowledge and information further compound the problems caused by the challenges articulated in points 1-3, impeding the ability of migrants to make informed choices. This impedance reinforces the need for access to: advocacy; advice; legal support; integration; navigation and informed social networks.

**3.2.11 Infrastructure** – The citywide response to migration in Leeds is negatively impacted by limited finances and resource challenges. These are acutely felt by the third sector and community groups, which are most likely to come into contact with people in need. There is a general concern around funding arrangements to cover core costs for small organisations and how we protect the services that we need as a city.

Initiatives already being considered include: greater platforms and guidance for the third sector to engage with funders and commissioners to articulate the needs of migrants, partnership working, capacity building, sharing resources and learning, joint bidding/consortiums and funding support through employee supported volunteering.

**3.2.12 Community safety and resilience** – Our ambition is for people in Leeds to be safe, feel safe and live their lives in strong cohesive communities. Being safe is a

concern for all communities in Leeds. It is particularly relevant to migrant communities given increases in reported and unreported hate crime following the EU referendum, planned changes to legislation, the potential consequences of Brexit on some migrant communities and the negative perceptions of migrants in some communities which contribute to a feeling of unease in what feels to migrants, as a hostile environment.

Research has highlighted the following issues:

- There are gaps in the knowledge of migrants about keeping safe, safeguarding responsibilities and acceptable behaviours within the host community;
- Many people are feeling less safe since the EU referendum;
- People are being subjected to race hate incidents but not reporting them;
- The need to support victims of hate crime and for ensuring that victims are provided with timely and effective support both at the time of reporting the crime and through the criminal justice system subsequently;
- Women whose immigration status (right to reside in the UK) relies on their sponsor may have additional concerns and maybe reluctant to raise safeguarding issues, for example domestic violence.

Considerable work is taking place to address these issues. For example:

- The development of the councils' breakthrough projects. Particularly, the 'strong communities benefiting from a strong city' breakthrough programme with activities to promote more cohesive communities;
- Further development and implementation of the Hate Crime Strategy led by the city's Strategic Hate Crime Board chaired by the Executive Member for Communities and contributing to the Stronger Communities Breakthrough Programme.
- Progressing safeguarding work including child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation, domestic violence, trafficking, forced marriage and honour based violence;
- Being aware of and responding to the implications of Brexit;
- Continuing our commitment to being a City of Sanctuary and developing and implementing a Council of Sanctuary award;
- Developing and delivering a Compassionate City Awards scheme.

**3.2.13 The Immigration Act 2016** – will bring significant changes to immigration law and practice. The full implications for our approach in Leeds are currently unclear and officers will review the guidance expected in early autumn 2017. The Act is anticipated to impact on areas which include housing, social welfare, employment and community cohesion. Of concern are: the restrictions/limitations in support for refused asylum seekers; unaccompanied asylum seeking children; migrant families with children under the age of 18; and the limiting of the Local Authority's duty of care to many families and young people in this context. There are also a number of concerns regarding the potential for a rise in destitution; increased pressures on public and third sector services contributing to capacity and sustainability concerns; amplified confusion amongst people seeking asylum and services; and reduced resilience amongst some communities in the city.

It 2013, it was estimated that there were between 300–400 people who were destitute in Leeds. The best current indication of numbers may be elucidated from



the number of destitute clients who accessed destitution case work in 2016; these services reported 676 people clients who were destitute, of which 303 were new to destitution. This is a significant rise in numbers and evidence suggests people are experiencing destitution for longer periods of time and are currently presenting with considerable challenges which are anticipated to worsen.

Officers have begun work to increase the awareness of the Immigration Act 2016 across directorates whilst we await further guidance from government and anticipate rolling out the awareness-raising of the potential implications to community committees when the guidance is available.

