

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting16th November 2017

1. Title of Item/Report

Scrutiny Review of Asylum Seeker Services - Final Report of Place Select Committee

2. Record of the Decision

Consideration was given to a report that presented the outcomes of the Place Select Committee's review of Asylum Seeker Services.

RESOLVED that:-

1. A clear pathway and information about what asylum seeker services are on offer in Stockton-on-Tees be provided.
2. The frequent issues raised in relation to unrelated adult asylum seekers being forced to room-share be acknowledged and such practice be objected to, but it be noted that any attempts at preventing this would be difficult to enforce. The Government be encouraged to consider the position on room-sharing of unrelated adults when forming the post-2019 asylum contracts.
3. The North East Migration Partnership (NEMP) ensures it continues to effectively represent the views of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council, in the context of effective representation and involvement of all Local Authorities in the region.
4. There should be closer working with local voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations, including:
 - a) ensuring that asylum seekers have the confidence and awareness to support their ability to raise issues of concern to the VCS and the Council, contributing to the intelligence needed to support action such as targeted inspections (of poor quality private rented accommodation) where necessary.
 - b) enhanced links with refugee-led community organisations (RCOs) via the Regional Refugee Forum North East to increase understanding of asylum seeker issues/concerns.

c) continued development of hate crime reporting processes to ensure asylum seekers and refugees have the confidence to report issues.

5. Information-sharing between agencies be strengthened to ensure joined-up processes, including:

a) notifications from local delivery partners of Home Office decisions (for leave to remain, discontinued, fled, deported), communicated via G4S and/or their contracted accommodation partner, be shared with Housing and Education teams as soon as possible to enable effective planning and provision to be made across all relevant partners.

b) the establishment of a clear protocol for asylum seeker children school admission, with key information provided to the Admissions Team and schools for the purposes of a robust induction, should form part of the planning for new contracts post-2019.

6. There is a need for additional opportunities for asylum seekers to access basic / fundamental English language courses or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classes.

7. The Government be encouraged to ensure that, when forming the post -2019 asylum contracts, an approach be taken which would enable aspects of provision, such as support, to be met by local partners. The Local Authority can then explore the feasibility of bidding for elements of the post - 2019 asylum contracts once these have been confirmed.

3. Reasons for the Decision

The report presents the findings of the scrutiny review of asylum seeker services which had been carried forward from the agreed 2016-2017 work programme.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 5 - Place Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Asylum Seekers Services as he was a member of the North East Migration Partnership.

Councillor Ann McCoy declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 5 - Place Select Committee - Scrutiny Review of Asylum Seekers Services as she was a member of the North East Migration Partnership.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight, 24 November 2017

Proper Officer
20 November 2017