

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Public Protection
DATE	10th March 2026
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Resettlement Delivery Plan Annual Progress Review
REPORT NUMBER	F&C/26/036
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Eleanor Sheppard
CHIEF OFFICER	Jacqui McKenzie
REPORT AUTHOR	Gill Strachan
TERMS OF REFERENCE	1.1.1 and 1.1.5

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides a progress update against the Resettlement Delivery Plan 2025-27 approved by Communities, Housing and Public Protection in March 2025.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note the progress made in 2025/26 against the Resettlement Delivery Plan outcomes in Appendix A;
- 2.2 Note, that following the completion of the first year of delivery, the intention to consult with the Collaboration for Health Equity in Scotland to help inform future plans;
- 2.3 Approve the amendments to the Resettlement Delivery Plan and instruct the Chief Officer - Housing to keep the plan under review given the rapidly changing environment; and
- 2.4 Instruct the Chief Officer- Housing to prepare a Resettlement Delivery Plan 2027/29 for consideration and approval at Committee in March 2027.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 The Resettlement Delivery Plan 2025/27 was approved by Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee on 11th March 2025. The Chief Officer-Housing was instructed to report progress against the Plan to the Communities, Housing and Public Protection Committee on an annual basis.

- 3.2 At mid-2025, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) reported that the number of displaced people who have fled their homes due to conflict, persecution and human rights violations was over 117 million, 49 million of whom were children.
- 3.3 The UK Home Office reported in the year ending September 2025, that the UK offered protection to 171,000 people through safe and legal (humanitarian) routes, either to come to or remain in the country. This is 95% more than the previous year, largely due to the introduction of the Ukraine Permission Extension (UPE) scheme, which allows people already in the UK under the Ukraine schemes to continue their protection and 110,000 asylum applications were made, an increase of 13% from the previous year. (Source: [Asylum claims and decisions – Asy D01, Asy D02 and Asy D03](#))
- 3.4 The rapidly changing national context continues to influence the shape of local provision:
- A Ministry of Defence sponsored Transitional Accommodation hotel site was established in June 2025 for those on the Afghan Resettlement Programme and will be operational until March 2026.
 - Two former student blocks were procured on behalf of the Home Office as dispersal accommodation for asylum seekers, with capacity to house up to 305 asylum-seekers.
 - The procurement of asylum dispersal properties by Mears Group on behalf of the Home Office increased from 45 properties in March 2025 to 143 properties in March 2026.
 - The announcement from the UK Government to extend the Ukrainian visa scheme for a further 2 years upon the ending of the current Extension Scheme means that the exclusive occupancy of the c500 Ukraine Long Term Housing Fund properties by Ukrainian households will continue and the properties will not be released back for general use.

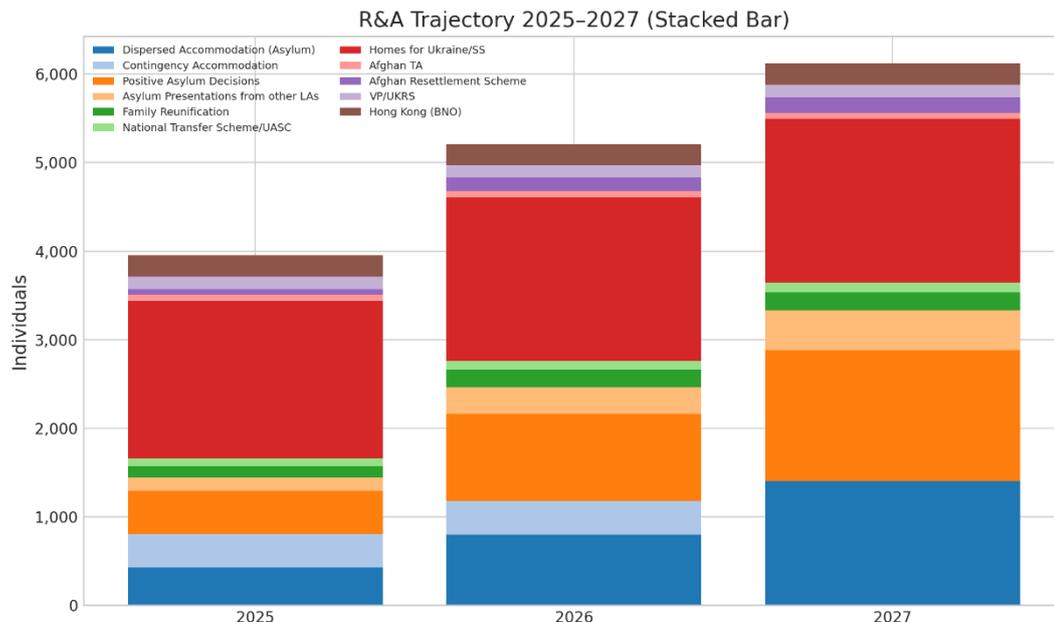
These developments serve to underscore the challenge of predicting, with any level of accuracy, the demands arising from resettlement and asylum arrivals.

