

Perth and Kinross Council

6 March 2024

UK CITY OF SANCTUARY BID REPORT AND COMMITMENT TO RESETTLEMENT

Joint Report by and Director – Strategy, People & Resources and Executive Director (Communities)
(Report No. 24/70)

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 The report provides members with the Council's Policy Statement and Action Plan for approval for submission to become a UK City of Sanctuary member with an accompanying commitment to settle a minimum of 20 people seeking sanctuary each year.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Council:
- i. notes the contents of this report
 - ii. approves the accompanying Policy Statement and Action Plan for submission to become a UK City of Sanctuary member (Appendices 1 and 2)
 - iii. approves the recommended commitment to settle a minimum of 20 people seeking sanctuary each year.

3. STRUCTURE OF REPORT

- 3.1 This report is structured over the following sections:

- Section 4: Background
- Section 5: Proposals
- Section 6: Conclusion
- Appendices

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Perth and Kinross has become home to a number of different groups of people seeking sanctuary from war, persecution or other troubles in their home countries in recent years through the various Resettlement programmes for Refugees and Asylum Seekers. There are important differences between people supported by formal resettlement schemes and those seeking asylum. These are outlined in Appendix 1.

4.2 Our local sanctuary seeking population includes people who have come to Perth and Kinross via the following formal resettlement programmes.

- (i) Syrian Resettlement – 33 people from 7 families have settled in Perth and Kinross since 2015
- (ii) Afghan Resettlement – 15 people from 4 families have settled in Perth and Kinross since 2021
- (iii) Homes for Ukraine – around 450 displaced people have settled in Perth and Kinross since March 2022

In addition, there are a number of adults and children who are seeking asylum currently accommodated in Perth and Kinross.

- (iv) Children Alone Seeking Asylum (CASA) – formerly known as Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People – currently supporting 40 young people aged 15 – 23 (can be eligible for support up to aged 26 if in education) from 11 different countries. Service has been provided since 2020. A dispersal arrangement is in place which requires local authorities to support CASA's.
- (v) Home Office Asylum Programme – 2 hotels in Perth have been used since December 2021 and currently accommodate around 100 single males going through the asylum process. The accommodation is procured and managed by the Home Office's contractor Mears. Following a successful asylum claim, a person becomes eligible for housing and other services anywhere in the UK.

4.3 To support officers working with these programmes and to ensure we are offering all the available support and assistance for a positive integration and resettlement into our communities, we are recommending that we seek membership of an umbrella organisation called the City of Sanctuary UK (<https://cityofsanctuary.org/>). This will not only benefit us as practitioners but also the people and communities that we are supporting.

4.4 City of Sanctuary provides coordination and development support for networks of community groups supporting people seeking sanctuary which includes local authorities. They facilitate events, activities and initiatives in partnership at a UK level, ensure good communication and the sharing of best practice across the City of Sanctuary networks, and work to raise the profile of City of Sanctuary overall.

4.5 There are currently five other areas in Scotland who are members of the City of Sanctuary initiative (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, East Lothian and Forth Valley (Stirling)).

