



Full Council – 20 September 2021

2nd Labour Group Motion

Refugee Support

This Council notes with deep sadness the unfolding and ongoing humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

This Council profoundly regrets the developments over the last few months following two decades of progress towards a more stable, and prosperous Afghanistan. Our thoughts are with the Afghan people and our residents who have family there at this time.

This Council is therefore ashamed at the slow and inadequate efforts this government has pledged for the near quarter of a million displaced Afghan people, the number which continues to grow rapidly.

As a Council we call on the UK government to stand by what should be a non-negotiable obligation to provide sanctuary to those in need, not least our British Nationals and Afghan partners who remain in-country desperately awaiting evacuation.

Thus far, this government has pledged to home 5000 Afghan refugees this year who have supported the Armed Forces through the 'Afghan locally employed scheme', with a view to increase this number to 20,000 in the coming years. This would equate to a meagre six people rehomed per constituency in the UK, falling extremely short of our humanitarian duty as a nation.

Focussing on the humanitarian crisis, the Council remains committed to providing as much direct and immediate help and support as possible to inbound refugees, and is determined – highlighting the need for adequate resources to be made readily available by government – to enable our newest residents to regain control of their lives and, in time, build for themselves real and lasting futures.

As part of this approach, the Council is working closely with the Home Office and has provided shelter for two Afghan families, whilst planning a more cohesive welcome programme for further Afghan families arriving in Brent in the coming months.

Furthermore, this Council notes the lobbying efforts it and other Councils have launched to highlight the needs of its migrant communities and the necessity to appropriately resource Councils in this endeavour. In terms of the wider picture, this

Council also notes the support and shelter it has provided for refugees from other parts of the world and is committed to continuing to lead these efforts for our new residents.

The Council recognises that the scale of the refugee crisis will require an international response and urges the UK to lead that effort by committing to a much more extensive and balanced Afghan resettlement scheme. Along with the creation of safe and legal routes for those suffering at the hands of the Taliban.

The Council therefore reiterates its call:

- (1) For open safe and legal routes for all those seeking a sanctuary from danger.
- (2) To increase the number of families given asylum and the need for a balanced refugee resettlement across the UK. Not just a heavy focus on London.
- (3) To increase funding to support councils such as our own, in further more extensive resettlement schemes as well as humanitarian aid.

This Council is proud that it is able to give sanctuary to the thousands of refugees that call Brent home. We want to be able to offer a brighter future for families through a chance at a proper education, good employment opportunities and a safe place to call home.

Cllr Faduma Hassan
Kilburn Ward