

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 3

Date of meeting: 2 March 2023

GREEN GROUP AMENDMENT

Urgent action to safeguard unaccompanied children seeking asylum

That the relevant changes are made to the recommendations as shown below in ~~strikethrough~~ and ***bold italics***:

Council notes that:

1. At least 136 children, equivalent to five classrooms, have gone missing from ***hotel accommodation operated by the Home Office in*** Brighton & Hove since July 2021;

2. 76 of these children remain unaccounted for;

3. The national press have reported whistle-blower and child protection testimony stating that serious organised crime have targeted these children, kidnapping them from the hotel where they have been abandoned ***and Council encourages anyone with evidence of these testimonies to report these to the Front Door for Families***;

~~4. This catastrophic break-down in child safeguarding shames our great City and undermines our status as a City of Sanctuary.~~

4. Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Partnership's Scrutiny Paper has been published which outlines 7 recommendations for the Home Office, local safeguarding partners and politicians to consider;

5. The Council has sought expert legal advice on its position and continues to liaise with other councils who have Home Office run hotel accommodation in their areas and this legal advice is has been and will continue to be made available, in confidence, to all Group Leaders within a week of this meeting taking place.

6. Therefore, this Council calls for:

6.1 An ~~urgent~~ officer report to a ***future meeting of*** Special P&R Committee meeting as soon as reasonably practicable, which addresses the following requests: ***which outlines the Home Office responsibility to, and the council's abilities to,*** the Assistant Director of Legal & Democratic Services immediately instructs external legal counsel, expert in public, immigration, asylum and human rights law, on

~~Brighton & Hove City Council (BHCC)'s obligations under the Children Act 1989 and the legal options available to BHCC to ultimately:~~

- ~~6.1.1 Close down the hotel to unaccompanied children seeking asylum;~~
- ~~6.1.2 Prevent the Home Secretary **Desist from** moving any more unaccompanied children into the City outside of the statutory National Transfer Scheme;~~
- ~~6.3 Achieve the immediate placement of children accommodated at the hotel into local authority care placements across the country through the NTS.~~

~~6.2 The Chief Executive to refer BHCC to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel to investigate the role of BHCC in the disappearances of these children, including all safeguarding acts and omissions. **write to the Home Secretary to request a formal published response to Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Partnership's Scrutiny Paper**~~

Proposed by: Cllr Allbrooke

Seconded by: Cllr John

Recommendations to read if carried:

Council notes that:

1. At least 136 children, equivalent to five classrooms, have gone missing from hotel accommodation operated by the Home Office in Brighton & Hove since July 2021;
2. 76 of these children remain unaccounted for;
3. The national press have reported whistle-blower and child protection testimony stating that serious organised crime have targeted these children, kidnapping them from the hotel where they have been abandoned and Council encourages anyone with evidence of these testimonies to report these to the Front Door for Families;
4. Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Partnership's Scrutiny Paper has been published which outlines 7 recommendations for the Home Office, local safeguarding partners and politicians to consider;
5. The Council has sought expert legal advice on its position and continues to liaise with other councils who have Home Office run hotel accommodation in their areas and this legal advice has been and will continue to be made available, in confidence, to all Group Leaders.

6. Therefore, this Council calls for:

6.1 An officer report to a future meeting of P&R Committee which outlines the Home Office responsibility to, and the Council's abilities to:

- 6.1.1 Close down the hotel to unaccompanied children seeking asylum;

6.1.2 Desist from moving any more unaccompanied children into the City outside of the statutory National Transfer Scheme;

6.1.3 Achieve the immediate placement of children accommodated at the hotel into local authority care placements across the country through the NTS.

6.2 The Chief Executive to write to the Home Secretary to request a formal published response to Brighton & Hove Safeguarding Partnership's Scrutiny Paper.

