



Leicester
City Council

MINUTE EXTRACT

Minutes of the Meeting of the
OVERVIEW SELECT COMMITTEE

Held: WEDNESDAY, 10 NOVEMBER 2021 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Cassidy (Chair)

Councillor Gee
Councillor Halford
Councillor Joel

Councillor Joshi
Councillor Kitterick
Councillor Porter

Councillor Thalukdar
Councillor Westley

Also present:

Sir Peter Soulsby

City Mayor

In Attendance

Councillor Cutkelvin

Assistant City Mayor, Education and Housing

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37. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Govind, and Deputy City Mayor Councillor Russell.

38. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were asked to disclose any pecuniary or other interests they may have in the business on the agenda.

With regards to agenda items, Councillor Westley declared that some of his family Members were tenants of private landlords.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, these interests were not considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest. The Member was not, therefore, required to withdraw from the meeting.

46. HOME OFFICE BRIDGING HOTEL AND AFGHAN RESETTLEMENT ACCOMMODATION IN LEICESTER

The Strategic Director (City Development & Neighbourhood Services, Capital Programmes) and Director of Housing submitted a report to the Overview Select Committee, which provided a strategic update on the Home Office Bridging Hotel and the Leicester City Council offer to re-settle 10 Afghan families within the city.

The City Mayor introduced the report, noting the city continued to provide full support to those individuals based in the Home Office bridging hotel. He reported that wrap around support had begun on the 4 October 2021, with the STAR AMAL team providing a very wide range of support, such as, getting children in the hotel into school, GP access, ESOL learning where required, and engaging with charities on service provision.

The meeting was informed the Council had also been advocating with the Home Office for individuals. Currently there were 16 families (74 individuals) in the hotel, but was a changing picture as people moved in and out of the hotel, sometimes into permanent accommodation. Feedback had been good from those families who had thanked STAR AMAL during their time Leicester.

The Council had to date offered 10 properties to those from Afghanistan and were expecting the first family to take up that long-term accommodation in Leicester at the end of November 2021.

It was further reported that Home Office personnel were now regularly in the hotel so they could address families' issues directly, and as a result, families felt they were being listened to. The Council were pushing the Home Office for clarity on a number of things, such as the impact of employment and local placement of families.

The City Mayor said that as the scheme began to evolve, behind the Council's approach was a commitment to welcome and support where it was able to those seeking refuge, whether hotel or long-term accommodation, and that there was a determination to do all it could to help.

Members welcomed the update from the City Mayor, and the report which would be taken to Housing Scrutiny Commission. It was asked if it was known how long the Home Office would be in the city. The City Mayor noted the bridging hotel would be in place for some time to come as there were a significant number of people who would require long-term placements. He added that at this point it was difficult to assess a timeframe but would want to do all that was necessary longer term to provide support.

The Chair said the care in which the City through the City Mayor and Officers had shown towards those people who had found themselves in that position through no fault of their own was impressive, and there was a lot of work to be

done. The Chair looked forward to further reports at future meetings and added would remain on the Overview Select Committee workplan as a standing item.

AGREED:

1. That the report be noted.