5. PROPOSALS

- 5.1 We have developed the accompanying Policy Statement and Action Plan that we are required to submit to become a member of this organisation. These are detailed in Appendices 1 and 2.
- 5.2 Although we are seeking approval as a Local Authority member, we will continue to lead a multi-agency response to ensure the actions within the Plan are delivered. This includes third sector and community groups who are members of our local Community Integration Network. These groups include local support and community groups such as Perthshire Welfare Society, Third Sector Interface at PKAVS; ESOL Perth; Perth Minorities Association and local faith groups and a national organisation the Scottish Refugee Council. These groups work directly with newer and longer-established minority ethnic communities in Perth and Kinross and give a voice to those with lived experience of seeking sanctuary in the area.
- 5.3 All members of this network are committed to pro-actively support this work and will also provide a voice for those with lived experience in the process. Awareness sessions have already been held with members of the Community Integration Network; the Equalities Strategic Forum and with key multi-agency staff leading on the respective areas in the accompanying Action Plan. It should also be noted that we will be seeking membership as an area of sanctuary, not just as a city. This is to reflect the Perth and Kinross wide response which has been offered to support new arrivals. There is no financial cost to the Local Authority in becoming a member.
- 5.4 The UK Government is looking to lay down a statutory instrument (SI) in June 2024 which will set the cap for 2025-2026. Local authorities have been consulted on how many people they could support, and it was agreed that COSLA would respond to the consultation on behalf of all 32 Scottish Local Authorities. However, individual Local Authorities have been asked to provide an indication on their ability to make a commitment to resettlement and provide a number regarding the amount of people that could be supported annually from 2025.
- 5.5 Perth & Kinross Council is in a position to make a commitment to support resettlement schemes due to the well-established, multi-agency resources that are in place, the funding associated with resettlement schemes and our use of private-sector accommodation for this purpose.
- 5.6 In addition to seeking membership of the City of Sanctuary UK and the associated recognition of Perth and Kinross as an area of Sanctuary, it is also proposed that Perth & Kinross Council makes a commitment to resettle a minimum of 20 people seeking sanctuary each year. This would enable us to secure further funding to support groups and allow us to plan strategically for the provision of services. This approach has been adopted by many other Local Authorities and has proven to be supportive in terms of providing effective services as well as responding to urgent requests for support from both the UK and Scottish Government. This commitment would be monitored

to ensure limited impact on wider service provision and the availability of suitable accommodation.

- 5.7 There are a range of active resettlement schemes, some of which have been mentioned previously. Since 2015, when the first Syrian families were welcomed to Perth and Kinross, the Council has developed the capacity, skills and expertise to work with a range of partners to welcome people seeking sanctuary and support them to integrate into, and become active members of, communities.
- 5.8 Immigration Policy is reserved and therefore administered by the UK Government through the Home Office and Department for Housing, Levelling-up and Communities (DHLUC). There is funding available for post-arrival resettlement support, including housing and education costs. The funding tapers-off over 5 years on the basis that resettled people will become more integrated and independent over time.
- 5.9 To date, Perth & Kinross Council has received around £6.4 Million from the UK Government to support the resettlement of the various groups referred to in the report. In addition, almost £1.2 Million has been received from the Scottish Government, specifically for supporting Ukrainian displaced people.
- 5.10 A virtual Resettlement Team has been established with Housing, Support, Community Engagement and Social Work staff being funded on a fixed-term basis using the funding mentioned above. The Scottish Refugee Council has also been commissioned to provide community integration support to all resettled groups mentioned previously. Having an agreed minimum Commitment would also provide some permanency to the work carried out by the Team and third sector partners.
- 5.11 The table below shows the Tariff funding that would be available for the resettlement of 20 people per year through the UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) over a 5-year period. The highlighted figures illustrate the funding tapering for the Year 1 arrivals.

	Tariff Funding based on 20 UKRS arrivals per year (£)				
Year 1	170,400				
Year 2	170,400	100,000			
Year 3	170,400	100,000	74,000		
Year 4	170,400	100,000	74,000	46,000	
Year 5	170,400	100,000	74,000	46,000	20,000
					1,586,000

- 5.12 Whilst there are considerable pressures on housing supply, it is considered that supporting the resettlement of 20 people per year through the UKRS would be manageable. The 20 people would be likely to represent 4-6 families and as such, 4-6 properties would be required. Suitable properties would be sourced from the private-rented sector in line with our current arrangements, which have proved to be successful for both the landlord and the families involved.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 By becoming a recognised area of Sanctuary, through a UK City of Sanctuary membership, we can build on the positive examples of support and opportunities which have already been offered to those members of the sanctuary seeking population – examples of which can be seen in the Case Studies in Appendix 3. It will enhance our positive reputation as a safe and welcoming place for new arrivals.
- 6.2 Committing to the resettlement of at least 20 people per year, with close monitoring arrangements, reinforces our ambition to be a place of sanctuary and build on the positive outcomes we have achieved to date.
- 6.3 This commitment alongside the longer-term funding will provide the certainty needed to create a permanent resettlement team, again reinforcing our efforts to ensure Perth and Kinross remains a welcoming and safe place for people seeking sanctuary.

