

## **SCRUTINY PANEL B**

**Meeting held in the Committee Room, Council Offices, Urban Road, Kirkby-in-Ashfield,**

**on Thursday, 27th September, 2018 at 7.00 pm**

**Present:** Councillor Helen Hollis in the Chair;  
Councillors Don Davis, Cathy Mason,  
Mick Murphy and Christine Quinn-Wilcox.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors Glenys Maxwell and Lauren Mitchell.

**Officers Present:** Mike Joy and Phil Warrington.

### **SB.4 Declarations of Disclosable Pecuniary or Personal Interests and Non Disclosable Pecuniary/Other Interests**

There were no declarations of interest made.

### **SB.5 Minutes**

RESOLVED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 2018, be received and approved as a correct record.

### **SB.6 Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme**

Panel Members were asked to consider and review the Council's role in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (SVPR). The Council is currently required to fulfil its obligation to resettle an agreed number of Syrian refugee families each year and it was felt to be a good time to consider the process and make any changes as appropriate.

In March 2017, the Council accepted its first two refugee families with a further two families being resettled in November 2017. The families were identified as needing resettlement by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and were nominated for rehousing in the UK.

Under the scheme the Government has committed to the resettlement of up to 20,000 Syrian refugees between 2016 and 2020. Ashfield District Council has currently committed to accommodating 46 individuals which equates to 8/10 families.

Under the terms of the SVPR agreement, the Council receives a grant to support each individual refugee which also meets the cost of preparing the property and any additional support the family may need. The families are

accommodated for 5 years in the first instance with a decision as to whether the family will stay in the country or return to Syria being made at the end of their stay.

The Council is currently working in partnership with Mansfield District Council to support the scheme with resettlement and community support being provided by Tuntum Housing's Supported Housing Service. Faith groups have also been instrumental in supporting the families in a number of ways. To date, the families have been housed by housing association partners and one family in a property acquired by a local church as an investment.

Panel Members welcomed the news that all the families had settled quickly into their communities and many of the children had excelled at school and formed friendships with other children. The Council were committed to resettling two further families in November 2018 with the final two families arriving mid-2019.

Lessons had been learnt following the resettlement of the first families in 2017 and these were acknowledged by the Panel as follows:-

- the importance of supporting families to become independent and endeavouring not to create dependencies with support being reduced each year;
- Community and faith groups were a great source of support though care needed to be taken to ensure that they continued to enable independence and offered appropriate support;
- Reasonable assumptions had been wrong and concerns regarding how the families might be received by neighbours and the local community were unfounded. Neighbours had been very supportive and in some cases protective of the families. Likewise, an expectation that the families would develop close relations with one another had not proved to be the case;
- The key to becoming part of the local community and to unlocking opportunities, such as employment, had been language skills and the commencement of English language lessons as soon as possible had been important in achieving this.

Members debated the details of the 2018 resettlement scheme and discussed:

- suitable locations;
- types of housing including size;
- the importance of keeping Ward Members involved as they may have contacts and be able to assist in support and employment;
- the need to continue communications with private sector landlords and housing associations;
- the growing relevance of technology including language apps;
- recognition that different cultures require different types of support.

RESOLVED that

- a) the update in relation to the Council's role in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, be received and noted;
- b) Ward Members where the resettlement scheme is taking place in 2018 are kept fully informed and consulted with;
- c) research be undertaken to consider whether any mobile apps would be appropriate to assist with learning languages for job applications and social integration;
- d) further discussions to take place with housing associations and landlords in the search for suitable properties and locations.

### **SB.7 Scrutiny Review of CCTV**

Panel Members received a progress update in relation to the review of public space CCTV and were introduced to recent developments to the subject area that might impact future discussions in relation to this particular review.

RESOLVED that

- a) the update in relation to the Scrutiny Review of CCTV, be received and noted;
- b) the night time visit to Sherwood Lodge CCTV control room commence at the earliest opportunity.

The meeting closed at 8.22 pm

Chairman.