

**COUNCIL
28 SEPTEMBER 2023**

PUBLIC DOCUMENT

TITLE OF REPORT: NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 4.8.12

The following motion has been submitted, due notice of which has been given in accordance with Standing Order 4.8.12.

Council of Sanctuary

North Herts is proud of its diversity and history of welcoming people from across the world to the District.

There is a tradition at the heart of North Herts' communities, those of faith and of none, of working together to welcome, host, feed, clothe and support people seeking sanctuary here.

North Herts is enhanced by the contribution of those from a diverse range of backgrounds.

Over the last few years, the council has, with the support of residents, partners and community groups, co-ordinated the resettlement of refugees and supported asylum seekers. This has included:

- Supporting the resettlement of 55 individuals through the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme
- Hosting 289 Ukrainian refugees escaping war (including 106 children)
- Resettling 15 refugees through the Afghanistan Citizens Resettlement Scheme
- Committing to playing our part in tackling modern slavery and trafficking.

We are committed to continuing to work with partners, schools, and the voluntary, community and faith sector to create a welcoming and secure borough for those seeking sanctuary.

The District Council of Sanctuary is awarded by City of Sanctuary to institutions that are welcoming to those fleeing violence and persecution in their own countries, and protecting the rights of all migrants, asylum-seekers and refugees.

Council believes that:

- Standing up for those facing persecution, and welcoming refugees, asylum seekers and migrants is a moral responsibility that enriches our district and country.
- North Herts must continue to support its migrant communities and that the journey to become a District Council of Sanctuary will solidify this commitment.
- Refugee & asylum seekers are much more likely to be subject to both criminal and sexual exploitation as well as modern day slavery.
- We owe a moral duty towards children, and vulnerable and trafficked adults in our District, and this should extend, where possible, to refugees and migrants.

This Council commits to continuing its work:

- Embedding our organisational principles of equality and inclusion at the heart of our work with refugees and asylum seekers when supporting them in our community and engaging with district council services
- Challenging anti-migrant sentiment wherever we find it and championing the rights and dignity of refugees and asylum seekers.
- Finding opportunities across the Council and the District to celebrate our migrant communities, tell their stories, and promote their voices.
- Developing the Council's formal approach to how we engage with, listen to and support those seeking sanctuary, including the development of a Refugee strategy and accompanying action Plan.
- Working with local community, health, and education partners, including those with lived Experience. This will include working with these partners to shape North Herts' District of Sanctuary ambition and strategy.

That the Council also resolves to:

1. **Launch the journey to become an awarded District Council of Sanctuary by joining City of Sanctuary's local authority network.**
2. **Embody the City of Sanctuary values of Inclusive, Openness, Participation, Inspire, and Integrity in all we do.**

In addition to taking local action, we will call on the Government to:

3. **Guarantee the safety of all children under their care.**
4. **Create a proper plan for resettlement.**

Proposed: Cllr Alistair Willoughby

Seconded: Cllr Sean Prendergast