

Conservative Group Motion to Full Council – 24th September 2025

Concerns about inappropriate accommodation for Asylum Seekers in Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough

Council notes:

1. The recent public statement issued by the Leader of the Council, on 21st August 2025, expressing concern over the placement of asylum seekers in unsuitable accommodation within the Borough, including Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and short-term lets, which often lack the necessary support infrastructure.
2. The outcome of legal action undertaken by Epping Forest District Council aimed at preventing the use of a hotel for asylum seeker accommodation, highlighting the growing national concern over inappropriate placements.
3. That the Borough is not currently hosting asylum seekers in hotels but officers are actively monitoring developments and reviewing the legal position regarding all forms of accommodation.
4. The powers available under the General Permitted Development Orders and has used 'Article 4 Directions' in the past to require planning applications for HMOs. Officers are currently reviewing the legal position in light of recent developments and will consider further action where appropriate to ensure that local planning oversight is maintained.
5. The ongoing discussions with Staffordshire County Council and other local councils seeking to develop a united approach to central Government on this issue.
6. The letter sent by the Leader of the Council on 21st August 2025 to the Member of Parliament for Newcastle-under-Lyme, Adam Jogee, urging him to raise the matter with Government Ministers and to advocate for a more collaborative approach between the Home Office, its contractors, and local councils, and that a response has not been received before submission of this motion.

Council believes:

1. Newcastle-under-Lyme has a proud history of welcoming individuals and families from all backgrounds and remains committed to supporting those in genuine need.
2. The current approach to placing asylum seekers in accommodation that does not reflect local pressures or community needs risks undermining social cohesion and the wellbeing of vulnerable individuals.

3. Local authorities must be properly consulted and supported in the implementation of national asylum policy, with decisions made in partnership and with full recognition of local circumstances.

Council resolves to:

1. Endorse the concerns raised by the Leader of the Council and support his call for a more collaborative and locally informed approach to asylum seeker accommodation.
2. Request that the Chief Executive continues to monitor developments and explore legal and policy options to ensure that accommodation used for asylum seekers is appropriate and sustainable.
3. Ask the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive to write to the Home Office and other relevant Government departments to express this Council's position and request a review of current practices, with a view to ensuring better outcomes for both asylum seekers and local communities.
4. Support the Leader's engagement with the MP for Newcastle-under-Lyme and regret that a prompt response was not received.

Proposed: Mark Holland

Seconded: Andrew Fear

12th September 2025