

OPEN SESSION: There were four members of public present, two of whom wished to speak on the agenda item relating to flood alleviation.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 28th October 2015 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Cllr Michael Thierry, Town Mayor
Cllr Christine Ford, Deputy Town Mayor
Cllr Emma Blake
Cllr Philip Day
Cllr Debee Deane
Cllr Jeremy Heron
Cllr Anne Murphy
Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine
Cllr Mark Steele
Cllr Jacqui Terry
Cllr Christopher Treleaven
Cllr Angela Wiseman

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr S Nash, Town Clerk
Mrs J Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk
Student Advisors Sam Whittingham, Millie Wells, Natasha Doe and Bella Rix

C/5738 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Ward, Cllr Briers and Student Advisors Jade Wardle and Bryony Mirus.

C/5739 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none declared at this time.

C/5740 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 30th September 2015, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/5741 PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Treleaven presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 2nd October.

It was noted that the District Council's "call for sites" was to be discussed at the next meeting of the Committee on 6th November, and all Members were invited to attend.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 2nd October be received.

**C/5742
POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Cllr Heron presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 21st October 2015.

Cllr Day queried the necessity for the duplication of reports, which were attached both to agendas and minutes and hard copies sent by post twice to Committee members, as well as by email. He felt that there was an opportunity to save money by reducing paper, copying and postage and therefore making the Council more sustainable.

Members agreed that the Council should look to reduce the amount of paper sent out to Members, and it was agreed that the Town Clerk should look into how this could be achieved.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 21st October 2015 be received.

ACTION S Nash

**C/5743
OUTSTANDING FLOOD ALLEVIATION ISSUES IN RINGWOOD**

The Town Mayor welcomed Mr Richard Bastow, Highways Manager (West), Hampshire County Council (HCC), who presented an update on outstanding flood alleviation issues (*Annex A*).

Dr Peter Street challenged some of Mr Bastow's statements, and in particular the need for the Moortown Lane flood relief drain to be brought back into use as, in his opinion, flooding issues at Hightown would not be resolved without it. He also said that culverts and pipes would need regular jetting, and this was accepted by Mr Bastow who said that they were building intelligence and mapping the system to ensure it could be adequately maintained in the future.

It was noted that the Town Council had previously agreed to the use of Developers Contributions to increase the capacity of the Moortown Lane system so that it could be brought back into use, and Members were keen that investigative work (as referred to in Mr Bastow's update) be carried out.

Mr Norman Light reported that the flooding issue at Avonvale Cottages had still not been resolved. However, Mr Bastow visited this week and agreed to raise the kerbstones; this would be the third visit by contractors to rectify the initial poor workmanship.

Cllr Wiseman was extremely disappointed in the update from Mr Bastow as there was still little action proposed. She was particularly concerned about the collapsed roadside verges, which had been brought to the attention of HCC four years ago.

Dr Peter Street stated that the Crow Stream works had proved how much could be achieved with the benefit of local knowledge and funding controlled by the Town Council. He said that he and others were prepared to specify and supervise works and would make sure that works were carried out efficiently and effectively. This could apply in the case of Crow Hill, for which he had already written a specification of works required.

RESOLVED: That Mr Bastow's report (*Annex A*) be received.

ACTION J Hurd

C/5744
SYRIAN REFUGEE REPORT

Members considered the Town Clerk's report on the relocation of Syrian refugees (*Annex B*).

Cllr Heron proposed that the Council should take no further action on this matter as, in his opinion, it would be seen as a gesture of the worst kind that would isolate a family and put pressure on local services. He suggested that the Council should instead look to support a coordinated response by central government or the County Council.

Cllr Ford and Cllr Wiseman agreed that uprooting and isolating one family from everything and everyone they knew would be unfair and also not the best use of scarce resources.

Cllr Terry spoke on behalf of her constituents, who felt very strongly that support would be better directed at local homeless people. In total there were 709 homeless people in Ringwood and 4163 in the New Forest District.

Cllr Rippon-Swaine set out the County Council's position. He stated that the first one thousand refugees would be arriving before Christmas and would be accommodated in the North of the country where systems were in place. There were significant challenges for the South East and costs were still unknown.

The Student Advisors were passionate about the need to help and said that the refugees are escaping complete devastation, they have nothing and nowhere to go. They felt that any refugees would be welcomed and could perhaps be homed with families, which would assist with integration. If all the local Councils were to participate, resources could be shared and costs reduced.

Cllr Deane said there was a need to look at the bigger picture nationally, as the UK was facing a crisis with the NHS and the benefits system and trying to bring the country out of deficit. £1.1 billion had already been sent to Syria to assist.

Cllr Day supported Cllr Heron's proposal and said that he felt uncomfortable focussing on Syria when there were millions of other people throughout the world who were also suffering severe hardship.

The Town Mayor thanked the Student Advisors for their participation in this debate. He said they had spoken with passion and compassion and had made their points well.

RESOLVED: That the Council take no further action on the relocation of Syrian refugees at this time.

C/5745
CHRISTMAS SWITCH ON

Members considered the Town Clerk's report on the Christmas Switch On event on 5th December 2015 (*Annex C*).

The Town Clerk reported that the event would take a similar format to last year, with some additions such as a quiz to increase footfall in Southampton Road/Friday's Cross, a Market Place shop becoming a cinema for the day, a Peal of Bells to launch the day, Dickensian singers and a steam organ.

The Town Mayor suggested that the Town Council have a stall in the Market Place, which could be manned by Town Councillors, giving people an opportunity to discuss local issues. Members agreed to support this.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk's report be noted.

