

COUNCIL	AGENDA ITEM No. 12
22 JUNE 2022	PUBLIC REPORT

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

The following notice of motion has been received in accordance with the Council's Standing Orders:

1. Motion from Councillor Ishfaq Hussain

“Peterborough Council recognises the contribution that refugees and migrants seeking sanctuary have made to the city of Peterborough throughout recent history. Peterborough City Council understands the important role it can play in welcoming people who are fleeing violence and persecution by offering them safety and sanctuary. In recognition of this, Peterborough City Council commits to support an initiative to make Peterborough into a recognised ‘City / Council of Sanctuary’.

A total of 99 cities and local authority areas across the country have formally signed up to this scheme within England and 21 cities / regions within Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

It is anticipated that through this pledge and the action plan that will be developed, our city will drive forward the following outcomes:

- Improved community cohesion and integration of refugees and other migrants within the city
- Reduced hate crime incidents relating to new arrivals
- Greater understanding of the experience of refugees and other migrants within the wider population
- Developing systemwide approaches to key challenges that refugees and new arrivals experience within the repatriation process, leading to improved socio-economic medium and long-term outcomes for new arrivals

Peterborough City Council has a track record of taking action consistent with ‘Sanctuary Status’ through past and existing programmes, including welcoming Refugees under the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme, and most recently, welcoming Afghan families resettled under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy, and most recently, welcoming families from Ukraine.

Peterborough City Council recognises that a comprehensive, co-ordinated and forward-looking approach is needed if the welfare of people moving into the city, and community cohesion between new and existing communities, are to be supported effectively.

To become a Council/City of Sanctuary Peterborough Council pledges to take the following actions:

- **Join the City of Sanctuary ‘Local Authority Network’.** In joining the network, we are committing to work towards the Council/City of Sanctuary Award and are agreeing to sign up as a Supporting Organisation.
- **Establish a Peterborough City of Sanctuary steering group, to be support by relevant officers and including a relevant Member of the Executive and people with the lived experience of seeking sanctuary, to co-produce an action plan which focuses on**

embedding the principles of City of Sanctuary into the City Council's strategy, policies and services.

- Working with the Peterborough City of Sanctuary Steering Group, commissioned services, community groups, faith groups and charities to support refugees, and migrants seeking sanctuary in Peterborough City.
- Celebrate the contribution of refugee and migrant communities through annual events like Refugee Week.
- Include information about refugees, and migrants seeking sanctuary in our Equality & Diversity Training for new and existing staff.
- Fact-checking and challenging anti-refugee and anti-migrant attitudes wherever they are found.
- Reporting on progress for achieving the 'Council/City of Sanctuary' status as part of the Council's monitoring report to the Growth, Resources and Communities Scrutiny Committee."

Peterborough City Council believes that through this pledge the Council will commit to working proactively with partners across the city to improving outcomes for migrants to our city. While this pledge does not automatically commit the Local Authority to accepting all refugees and migrant seeking sanctuary, the concept of 'sanctuary' suggests endeavouring to improve integration and wellbeing for migrants and therefore these outcomes will be the focus of this pledge."

2. Motion from Councillor Shaz Nawaz

"Peterborough Council notes the recent announcement by the BBC to cease production of the Look East regional news output from Cambridge and only broadcast a regional news programme based in Norwich.

Peterborough is a key city in the East and having operations based in Norwich means vital and important local stories in Peterborough may be missed.

Peterborough Council expresses deep concern over the plans and believes that as a growing area our region requires more, not less, investment in local journalism.

Peterborough Council therefore agrees.

1. To ask the Chief Executive to write to the Director General of the BBC to oppose these cuts to local and regional news.
2. To seek support from other local authorities to highlight the growing importance of our region and that more, not less, local journalism should be focussed on the area in general."

3. Motion from Councillor Jamil

"Peterborough City Council is proud of its diversity and has a huge asset and a source of great strength. A substantial proportion of its residents are Muslim, who are an integral part of its make-up, playing a huge role in all aspects of the Peterborough City's life.

Peterborough has a strong history of promoting cohesion and welcoming people from all over the world. Its residents have always united and supported each other in the fight against racism and discrimination in all its forms.

This Council therefore welcomes, endorses and adopts the working APPG (All-Party Parliamentary Group) definition of Islamophobia, including all of its examples in full, cited as follows:

"ISLAMOPHOBIA IS ROOTED IN RACISM AND IS A TYPE OF RACISM THAT TARGETS EXPRESSIONS OF MUSLIMNESS OR PERCEIVED MUSLIMNESS."

Contemporary examples of Islamophobia in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in encounters between religions and non-religions in the public sphere could, considering the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, instigating or justifying the killing or harming of Muslims in the name of a racist/fascist ideology, or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Muslims as such, or of Muslims as a collective group, such as, especially but not exclusively, conspiracies about Muslim entryism in politics, government or other societal institutions; the myth of Muslim identity having a unique propensity for terrorism and claims of a demographic 'threat' posed by Muslims or of a 'Muslim takeover'.
- Accusing Muslims as a group of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Muslim person or group of Muslim individuals, or even for acts committed by non-Muslims.
- Accusing Muslims as a group, or Muslim majority states, of inventing or exaggerating Islamophobia, ethnic cleansing or genocide perpetrated against Muslims.
- Accusing Muslim citizens of being more loyal to the 'Ummah' (transnational Muslim community) or to their countries of origin, or to the alleged priorities of Muslims worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying Muslim populations, the right to self-determination e.g., by claiming that the existence of an independent Palestine or Kashmir is a terrorist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of Muslims behaviours that are not expected or demanded of any other groups in society, eg loyalty tests.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic Islamophobia.
- Holding Muslims collectively responsible for the actions of any Muslim majority state, whether secular or constitutionally Islamic.

This Council asks the Chief Executive of the Council to:

- 1. Write to our two local members of Parliament and the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities asking them to listen to Muslim communities and the cross-party group of MPs and peers and to adopt this definition of Islamophobia which classifies discrimination against Muslims as a form of racism.**
- 2. Continue to prioritise tackling hate crime and Islamophobia in partnership. Peterborough City Council works with partners such as Cambridgeshire Police, on a rolling basis, and will now coordinate future actions in line with this definition of Islamophobia for all Muslims."**

This page is intentionally left blank