

SOUTHEND-ON-SEA BOROUGH COUNCIL

Meeting of Cabinet

Date: Tuesday, 5th January, 2016
Place: Committee Room 1 - Civic Suite

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Appendix 2

Min 521

Noted cv

Coul 25/2/16

(Min. 664)

Present: Councillor Woodley (Chair)
Councillors Gilbert (Vice-Chair), Jones, Moyies, Norman MBE, Terry and Betson

In Attendance: Councillors Assenheim, Folkard, Holland, Mulroney and Salter
R Tinlin, J K Williams, S Leftley, A Lewis, A Atherton, J Chesterton, J Ruffle, C Gamble and Keating

Start/End Time: 2.00 - 3.16 pm

518 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence at this meeting.

519 Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 November 2015

Resolved:-

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 10th November 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed.

520 Declarations of Interest

- (a) Councillor Assenheim – Notice of Motion, Local Connection Housing Allocation Policy - Board Member of South Essex Homes - non-pecuniary interest.
- (b) Councillor Betson – Appropriation of Assets – Board Member of South Essex Homes and knows tenant of 75 Southchurch Avenue – non-pecuniary interest.
- (c) Councillor Betson – Fostering Service Annual Report - Member of Fostering Panel – non-pecuniary interest.
- (d) Councillor Terry – Flood Incident Report - Lives in area affected – non-pecuniary interest.

521 Notice of Motion - Refugees

NO REPORT

NOTICE OF MOTION
ATTACHED

At the meeting of Council held on 10th December 2015, Members received a notice of motion in relation to the support of refugees, which was proposed by Councillor Ware-Lane and seconded by Councillor Nevin (this had been referred to Cabinet in accordance with Standing Order 8.4).

Resolved:

1. That it be noted:

(i) Conflicts in the Middle East have created the largest refugee crisis in generations.

(ii) Thousands of people have died while seeking sanctuary from the violence this year alone trying to cross the Mediterranean Sea; many of them were children.

(iii) The United Kingdom has played a leading role as one of the world's top international donors, supporting refugees in Syria and the surrounding area.

(iv) The UN estimates there are over 320,000 people though who live in urgent need of resettlement. Survivors of torture or sexual violence, the very elderly or disabled, there are people who cannot survive in UN refugee camps near in countries surrounding Syria.

(v) The UK has a long and important tradition of offering sanctuary to those who need protection. 100,000 Huguenots, 10,000 Jewish Kindertransport children spared the Nazi concentration camps, 160,000 Poles following the Second World War many of whom had served in the Battle of Britain, the Vietnamese Boat People, the 28,000 Asian Ugandans fleeing Idi Amin and the people who fled the war in Kosovo. This is our proud and decent tradition.

(vi) To play its part fully in solving this global crisis the British government must work for durable long term political solutions in the region, lead as a major international donor, and live up to its reputation as a place of sanctuary, integration and protection.

2. That this Council believes:

(i) That this crisis will be better managed if incoming refugees are accommodated around the whole country;

(ii) We can best rise to the crisis if a National Welcome and Resettlement Board bringing together local and national government, civil society and business leadership, is created to oversee efforts to resettle refugees and mobilise public support as in times past;

(iii) Long term political solutions are needed to ease the crisis, but in the meantime we must do what we can;

(iv) The UK must welcome its fair share of refugees to ease this crisis.

3. That it also be noted:

(i) On the 18 September the Council wrote to the Home Office with an offer to support Syrian refugees (10-12 *initially*), with a preference for families, pending clarification of the resettlement process and the final funding package available.

(ii) The Council will provide the following support to refugees (many of whom may have complex needs):

- Meet and greet arriving refugees from the designated regional airport;
- Arrange accommodation for the arriving refugees that meets local authority standards, which is affordable and sustainable;
- Furnish the property appropriately including essential white goods;
- Register refugees with utilities;
- Provide a welcome pack of groceries;
- Provide an allowance for each refugee while benefits claims are processed;
- Provide advice and assistance with registering refugees for mainstream benefits and services, including local schools, GPs and access to employment (utilising skills that some refugees may have);
- Put in place a 12 month support plan for each family to support their orientation into their new home/area;
- Provide access to accredited English language classes within one month of arrival; and
- Ensure interpretation services are available throughout the period of resettlement.