- 3.5 Since March 2025 there has been a continuing increase in the number of displaced people in Aberdeen, who have arrived either through planned or unplanned routes, confirming the trajectory of an increase in numbers:
- 56 Ukrainian individuals have arrived through the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. There are now c.1800 Ukrainians known to be living in the city and who have received assistance from the Resettlement Team.
 - A small number of (under 5) Afghan households have settled in Aberdeen.
 - 136 Afghan individuals have temporarily resided in Transitional Accommodation.
 - 5 households have arrived through the United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme.
 - 370 asylum seekers received a positive decision in Aberdeen and assumed refugee status, enabling access to public services. 194

individuals are then thought to have left Aberdeen, leading to a net increase of 176.

- 115 refugees (former asylum seekers) who received their positive decision in another Local Authority have migrated to Aberdeen for settlement.
- 187 individuals have arrived through the Family Reunification Scheme, with a further 34 individuals expected.

3.6 Migration patterns depend on many different factors and projections cannot be precise. However, based on arrivals since 2021 and existing resettlement commitments and Home Office policy intentions, it is anticipated that the number of displaced households making Aberdeen their home is set to increase by over 30% over the next 12 months largely due to national asylum dispersal but also family reunification and the Afghan Relocation Programme (ARP). The extension of the Ukraine Permission Scheme (UPE) for a further 24 months beyond the current extension period, means that the Ukrainian population is likely to remain in situ and there are outstanding commitments to the United Kingdom Resettlement Scheme (UKRS). A further increase of 17.5% is anticipated in 26/27. This level of demand will continue to place pressure on local services.



3.7 Notwithstanding the pressures, significant progress has been made in achieving the Year 1 (2025/26) outcomes in the Resettlement Delivery Plan (please see Appendix A), notably:

- A strong and committed **community development approach** to support integration and address social isolation, empowerment, personal achievement and active participation. Households report that it is important for them to have a sense of belonging in the place where they stay, that they feel safe and that it should be a place they can relate to. Working in partnership with the Community Learning and Development service, opportunities have been created to enhance learning and build strong

community connections. Since March 2025, 215 events have taken place, with participants reflecting a healthy cross representation (age, gender, nationalities) of the New Scot population. On average 97 New Scots engaged in CLD provisions every month with 890 learner hours delivered.

- A focused approach to identifying and **maximising housing opportunities** for all, including agreement with Scottish Government to a Variation to the Ukraine Long Term Housing Fund contract to enable the return of surplus properties to Aberdeen City Council for mainstream provision; resettlement housing needs recognised in the Local Housing Strategy, the redirection of resources to implement a project to reduce the use of temporary accommodation for those leaving Home Office asylum accommodation and, ensuring those entitled to apply for the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme did so, to avoid becoming ineligible for public support, thereby mitigating any risk of housing costs not being met (over 500 ACC tenancies are held by Ukrainian households).
- The satisfactory completion of the **Internal Audit** actions and a rigorous approach to **risk and resource management**, ensuring the service was able to flex to respond timeously to the unplanned levels of need, for example, resourcing the Transitional Accommodation with no additional ACC staffing costs incurred.
- Following assessment and through the provision of **targeted support with the aim of building self-sufficiency**, 813 displaced households have been helped to increase their knowledge and cultural understanding of life in the UK to a sufficient capacity level that they no longer need the assistance of the Resettlement Team, and now engage with mainstream services as and when required.
- Establishing and embedding a number of **key processes**, to enable agility. These processes will now be maintained.

Appendix A provides a comprehensive summary of progress, and highlights tasks which:

- are fully completed or are no longer a priority
- are complete and will now be maintained
- are in progress with work continuing into the second year of the Plan
- will be progressed over the coming year
- new priorities that have emerged and have been added to the Plan.

