

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Date of Meeting	Tuesday 28 September 2021
Report Subject	Becoming a County of Sanctuary
Report Author	Chief Officer (Housing and Assets)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

City of Sanctuary is a UK movement with over 110 members and a rapidly growing networks of partners. The organisation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

The movement aims to advance the education of the public in general and in particular the City of Sanctuary Network in subjects relating to refugees and those seeking asylum for example:-

- a) Supporting, promoting and organising the City of Sanctuary network, including identifying the needs of the network and establishing projects or resources to address them;
- b) Raising awareness of the work of City of Sanctuary Network to the public and media;
- c) Encouraging cities, towns, villages, regions, areas, places, organisations and institutions to become welcome and safe, through the provision of information, advice and support;
- d) Advancing the education and training of people who are refugees or asylum seekers;
- e) Liaising with other private, voluntary and statutory organisations on relevant issues

This work also includes promoting equality and diversity for the public benefit by promoting activities to foster understanding between people from diverse backgrounds including promoting activities to foster understanding between the general public, refugees and asylum seekers.

Flintshire City of Sanctuary was initially launched in June 2018, as Synergy-Mold, but has now expanded to include branches in Mold, Flint and Holywell.

There is the opportunity for the County Council to join the movement.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That the Council becomes a non-awarded member of the movement and in doing so signs up to the vision and values of City of Sanctuary
---	--

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE TO BECOMING A COUNTY OF SANCTUARY
1.01	Flintshire has a strong history of supporting refugees based on the work undertaken as part of the Syrian refugee programme, this work has been further reinforced more recently through our approach and work supporting the Afghan refugee programme. In that context therefore we are perhaps well placed to use this work to promote the County in further complimentary ways.
1.02	The County has a rich diversity and welcomes all, irrespective of their background, it also recognises the contribution of refugees, migrants and those who seek sanctuary and is committed to welcoming them and including them in our local communities.
1.03	<p>In considering whether to become a County of Sanctuary it is worth reflecting on the national organisation that promotes and raises the profile of this work. City of Sanctuary is a United Kingdom (UK) movement and has grown from its origins in Sheffield in 2005, to become an international network and movement with over 110 groups in the UK, and a rapidly growing network of partners. Flintshire City of Sanctuary was launched in June 2018, initially as Synergy-Mold, but has now expanded to include branches in Mold, Flint and Holywell.</p> <p>City of Sanctuary's vision:-</p> <p>That the UK will be a welcoming place of safety for all and proud to offer sanctuary to people fleeing violence and persecution.</p>
1.04	<p>In terms of its values the organisation and its networks are guided and informed by a commitment to the following values:-</p> <p>Inclusiveness – We welcome and respect people from all backgrounds, place the highest value on diversity and are committed to equality.</p> <p>Openness - We are committed to a culture of working collaboratively within the network and in partnership with others.</p>

	<p>Participation – Those who support our vision work together with people seeking sanctuary. We value and recognise the contribution of all involved. We aspire to ensure people seeking sanctuary are fully involved in decision making processes and supported to become leaders within the City of Sanctuary organisation and network as well as within the wider movement.</p> <p>Inspiring – We work with enthusiasm and positivity and are determined to surpass what has already been achieved to welcome refugees and people seeking sanctuary. We act as a catalyst for change by being open to new and innovative ideas and through sharing knowledge gained with others and working in partnership.</p> <p>Integrity – We aspire to high standards of honesty and behaviour, and always to act in the interests of people seeking sanctuary.</p>
1.05	<p>The City of Sanctuary network includes groups, and others engaged in work streams of Sanctuary activity, that are focused on bringing about both local and national social change. Groups, and others engaged in streams of sanctuary work who are aligned with the network principles, have flexibility to develop local, regional and national responses to local, regional and national challenges (e.g. developing Wales as a Nation of Sanctuary). Together such networks affirm and achieve our overarching vision.</p>
1.06	<p>The City of Sanctuary network is part of a mainstream, grassroots movement working towards achieving the overall vision. Whilst there is flexibility in determining how best to work towards the vision, the following principles apply to all groups, networks and work streams operating under the name of City of Sanctuary:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer a positive vision of a culture of welcome and hospitality to all; • Create opportunities for relationships of friendship and solidarity between local people and those seeking sanctuary; • Recognise and encourage partnership working and network development across localities; • Identify opportunities for practical action and work on common cause issues to effect change within and across communities (turning empathy into action); • Celebrate and promote the welcome and contribution of people seeking sanctuary; • Engage people seeking sanctuary in decision making processes at all levels and in all activities; • Promote understanding of asylum and refugee issues, especially by enabling refugee voices to be heard directly
1.07	<p>Flintshire can apply to become a member of the network, and there are two types of membership:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Awarded member – Local Authority has gone through the award appraisal process and gained recognition (*please note that local authorities who were awarded as part of a city-wide recognition process or a self-recognition process will be classed as awarded

	<p>members but will be expected to submit an application form within six months of the membership application.</p> <p>2. Non-awarded member – Local Authority has signed up to vision and values of City of Sanctuary and has committed to working towards the award</p>
1.08	At this current point in time it is suggested that the County Council becomes a Non-awarded member.
1.09	The above approach resonates with Welsh Governments approach for Wales to be a Nation of Sanctuary.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	At this moment in time the intention is to become a non-awarded Member in that it signs up the vision and values of City of Sanctuary. It is anticipated that this initial stage will not require any additional resources.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	Not applicable.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Consultation with Chief Officer Team.
4.02	Consultation with Group Leaders or representative.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Link to website :- https://cityofsanctuary.org

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Neal Cockerton, Chief Officer, Housing and Assets Telephone: 01352 703169 E-mail: neal.cockerton@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIO's) provide a means for charities to incorporate and gain the benefits currently available to companies without the burden of dual regulation by both the Charity Commission and Companies House. CIOs will be administered by the Charity Commission who will have sole responsibility for their formation and registration.