ACTION S Nash

C/5746

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED

The Town Mayor reported the following:

- 1) The Lantern of Remembrance had been lit for the period of one year on the days when a Ringwood person had died in action or as a result of the First and Second World Wars. There had been some administrative issues with the switching on of the lantern throughout the year and the Town Mayor suggested that it now be left on permanently; an eternal flame to commemorate the fallen. However, it was noted that the lantern held a special meaning for some people now and they looked to see when it was lit. It was therefore agreed that the lantern should continue to be lit only on specific days as before.
- 2) The Town Mayor had received several suggestions from local people for improved road safety measures in Cowpitts Lane following the recent hit and run incident. Members considered suggestions including a speed reduction, markings on the road, no footpath signs, lighting, cameras, speed bumps and pinch points. However, as the highway authority had limited resources, it was agreed that any recommendations should be both deliverable and enforceable. This matter was referred to Planning, Town & Environment Committee for further consideration.

C/5747

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Rippon-Swaine presented his written report (*Annex D*). In addition, he had recently attended planning training at the District Council when Members were informed that the District would be required to provide between 14,000 and 16,000 houses from 2016 to 2026, which would mean that Ringwood was likely to need to provide 50 per year, or 500 in total over the ten year period.

C/5748

REPORTS FROM RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCILLORS

Cllr Day reported that the enforcement case regarding the sale of cars on the grass verge near Wells Garage had been closed as the breach had ceased. He had attended a meeting of Ringwood Society and received an update on The Furlong Phase 2; the developers had still not resolved the outstanding land ownership issues and were now proposing that the old town hall be 3-storeys.

C/5749

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 4 th November 2015
Planning, Town & Environment	10.00am	Friday 6 th November 2015
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 18 th November 2015
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 25 th November 2015

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.38pm.

APPROVED
25th November 2015

TOWN MAYOR

Update from Richard Bastow to Full Council – 28th October 2015 Outstanding Flood Alleviation Issues

1) Concrete restriction of culvert at Crow Farm

Not progressed at present as not causing a significant impact, but being monitored and enforcement action will be taken if necessary.

2) Restriction under bridge into Sabines Farm (owned by HCC)

Some clearance was undertaken by HCC but there was a concern about undermining of the foundations of the bridge so this had to be limited. Noted during my visit on 26/10 that silt had built up again so will get this dealt with. This is a County Farm so we may need to involve our Estates Team re. any work to the access bridge.

3) Restricted culvert under access to Solent Coaches and unauthorised parking area preventing widening of ditch

Culvert installed by Solent Coaches was approved by our Ordinary Watercourses team and is the same size as the one immediately upstream. I have spoken to a Director at Solent Coaches who has offered to re-profile and straighten the ditch. Currently not considered to be causing a problem in its current condition/profile, and the parking on the verge appears not to be harming the ditch.

Solent Coaches have provided some posts on the verge to the south of their entrance and HCC have agreed to supply them with some reflective verge markers.

4) Repair of collapsed roadside verges (risk to public safety, especially during flood conditions)

Three locations:

- Sandford Copse
- Between Castlemans Farm and Stocks Green
- North of Stocks Green

Inspection by myself on 26/10 found all verge markers that had been supplied in place and the verge stable. A scheme will put added to the list for future funding but given the increasing financial pressures may not now proceed immediately. An edge line and/or signage could be provided; as we have done elsewhere in similar situations, as a low cots interim measure.

The suggestion put forward by Dr Peter Street for pinch points to be introduced is under consideration and being investigated by the traffic team. However, there may be visibility issues with the bend at Sandford Copse. The comment above re. funding still applies.

5) Culvert west of the Elm Tree

Pipes and ditches were cleared but non-return valve put on hold due to pressures on finance. Ditches still clear but with some vegetation growth. Grips to be cut. Non-return valve could be progressed before Christmas.

6) Crow Hill (risk to public safety in icy conditions)

Highways Engineer has met with Dr Peter Street on site. Pipes at top of hill and across the road jetted clear and running free. Some ditching still to be done which can now proceed as we have the services information. This could now be delivered before the end of the calendar year.

7) Moortown Lane

An extensive drainage system was installed some years ago but had to be shut down as the system couldn't take the increased flow. This has now been mothballed as the system westwards from Christchurch Road to the River Avon needs to be improved before it can be brought back into use.

Colleagues are in discussion with counterparts at NFDC to determine if Developers Contributions can be used for this, but any scheme is likely to be well in excess of £50,000 and would only protect a small number of properties with a consequentially poor cost benefit ratio. There are likely to be schemes with a higher priority and with a better cost benefit ratio. It is possible that Developers Contributions could be used to fund investigative work.

Report to Full Council – 28th October

SYRIAN REFUGEE RE-LOCATION

1. Introduction

The Government has agreed to take 20,000 Syrian refugees over the next couple of years and is looking for support from local authorities in placing them around the country. The government has confirmed that they will be fully funded for the first 12 months and that they will be entitled to all benefits and health care during this period and will be able to remain for up to 5 years. The funding will come from the Immigration Budget and will not be part of existing resources for UK residents but a statement on what happens beyond the first year is still being sought. See Annex B for a plain English explanation of the current situation.

During the last Full Council meeting the Mayor advised councillors that he had been approached by local people and organisations about Ringwood's response to this crisis and the suggestion that we might do something to assist. After some discussion it was agreed that the Town Clerk would seek some additional information on the subject and provide a report to Full Council.

2. Requirements

There are some specific requirements of any 'Recipient Organisation' as laid out in Annex A. The majority of these would be covered by a partnership arrangement with the principal authority but, where there is local expertise, this could be employed also to ease the burden. As the attachments indicate there would be 6 weeks advance notification of the needs of an identified family with time to prepare for their arrival.

