

New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy Delivery Plan

Summary and Recommendations

Further to the agreement of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy by Leaders in February 2024, this paper updates the Board on the development of the strategy's associated Delivery Plan 2024-2025. It seeks endorsement of the attached plan and proposed next steps further to its planned publication at the end of June 2024.

The Board is invited to:

- i. Approve the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy Delivery Plan subject to the caveats set out in paragraph 6; and
- ii. Agree that COSLA officers continue to engage with New Scots partners to deliver and improve the plan.

References

Previous reports on the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy:

- LD24031A New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy

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Date Considered: June 2024



New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy Delivery Plan

Purpose

1. Further to the agreement of the New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy by Leaders in February 2024, this paper updates the Board on the development of the Delivery Plan associated with the new Strategy. It seeks endorsement of the attached plan and proposed next steps further to its planned publication at the end of June 2024.

Current COSLA Position

2. The third New Scots Refugee Integration Strategy has been divided into a [Strategic Framework](#), published at the end of March 2024, and successive Delivery Plans. COSLA has been working with Scottish Government, Scottish Refugee Council and other partners to draft the first Delivery Plan which is due for publication at the end of June 2024.

What is changing?

3. Discussions around drafting this first Delivery Plan have been challenging, both because of the short time available and because the partners – COSLA, Scottish Government, and Scottish Refugee Council (SRC) – have had to work hard to find agreement both on the content and the format of this first plan.
4. The draft plan is at Appendix A. Scottish Government's legal team are currently reviewing the document, so it is subject to change. A small number of other partners are still to confirm their actions and those, along with any feedback provided by the Board, will also be fed back to the New Scots partners in order that final changes can be incorporated prior to publication.
5. Items in the Delivery Plan have been drafted in response to research undertaken from 2020-23 as well a range of consultation exercises. This has included a set of five formal consultation events held in late 2023 across Scotland, involving a significant number of local authority officers, a more focussed consultation exercise on governance undertaken by SRC with lived experience partners, smaller refugee-led consultations, and a series of consultations led by COSLA with local authority staff delivering support to displaced persons, refugees and asylum seekers.

Proposed COSLA Position

6. COSLA officers are broadly content with the plan but would recommend the Board consider some particular points, summarised as follows:
 - a. **Inclusion of outcomes and measurements**
COSLA officers were concerned that elements relating to the impact of the actions and more detail on the outcomes were not included in the final draft plan. Therefore, as part of the next plan, officers would recommend the inclusion of not only short-term outcomes, but also medium- and longer-term outcomes and means of measuring success against each deliverable. This will ensure that appropriate

monitoring, evaluation, learning, and continuous improvement is built in to the plans.

b. **Strengthened partnership working**

The compressed timescale for producing this Delivery Plan has meant key partnerships that were an important part of the previous New Scots Strategies have not been fully utilised. There is potential to include a broader range of partners, which would improve services and the experience of integration for New Scots. Examples might include: RSLs and their representative bodies, NHS, British Red Cross, the WEA, Mears, local colleges and local authority partnerships for learning and employability.

c. **Duration of the plan**

Emphasis should be placed on the plan being subject to annual review to ensure that it evolves through robust planning, monitoring, and evaluation; corresponds to funding cycles; and is responsive to a rapidly changing world, including the potential for a changed political context given the forthcoming UK General Election. Scottish Government is currently funding key actions in the plan to 31 March 2025. This includes £1m for community-based projects and separate funding for the SRC Refugee Support Service. Without a review leading to the next annual Delivery Plan, there will be no monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of this initial funding, nor will learning from these activities inform the next iteration of the plan in a timely way.


- The New Scots Partnership is also working towards the inclusion of New Scots in the delivery and governance of the Plan in more meaningful ways. This will include the re-establishment of the New Scots Core Group who will oversee the delivery of the plan.

Next Steps

- COSLA officers will continue to work with the New Scots partners to deliver on the actions within the plan and will continue to work alongside local authorities to support them in their role supporting New Scots arriving and settling in Scotland.

Date Considered: June 24

Contribution to agreed COSLA Plan and Verity House Agreement:

<p>COSLA Plan 22-27</p> 	<p>Priority Areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen Local Democracy <input type="checkbox"/> Secure Sustainable Funding <input type="checkbox"/> Improve the Wellbeing of Individuals, Families and Communities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Enhance Education and Support for Children and Young People <input type="checkbox"/> Deliver a Just Transition to a Net Zero Economy <input type="checkbox"/> Support the Most Vulnerable in our Communities <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Verity House Agreement</p>	<p>Shared Priorities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tackling Poverty <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Just transition to net zero <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainable Public Services <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>