

For the Attention of Robert Jenrick MP (Minister of State - Immigration)

Copy to MP Andrew Bridgen, the Leader of the County Council and Chief Executive of North West Leics District Council

19/02/23

We recently became aware, via our District Council, of your plan, via a Serco contract, to house up to 250 asylum seekers at the Yew Lodge Hotel, Kegworth.

On behalf of Kegworth Parish Council I am requesting confirmation of your intention, along with full details, a timeline, and an indication of decisions yet to be made with timescales.

I assume that our MP has so far been unable to get hold of this information from you as we have not received a reply directly to the Parish Council over the weekend. I paid a useful but inconclusive visit to the hotel on Saturday afternoon and sat down for a useful chat with the General Manager. Regrettably, no direct e-mail address was supplied, hence I am using using the hotel sales e-mail in the hope that this message will be passed on and acknowledged.

I wish to remind you of some numbers - do correct them if you disagree:-

Using Nov 2022 UNHCR data and 2021 census data, my best estimate for the ratio of refugees and asylum seekers in transit per head of UK population is 1:170

The population of Kegworth at the 2021 census was 4290
so you plan a ratio for this village of 1:17. Do you agree that this is disproportionate by comparison?

Note that, although relatively close to Nottingham, Derby and Loughborough, we are in NW Leicestershire and have no access to their public services nor to specialist refugee/asylum support that these conurbations may have developed over the years. We are a rural area with limited services. We and our community organisations already struggle to find enough volunteers. Public services nationally and in Leicestershire are under intense pressure and the national emphasis on volunteering on the May 8th Bank Holiday supports the view that we are not alone.

We suggest that the failure by the Home Office, Serco and the Yew Lodge Hotel to make plans openly and transparently with the Kegworth community represents flawed and unwise project and business planning. There seems to be no regard at all for the impact on relationships between government, the hotel and a traditionally warm-hearted community. This is a community already in tension because of what, apparently, you are planning.

With Good wishes

Ray Sutton
Chairman of Kegworth Parish Council