3. Cost Implications RTC

The current offer from government is for Full Cost Recovery, which would be claimed back against the number of individuals taken in under the scheme. However, there is likely to be some immediate expense in the provision of a clothing allowance of £200 per person if needed, £1000 for a family of 5. Beyond this initial funding, benefits and allowances would then cover the remaining costs through Job Centre Plus.

4. Local Support

A local church group and some individuals have offered their services for the refugees and would be willing to assist in supporting them while they are here. While no specific offer has been made it might include cultural awareness, friendship circles, good neighbour services and shopping. The provision of clothing, white goods and bedding has been mentioned and would assist in quickly settling a family back to normality.

5. Co-ordination

A possible suggestion is that we play a 'Co-ordinating' role with all agencies involved and provide information during a normal operational day. The Town Council could assist in making appointments, registering with doctors and dentists and with local schools if available.

The Town Council could co-ordinate attendance on English Classes as suggested in the paperwork attached and identify religious and health needs locally.

6. Potential

- i The Town Council does have some capacity and a great deal of expertise within our Front of Office on available services so this would be an achievable commitment if councillors are minded to pursue this idea.

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- i The whole process has already begun across the UK under existing immigration resettlement procedures and will expand slowly as suggested in the attached Annexes.
- i Larger Town Council's may provide a valuable contribution to this process and allow for a good dispersal of refugees which would minimise the impact they might potentially have on local services. There would need to be some partnership meetings to confirm responsibilities, policies, procedures and agree funding but with existing requests in place this comes from a sympathetic public quarter.

7. Conclusion

There is capacity within Ringwood Town Council to assist in the resettlement of refugees if councillors are so minded. The level of assistance could be as a 'Recipient' of a family and all those responsibilities indicated in the attachments, to simply co-ordinating local support should a family arrive in Ringwood.

For further information, please contact:

Steve Nash

Town Clerk

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ANNEX A – STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS

1. Section 1 – Delivery Requirements

- 1.1 The Syrian VPR scheme is made up of two elements.
 - 1.1.1 **Pre arrival** – Provision of medical and travel services enabling the migration of accepted Beneficiaries to the UK;
 - 1.1.2 **Post arrival** – Housing provision, initial reception arrangements, casework and orientation support including English language provision.
- 1.2 The Authority requires the following deliverables:

2. Post Arrival services

Provision of accommodation:

- 2.1 The Recipient will meet and greet arriving Beneficiaries from the relevant airport and escort them to their properties briefing them on how to use the amenities
- 2.2 The Recipient will arrange accommodation for the arriving Beneficiaries which meets local authority standards and which will be available on their arrival and is affordable and sustainable
- 2.3 The Recipient will ensure that the accommodation is furnished appropriately. The furniture package should not include luxury items. This means that food storage, cooking and washing facilities can be provided but the facilities should not include the provision of other white goods or brown goods, i.e. TV's, DVD players or any other electrical entertainment appliances.
 - 2.3.1 The Recipient will ensure that the Beneficiaries are registered with utility companies and ensure that arrangements for payments are put in place (no pre pay/card accounts)
 - 2.3.2 The Recipient will provide briefings on the accommodation and health and safety issues for all new arrivals including the provision of an emergency contact point

Casework support service:

- 2.4 The Recipient will ensure that Beneficiaries are provided with a welcome pack of groceries on their arrival
- 2.5 The Recipient will provide a cash/ clothing allowances for each Beneficiary of £200 – this is to ensure they have sufficient funds to live on while their claim for benefits is being processed.
- 2.6 The Recipient will provide advice and assistance with registering for mainstream benefits and services and signposting to other advice and information giving agencies – this support includes:
 - 2.6.1 Assisting with registration for and collection of Biometric Residence Permits following arrival
 - 2.6.2 Registering with local schools, English language and literacy classes
 - 2.6.3 Attending local Job Centre Plus appointments for benefit assessments
 - 2.6.4 Registering with a local GP
 - 2.6.5 Advice around and referral to appropriate mental health services and to specialist services for victims of torture as appropriate

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2.6.6 Providing assistance with access to employment

- 2.7 The Recipient shall put in place a support plan for each family or individual for the 12 month period of their support to facilitate their orientation into their new home/area.
- 2.8 The Recipient shall put in place arrangements for the provision of English language classes which Beneficiaries should be able to access within one month of arrival. This should be provided following an assessment to determine the appropriate level of provision. This provision should be delivered by an accredited English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provider. This ESOL provision should be made available until such time as suitable mainstream provision becomes available or until 12 months after arrival (whichever is sooner). The purpose of the language tuition is to ensure that Beneficiaries are able to carry out basic transactions within the communities in which they have been placed.
- 2.9 Throughout the period of resettlement support the Recipient will ensure interpreting services are available.
- 2.10 The above services will be provided through a combination of office based appointments, drop in sessions, outreach surgeries and home visits.

