



# KEGWORTH PARISH COUNCIL

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22 March 2023

Dear Sirs

## **Asylum Seeker Hotel(s) in Kegworth Parish, Leicestershire: currently former Best Western Yew Lodge/Serco UK**

This Parish Council has been 'kept in the dark' and has further questions following the latest replies from yourselves, both directly and via our MP. The majority of our residents recognise the fact that a lack of information leads to misinformation, rumour and diminished community relationships. We remain deeply disturbed by the impact of a likely potential 5% asylum seeker boost to a village population for the foreseeable future: there is a legacy effect, housing in Kegworth is in short supply, rapidly increasing numbers of HMOs over the last seven years is already a live issue.

Our hand-delivered letter to Serco at the hotel of March 8<sup>th</sup>, seeking a 'community liaison contact', remains unacknowledged. Volunteers working with asylum seekers at the hotel have information that this Council does not and we have discovered at least two volunteers who have direct access to Serco regional management when the local parish council has none.

1. We have been unable to find Schedule 7 of the AASC Contract but the organisation 'Asylum Matters' reports that AASC providers, like Serco, must "share information on Service Users and their accommodation portfolio with Local Authorities and other stakeholders which is relevant to the impact or potential impact upon the provision of public services, community cohesion issues and housing strategies for the area" (ref. 8.3.2). Is this correct?
2. Is a parish council regarded by the Home Office as a Local Authority?
3. Could you provide us with a copy of the recommendation that Yew Lodge Hotel is accepted as a suitable asylum seeker hotel, when it was accepted by the Home Office, relevant dates and milestones in the proposal and acceptance process, including any site visit by Home Office staff, consultation with local authorities, NHS, Police and so on?
4. Could you explain, in general, the process of procurement of hotels in relation to the Home Office, AASC provider and the hotel owner? In the specific case of Yew Lodge could you help us to understand the roles of the Home Office, the AASC provider and Yew Lodge owner between September 2022, when Andrew Bridgen MP was assured that this hotel would not be selected and the contract date of Feb 20<sup>th</sup>, 2023?
5. What are the 'unique merits' in the case of the Yew Lodge Hotel, with its long local association with the village and location near the centre, using your own phrase in correspondence?
6. In your reply to our MP, you state that numbers of asylum seekers being placed into a community in relation to the local population is something that would naturally be taken into account during procurement. Is that a

Home Office decision or an AASC provider decision? What was the rationale once numbers were considered in the case of Kegworth parish (estimated potential ratio of asylum seeker to resident 1:17) and Sandiacre parish just five miles away in Derbyshire (reportedly 1: 10 in two hotels)?

We look forward to a speedy reply; we have resolved to continue pursuing these important issues on behalf of our residents because they know that we are the vital local element of UK democracy and local government.

Yours faithfully

Donna Griggs  
Parish Clerk – Kegworth Parish Council

*Sent as Email to:*

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