

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Town House,
ABERDEEN, 26 September
2025

MINUTE OF SPECIAL MEETING OF ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

Sederunt:

Lord Provost David Cameron, Chairperson;
Depute Provost Steve Delaney; and

COUNCILLORS

GILLIAN AL-SAMARAI
CHRISTIAN ALLARD
ALISON ALPHONSE
KATE BLAKE
JENNIFER BONSELL
RICHARD BROOKS
HAZEL CAMERON
DONNA CLARK
JOHN COOKE
NEIL COPLAND
WILLIAM CORMIE
SARAH CROSS
DEREK DAVIDSON
LEE FAIRFULL
EMMA FARQUHAR
GORDON GRAHAM
ROSS GRANT
MARTIN GREIG
DELL HENRICKSON

RYAN HOUGHTON
MICHAEL HUTCHISON
MICHAEL KUSZNIR
SANDRA MACDONALD
NEIL MacGREGOR
ALEXANDER McLELLAN
KEN McLEOD
CIARAN McRAE
M. TAUQEER MALIK
DUNCAN MASSEY
JESSICA MENNIE
ALEX NICOLL
MIRANDA RADLEY
KAIRIN VAN SWEEDEN
LYNN THOMSON
DEENA TISSERA
SIMON WATSON
and
IAN YUILL

Lord Provost David Cameron, in the Chair.

The agenda and reports associated with this minute can be found [here](#).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

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WRITTEN REQUEST FOR SPECIAL MEETING

1. The Council had before it the wording of the written request for this special Council meeting which had been signed by 12 members in accordance with Standing Order 8.2.2:-

“The business to be transacted related to the failure of the SNP and Liberal Democrat administration to provide a full, open, and transparent account to the citizens of Aberdeen City Council, of plans put forward by the Home Office to provide additional new accommodation for asylum seekers being sent to the city. Additionally, to instruct the Chief Executive to provide details of all meeting and communications with elected members and Home Office officials regarding the Home Office proposals.”

Councillor Nicoll moved, seconded by Councillor Malik:-

That Council -

1. Notes on 13 August 2025, all elected members of Aberdeen City Council were provided with a confidential briefing regarding an increase in dispersal accommodation for asylum seekers in Aberdeen and identifying new sites together with timelines for new accommodation to become available.
2. Notes media reports about Kevin Stewart MSP on 28 August 2025 expressing concerns regarding the use of former Aberdeen University Halls of Residence in Don Street, Aberdeen as accommodation for asylum seekers and indicating that the Council could consider a legal challenge to the decision and further in a letter to the Council calling for the proposals to be shelved.
3. Notes media reports on Saturday 13 September 2025 that Aberdeen City Council Chiefs were not informed of a Home Office decision regarding accommodation for asylum seekers located in Aberdeen. The report stated that Council co leader Christian Allard blasted the lack of notice from the Home Office officials stating, *“We’ve been notified, we’ve not been asked, no consultation has happened with Aberdeen City Council, with the communities, with the universities, with student groups.”* Expresses concern that these media statements may be construed as being economical with the truth.
4. Notes that during the week 8 to 12 September 2025 a meeting between senior officers and political group leaders of Aberdeen City Council was called to discuss the changes to dispersal accommodation in Aberdeen.
5. Notes no independent or single party members were invited to the meeting despite forming 11% of the council membership. Further noting this group comprises a former Lord Provost, former Deputy Provost, former Co-Leader, former Deputy Leader and an Individual Party Member.
6. Instructs the Chief Executive to urgently prepare a report detailing all Council contact with the Home Office regarding this matter, together with details of all steps taken to inform individual elected members of the progress of these proposals, and to submit the report to a Council meeting as soon as possible.
7. Notes with concern that the democratic process in Aberdeen City Council excludes some elected members from information sharing. Instructs the Chief Executive to immediately consult with independent and single party members on the future dissemination of information being shared with political group leaders.

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8. Welcomes the statement of 10 September 2025 below, signed by the SNP Group Leader Councillor Allard, the Liberal Democrat Group Leader Councillor Yuill and the Labour Group Leader Councillor Malik:

“Aberdeen has a long tradition to welcoming people from all over the world. In recent years our city has welcomed refugees fleeing war and violence from Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine.

“Many in Aberdeen, volunteers across all sectors and all walks of life, are supporting people fleeing wars and persecution and doing an amazing job on our behalf.

“We urge everyone thinking of joining gatherings in front of hotels being used by the Home Office to accommodate asylum seekers to respect one another and to respect the rights of the people seeking asylum.

“We condemn the false claims and hateful rhetoric that are threatening community cohesion.

“We will work to ensure that Aberdeen remains a city that welcomes newcomers and treats them with dignity and respect.”

Councillor Radley moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Greig:-
That the Council -

Welcomes the statement of 10 September 2025 below, signed by the SNP Group Leader Councillor Allard, the Liberal Democrat Group Leader Councillor Yuill and the Labour Group Leader Councillor Malik:

“Aberdeen has a long tradition to welcoming people from all over the world. In recent years our city has welcomed refugees fleeing war and violence from Syria, Afghanistan, and Ukraine.

“Many in Aberdeen, volunteers across all sectors and all walks of life, are supporting people fleeing wars and persecution and doing an amazing job on our behalf.

“We urge everyone thinking of joining gatherings in front of hotels being used by the Home Office to accommodate asylum seekers to respect one another and to respect the rights of the people seeking asylum.

“We condemn the false claims and hateful rhetoric that are threatening community cohesion.

“We will work to ensure that Aberdeen remains a city that welcomes newcomers and treats them with dignity and respect.”

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On a division, there voted:-

For the motion (17) - Councillors Blake, Bonsell, Brooks, Cross, Farquhar, Graham, Grant, Houghton, Kuszniir, Macdonald, McLeod, Malik, Massey, Nicoll, Thomson, Tissera and Watson.

For the amendment (22) - Lord Provost; Depute Provost; and Councillors Al-Samarai, Allard, Alphonse, Hazel Cameron, Clark, Cooke, Copland, Cormie, Davidson, Fairfull, Greig, Henrickson, Hutchison, MacGregor, McLellan, McRae, Mennie, Radley, van Sweeden and Yuill.

The Council resolved:-

- (i) to adopt the amendment; and
- (ii) to note that the Executive Director - Families and Communities would circulate a log of all communications between Aberdeen City Council and the Home Office since the beginning of discussions in relation to the relevant properties with regard to asylum accommodation.

- **DAVID CAMERON, Lord Provost.**