Requirements for Beneficiaries with special needs/assessed community care needs

- 2.11 Where Beneficiaries are identified as potentially having special needs/community care needs the Authority will ensure, as far as possible that these needs are clearly identified and communicated to the Recipient 6 weeks prior to the arrival of the Beneficiaries.
- 2.12 Where special needs/community care needs are identified only after arrival in the UK, the Recipient will use its best endeavours to ensure that care is provided by the appropriate mainstream services as quickly as possible

3. General Requirements

Hours of operation:

- 3.1 The Recipient shall note that the Authority's offices perform normal business during the hours times of 09.00 to 17.00 on Working Days
- 3.2 The Programme as defined in the Statement of Requirements (SoR) shall be provided on each Working Day. The Authority recognises that in the interests of efficiency the exact availability and timings of the various service elements will vary. It is envisaged that some Out of Hours provision will be required from the Recipient
- 3.3 All premises used to deliver the Programme elements should meet all regulatory requirements and be suitable for the purpose.
- 3.4 The Recipient and/or its Delivery Partners shall develop, maintain and implement the following procedures:
 - 3.4.1 A procedure for Beneficiaries to complain about the service provided by the Recipient.
 - 3.4.2 A procedure for managing and reporting critical incidents. The Authority must be advised of such incidents as soon as reasonably possible, but in any event by the end of the next Working Day

Personnel standards:

- 3.5 The Recipient shall ensure that the recruitment, selection and training of its Staff, including persons employed by or as agents or sub-contractors to the Recipient, are

consistent with the standards of service required for the performance of the service. The Recipient will fully equip and train staff to ensure they are able to fulfil their roles and ensure that appropriate and sufficient security provisions are made for all staff undertaking face-to-face activities. Also, the Recipient shall ensure that staffing levels are appropriate at all times for the purposes of the service and ensure the security and well-being of all Beneficiaries, dependent children and its staff.

- 3.6 The Recipient shall ensure that all applicants for employment in connection with the Requirement are obligated to declare on their application forms any previous criminal convictions subject always to the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.
- 3.7 In addition, the Recipient shall ensure that all Staff (including volunteers and sub-contractors):
 - 3.7.1 employed or engaged have the right to work in the United Kingdom under applicable immigration Law
 - 3.7.2 Disclosure and Barring Service checks are undertaken on any potential Staff member. The results of such checks must be known before any employee undertakes duties requiring contact. Where such checks reveal prior criminal convictions that might reasonably be regarded as relevant to the appropriateness of the individual to have unsupervised access, particularly to children under the age of 18, or where such checks are not possible because of identification issues, the Recipient shall follow its internal policy and carry out an appropriate risk assessment before an offer of employment is made.
 - 3.7.3 who are likely to have unsupervised access to children under the age of 18 have been instructed in accordance with National Child Protection Guidelines and Area Child Protection Committee guidance and procedures.
 - 3.7.4 Providing immigration advice should be known to the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC) in accordance with the regulatory scheme specified under Part 5 of the Immigration & Asylum Act 1999. The Recipient shall use all reasonable endeavours to ensure that Staff do not provide immigration advice or immigration services unless they are “qualified” or “exempt” as determined and certified by OISC.
- 3.8 The Recipient shall, on request, provide the Authority with details of all staff (and volunteers and sub-contractor agents) delivering the service in this schedule.
- 3.9 The Recipient shall, on request, provide the Authority with CVs and/or job descriptions for all members of staff selected to work on the project.
- 3.10 The Recipient shall use all reasonable endeavours to comply with the requirements of the Computer Misuse Act 1990.
- 3.11 The Recipient shall implement the Programme in compliance with the provisions of the Data Protection Act 1998.

Information sharing:

- 3.12 The Authority expects the Recipient to share relevant information on the delivery of the Programme and on Beneficiaries by signing a Sharing of Information Protocol with relevant deliverers of the Programme.
- 3.13 Beneficiaries will be expected to sign a consent form to confirm their willingness to share personal data with executive bodies and relevant deliverers of the programme. The Recipient will retain these forms and will allow inspection by the Authority as requested.

Syrian Resettlement Programme

How many additional people will you resettle?

- The Government will expand the existing Syrian Vulnerable Person Scheme and intends to resettle 20,000 Syrians in need of protection during this Parliament.
- The UK is at the forefront of the response to the crisis in Syria and this expansion is part of our 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.

How will the arrival of 20,000 be spread out?

- It will take several months to reach full capacity but when we do we would expect to bring in roughly several hundred refugees each month over the course of the Parliament, subject to continuing need and capacity.

How else is the Government supporting Syrians in need of protection?

- Our priorities are on continuing to provide humanitarian aid to those most in need in the region and actively seeking an end to the crisis. We believe this approach is the best way to ensure that the UK's help has the greatest impact for the majority of refugees who remain in the region and their host countries.
- As the brutal conflict continues in Syria, millions of people continue to be in need. Hundreds of thousands have been killed in the conflict between the Assad regime, extremist groups and moderate opposition groups. In response to the crisis, the UK has allocated over £1.1 billion since 2012 to meet the immediate needs of vulnerable people in Syria and of refugees in the region – more than any other country in the world except the United States. The UK is the only major country in the world that has kept its promise of spending 0.7% of our national income on aid and we should be proud of this. By the end of March 2015, UK support had delivered over 18 million food rations, each of which feeds one person for one month, provided access to clean water for 1.6 million people (peak month), and over 2.4 million medical consultations in Syria and the region.

How will the expansion of the programme operate?

- We already have significant experience of resettling vulnerable people and our existing domestic resettlement mechanisms provide a basis for a relatively quick increase in numbers. And we are already working with existing partners to ensure that we can begin to increase numbers as quickly as possible. Over the coming weeks and months, we will work with local authorities, the UNHCR and others to put in place the full structures to ensure we can scale up the current arrangements so that we can meet the aim of bringing up to 20,000 Syrians over the lifetime of this Parliament and deliver on the expansion that has been announced.

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How long will the expansion take?

- Although we have simplified the process as much as we can the UNHCR must still assess each individual case before referring them to the Home Office. The Home Office must conduct visa checks and at the same time a place must be found in a local authority. We do all this already but it is important we get it right and scaling up a system like this in a way that protects the interests of all concerned, including local communities, will take a little bit of time.

How do you choose who comes to the UK?