## **4. Proposed Enhancements to our Approach to Migration**

- 4.1 Scrutiny Board recommended that any further work by the council and its partners be guided by thorough research and a strong understanding of the shared needs of migrant communities and the challenges they face. The research project described earlier in this paper seeks to build on the work programme of the past 12 months and proposes an enhancement of the approach to migration in Leeds rooted in Leeds being 'welcoming and supportive of migrants and a place where everyone is safe, is connected and feels valued'.
- 4.2 It is proposed that this enhancement to the approach should be underpinned by five priorities determined by the research work, as follows:
  - 1) Improving access to services;
  - 2) Shifting attitudes and behaviours;
  - 3) Increasing awareness and understanding;
  - 4) Strengthening resilience and building capacity;
  - 5) Building and creating cooperative partnerships.
- 4.3 These five priorities should be used to galvanise the combined efforts of services, organisations and activities across the city, ranging from universal approaches through to more targeted work, building upon the wealth of good practice taking place through communities, voluntary contributors, services and partnerships, with all those involved in this work taking joint ownership to driving improvements in our response to migration in the city.
- 4.4 To support delivery of these priorities a communication strategy is being developed to strengthen conversations already taking place; facilitate participation and engagement with stakeholders and partners; and enable responsive action planning and partnership working whilst promoting the reimagining of the way services and communities intervene and work together preventatively.

## **5. Corporate considerations**

### **5.1 Consultation and engagement**

- 5.1.1 Consultation and engagement has been at the heart of developing the strategic, co-ordinated and inclusive approach to migration for Leeds. This has involved working with Citizens and Communities Scrutiny Board, Leeds Strategic Migration Board and Leeds Migration Partnership and continued engagement and activity with partners in the city including migrant communities, people working with migrant

communities, other public bodies (such as universities and the further education sector) and the private sector.

## **5.2 Equality and diversity / cohesion and integration**

- 5.2.1 Migration is recognised as a dimension of equality and consideration has been given to ensure due regard to wider equality issues is incorporated within all work undertaken. In addition an equality screening has been undertaken to support development of the proposed strategic, co-ordinated and inclusive approach.

## **5.3 Council policies and Best Council plan**

- 5.3.1 The approach to migration in Leeds articulated in this paper will help Leeds to achieve its ambition to be a compassionate city with a strong economy, which tackles poverty and reduces the inequalities that exist. It supports the council's ambition for Leeds to be the Best City in the UK and underpins the 'Strong Communities Benefiting from a Strong City' breakthrough project by focussing on the people who are new to Leeds, and ensuring that their interests and contributions are included in all aspects of city life.
- 5.3.2 The recommendations in this report support the Best Council Plan ambition that people in Leeds earn enough to support themselves and their families, raise aspirations and promote healthy lifestyles. In addition, it aims to keep people safe, aid integration, build more cohesive and resilient communities whilst seeking to minimise the risk associated with changes to demography, service impact and low level community tensions.

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

- 5.4.1 An approach to migration in Leeds provides opportunities to build upon, and create effective partnerships and responses to changing needs and to target our work more effectively based on evidence.

## **5.5 Legal implications, access to information, and call-in**

- 5.5.1 Although, there are no legal implications or access to information issues within the work articulated in this paper there will be implications arising from the Immigration Act 2016. As yet the full impact of these regulations is not known and guidance is being produced by Government for the autumn. The present report is subject to call-in.

## **5.6 Risk management**

- 5.6.1 There is significant risk involved if we do not have a coherent and strategic approach to work with our partners in this area of work or if we do not fully understand the nature of the changes to demography, need and impact on mainstream and non-mainstream services. The approach outlined seeks to minimise the risk.
- 5.6.2 Officers have begun work to increase the awareness of the Immigration Act 2016 across directorates whilst we await further guidance from government and

anticipate rolling out the awareness-raising of the potential implications to community committees when the guidance is available.

## **6. Conclusions**

- 6.1 The proposed strategic, co-ordinated and inclusive approach to migration in Leeds will bring much needed direction to the Council's work with its partners, harnessing the work and activities that take place in the city, galvanising improved collaborative action to drive improvements and strengthen the offer to migrant communities living in Leeds. It will contribute to our ambition to be a compassionate city with a strong economy, which tackles poverty and reduces inequalities for all.

## **7. Recommendations**

Executive Board are requested to:

- 7.1 Approve the strengthened arrangements developed following the Citizen's and Communities Scrutiny Board inquiry on migration for a more strategic, co-ordinated and inclusive approach to migration and endorse the current and future work that is planned.
- 7.2 Note the responsibility of the Director of Communities and Environments' and the Executive Member for Communities for leading this work through the Council's Stronger Communities Breakthrough Programme.
- 7.3 To receive an update on progress in July 2018.

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

- 8.1 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.