3.8 Looking forward, Year 2 of the Plan (2026/27), provides an opportunity to continue to build on the work already undertaken. Consultation and ongoing dialogue about priorities, both with service-users and strategic partners at the Strategic Partnership Group is a key feature of the resettlement approach and the priorities identified through these forums have enabled a refinement of our focus for 2027 into 4 key areas of need across the determinates of good health.

3.9 Communities and Housing:

Having a safe and suitable place to live is at the core of integration and every household who settles in Aberdeen requires long-term housing as part of our ambition to address inequalities. The need to establish and support **long-term housing solutions** for displaced households is a key outcome for Year 2 in the Resettlement Delivery Programme and will include:

- consideration of options for larger households,
- overseeing the housing options for those affected by the removal of the UK Government Thank You Payments for Hosts of Ukrainian households with a view to preventing homeless applications, and,
- a review of the process and cost avoidance outcomes of the project to reduce the use of temporary accommodation for those asylum-seekers who have received a positive decision and subject to successful outcomes, scale the project in line with the anticipated increase in this cohort.

3.10 Economic Stability:

The increase in migration detailed above, should be viewed against the backdrop of falling population levels within Aberdeen City, declining birth rates and an aging population. New Scots, who are successfully supported to thrive in our city, could help reduce the significant risks around a reduced working age population. However, the Migration Observatory report that refugees have lower qualifications and employment rates than the UK born. Data shows that people who come to the UK to seek asylum tend to have lower levels of education compared to other migrants and the UK-born population. While around 16% hold high-level qualifications such as university degrees, a significant 30% have no formal qualifications – compared to just 8% among the UK born. Employment rates are low. Source: [Asylum and refugee resettlement in the UK - Migration Observatory](#)

3.11 In addition, the UK economic environment and job market is very different for those who arrive through United Nations Refugee Agency programmes and asylum programmes. Asylum-seekers right to work is restricted whilst their claim is being assessed and a lack of funding prevents any work-based activities being provided whilst they are resident in Contingency Accommodation, meaning they are unprepared for work when they receive a decision and Home Office support ends. This increases the risk of exploitation from unscrupulous business owners who can offer immediate, but often unregulated work.

3.12 A key priority therefore in Year 2, is to work in partnership with providers to commission a suite of **employability provision** which maximises the opportunities presented by those who are of working-age and who choose to settle in Aberdeen. This will include:

- Developing a cost -effective programme of service provision, events and skill building opportunities to support New Scots access paid employment, addressing barriers with both services users and local employers.
- Developing opportunities for supported volunteering opportunities by engaging organisations that support volunteering to ensure these are accessible and adapted where necessary to support New Scot engagement.

3.13 In addition, we will engage partners in discussion to address and build resource around exploitation in the city, to raise awareness of the impact and consequences.

3.14 Education and Lifelong Learning

Despite additional funding being secured in recent years, there remains insufficient provision of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes locally, to meet the levels of demand amongst the displaced population. Without competency in the English language, opportunities for employment and education progress are significantly limited and health, wellbeing and integration outcomes compromised. There may also be an impact on children whose parents are unable to support their school learning.

3.15 A priority for Year 2 is to review current provision with a view to collaboratively establishing an **ESOL Delivery Plan** which ensures English language learning opportunities are available for every displaced person who settles in Aberdeen. This will include:

- Consideration of the delivery capacity in-house and across Third Sector providers,
- Consideration of use of existing funding streams to expand provision,
- Exploring alternative and diverse ways to learn English outside of the classroom, including with support from the faith community,
- Developing resources to enable self-directed learning.

3.16 Neighbourhood and Environment

Similar to many Local Authorities across the UK, Aberdeen has seen an increase in community tension incidents, including anti-immigration protests and disorder which have been predominantly but not exclusively, focused on asylum accommodation sites. Building enduring social connections and harmony is critical to the overall wellbeing of our city and a priority in Year 2, will be to contribute to a shared endeavour to develop a **Community Cohesion Plan** which:

- Builds on the work undertaken in Year 1 to support communities feel connected, supported and safe,
- Supports learning and capacity-building,
- Promotes shared ownership and collective leadership for community wellbeing and
- Provides the collective framework, response and plan of action to support integration and community cohesion.

