WC Information Item

Subject:	First multi-agency meeting helps prepare the way to welcome refugees
Officer Contact Details:	24 September 2015 Sue Ellison Communications team
Further details available:	See below

Summary of announcement:

Wiltshire Council is joining with public sector partners and the community as it prepares the way to welcome refugees into the county.

The Refugee Programme Board met this week with health and police partners joining Wiltshire Council to help assess capacity for welcoming refugees.

Members of the board have given careful consideration to health, housing and education as preparations take shape. They will now liaise closely with central government advising how many refugees could settle in the county.

Wiltshire Council leader Jane Scott said: "Together with our partners we are making plans so that the right support is in place to ensure refugees can make Wiltshire their home. We want them to be part of our communities permanently, having the support they need to become self-sufficient, finding jobs and settling in Wiltshire.

"We'll now be working closely with central government as we advise how many refugees we can welcome to the county and look forward to preparing the way to help them settle into our communities.

"There is a huge amount of support being offered by communities locally, and currently the best organisations to contact at this time are the international aid organisations such as the Red Cross, Unicef and Oxfam. We will also be working with the voluntary and community sector in the county to provide support."

For more information contact communications on 01225 713370/713115/713116.

Details for the international aid organisations: www.redcross.org.uk/refugeecrisis, www.unicef.org.uk/refugee-crisis and www.oxfam.org.uk/RefugeeCrisis.

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