

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 20 October 2015

BY: Depute Chief Executive (Partnerships and Community Services)

SUBJECT: Refugee Crisis – Request for Financial Assistance

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to provide 'one-off' financial support to East Lothian Calaid.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to:-
- (i) Note the East Lothian community response in providing everyday essential items for individuals and families currently living in Calais refugee camps; and
 - (ii) Approve the provision of financial support to assist with the everyday operational costs associated with the voluntary effort that has been established, and in particular to contribute towards transport costs in moving goods to Calais.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 East Lothian Council has received a request from Calaid seeking financial support to assist in their efforts in collecting, packaging and preparing for transport everyday essential items that will provide shelter and warmth for families fleeing the Syrian crisis and encamped in sites in Calais.
- 3.2 Calaid is a national network that has been established to provide humanitarian support to people displaced from war-torn countries, such as Syria. The organisation has set up an East Lothian branch, which is a Social Enterprise, and is also in the process setting up as a community interest company in Scotland.

3.3 A group of volunteers have come together and are working together with Calaid in gathering large quantities of everyday essential items, including clothing and other goods, that have been donated by East Lothian residents and other organisations existing in East Lothian who wish to contribute and assist with the initiative. A small team of Calaid representatives from East Lothian have travelled to Calais to deliver emergency supplies and, just as importantly, to gather further intelligence about the precise needs and requirements on the ground, which will inform their future activities.

3.4 Calaid East Lothian has advised that the response from the people of East Lothian has been overwhelming and they have been inundated with donations. Currently, 30+ (a growing number) volunteers have signed up to assist Calaid. The organisation and co-ordination of such support does attract costs, most particularly the rental costs associated with the premises, (currently located at West Barns), and transport costs in relation to the movement of goods.

3.5 Calaid has attracted some modest funding to assist with their efforts and they are confident that they will be able to fundraise locally and nationally to meet their everyday ongoing costs. In the early weeks of their effort, however, they are challenged in securing sufficient funding to support their daily, weekly and monthly costs. The monthly costs to support the project amount to some £14,500. Calaid is confident that their operational cost will reduce over time but there is an immediate need for financial assistance. The monthly operational costs are made up as follows:-

• Management	£ 2,500
• Volunteer Support (Refreshments, Food, Etc.)	£ 3,000
• Transport	£ 8,000
• Current Warehouse Rental	<u>£ 1,000</u>
Total	£14,500

3.6 Having examined the powers and authority that the Council may use to support matters of this nature, it is considered appropriate to use the power to advance wellbeing, in that a significant number of East Lothian residents are involved with the initiative which as a consequence adds to their personal development in the voluntary effort and contributing to Growing our Communities.

3.7 The recommendations contained within this report seek Cabinet approval to award the sum of £14,500 to assist Calaid East Lothian's efforts. Cabinet is also asked to note that in response to an urgent and immediate requirement for assistance to help with transport and warehousing costs, the Head of Communities & Partnerships, under delegated authority, arranged for an award of £1,000 from Community

Partnerships grant funding to enable the organisation to address pressing financial demands. This payment was processed in the second week of October 2015.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The recommendations as set out in this report will assist the Council in meeting its objective in the Council Plan, in terms of Growing our Communities.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 This report is not directly applicable to the wellbeing of equalities groups and Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 **Financial** - The costs associated with the requested financial and in kind support will be accommodated through the Council's Communities & Partnerships Service.
- 6.2 **Personnel** - There are no personnel implications arising from this report.
- 6.3 **Other** - None.

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Correspondence between Calaid East Lothian and East Lothian Council officials.

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