

RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL

QUESTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10

COUNCIL – 25 OCTOBER 2023

QUESTION D

Councillor Harrington to ask the Communities, Homes, Digital and Communication Portfolio Holder, Councillor Willis:

“In view of the Home Secretary’s recent announcement of her intention to move asylum seekers out of hotels, what is the expected impact on housing provision (both permanent and temporary) in Rugby?”

Councillor Willis, Communities, Homes, Digital and Communication Portfolio Holder, to reply as follows:

“Thank you for your question.

Unfortunately, this is a question that cannot easily be answered as there are so many variables at play.

As with any other local authority, we are unable to model with any accuracy what the likely impact will be on Rugby, as we are unable to forecast the pace of people being granted indefinite leave to remain or the number of households that will seek to exercise their right to present as homeless within the borough, and to whom we will owe a statutory duty. However, officers are in regular contact with the West Midlands Strategic Migration Partnership and the Home Office to understand the emerging and changing picture and its likely impact on the borough.

What is known, is that often, people who have a positive determination of their application for asylum will seek to move towards established networks of potential support, from existing communities and contacts, most often in the cities.

Locally, we do anticipate an inevitable rise in the number of people seeking both temporary and permanent accommodation. We, as a Council, will not be unique in facing these challenges. The number of people from this cohort currently requiring temporary accommodation in the borough is very low – and in the low single figures.

We predict that the pressure on temporary accommodation is likely to be the most pressing as there is sometimes a delay between the cessation of accommodation support, from the Home Office, following a positive determination of a claim for asylum and the client’s subsequent receipt of a Biometric Residency Permit. This permit is required to enable people to access employment, accommodation, and any financial support that they may be eligible for. Temporary accommodation is therefore potentially likely to be called upon to bridge this gap, with bed and breakfast accommodation, as ever, only be used as a last resort.

Our Homelessness Team have received additional training and guidance to support asylum seekers who are granted indefinite leave to remain and subsequently given notice to leave hotel accommodation. The team has established good partnerships with organisations such as Migrant Help who will help people to apply for accommodation, maximise their income and resolve Biometric Residency permit issues.

It is important to remember that local authorities across the country have a role to play in meeting the emerging housing needs, and not just places that have hotels within their borders.

What I can do is provide reassurance that all that can be done is being done to secure additional temporary and permanent accommodation to meet the needs of Rugby's residents, including those that are given indefinite leave to remain."