| MERSEYSIDE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY | | | |
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| **MEETING OF THE:** | **FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY** | | |
| **DATE:** | **26TH JANUARY 2017** | | **CFO/11/17** |
| **PRESENTING OFFICER** | **CHIEF FIRE OFFICER** | | |
| **RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:** | **AM KEEN** | **REPORT AUTHOR:** | **GM OAKFORD** |
| **OFFICERS CONSULTED:** | **AM KEEN, GM RYDER, SM HILL AND KAREN METCALF** | | |
| **TITLE OF REPORT:** | **SUPPORTING THE SYRIAN RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME** | | |

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| **APPENDICES:** | | |

## Purpose of Report

1. To inform Members of the contribution made by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Authority in relation to the Syrian Refugee Resettlement Programme.

## Recommendation

2. That Members endorse the content of this report and note the ongoing support.

## Introduction and Background

3. The UK Government is committed to supporting the Syrian Vulnerable Person Scheme and intends to resettle 20,000 Syrians identified as in need of protection during the lifetime of the current Parliament.

4. The UK is at the forefront of the response to the crisis in Syria and this expansion is part of the comprehensive approach designed as far as possible to help refugees in the region but recognising that for some vulnerable people the only solution is to bring them to countries like the UK.

5. The Home Office and Department for Communities and Local Government will be working with and supporting Local Authorities across the UK including those within the Liverpool City Region.

6. Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council (KMBC) has taken the lead locally and has welcomed the first cohort of 25 people (5 families) with a further 25 people (6 families) expected this month.

7. It is understood that KMBC will develop the “best practice” model for adoption by others involved in the scheme.

8. Other Local Authority areas will come online during 2017 including Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral (350 people in total).

9. This scheme is in addition to other aspects of people movement including asylum seekers and economic migrants.

10. In response to the anticipated challenges faced in introducing the scheme MFRA were approached by KMBC in order to request the support of our Arabic speaking Bi-Lingual Advocate (Suzanne Hazza) in order to successfully integrate the first cohort of Syrians Refugees into Knowsley.

11. The work would require Suzanne Hazza to work within the KMBC multi-agency team.

12. As part of our commitment to the scheme officers agreed to support the pilot as an active and engaged stakeholder for an initial period of 4 months. KMBC has now asked for an extension to the programme for a further 6 months and have agreed to support full costs for the post.

13. Feedback thus far, on Suzanne's contribution has been highly commendable by KMBC who is considered a valued team member but also an ambassador of MFRS.

14. There have been other tangible outcomes following our engagement in support of people movement including the points below. This has been shared with the Syrian Resettlement Community Support Officers (Home Office) and the North West Regional Strategic Migration Partnership (LGA).

    - Prevention Officers delivering presentations to Merseyside Local Resilience Forum.

    - Prevention & Protection Officers supporting housing partners (SERCO) who have responsibility to house asylum seekers (City wide).

    - Prevention Officers supporting Liverpool City Council Strategic Cohesion Panel and Asylum Seekers and Refugee Group.

    - Raising awareness of MFRA prevention services and safe haven scheme.

    - Response to fire related incidents (Operational and Community Reassurance).

    - Young people accessing Princes Trust Programmes via Asylum Link.

## Equality and Diversity Implications

15. Community Prevention has a current EIA, however this will be refreshed in line with the new Functional Delivery Plan for 2017/18. It will include engagement with new communities.

## Staff Implications

16. Suzanne remains directly supported by her line manager and via periodic meetings with MFRA and KMBC Officers. Outcomes are reported back by Justin Thompson – Assistant Executive Director for Neighbourhoods.

## Legal Implications

17. The People and Organisational Development Directorate (POD) have advised upon and managed the secondment process.

## Financial Implications & Value for Money

18. There are no other resource implications beyond seeking agreement on supporting this secondment on a full time basis for a further six months at full cost recovery.

## Risk Management, Health & Safety, and Environmental Implications

19. Community Risk Management understand and are aware of the Protecting Vulnerable Persons Agenda and horizon scan to ensure all threats, harm and risk to people is mitigated where possible.

20. This secondment does not mean that MFRA loses a valued skill. If the necessity requires MFRA can call upon Suzanne for a high risk home visit, community reassurance or in any circumstance if translation services are required.

## Contribution to Our Mission: *Safer Stronger Communities – Safe Effective Firefighters*

21. MFRA continues to engage with a wide range of fire and rescue service and non-fire and rescue service partners to actively promote the concept of enhanced safety from fire, and to encourage cooperation and partnership working on shared ambitions.

22. As part of the integrated programme fire safety advice will be provided as part of the integration process.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS