

County Council

20 July 2018

Item No. 6(d) - Notice of Motion by Mrs Mullins on Costs of Citizenship for Children

Amendment by Mr Hillier

In the UK today, there are significant numbers of children who do not currently have British citizenship, but have rights to register as British citizens. Many of these children were born in the UK, and others have lived here from a young age, been raised here, educated here, and have never known any other home. Without access to their citizenship rights, children may find themselves denied opportunities extended to their peers, such as the chance to participate in a school trip, or to be eligible for funding, so they can undertake higher education.

It is reported that there are a number of barriers to children registering their citizenship. Registration can be a complex process of prohibitive cost. Children are charged £1,012 for a process whose administrative cost is published at £372, meaning government is **apparently** making a profit of £640 from every child who claims their rights. No child should be denied their citizenship rights by reason of a fee. There is no substitute for citizenship, which is vital to future security and sense of belonging.

This Council recognises:

- (a) That **there is a risk that** ~~the profit-making element of the fee, to register citizenship, discourages the best outcomes for many~~ **some** of the UK's children;
- (b) Because of their duties as corporate parents, the fee for children to register ~~will~~ **may** fall on councils, in the ~~many~~ **few** cases where children looked after qualify for citizenship **and put an application in**; and
- (c) **in such instances, the fee could** puts councils, in the ~~unacceptable~~ position, of having to weigh the benefits of citizenship, to a child in their care, against the cost to the council of assisting a child in claiming that right.

This Council therefore resolves to ask the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People:

- (12) To identify children in the Council's care who are entitled to citizenship, and **to continue to** make sure they are aware of their rights and supported to claim them.
- (21) To write to the Minister of Immigration, ~~demanding that~~ **suggesting that the level of** the fee for children to register as British citizens ~~is~~ **could be a barrier to a young person wishing to regularise their citizenship and asking that consideration be given to** ~~demanding that~~ the fee

being reduced to the administrative cost; and ~~demanding that children~~ looked after **being** are exempted from the fee in its entirety; and

- (3) To also ask that the Home Office undertakes to take up its statutory responsibilities in relation to those young people who have been refused refugee status in more timely fashion and not leave the burden on local authorities.**