**Windrush and the Government’s hostile environment**

Council notes that:

Lambeth residents are part of the historic struggle for equality in this country and that those of the Commonwealth diaspora - the Windrush generation, their descendants and families - have played a crucial role in shaping our borough. Our diversity makes us strong, and is to be celebrated.

The Windrush scandal has brought to prominence the Government’s ‘hostile environment’ policy which is having a terrible impact on many Lambeth residents. Detaining and deporting members of the Windrush Generation and their descendants is a betrayal and a shame on this government and our country. The UK’s immigration detention system is not fit for purpose and the Government must end immigration detention.  Anyone whose grandparents and parents are here has the right to reunite with their family.

Despite the Government’s apology for the Windrush scandal many of the Windrush generation, their descendants and families are still suffering great hardship. Children, grandchildren and family members from Commonwealth countries who joined their families in the UK after 1st January 1973 are still facing detention and deportation. They have not been included in the Government’s apologies or measures to put right this wrong.

Despite the establishment of the Government’s Windrush taskforce Windrush citizens are still being forced to wait months for their immigration cases to be resolved despite a government pledge to process them in two weeks.  The Home Office’s response is chaotic and is forcing people into distress and destitution.

Council believes that:

It is unacceptable that older members of the Windrush generation are spending their last years alone in care homes because their own children and grandchildren are not allowed back into the country, or that families continue to be separated as a consequence of racist immigration policies.

It is unacceptable that those who have lived and worked here for decades are the subject of immigration raids and harassment.  Those who work in our hospitals, schools and other parts of the public sector should not be made into border guards in sweeping measures that have criminalised entire communities.

It is unacceptable that people have to go through all of the bureaucratic processes of different departments such the Department for Work and Pensions and Home Office, to get their lives back on track.

No one from the Windrush Generation, their descendants or families should be charged additional fees for naturalisation or passport applications. Additional hardship payments should be issued to those who need them.

Council will:

(i)  Support the campaign calling for the government to widen the Windrush Scheme (#WidenWindrush) to include descendants and family members who came to the UK after 1st January 1973, publicise the legal challenge to the discrimination against Windrush descendants who arrived after that date, and call on MPs and other Councils to support this campaign.

(ii)  Support the call for fees for naturalisation to be waived for all those who have been affected; call on the Prime Minister to commission a public inquiry into the Windrush scandal; actively campaign for an end to the ‘hostile environment’ policy and indefinite detention, and oppose the criminalisation of Windrush families.

(iii)   Call on the Government to ensure that the Windrush taskforce becomes a ‘one stop shop’ for the Windrush Generation, their descendants and families. That would mean that in one place people would not only get their residence permit but also their British passport and their welfare benefits/pensions reinstated.

(iv)  Set up a working group that will explore the impact of immigration policies on Lambeth residents who are members, descendants or close family members of the Windrush generation, champion and secure their rights, and come forward with proposals to ensure Lambeth residents do not continue to suffer from the Hostile Environment policy.

(v)  Review the Council’s policies and procedures to ensure the Council supports those affected to the fullest extent possible, including fully supporting advice agencies and local community organisations in Lambeth in their work to achieve justice for all Lambeth residents of the Windrush generation.

vi) Endorse the ‘These Walls Must Fall’ Campaign

vii) Call on the Government to implement the recommendations of the Joint Inquiry by the All Party Parliamentary Group on Refugees & the All Party Parliamentary Group on Migration into the Use of Immigration Detention in the United Kingdom.

viii) Ask Lambeth MPs to raise these matters in the House of Commons, and support alternatives to immigration detention.

ix) Seek further support for this motion via the Local Government Association, and by encouraging other Councils in the UK to show their support.