

**COUNCIL – 17 DECEMBER 2015
QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

Agenda item 7 refers

1. **Councillor Eddie Johnson to Councillor Jon Clempner, Leader of the Council**

Since Full Council on Thursday, 24th September, 2015 when the Council passed the motion on Refugee Crisis which said:

Harlow Council commits to playing its part to help and support refugees from conflict zones who arrive in the Town and recognise that they have a right to be safe from persecution and become part of our community;

How many Syrian Refugees has the Council housed?

Reply from Councillor Jon Clempner, Leader of the Council

The Council motion on 24 September set out how Harlow Council commits to playing its part to help and support refugees from conflict zones who arrive in the Town and recognise that they have a right to be safe from persecution and become part of our community. It also called on the Government to recognise the humanitarian need and to make available the appropriate funding and resources to provide a safe haven.

The Home Office have now confirmed the funding secured through the recent Spending Review and have advised that that years two to five funding will be allocated on a tariff basis over four years. Notification of this to the Council was received from the Home Office on 27 of November 2015.

Harlow Council, along with other Essex Councils is working with Essex County Council who is establishing a rolling quarterly programme to rehouse Syrian refugees throughout Essex. The proposal is to house four or five families at a time in a Council area. It is likely that one or two Councils will assist each quarter, with the Councils assisting in quarter one of 2016 having already been identified. It is likely that Harlow Council will be asked to assist from quarter two, 2016 onwards.

In readiness for this the Council is working with the voluntary services and church to establish the networks that are already available in the town to enable a cohesive support network to be provided. The Council is also identifying other agencies that should be involved such as the Department of Works and Pensions. The intended approach is to have a named person within each organisation who will be able to either provide support or signpost to others who can provide the necessary support. It is intended that Harlow Council, Rainbow Services and the Church will each have a 'link

Officer' to ensure a 'joined up' approach in Harlow. Harlow Council will be compiling the contact information and will make contact with those organisations that have not already offered to provide support but may be a good position to do so.

In addition to the above, the Council has identified a lead officer who will be assessing the suitability of accommodation for Syrian refugees and ensuring that it is available at the appropriate time.

2. **Councillor Simon Carter to Councillor Jon Clempner, Leader of the Council**

At last week's Cabinet, in answer to questions over the governance of the Local Authority Trading Company, agenda item 11, you said there were no specific plans to establish additional LATCs. By implication there are some plans to create further companies. In order to provide further transparency over the governance arrangements, can you provide examples of the functions of those companies?

Reply from Councillor Jon Clempner, Leader of the Council

As already stated there are no specific plans to create additional LATC's. The creation of LATC's is now seen increasingly by many councils as an innovative approach to address the significant reductions in Government funding. The creation of a parent group structure now will provide the flexibility in the future should the Council determine to create other LATC's and to not do so now would create a risk of further unnecessary expenditure and time at a later date.