

COUNCIL		
Report Title	Motions	
Key Decision		Item No.
Ward		
Contributors	Chief Executive (Head of Business & Committee)	
Class	Part 1	Date: January 19 2022

Motion on the Nationality and Borders Bill

This Council notes that:

- (i) Lewisham has a proud history of welcoming people seeking safety and is the first local authority in the UK to be recognised as a Borough of Sanctuary by the City of Sanctuary;
- (ii) there are significant problems with the UK asylum system that affect people in Lewisham, including a record backlog of cases awaiting a decision, an effective ban on working, and enforced poverty and homelessness;
- (iii) the Government's Nationality and Borders Bill does not address these issues, and will instead create a two-tier system, penalising people seeking safety based on the journeys they make;
- (iv) people seeking sanctuary, including Afghan refugees, who reach the UK via unofficial routes will be criminalised and threatened with deportation under this Bill;
- (v) the Bill will create longer backlogs, warehouse people in large accommodation centres, and leave many refugees with a temporary and precarious status;
- (vi) the Government's proposals have been condemned by organisations in Lewisham that comprise the Lewisham Migration Forum as well as the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees in the UK.

This Council believes that:

- (i) the UK needs an asylum system that empowers people seeking safety to rebuild their lives and enables communities to welcome and encourage them to play their full part in society;
- (ii) this Bill undermines the essential human right to seek safety as expressed in the United Nations Refugee Convention of 1951 and that the UK should

uphold its obligations in international law and its responsibilities as a global nation;

- (iii) this Bill will lead to greater poverty and homelessness in Lewisham and emergency destitution support that is provided for those with No Recourse to Public Funds will place an unfair burden on council resources that have already been brutally slashed by over a decade of Government austerity.

This Council resolves to:

- (i) call on the UK Government to withdraw the Nationality and Borders Bill;
- (ii) call on the UK Government to work with local authorities and communities to build a fairer and more effective asylum system.

Proposed by **Councillor Kevin Bonavia**
Seconded by **Councillor Samantha Latouche**