- The Syrian VPR is based on need. It prioritises those who cannot be supported effectively in their region of origin: women and children at risk, people in severe need of medical care and survivors of torture and violence amongst others. We work closely with the UNHCR to identify cases that they deem in need of resettlement and we will continue this work to ensure we deliver our commitment to provide refuge to 20,000 Syrians.
- The UNHCR identifies people in need of resettlement based on the following criteria: women and girls at risk; survivors of violence and/or torture; refugees with legal and/or physical protection needs; refugees with medical needs or disabilities; children and adolescents at risk; persons at risk due to their sexual orientation or gender identity; and refugees with family links in resettlement countries.

How does the process work?

- UNHCR refer cases to the Home Office. We check they meet our eligibility criteria and carry out medical and security checks. We arrange exit visas from the host country and entry visas into the UK. At the same time, we pass the cases to a local authority who has asked to participate in the scheme. The Local Authority is asked to accept or reject cases. The referral forms give detail on family make up, age and specific needs. Further detail on any medical needs will follow shortly after via a full medical health assessment report. On accepting a case, local authorities then need to arrange housing, school places etc. In parallel we would agree an arrival date. We are working to make this process as quick as possible.

What if an area is new to resettlement?

- Local authorities will need to think carefully about whether they have the infrastructure and support networks needed to ensure the appropriate care and integration of these refugees. It would be worth speaking to existing resettlement areas to learn best practice. Regional Strategic Migration Partnerships can put you in touch.

How can local authorities find out more about the profiles and needs of the refugees they will be hosting?

- All cases will differ and it is very difficult to generalise. We do not have detail of the cases before UNHCR refer them to us. As soon as a local authority wants to participate, we will send these referrals that give detailed information on the individual cases. If authorities want a particular make up of cases, they should state this and we will do our best to match cases.

Will the 20,000 be on top of existing schemes?

- The Government will expand the existing Syrian VPR Scheme and we expect to resettle up to 20,000 Syrians in need of protection during this Parliament. This is in addition to those we resettle under Gateway and Mandate and the thousands who receive protection in the UK under normal asylum procedures.

How will these people be accommodated? Where will they go when they are here?

- The UK has been operating resettlement schemes for many years and we already have established and effective networks to accommodate and support resettled people. However, we recognise that the increase in numbers will require an expansion of current networks and the impact on local communities and infrastructure will need to be managed carefully. That is why we are working with a wide range of partners including local authorities and civil society organisations to ensure that people are integrated sensitively into local communities.
- Our existing dispersal policy is aimed at ensuring an equitable distribution of refugees across the country so that no individual local authority bears a disproportionate share of the burden. We are working closely with local authorities to ensure that this remains the case.

How will you ensure refugees are dispersed fairly and in a way that manages the impacts on local communities and services?

- We are determined to ensure that no local authority is asked to take more than the local structures are able to cope with. That is why we will be talking to local authorities and other partners over the coming weeks to ensure that capacity can be identified and the impact on those taking new cases can be managed in a fair and controlled way.

How will schools be supported to provide language support for refugee children?

- Financial support for English as an Additional Language (EAL) pupils is a matter for local discretion. The funding arrangements enable local authorities to allocate a proportion of their funding to schools on the basis of the number of pupils in each school who have EAL and who have been in the school system for a maximum of three years. The pupil rate for this is also decided locally and can therefore reflect specific challenges in the area. Schools can also use the additional money they receive through the pupil premium to raise the attainment of disadvantaged EAL pupils.
- Local authorities have the freedom to take account of high migration in their local funding formula, to address the additional costs of having a large number (over 10%) of pupils arriving at unusual times in the school year.
- Schools can access information about good practice in meeting the needs of EAL pupils - Ofsted has published some case studies showing good practice at schools with high proportions of pupils with EAL. Resources are also available from the National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum, an organisation that seeks to promote effective teaching and learning for EAL pupils in UK schools.

How will you ensure that there are enough schools places in areas where refugees are resettled?

- We have committed to investing £7bn on new school places over the next six years, and in the last Parliament funding for school places doubled to £5bn to create 445,000 additional places. Local Authority's are allocated funding for school places based on their own local data on school capacity and pupil forecasts, in which they take account of factors including rising birth rates, housing development, trends in internal migration and migration to England from elsewhere in the United Kingdom and from overseas. We continue to work with LAs to make sure that every child has a school place.

How can I become a foster carer for a refugee child?

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- We are not expecting the refugees arriving in the first months of the scheme to include unaccompanied children, but if you are interested in finding out more about fostering, you might wish to contact your local authority. They can provide you with details about applying to foster for them. You can also find out more about fostering by contacting Fosterline, a government funded service providing independent advice and support for people considering becoming foster carers. In addition, you might wish to look at information about applying to foster that Fostering Network give on their website at: <http://www.couldyoufoster.org.uk/>.
- Further information for foster carers is also available on GOV.UK : <https://www.gov.uk/foster-carers>. This page sets out the process people should follow and explains how much financial support and training foster carers can get.

I am interested in adopting an unaccompanied refugee child?

- We are not expecting the refugees arriving in the first months of the scheme to include unaccompanied children. Even if we do support unaccompanied children in the future it is unlikely that adoption will be an appropriate option for these children. The United Nations and other humanitarian charities advise that no new adoption applications should be considered in the period after a disaster or from a war zone before the authorities in that State are in a position to apply the necessary safeguards. This is especially true when civil authority breaks down or temporarily ceases to function.
- It is not uncommon in an emergency or unsettled situation for children to be temporarily separated from their parents or other family members who may be looking for them. Moreover, parents may send their children out of the area for their safety. Premature and unregulated attempts to organise the adoption of such a child abroad should be avoided and resisted with efforts to reunite children with relatives or extended family being given priority. So whilst some lone refugee children may come to the UK for temporary care, we would wish to support them to be reunited with their parents or other relatives where this is possible.

