

Amendment to Motion – SYRIAN REFUGEES

This council notes:

More than 3 million Syrians have had to flee their country since the war began more than three years ago, and a further 6.5 million are reported to have been forcibly displaced from their homes within the country. The UN High Commissioner for Refugees has stated, 'Syria has become the greatest tragedy of this century – a disgraceful humanitarian calamity with suffering and displacement unparalleled in recent history'.

This Council also notes:

- In January of this year the UK Government announced a scheme to provide protection in this country for vulnerable refugees as our part of an international response which is working to a target of resettling some 33,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2014 – 3 months ago, and 130,000 by the end of 2016. Under the UK scheme local authorities have been invited by the Home Office to volunteer to help by participating in the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation (VPR) scheme.
- However, that the VPR funds are only for one year, after which costs would transfer to the local authority.
- That the Government's cap on housing benefit and overall benefit cap mean that very few private rented homes would be available in Islington to accommodate refugees; and these people are therefore the latest victims of the Government's 'welfare reforms'.

This Council resolves:

To play a part in this important national and international initiative to respond to the suffering and trauma of refugee families; building on the dialogue that has taken place between the Leader of the Council and Citizens over recent months.

To work with any appropriate community and faith groups that wish to accommodate refugees and to co-ordinate necessary support.

To liaise with neighbouring authorities and all interested parties, including our MEPs, local MPs and housing associations, to make representations to the Government for it to provide adequate financial support to meet the costs of accommodating refugees, in-light of the caps on housing benefit and the benefit cap more generally imposed by the current Government.