



Report to Council

Meeting Date – 3 March 2026
Key Decision – No
Public/Private – Public

Portfolio – Cllr Lisa Hinton – Deputy Leader (Statutory)
Directorate – All
Lead Officer – Colin Cox, Director of Public Health, Customer & Community Wellbeing

Title – Petition – Council of Sanctuary

Summary:

A petition has been submitted to the Council via www.change.org entitled “The citizens of Carlisle and Cumberland object the (*sic*) ‘city and council of sanctuary’ status”. At the date this was submitted to the Council this petition contained 1883 signatures, of whom 1112 were from Cumberland. This exceeds the threshold for the petition to be debated in Council and as such the Monitoring Officer has referred it for such debate.

Recommendation:

Council is RECOMMENDED to consider this report and the contents of the petition.

Tracking:

Executive:	N/A
Scrutiny:	N/A
Council:	3 March 2026

1. Background

- 1.1. Council agreed in September 2024 to pursue recognition as a “council of sanctuary”. Since then a Council of Sanctuary Strategic Statement has been approved by Executive (25 November 2025) and a Motion to overturn the September 2024 agreement has been debated and rejected by Council (January 2026). Following the confirmation of Council’s intent in January 2026, an application for the Council of Sanctuary Award has now been submitted.
- 1.2. A petition has been submitted to the Council via www.change.org entitled “The citizens of Carlisle and Cumberland object the (*sic*) ‘city and council of sanctuary’ status”. At the date this was submitted to the Council this petition contained 1883 signatures, of whom 1112 were from Cumberland. This exceeds the threshold for the petition to be debated in Council and as such the Monitoring Officer has referred it for such debate.
- 1.3. The Petition makes no clear request of the Council. Rather it outlines a number of concerns relating to the changing demographics of Carlisle, specifically related to the presence of asylum seekers (or people who are presumed to be so). It particularly raises fears about safety, indicating that those signing it feel intimidated by the presence of people who are seeking asylum.
- 1.4. As Members will be aware, being a Council of Sanctuary will make no difference to the number of asylum seekers placed in Cumberland by the Home Office. The aim of being a Council of Sanctuary is to ensure that people arriving in Cumberland are supported adequately to be quickly and effectively integrated into local society.

2. Proposals

- 2.1. On the basis that Council has now twice confirmed its support for becoming a Council of Sanctuary, most recently at its last meeting, it is proposed that Council note the contents of the petition.

3. Alternative options considered

- 3.1. Through debate Council could reach any alternative resolution it sees fit.

4. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 4.1. The report is intended to confirm what actions are being proposed.

Implications:

Contribution to the Cumberland Plan Priorities – Dependent on resolution reached.

Relevant Risks - N/A

Legal – N/A

Finance – N/A

Information Governance – N/A

Impact Assessments – N/A

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Appendices attached to report:

None

Background papers:

None