

Member Forum

14 March 2017

Statements from councillors



Procedural note:

STATEMENTS FROM COUNCILLORS:

- A maximum of 1 minute shall be allowed for the presentation of each statement (subject to overall time constraints).
- There shall be no debate on the statements and the Lord Mayor shall refer them to the Mayor for information/consideration.
- Statements will be dealt with in the order of receipt (subject to time).



The following member statement has been submitted – full details are attached:

CS 01 - Cllrs Massey, Pickersgill, Kirk, Phipps, Keen & Brain - Humanitarian support for child refugees



STATEMENT CS 01

Statement to Full Council: Humanitarian Support for Child Refugees

This statement is from the Labour members of the People Scrutiny Committee to express our dismay at the defeat in the House of Commons last Tuesday, of the proposal, (which has been relentlessly supported by Lord Dubs), to get Councils to say how many unaccompanied asylum seeking children they are able to accommodate.

- We recognise that this is a grave humanitarian issue as 10,000 children are missing across Europe. Many of those stuck in camps are orphaned or have no idea where their extended family are, or indeed, if any have survived. Many have fled war, torture and persecution. Some have witnessed the murder of, or attacks against, their relatives and neighbours, or have lost their homes in bombing or crossfire.
- We recognise that this is a safeguarding issue, as evidence shows huge numbers of children have been subjected to trafficking and exploitation, as well as physical and sexual abuse on their journeys. The Dubs programme offered them an alternative safe, legal route to Europe.
- We condemn the Government for capping the scheme at 350 children, (an average of less than one per Local Authority), when the original decision was to take 3000 (still only an average of 7).
- We applaud the small number of Conservative MPs who showed their compassion and supported the amendment.
- We are proud that Bristol City Council was mentioned in the House of Commons as an authority willing to take more young people than the 5 we have already accommodated.
- We applaud our Mayor for the strong leadership he has shown in supporting Bristol as a City of Sanctuary, and the fact that he is willing to make sure the City shows compassion, takes its international responsibilities seriously, and puts the needs of children first.
- We recognise the hard work of our Children's Services, local refugee organisations, the Haven, schools, the college and other agencies in trying to meet the needs of child asylum seekers in times of austerity.

We urge all parties to continue to lobby MPS to find a way to reopen the Dubs resettlement scheme, so that at least 3000 children are given the chance of a new life.

Cllrs. Brenda Massey, Ruth Pickersgill, Gill Kirk, Celia Phipps, Anna Keen and Mark Brain.