How can people help now?

- People can already make donations to charities and volunteer to help local refugee support groups. We would encourage that to continue but we will also be consulting partners on options to do more - including ways to sponsor refugees alongside those supported by the government.
- People can also refer to the Government release on the GOV.UK website <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/syria-refugees-what-you-can-do-to-help--2>

The British Red Cross has created a Crisis Helpline on 0800 107 8727 to triage calls to appropriate organisations.

Key facts and statistics on resettlement

- The UK operates three resettlement routes, Gateway, Mandate and the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation (VPR) Scheme, working closely with the UNHCR on each. The Gateway programme has run for 10 years and has resettled almost 6,400 people in that time, and aims to resettle around 750 people a year.
- On the VPR, we are working closely with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to identify some of the most vulnerable displaced Syrians and bring them to the UK.
- The scheme is helping those in the greatest need who cannot be supported effectively in the region by giving them protection and support in the UK – the scheme prioritises people requiring urgent medical treatment, survivors of torture and violence, and women and children at risk. The current criteria for acceptance under the scheme will be expanded to ensure more of those in the greatest need are resettled in the UK.
- Since the first arrivals in March 2014 to the end of June 2015 (the last published figures), 216 people were relocated to the UK under the Syrian VPR scheme.
- Since the crisis began in 2011 we have granted asylum or other forms of leave to almost 5,000 Syrian nationals and dependants through normal asylum procedures.
- In response to the increase in asylum claims, the UK introduced a concession in October 2012 for Syrian nationals who are already legally present in the UK, allowing them to extend their leave or change immigration category without leaving the UK. This currently runs to 28 February 2016.

How does the current Syrian Vulnerable Persons Scheme work?

The UK sets the criteria and then UNHCR identifies and submits potential cases for our consideration. Cases are screened and considered on the papers and we retain the right to reject on security, war crimes or other grounds. Once the screening process has been completed a full medical assessment is conducted by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in the host country. Full details of the case and medical history are sent to the local authority for assessment of need, including whether suitable accommodation and care are available locally. The local authority then provides details of the estimated costs.

Eligibility is then confirmed and IOM start the visa application process. UK Visas and Immigration International issue UK visas (3 months Leave Outside of the Rules) and on arrival, arrangements are made for Biometric Residence Permits to be issued with 5 years' humanitarian protection.

B

Worldwide trends

How many refugees are there worldwide?

- The UNHCR reports that by the end of 2014, the number of forcibly displaced individuals worldwide stood at 59.5 million. There are 19.5 million refugees worldwide. 51% of refugees were under 18 years old.

Where do most refugees come from?

- Syria is the world's largest source country of both internally displaced people (7.6 million) and refugees (3.88 million at the end of 2014). Afghanistan (2.59 million) and Somalia (1.1 million) are the next biggest refugee source countries. This is followed by Sudan (648,900) and South Sudan (616,200).

What are the reasons for refugee flows?

- The humanitarian situation in **Syria** continues to deteriorate. The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance now stands at 12.2 million, and four in every five Syrians live in poverty. Flagrant human rights violations, indiscriminate attacks against densely populated areas and targeting of civilian infrastructure, in particular aerial bombardment by the Assad regime, continues in violation of international norms.
- **Afghanistan** remains one of the poorest countries in the world, with 1 in 3 people living below the poverty line and without access to basic services or opportunities to support their families. The ongoing insurgency across many parts of the country means people are facing violence as part of their daily lives and has given rise to a sharp increase in population displacement. As of December 2014, UNHCR listed over 2.5m Afghans as refugees and over 800,000 Afghans are internally displaced.
- **Somalis** are the third largest group, following Eritreans and Sudanese, arriving in Europe from the East African region. They make up 9% of migrants to Europe. The main causes of migration from Somalia are understood to be spikes in insecurity and humanitarian need (driven by conflict and Al-Shabaab activity). There are also likely to be a significant number of 'economic migrants' looking for better economic opportunity than exists in Somalia. Large diaspora communities in the UK (thought to be 3-500,000) and elsewhere in Europe create a pull factor.
- We believe that **Sudan** is primarily a country of transit, though there are refugees fleeing conflict in Darfur. Numbers of economic migrants from Sudan are unknown - if someone claims to be from Darfur it is difficult to prove otherwise. The security services have periodic clamp-downs on Eritreans in Sudan (usually in Khartoum) with some forcible returns for not having the correct paperwork.

General Asylum Statistics

- There were 25,771 asylum applications (main applicants) in the UK in the year ending June 2015. (Including dependants, there were 32,508).
- In recent quarters, we have seen fewer applications from some countries with traditionally higher refusal rates (Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nigeria), and more from countries with higher grant rates (Eritrea, Syria, Sudan).
- In the year ending June 2015, the highest numbers of applications came from Eritrean (3,568), Pakistani (2,302) and Syrian (2,204) nationals (main applicants only). Including dependants, the largest number of asylum applications came from Eritrea (3,624), Pakistan (3,276) and Iran (2,533).
- Compared to the year ending June 2014, the number of initial decisions on asylum applications (main applicants) increased by 107% in the year ending June 2015, to 28,538 from 13,795. (Including dependants, initial decisions increased by 117%, to 38,373 from 17,697).
- The total number of outstanding initial decisions has fallen in recent quarters (main applicants only – Q3 2014: 18,149, Q4 2014: 17,067; Q1 2015: 12,878, Q2 2015: 12,368; main applicants and dependants – Q3 2014: 24,369, Q4 2014: 22,898; Q1 2015: 16,879, Q2 2015: 16,163).
- We are certifying more cases, thus refusing clearly unfounded cases a right of appeal in the UK. In the year ending June 2015, 14% of all refusals for main applicants were certified, unchanged from the year ending June 2014. (Including dependants, 15% of refusals were certified, compared with 14% in the previous year).

