

RESOLUTION

TO: POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

19 SEPTEMBER 2019

FROM: COMMUNITY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE 12 JULY 2019

12. PLEDGE OF SUPPORT FOR THE 'OUR TURN' CAMPAIGN

Members considered a report of the Director of Community and Children's Services which sought a pledge of support in relation to the 'Our Turn' Campaign, which sought to re-settle 10,000 additional asylum-seeking and refugee children each year, over ten years, if central government were to create a new fully funded scheme. The report noted that several London boroughs had made the pledge. Members noted that, if they were minded to support this pledge, then it would be recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee for final approval.

Members were advised that this matter had been the subject of considerable debate at the Leaders' Committee at London Councils, which had expressed a view that London had already taken an unfair share in the support of Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers, particularly care beyond 18 years. Whilst having every sympathy for the plight of this group, there was a consensus, from the London Council's Leaders Committee, that the current system was flawed and they were promoting alternative, positive steps such as lobbying for changes to ensure fair distribution and adequate resources. The Leaders' Committee were also concerned that the pledges might detract from this objective. A Member felt it was important that the Committee did not use this as a gesture but remained in line with London Councils and other local authorities.

There was a general consensus from the Members of Community and Children's Services that the lobbying and legal action should continue, alongside the pledge, and they should not wait until a flawed system was remedied. Furthermore, there was a view expressed that this gesture was an effective method of lobbying for more funding by signalling a willingness to manage the welcome of children that could come under the program and Members were concerned about the wider implications of not assisting vulnerable groups. Members also discussed the City Corporation's success stories in integrating Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers.

On being put to the vote, whereby 14 voted for, 3 against and 1 abstention it was RESOLVED, that:

1. The Community and Children's Services Committee pledge to resettle five additional asylum-seeking and refugee children each year, for ten years, as part of a fully funded government scheme, as proposed by the Our Turn Campaign.
2. The Policy and Resources Committee be recommended to approve the above Pledge, in line with those already made by London local authorities.