

## **Motion on Ukrainian refugees – Councillor Brett**

### Preamble:

Nobody can fail to have been moved by the plight of those affected by the war in Ukraine and the need to offer sanctuary. We have all been impressed by the number of local residents who have come forward in Lewes District and have, in many cases, been supporting those affected for over three months now. They have our thanks and admiration, but the Government has not provided any indication or reassurance on what will happen next.

This Council notes:

1. It is already clear that many Ukrainian refugees will be unable to return home at the end of their initial six month placements and we are already hearing from hosts who want to know what will happen when the six months are up.
2. That the Government's scheme has been rushed and very complicated to access and implement. Local authorities, including Lewes District Council, have struggled to keep up with minimal support and guidance from central government resulting in frustration for hosts and refugees
3. Some people may continue to offer accommodation, but others say they will not be in a position to continue. They are asking how we can make sure that the social networks and links, friendships, jobs and school placements that are developing will be maintained.
4. Some refugees would like to rent a home privately, but they are priced out of our overstretched rental market even if they have jobs by then.
5. The Government is still dragging its feet on visas for Ukrainian refugees fleeing the conflict in their country meaning that many seeking safety and sanctuary remain in limbo.

### Motion:

The Council resolves to ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Home Secretary and local MPs including the following:

1. A request for urgent clarification on the plan for refugees in our District once the initial six months ends.
2. Remind them that a system to support those fleeing the conflict in Ukraine and honour the promise of sanctuary which has been given as well as acknowledge the commitment already made by those who have already opened their homes.
3. Request that they urgently seek a second tranche of placement hosts in the towns where many are already living, and children are being educated.
4. Take steps to support refugees looking to move into privately rented accommodation specifically increasing the **Homeless Prevention Grant** above the current level of £520K. This will enable the Lewes District Council Housing Needs Team to better address the emerging housing issues of this particular group of residents.

5. Increase the Local Housing Allowance to better reflect the costs of rents within Lewes District outside those in the Affordable / Social Rent sector in order to prevent a further deterioration in availability of suitable housing for all those in need of appropriate local accommodation.