

Appendix 1

Dear John Boyce (as Leader of the Council)

I note that the Council AGM is approaching and so understand that the Chairs of Committees may change soon. I write to you in your capacity as Leader of the Council, and ask you to pass this to the relevant Councillors for consideration.

I attach the minutes of the latest Oadby & Wigston Multi-Agency Forum – MAF/Asylum Seekers-Refugees, and you will note that it was agreed by members attending the meeting of 8 May 2017 that I would write to you, and to the County Council expressing our deep concern regarding the impact of local Housing policy on creating a situation in which the residents of Kennedy House, in South Wigston become homeless when they receive the right to remain in UK.

We ask you to bring this concern to the relevant people/Committees for consideration of a solution, as the men going through Kennedy House have a right to be treated fairly and with compassion in their special circumstances. Perhaps there could also be some discussion with the County Councillors.

You know that Kennedy House is managed by G4S and houses up to 56 people seeking asylum in the UK, and you will see from our minutes that there is a good level of collaboration to welcome and help these men to feel safe and valued once they are here. Once they are given the right to remain in UK they have to leave their accommodation and some find their way out of the area, but unfortunately others become homeless.

As the rules stand, people with a positive decision from the Home Office have no right to apply for housing in Oadby & Wigston unless they have been living in the area for two years or are working. The men at Kennedy House are people who have very recently come to UK seeking a place of safety, and so are entering the asylum system and will not satisfy the 2-year residence rule (unless their cases last much longer than it should), and they are unlikely to fall straight into a job given their circumstances.

I know that the O&W Housing Office can offer to help with initial rental costs on a privately rented property, but rents in our area are prohibitively high and landlords are generally not keen to take people on Housing Benefit or people with immigration issues (because of confusion over the Immigration Act penalties for accommodating people without secure status).

Further, the Kennedy House residents do not qualify for a place at the Falcon Centre in Loughborough for the same reason.

Please could you keep me informed of the progress of this request

Many thanks

Sheila Mosley

Chair: Oadby & Wigston Multi-Agency Forum – MAF/Asylum Seekers-Refugees, [in my capacity as a Quaker from Leicester Quaker Meeting]