

Council 24 March 2022

Ukrainian Refugees

Labour Group to move:

This Council:

- 1 Notes that at the time of writing more than 2.5 million civilians have fled Ukraine in what the UN has described as the fastest-growing refugee crisis since World War Two. The EU anticipates up to four million people may try to leave as a result of the conflict and that seven million people could become displaced within Ukraine.
- 2 Notes that under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, sponsors in the UK are able to nominate a named individual or family to stay rent-free in their home or in a separate property for at least six months and that there is no cap on the number of refugees who can benefit from this scheme. Further notes that refugees will be allowed to live and work in the UK for at least three years and that they will be entitled to access healthcare, benefits, employment support, education and English language tuition.
- 3 Notes that it is anticipated that local authorities will receive £10,500 in extra funding per refugee for support services with more for children of school age, and that hosts will be offered £350 per month.
- 4 Believes that the escalation of violence, repeated bombings and attacks on Ukraine pose a serious threat to peace and democracy across Europe.
- 6 Recognises that support for refugees cuts across party politics and that councillors from across the political spectrum will wish to stand shoulder to shoulder to express their full support and solidarity with Ukrainian people and affirm their commitment to provide help and support to Ukrainian nationals.
- 7 Recognises the generosity and goodwill of B&NES residents who showed through the welcome they gave Syrian refugees that this is an area which is willing and able to provide sanctuary to desperate people and further encourages those wishing to help to donate to established organisations such as the British Red Cross and Unicef as well as the Disasters Emergency Committee.
- 8 Notes that on 1 March, the Leader of the Council wrote to the Home Secretary and to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Safe and Legal Migration to express solidarity, call for visa requirements to be lifted and reiterate the readiness of this Council to welcome refugees.
- 9 Agrees that a further letter be sent to both the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary repeating this Council's willingness to welcome Ukrainian people fleeing war and persecution in their own country and urging the UK government to act to ensure that the UK does all it can to help alleviate this humanitarian crisis.

Unless where specifically set out in the statute, motions approved at Council do not bind the Executive (Cabinet) but may influence their future decisions.

Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.