3.17 The Resettlement Delivery Plan 2025-27 was developed following extensive engagement with key Partners and by reflecting on the experiences of New Scots who have been supported. Documentation has been reviewed by and with the Health Determinants Research Collaboration (HDRC), including an overview of systematic reviews on the “Health and social care needs of adult asylum seekers and their experiences of accessing care services”. The

priorities for Year 2 have been discussed and agreed at the Strategic Partnership Group which comprises representatives from across Community Planning Aberdeen. The work to inform the 2027/29 Resettlement Delivery Plan will be developed in collaboration with the HDRC.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This Plan aims to balance the institutional financial risk associated with supporting an increasing number of New Scots in the city with the significant economic and social diversity opportunities presented by those who choose to make the city their home. Funding specific to each resettlement/asylum schemes continues to be received from the UK Government on a per person basis to provide a range of support and reduce the impact on Council and partner services.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no direct environmental implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

7. RISK

7.1. The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement.

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Pace of unplanned resettlement and asylum demand and risk of harm. Impact of reducing population.	Delivery Plan and governance arrangements support mitigations to manage impact. The impact of a reducing population could be mitigated through the effective	M	Yes

		settlement of those seeking refuge in the city.		
Compliance	Non-compliance with New Scots Integration Strategy and Delivery Plan	Delivery Plan supports compliance with the New Scots Integration Strategy and Delivery Plan	L	Yes
Operational	Unplanned impacts on services	Delivery Plan provides a framework to mitigate against unexpected and unplanned service demand.	M	Yes
Financial	Financial and expenditure impacts due to excessive service demand	Delivery Plan mitigates financial risk by maximising funding opportunities and controlling costs. Internal Audit actions supported increased risk management actions relating to wider financial impact of resettlement and asylum.	L L	Yes Yes
Reputational	Favourable reputation in this field could be damaged and public perception affected.	Delivery Plan details accountability and governance arrangements. Delivery Plan promotes a community development approach to support integration. Addition of a Community Cohesion Strategy in 26/27 will support positive relations.	M	Yes
Environment / Climate	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes

8. OUTCOMES

COUNCIL DELIVERY PLAN 2025-26	
	Impact of Report

<p>Council Delivery Plan</p> <p>Aberdeen City Council Policy Statement</p> <p><u>Working in Partnership for Aberdeen</u></p>	<p>The Resettlement Delivery Plan outcomes are structured around the social determinants of health – children and families & lifelong learning, economic stability, communities and housing, neighbourhood and environment and health and social care, aligning with the framework of the Council Delivery Plan. The service in particular supports Strategic Priorities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce Child Poverty • Reduce homelessness <p>The outcomes delivered in the Resettlement Delivery Plan 25/27 support the delivery of the following aspect of the policy statement:-</p> <p>Aberdeen City is a welcoming, peaceful and safe place to live, work and visit:</p> <p>This is evidenced, for example, through the assessments of community needs undertaken with New Scots to support their integration into local communities resulting in 93 referrals for additional support and the community development approach to engage communities in meaningful participation to build social connections and community resilience= 215 events were delivered. Work in 2027 in relation to supporting community cohesion will further support this policy objective.</p>
<p><u>Local Outcome Improvement Plan</u></p>	
<p>Prosperous Economy Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The Resettlement Delivery Plan supports the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 1 – 20% reduction in the percentage of people who report they have been worried they would not have enough food to eat and/ or not be able to heat their home.</p> <p>The Resettlement Delivery Plan has a range of KPIs related to budgeting and managing and maximising income.</p>
<p>Prosperous People Stretch Outcomes</p>	<p>The Resettlement Delivery Plan supports the delivery of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stretch Outcome 3 – 95% of all children will reach their expected developmental milestones by their 27-30 month review by 2026 through the delivery of parenting and family support and improving health and reducing child poverty inequalities. - Stretch Outcome 10 - Healthy life expectancy (time lived in good health) is five years longer by 2026, through supporting vulnerable and disadvantaged people, families and groups

	and providing individuals and communities with the social resources needed to reduce feelings of loneliness and social isolation.
Community Empowerment Stretch Outcomes	The proposals within this report support the delivery of LOIP Stretch Outcome 16 – 50% of people report they feel able to participate in decisions that help change things for the better by 2026. A key priority for 26/27 is an increased community cohesion approach which will further contribute to this outcome.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	Previous Integrated Impact Assessment relating to Resettlement Delivery Plan 2025/27 has been reviewed and no changes required, I confirm this has been discussed and agreed with Jacqui McKenzie, Chief Officer, Housing on 28 January 2026
Data Protection Impact Assessment	DPIA26-0013
Other	Not Applicable

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Resettlement Delivery Plan Paper for Communities, Housing and Public Protection, March 2025

11. APPENDICES

11.1 Appendix A – CHPP Resettlement Delivery Plan Progress Update

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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