

An Update from Your Parish Council on the Housing of Asylum Seekers in Kegworth

From 19 February, Kegworth Parish Council has been questioning rigorously decision makers at all levels, including those at North West Leicestershire District Council, Leics County Council, Ministers in the Home Office, Members of Parliament, and East Midlands Councils about the housing of asylum seekers in Kegworth. In addition, we wrote to Robert Jenrick, the Minister for Immigration, on 19th February and issued a media statement on 23rd February 2023.

Today, Andrew Bridgen, your MP, has said:

"I met with the Home Office resettlement team this week who didn't seem very sympathetic of our arguments. Some further information I did manage to gather is that there will be security at the hotel, but this will be to stop the general public getting into the hotel. After some pressing, they stated it will be men based at the hotel and I gather that they are seeking asylum from Afghanistan. It is a 12 month contract with the Home Office, I asked why they are using the site when it was rejected in September and they stated they keep all venues under review. When I challenged the decision regarding the hotel in Quorn, they stated that this remains an option so it's future use is still unclear.

I raised the points regarding community safety and the ratios, the Home Office stated there is no evidence that there is any increase in crime. I have also consulted with the District Council about the change of use, however the hotel is still being run as a hotel and is effectively block booked so is acting within the parameters of permissions.

I will be writing further to the Home Office regarding the ratio and to clarify the guidance and rules around that. I am also intending to ask a Business of the House question raising this whole issue and when we can expect legislation to stop the illegal crossings which has led to this issue."

Andrew has agreed to put the following questions to the Home Office:

- Why Kegworth, given its size and the numbers to be accommodated?
- Why is Kegworth apparently going full steam ahead when Quorn and Earl Shilton in Leicestershire have been reviewed and overturned? The ongoing Creaton (Northants) case can be added to the mix and makes interesting reading not least in the evident respect for the relevant parish council(s): [Northamptonshire village hotel owners hit back at 'bias' campaign which saw plans halted to house up to 400 asylum seekers on its five-acre site | Northampton Chronicle and Echo](#)
- The BBC gave total numbers of asylum seekers in Leicester and other cities but without reference to density per head of population either within or external to the region. Please can you set out the current and accepted future numbers per community and asylum seeker to resident ratios for Leicester and its the towns, villages. (we are aware of Appleby Magna but suggest that the exact location of the Appleby Park Hotel is not central to the village

Allison Thomas, Chief Executive of NW Leics District Council, has said the District Council is taking independent advice as to whether the occupation of the Yew Lodge Hotel by asylum seekers is deemed to be a change of use from a hotel to a hostel.

As a Third Tier Authority, Kegworth Parish Council is not responsible for the decisions that have been made at District, County, and Home Office level. Kegworth Parish Council was not consulted about the decisions.

We have received a lot of questions about the issue from residents of Kegworth. At our March meeting, councillors will conduct the usual business they are legally obliged to carry out. As usual, a 15-minute public participation session has been included on the agenda.