Support

- We currently support a total of over 36,000 asylum seekers (main applicants and dependants; sections 95, 98 & 4). At the end of June 2015, 30,457 asylum seekers and their dependants were being supported under Section 95.
- There are over 26,000 asylum seekers in dispersed accommodation, in over 200 local authorities. Our dispersal policy ensures a reasonable spread amongst those local authorities.

UASCs

- There were 2,168 asylum applications from Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASCs) in the year ending June 2015, an increase of 46% from the year ending June 2014 (1,488). These applications represented 8% of all main applications for asylum.
- Despite the recent increase in UASC applications, they remain below the peak of 3,976 in 2008.

Resettlement

- In the year ending June 2015, 166 Syrians were relocated to the UK under the VPR scheme (216 since the scheme began in March 2014). This is in addition to almost 5,000 Syrians (including dependants) who have been granted protection under our normal asylum rules since the crisis began in April 2011.

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- In the year ending June 2015, we resettled 640 refugees under the Gateway Resettlement Programme. Since 2004, we have resettled 6,380 refugees under the programme and we met our target in the last financial year (April 2014 to March 2015), resettling over 750 refugees.

Removals

- In the last two years (July 2013 to June 2015) there were over 8,500 enforced removals of people who had sought asylum at some stage (including dependants). In the same period there were over 5,500 voluntary departures of people who had sought asylum at some stage.

International comparisons

- The number of asylum applications to the EU in the year ending June 2015 was the highest it has been since 2002.
- There were an estimated 754,700 asylum applications by main applicants and dependants to the 28 EU countries in the year ending June 2015 (an increase of 65% on the previous year). Of these, the UK received 32,600 (4% of EU asylum intake) compared to 259,300 in Germany, 92,600 in Hungary and 78,400 in Sweden. In 2010, the EU received 241,100 applications for main applicants and dependants, and of this the UK received 22,600 (9% of EU asylum intake).
- The UK had the seventh highest number of asylum applications within the EU in the year ending June 2015 (fifth in year ending June 2014). In the year ending June 2015, Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Italy, France and Austria received more asylum applications than the UK.
- Asylum claims in Germany were eight times those in the UK (259,300 vs 32,600) in the year ending June 2015. Hungary had the second highest number of applications in the year ending June 2015 after being ranked ninth during the previous 12 months.
- When the relative size of resident populations of the 28 EU countries is taken into account, the UK ranked 16th in terms of asylum seekers per head of the population in the year ending June 2015 (it was also 16th in the previous year).

Report to Full Council – 28th October 2015

CHRISTMAS SWITCH ON – SATURDAY 5th DECEMBER 2015

1. Introduction

The event is in 3 parts:

- i Christmas Market
- i Lantern Parade
- i Switch On

A Christmas Market made up of local business, charity and organisational stalls, fair rides and stage entertainment. This will be augmented by a Lantern Parade and street entertainment and followed by the Switch on as the finale of the day. As we did in 2014, the Town Council has sought additional funding and grants to increase the number of lights and the size of the event we will be providing. To that end, we have secured funding to increase the festoon lighting down Southampton Road and into Christchurch Road as far as Lunns. In the Market Place we have permission to install lights to the existing lighting columns (x 4) on the right of the street and wall mounted (x 6) on the left. An additional 1000 bulbs will be added to each of the Christmas trees and they will be an additional 1800mm (6ft) higher than last year.

2. The Christmas Fair

We have asked local businesses to come out onto the High Street and sell their wares along with the local organisations and cottages industries which abound in the New Forest. We have offered pop up shelters and folding tables, having secured these with a grant last year, and adding to the resources this year along with an option for power. Last year we had 60 stalls filling the Market Place as far as the High Street and this year we are hoping to fill the whole High Street to Fridays Cross with some additional market sheds.

3. Entertainment

We hope to secure funding to provide 'Delay Towers' down the High Street which will ensure people hear the stage entertainment and announcements. During the day we will have a range of entertainment on the stage which is being built for us and donated afterwards as another RTC asset. Around the town we will have Dickensian Carol Singers in period clothes and Naughty Street Elves giving out sweets and encouraging children into the activities.

4. Children's Entertainment

There will be small fair rides around the Market Place along with side stalls, Santa's Grotto, Face Painting, a Nativity and Real Donkeys for children to engage with. In addition, the shop previously occupied by Tulip Craft will be turned into a Cinema for the day showing Christmas Movies. Children will be treated to popcorn and a drink for £1 entry fee and may be accompanied by a parent. Youth work staff and volunteers will be running this element of the day and parents can opt to leave their children to pop out and shop.

In the Meeting House, there will be a Lantern Workshop run by Elves all day for free and this will be provided by the previous owners of Tulip Craft, who will also be supported by volunteers dressed as Elves from Ringwood School. For any child turning up late or not able to attend the lantern workshop, we will provide a lantern at the start of the parade, from the Furlong to the Market Place.

C

5. Southampton Road/Fridays Cross

This has traditionally been a difficult area to draw people to and we will be working with the shops and businesses there to bring forward some new ideas, which include: Guess the location (a photo of an item or part of an item that you have to find) and children will get a reward at each location. The Print Trail (follow Reindeer Prints or Elf prints to find the treasure) around the High Street, Market Place and Southampton Road to discover a secret message and win a prize.

