

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Full Council meeting, Thursday 10 November 2016

Liberal Democrat Motion on Refugees

To be proposed by Councillor Dine Romero

This Council notes that:

1. Bath & North East Somerset Council, on an all-party basis, expressed a strong willingness to the Home Office be involved in the Government's national resettlement scheme. It established an officer working group which established the capacity within the area for this, particular relating to support services, housing supply and medical interventions.
2. The Council accepted 25 individuals (5 families) during 2015/16 under the Home Office Syrian Vulnerable People Resettlement programme.
3. The Council has received 10 unaccompanied asylum seeking children.
4. The Council is grateful to the people of Bath & North East Somerset for the many offers of support from citizens, voluntary organisations, faith groups and other organisations to assist in resettlement and confirms its commitment to build on that spirit of welcome.
5. Refugees contribute a huge amount to local communities throughout the UK.
6. The Council has agreed in principle to sponsor an application by the local group 'Bath Welcomes Refugees' for Community Sponsorship.
7. The Chair of the Local Government Association's Asylum, Refugee and Migration task group has called for Councils to receive more funding from central government to cope with resettlement challenges.

This Council resolves to:

1. Commend the work of Council officers and staff from the Clinical Commissioning Group in responding quickly and efficiently to urgent requests for resettling the most vulnerable of the refugees during 2015/16.
2. Continue to actively address requests from the Home Office for further resettlement of vulnerable people, refugees and asylum seeking children.
3. Work with partners, organisations and local individuals to address the significant problem of lack of housing that is affordable (i.e. within Local Housing Allowance rates).
4. Identify the skills and capacity which Council and partners can contribute to a variety of resettlement options.
5. Call on the Cabinet member for finance and efficiency to consider separating out the budget line for refugees from the Connecting Families project, in the forthcoming budget process, to increase transparency.
6. Request that the Leader write to government and local MPs to once again call for additional funding and support to be made available to help local authorities resettle refugees and to build capacity.
7. Encourage Councillors to sign the "Councillors Statement of Support for Refugee Children" hosted by Liberty, which has already won the support of 300 Councillors from across the country and five Councils.