

Appendix A
Draft Cabinet response to recommendations of
the Housing and Homelessness Panel of the Scrutiny Committee

The document sets out the draft response of the Cabinet Member to recommendations made by the Housing and Homelessness Panel on 05 July 2023 concerning Future Resettlement Commitments for New Refugee Families. The Cabinet is asked to amend and agree a formal response as appropriate.

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Recommendation	Agree?	Comment
<p>1) That the Council clarifies its position in relation to the flexibility within its commitment to resettle more than 8 refugee families per year for the next 5 years; explicitly stating that any significant surplus will be rolled into the following year's commitment, but that there is capacity to support a small number of additional families in any given year.</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>The report recommends to Cabinet a commitment of 8 households a year for resettlement, as long as conditions outlined in paragraph 21 are met. In addition, it recommends delegation of authority to exceed that number in any given year. This provision has been included to ensure that, if opportunities to rehouse more households become available over the 5 year period, the ability is there to proceed quickly without additional approval, in line with the Council's strategic objectives. It is not anticipated that the Council would exceed the 8 households significantly each year, due to resourcing limitations, but in particular due to the very limited supply of suitable housing for families needing resettlement, as part of the broader supply and housing need challenges Oxford is facing. Any households resettled through the scheme above the 8 annually will be counted against the profile for the next year. This is because over the course of the 5 years we are aiming to resettle 40 families and this provision has been included as resettlement is often inconsistent, with</p>

		households sometimes arriving rapidly in a short period, followed by gaps, driven by our ability to procure properties. It may be that in practice we have some years that the 8 is exceeded, followed by other years when it is not. This provision therefore provides an ongoing view on if we are on track to meet our overall commitments or not.
2) That the Council considers the language used within future reports and documents to ensure that individuals and families entering the UK having fled war, conflict and/or persecution are given equal status regardless of their country of origin.	Yes	The utmost effort goes into using the right language when drafting reports and documents in order to be clear in meaning, and to describe the status of clients who have come to Oxford fleeing war, conflict and persecution in the most appropriate language. Added effort will be put into future reports to seek to use more consistent language to describe different groups of people when possible. However, in order to ensure accuracy and clear legal meaning, at times reports must use the language prescribed in legislation, to ensure clear application of decisions made by Cabinet and Council, and to ensure compliance with ring-fenced central government funding.