

Agenda Item 24:

Motion submitted for debate at the Council meeting on 05 October 2023

(a) The following Motion has been submitted in the name of Councillor Denise Gaines:

Asylum Seekers

We the council note:

1. *As a result of the government's asylum process and its efforts to reduce the backlog of asylum decisions, we are seeing increased demand for homelessness prevention services in West Berkshire.*
2. *The home office has reduced the move-on period from 28 to 7 days, the time an asylum seeker must transition from their temporary accommodation to become independent. This is an unacceptably short period of transition.*
3. *As a result of the Government's decision to drastically reduce this move-on period there has been an escalation of homelessness and rough sleeping here in West Berkshire.*
4. *The Government has effectively abdicated the responsibility for asylum seekers granted leave to remain and passed responsibility to local authorities.*
5. *We have inherited the responsibility, from the Home office, to accommodate and support any person, given the status of right to remain, and currently residing in West Berkshire.*
6. *This has placed a heavy burden on this authority and created an impossible target for us to source accommodation and house people within a very narrow time period of just 7 days. This burden comes without any additional funding from central government.*
7. *We are committed, as an authority, to playing our part in welcoming and safeguarding the welfare of all people in our communities, including people granted right to remain.*
8. *In an area the size of West Berkshire, rental properties and temporary accommodation is at a premium and having this additional pressure could make costs for this accommodation spiral in an already inflated market.*

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. *Write to the Home Secretary to request that the Government:*
 - *extend the transition period to a more realistic time period of 8 weeks to enable local authorities and the newly recognised refugees sufficient time to have all the official documentation in place to apply for work and to find accommodation;*

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- provide Local Authorities with emergency funding to support those who have a right to remain.

- 2. Request the LGA as the national voice of local govt to lobby relevant ministers on the plight facing Local Authorities*
- 3. Ask the three MPs within the Council area to support this Motion and to raise at the highest levels of government.*