

Birmingham City Council

City Council

6 December 2022



Subject: Motions for Debate from Individual Members
Report of: Janie Berry, City Solicitor (Monitoring Officer)
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Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential :

1 Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 To consider the following Motions of which notice has been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules (section B4.4 G of the Constitution).

2 Notices of Motion

A. Councillors Roger Harmer and Colin Green have given notice of the following Notice of Motion:-

“This Council stands firmly and unwaveringly with Ukraine as its people bravely resist Russian aggression.

This Council thanks the many Birmingham hosts and community groups who have made huge efforts to provide support for Ukrainian Refugees under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

This Council also notes:

- 1) The recent significant progress made by the people of Ukraine in freeing large areas of their country from Russian occupation, but despite this, there is a high risk that the War will continue well into 2023 and potentially beyond.

2) With the war continuing and major attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure, it is unlikely that many existing Ukrainian refugees will be able to return home for many months at least, and there is a risk that more may arrive.

3) Therefore, it is important that we in Birmingham, together with other communities in the UK, enhance our long-term plans for the welfare of our Ukrainian refugees.

4) This work forms part of Birmingham's proud status as a City of Sanctuary for people fleeing war torn countries and persecution

5) Learning from the Homes for Ukraine Scheme should be used to provide lessons for future support to all refugees arriving in Birmingham

This Council therefore calls for:

1) A quick assessment, involving Scrutiny, of the existing programme of support provided so far in Birmingham, by the Council and its partner agencies, in terms of its timeliness and value for money. This assessment should include looking at the successes and lessons learned in other UK local authorities and the interaction with the other pressures the City is facing in areas such as Housing, Education and the Cost of Living Crisis.

2) The Government to provide enhanced support to Ukrainian Refugees, including extending the maximum period of Host Support beyond a year, as part of a co-ordinated effort to avoid the use of Temporary Accommodation.

3) Greater recognition of the massive cultural, social and economic contribution of refugees and migrants to this city and to the UK and seeks to champion this by: celebrating refugee week and working with organisations such as the Refugee Council to remove barriers and empower refugees to rebuild lives and contribute to the community.”

B. Councillors Nicky Brennan and Shehla Moledina have given notice of the following Notice of Motion:-

“This Council notes the recent research conducted by Women’s Aid on the impact of the Cost of Living on survivors of domestic abuse which found that:

- Almost all survivors (96%) responding had seen a negative impact on the amount of money available to them as a result of cost of living increases.
- Two thirds (66%) of survivors told us that abusers are now using the cost of living increase and concerns about financial hardship as a tool for coercive control, including to justify further restricting their access to money.

- Almost three quarters (73%) of women living with and having financial links with the abuser said that the cost of living crisis had either prevented them from leaving or made it harder for them to leave.

This Council also notes the recommendations in the recent report by the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner Victims' Commissioner which are:

- An increased uplift to victims' services
- A commitment to provide a multi-year funding strategy in line with inflation
- Overhaul of child maintenance service
- Commitment for increased number of specialist refuge bed spaces in West Midlands
- Overhaul how Universal Credit works for victims of domestic abuse
- Commitment for benefits to rise in line with inflation
- A commitment to working towards a whole culture change

This Council resolves to:

- Write to the Chancellor to urge him not to cut funding for Domestic Abuse services through the Home Office budgets or the Justice budgets.
- Explore what options may be available to provide specialist support for women who are survivors of domestic abuse via the Council's growing network of Warm Welcome Spaces.
- Write to the Government in support of the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner Victims' Commissioner's recommendations.
- Ensure all Council Directorates and city partners are fully engaged in the work to renew Birmingham's Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy and are clear on the part they must play in tackling and preventing domestic abuse in our communities.
- Ask the Co-ordinating Overview and Scrutiny Committee to facilitate the engagement of the Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committees in the work to renew the Strategy."