

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

25 November 2015

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

Urgent Reference from Communities, Housing and Environment Committee 8 December 2015: Maidstone's approach to the Syrian refugee crisis

Final Decision-Maker	Policy and Resources Committee
Lead Head of Service	John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services
Lead Officer	Ellie Kershaw, Housing and Inclusion Manager
Classification	Public
Wards affected	

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That Policy and Resources Committee consider the Reference from Communities, Housing and Environment Committee due to the budgetary implications and the potential capital spend associated with the report.

The recommendations as presented to Communities, Housing and Environment Committee are as follows:-

- 1) That Maidstone Borough Council commits to take part in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme;
- 2) That, as per 4.1, the Council's offer is 6 single males over the five year period, to be reviewed periodically with an aim of increasing this through the lifetime of the scheme if viable;
- 3) That the Council investigate options for the provision of housing including the purchase of property from capital funds;
- 4) That households should be accepted as soon as suitable housing is available; and
- 5) That if the recommendation at 4.1 is agreed, a periodic review is undertaken, with a view to increasing the offer throughout the life of the scheme if it is running successfully and thought to be viable.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	16 December 2015

Urgent Reference from Communities, Housing and Environment Committee 8 December 2015: Maidstone's approach to the Syrian refugee crisis

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 This reference relates to a report that was presented to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee on 8 December 2015.

2. REASONS FOR URGENCY

2.1 Any delay in the proposed participation of the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme could have a bearing on this Council's ability to take in Syrian refugees from April 2016.

3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

3.1 At its meeting on 8 December 2015 the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee were presented with a report which sought approval for the Council to assist Syrian refugees.

3.2 Concern was expressed by Members that one of the recommendations required that the Council investigate options for the provision of housing for the Syrian refugees, including the purchase of property from capital funds.

3.3 Although it was within the remit of the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee to purchase from capital funds, the increase in homelessness had already impacted on its capital funds and additional resources had already been requested from Policy and Resources Committee and this could create an additional burden should there be a need to purchase a property. Therefore, for the sake of consistency, the Committee voted to refer this matter to Policy and Resources Committee. A copy of the report is attached as Appendix 'A' for ease of reference.

4. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

4.1 The Committee could decide not to agree to take the recommendations and refer them back to Communities, Housing and Environment Committee with the caveat that should it be decided that accommodation to house these individuals were necessary then that particular issue should be referred to Policy and Resources Committee.

4.2 Alternatively the Committee could consider all the recommendations as detailed in the original report, which have been replicated on the front page of this report as well as in Appendix A. This would ensure that there is not any further delay for the Council accommodating these individuals from April 2015.

5. REPORT APPENDICES

The following document is to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A: Copy of the Report of the Housing and Community Services, presented to Communities, Housing and Environment Committee