(iii) The Council has established a Displaced Communities Partnership Group to co-ordinate the Council's, partners, community and voluntary sector groups' response to supporting displaced communities, with an initial focus on the Syrian refugee crisis.

(vi) The increasing pressures on the Council to meet levels of demand for critical Council services, such as housing and social care, as a result of continuing reductions in Government support and the growing needs of residents and displaced families.

4. That the Council will:

- (i) review its ability to receive more refugees on receipt of full knowledge of final levels of government support and once the capacity of the support mechanisms being put in place by the Council and partners becomes clearer; and
- (ii) write to the Prime Minister to inform him of the Council's resolve to contribute to the country's overall response.

Reason for Decision

To respond to the notice of motion.

Other Options

None

Note:- This is an Executive Function

Eligible for call-in to Policy and Resources Scrutiny Committee

Executive Councillor:- Cllr Gilbert

← Not called in.

- 12 **Minutes of the meeting of Place Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 30th November 2015**
Minutes to follow.
- 13 **Minutes of the meeting of People Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 1st December 2015**
Minutes to follow.
- 14 **Minutes of the meeting of Health & Wellbeing Board held on Wednesday, 2nd December 2015**
Minutes to follow.
- 15 **Minutes of the meeting of Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday, 3rd December 2015**
Minutes to follow.
- 16 **Notice of Motion - Sunday Trading** (Pages 61 - 62)
Notice of Motion attached.
- 17 **Notice of Motion - Support to Refugees** (Pages 63 - 64)
Notice of Motion attached.
- 18 **Notice of Motion - Review/Change Housing Policy** (Pages 65 - 66)
- 19 **Notice of Motion - Southend Borough Patrol** (Pages 67 - 68)
Notice of Motion attached.
- 20 **Notice of Motion - Transatlantic Trade & Investment Partnership (TTIP)** (Pages 69 - 70)
Notice of motion attached.
- 21 **Notice of Motion - Changes in Electoral Arrangements** (Pages 71 - 72)
Notice of Motion attached.
- 22 **Opposition Business - Drop kerbs & Highway Issues**
- 23 **Honorary Aldermen/Alderwomen and Changes to the Constitution**
Report of the Corporate Director for Corporate Services to follow
- 24 **Local Council Tax Support Scheme 2016/17**
Report of the Corporate Director for Corporate Services
- 24 **Changes to Committees, etc**

Motion to welcome, support and accommodate our fair share of refugees both locally and nationally

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This Council notes that:

Conflicts in the Middle East have created the largest refugee crisis in generations.

Thousands of people have died while seeking sanctuary from the violence this year alone trying to cross the Mediterranean sea; many of them were children.

The United Kingdom has played a leading role as one of the world's top international donors, supporting refugees in Syria and the surrounding area.

The UN estimates there are over 320,000 people though who live in urgent need of resettlement. Survivors of torture or sexual violence, the very elderly or disabled, there are people who cannot survive in UN refugee camps near in countries surrounding Syria.

The UK has a long and important tradition of offering sanctuary to those who need protection. 100,000 Huguenots, 10,000 Jewish Kinder transport children spared the Nazi concentration camps, 160,000 Poles following the Second World War many of whom had served in the Battle of Britain, the Vietnamese Boat People, the 28,000 Asian Ugandans fleeing Idi Amin and the people who fled the war in Kosovo. This is our proud and decent tradition.

To play its part fully in solving this global crisis the British government must work for durable long term political solutions in the region, lead as a major international donor, and live up to its reputation as a place of sanctuary, integration and protection.

This Council believes:

- That this crisis will be better managed if incoming refugees are accommodated around the whole country;
- We can best rise to the crisis if a National Welcome and Resettlement Board bringing together local and national government, civil society and business leadership, is created to oversee efforts to resettle refugees and mobilise public support as in times past;
- Long term political solutions are needed to ease the crisis, but in the mean time we must do what we can;
- The UK must welcome its fair share of refugees to ease this crisis.

This Council resolves to:

- Formally express an interest in both the VPR and Gateway programmes to the Home Office, requesting that 100 refugees be resettled here;
- Write to local housing associations to encourage them to make properties available to resettle refugees;
- To commit to ensuring that refugees are welcomed in this area and help facilitate this process by coordinating local service provision and coordinating the immense public will to help;
- Write to the Prime Minister to assure him that the country stands ready and willing to help at this time of crisis.

Proposed: Cllr Julian Ware-Lane **Seconded:** Cllr Cheryl Nevin