Authors

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APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Policy Statement
- Appendix 2 Action Plan
- Appendix 3 Case Study Examples

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You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

1. IMPLICATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

Strategic Implications	Yes / None
Community Plan / Single Outcome Agreement	Yes
Corporate Plan	Yes
Resource Implications	
Financial	Yes
Workforce	Yes
Asset Management (land, property, IST)	Yes
Assessments	
Equality Impact Assessment	Yes
Strategic Environmental Assessment	None
Sustainability (community, economic, environmental)	None
Legal and Governance	Yes
Risk	Yes
Consultation	
Internal	Yes
External	Yes
Communication	
Communications Plan	Yes

1. Strategic Implications

Community Plan/Single Outcome Agreement

1.1 This report supports all of the priorities within the Community Plan 2022-27:

- (i) *Reducing Poverty (including child poverty, fuel poverty and food poverty)*
- (ii) *Mental and physical wellbeing*
- (iii) *Digital participation*
- (iv) *Skills, learning and development*
- (v) *Employability*

Corporate Plan

1.2 This report supports the objectives within the draft new Corporate Plan:

- (i) *Children and young people grow up safe, respected, well-educated, and confident in their ability to realise their full potential;*
- (ii) *People and businesses are increasingly able to prosper in a local economy which support low carbon ambitions and offers opportunities for all;*
- (iii) *People can achieve their best physical and mental health and have access to quality care and support when they need it;*
- (iv) *Communities are resilient and physically, digital and socially connected;*
- (v) *Perth and Kinross is a safe and vibrant place, mitigating the impact of climate and environmental change for this and future generations.*

2. Resource Implications

Financial

- 2.1 There are no additional financial implications arising directly as a result of this report at this time. Ongoing work is managed within existing budgets and any new developments which may arise in future will be subject to budget approval as appropriate.

Workforce

- 2.2 There are no additional workforce implications arising directly as a result of this report at this time. Ongoing work is managed within existing resources.

Asset Management (land, property, IT)

- 2.3 There are no additional Asset Management implications arising as a result of this report at this time. Any new proposed developments which arise in the future will be subject to the relevant approval process at the time.

3. Assessments

- 3.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, the Council is required to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations between equality groups. Carrying out Equality Impact Assessments for plans and policies allows the Council to demonstrate that it is meeting these duties:

- (i) Assessed as **relevant** for the purposes of EqIA

Strategic Environmental Assessment

- 3.2 The Environmental Assessment (Scotland) Act 2005 places a duty on the Council to identify and assess the environmental consequences of its proposals.

Sustainability

- 3.3 Under the provisions of the Local Government in Scotland Act 2003 the Council has to discharge its duties in a way which contributes to the achievement of sustainable development. Under the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 the Council also has a duty relating to climate change and, in exercising its functions must act:
- in the way best calculated to delivery of the Act's emissions reduction targets;
 - in the way best calculated to deliver any statutory adaptation programmes; and
 - in a way that it considers most sustainable.
- 3.4 No steps are required to be considered relating directly to this report.

Legal and Governance

- 3.5 The Head of Legal and Governance has been consulted during the development of this report.

Risk

- 3.6 Any risks associated will be mitigated by the monitoring and reporting procedures which are in place for the work concerned.

4. Consultation

Internal

- 4.1 This report has been developed through work across all services within the Council.

External

- 4.2 The work reported here contains reference to the partnership work which goes on with strategic partners in all sectors to deliver on our commitments in the Action Plan.

5. Communication

- 5.1 The report will be made available internally and externally when approved.

2. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 2.1 No other background papers were referred to in the preparation of this report.