6. Lantern Parade

The Lantern Parade is open to all ages and will be led by Santa, Roger the Reindeer and Elves along with marching band, children and adults and groups wishing to participate. Starting from The Furlong they will march down Meeting House Lane, onto the Market Place and in front of the Stage where they will congregate until the switch on. Each child participating will receive a small gift from the Elves there.

7. Switch On

The Switch On will be carried out by the Mayor at this time and there will be a countdown to the lights going on. The plan this year is to have a ripple effect starting with the main tree, Market Place lights, column fittings and wall mounted lights then to the festoon lighting down the High Street. At the same time we have 2 Giant Snow Machines and 2 small Snow Machines blowing snow over the crowds (these will also be used throughout the day) and a great time to take a photo. We hope to have an 80 piece choir in place who will then start singing carols and encouraging people to join in.

8. Disbursement

Crowds will then be free to stay and enjoy the fair rides and entertainment up to 7pm while some of the packing down is taking place. At 7pm all entertainment will cease to allow the roads to be re-opened and equipment to be taken away.

9. Outline Timings

08:00	Road Closure In Place
10:00	Event Opens
11:00	Official Opening By Mayor / Dickensian Singers Start Programme
17:45	Lantern Parade Leaves Furlong
18:00	Lights On
19:00	Closure

For further information, please contact:

Steve Nash

Town Clerk

01425 484720

steve.nash@ringwood.gov.uk

RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
FULL COUNCIL MEETING
28th October 2015

COUNTY COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

HAMPSHIRE HIGHWAYS WEST – October 2015.

Traffic Management Winter Programme 2015-2016.

- i All HCC salt bins refilled to assist residents with smaller roads & pavements.
- i 2 new salt barns at Broadmarsh full.
- i Priority 1 routes (cleared first): A roads, some B roads, major bus routes, roads to emergency services, large schools, etc.
- i Priority 2 routes: remaining B roads & single access roads to villages.
- i Updates on road salting on [@Hantshighways](#) on Twitter
- i Information on salting routes, maps & community salt bins at www.hants.gov.uk/roads/weather-on-roads

Minor Traffic Management – Temporary Road Closures

- i Crow Lane between Moortown Road & Charles Lane.
- i Ringwood Road between North Ripley Road & Charles Lane.
- i No longer than 2 days duration anytime after 23 November 2015.

HCC & UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL.

- i From September 2015, HCC & Schools will take legal action if:-
 1. a child has unauthorised absence for 10 or more sessions (5 days),
 2. a child is continually late to school and unauthorised for 10 sessions,
 3. a child has any unauthorised absence during formal exams, assessments or testings.
- i Further advice and guidance for parents/carers are available at HCC website; <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendanceguidance-for-parents.htm>

HCC LABOUR MARKET SEPTEMBER 2015.

- i 5,941 unemployed, 88 fewer than August 2015, 1,808 fewer than Sept. 2014.

HCC & SYRIAN REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT PROGRAMME.

- i 5yr National Programme to bring into UK up to 20,000 refugees.
- i 1st tranche of 1,000 refugees to arrive before Christmas – all to go to North of England, which is very advanced in preparation and ready to go!
- i Consequently, no rush for South East Counties to come forward till 2016 and beyond.
- i There are significant challenges for South East Counties, e.g. availability of affordable rental housing, lack of Council Housing stock, criteria to deal with and fund refugees in 2 tier LA areas is unknown, etc.
- i Ministers have confirmed all existing benefits caps will be adhered to.

HCC CUSTOMER PHONE NUMBERS

- i Attached is a list of new contact telephone numbers for customers.
- i Switchboard & General Enquiries combined to one new number to improve first-call resolution.
- i New number for concessionary travel to include Blue Badge enquiries.

D

HCC COUNCILLOR MEETINGS – September & October 2015.

- i 7th Sept – HCC New Forest Access Forum meeting at Lepe Country Park.
- i 10th Sept – HCC Conservative Group meeting at Winchester.
- i 15th Sept – HCC Economy, Transport & Environment meeting at Winchester.
- i 16th Sept – HCC Community First New Forest Board Meeting at Greyfriars.
- i 15th Oct – HCC Conservative Group Meeting at Winchester.
- i 22nd Oct – HCC Full Council Meeting at Winchester.

W Steve Rippon-Swaine FRICS DipGS
Hampshire County Councillor

New Forest

Statistics for September 2015



Working with



Hampshire
County Council

277

Potholes repaired

6

Vehicle accesses
completed

106

Square metres of footway
patching completed *not
including vehicle accesses

1147

Gullies and
catchpits cleared

19167

Square metres of carriageway
resurfacing completed

13

Two hour response
emergencies attended

5

Drainage jobs
completed

169

Jobs completed (excluding emergency,
tree and vegetation maintenance,
structures or planned works)



*Conversion – 1sqm = 1.2sq yard

Service name	Old number	New number
Adult Services	0845 603 5630	0300 555 1386
OT Direct	0845 600 4555	0300 555 1378
Children's Services	0845 603 5620	0300 555 1384
School Admissions	0845 603 5623	0300 555 1377
IOW Children's Services	0845 650 0097	0300 300 0117
Countryside/ Rights of Way	0845 603 5636	0300 555 1391
Libraries	0845 603 5631	0300 555 1387
Registrations	0845 603 5637	0300 555 1392
Roads & Transport	01329 225393	0300 555 1388
Recycling, Waste & Planning	0845 603 5634	0300 555 1389
Blue Badge & Concessionary Travel	New name	0300 555 1376
General Enquiries & Switchboard	New name	0300 555 1375
Payments	0845 603 5626	0300 555 1374
Social Care out-of-hours	0845 600 4555	0300 555 1373
Text Phone	0845 603 5625	0300 555 1390