

Migration and Nation of Sanctuary Strategic Oversight Board

17 October 2024 13:130 – 15:00

Virtual MS Teams

Attendees

Jane Hutt, Cabinet Secretary for Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip (Chair)

REDACTED SEC 40(2) [Welsh Government official]

REDACTED SEC 40(2), Home Office

REDACTED SEC 40(2), Home Office

REDACTED SEC 40(2), Home Office

REDACTED SEC 40(2), Home Office

REDACTED SEC 40(2), Home Office

Tim Rymer, Deputy Director of Adult and Family Asylum Accommodation, Home Office

REDACTED SEC 40(2), WLGA

REDACTED SEC 40(2), Welsh Local Government Association

REDACTED SEC 40(2), Wales Strategic Migration Partnership

REDACTED SEC 40(2) [Wales Trade Union]

Erica Cassin, Chair of Careers Wales Board

REDACTED SEC 40(2), Public Health Wales

REDACTED SEC 40(2), REDACTED – SECTION 38(1)

REDACTED SEC 40(2), REDACTED – SECTION 38(1)

REDACTED SEC 40(2), REDACTED – SECTION 38(1)

REDACTED SEC 40(2), Cardiff City Council

REDACTED SEC 40(2), REDACTED – SECTION 38(1)

Sarah Rhodes, Deputy Director, Housing Policy Housing and Regeneration, WG

Andrew Charles, Deputy Director, Cohesive Communities, WG

REDACTED SEC 40(2), WG

REDACTED SEC 40(2), WG

REDACTED SEC 40(2), WG

REDACTED SEC 40(2), WG

REDACTED SEC 40(2), WG

REDACTED SEC 40(2), WG

REDACTED SEC 40(2), WG (notetaker)

Apologies

Cllr Nia Wyn Jeffreys, Deputy Leader Plaid Cymru, Gwynedd Council (Co-Chair)

Dame Angela Eagle, Minister for Border Security and Asylum

Lord Khan, Lords Minister for Faith, Communities and Resettlement

Tracy Bridgett, Deputy Director Resettlement, Home Office

Andy Dunbobbin, Police and Crime Commissioner for North Wales

Cllr Andrea Lewis, Deputy Leader Swansea Council

Cllr Mary Ann Brocklesby, Leader Monmouthshire Council

Cllr Huw Thomas, Leader Cardiff Council

Cllr Darren Price, Leader Carmarthenshire Council

REDACTED SEC 40(2), REDACTED – SEC 38(1)

Tracey Cooper, Chief Executive Public Health Wales

REDACTED SEC 40(2), Newport City Council

REDACTED SEC 40(2), Pro Steel Engineering
Nikki Lawrence, Chief Executive Careers Wales
Emma Williams, Director of Housing and Regeneration
Amelia John, Director of Communities and Social Justice
Tracey Cooper, Chief Executive Public Health Wales

Agenda Item 1: Welcome and Actions from Last Meeting

The Cabinet Secretary welcomed everyone to the meeting. The actions from the previous meeting were reviewed and confirmed as completed.

Agenda Item 2: Agree Updated Terms of Reference

The updated terms of reference were shared ahead of the meeting. Attendees were asked if there were any further amendments or comments. No hands were raised, and the updated terms of reference was approved.

Agenda Item 3: Review and Follow Up on Actions from the Nation of Sanctuary Partnership Board

The meeting proceeded to review and follow up on actions from the Nation of Sanctuary Partnership Board. This meeting followed the extraordinary meeting convened after the Southport attack.

Andrew Charles provided a high-level update on the discussion from the Partnership Board meeting held on 16th August. The meeting was primarily in response to the Southport attacks and aimed to update on progress and actions taken by partners, as well as identify key areas for improvement.

Andrew emphasised the importance of clear and timely communications during times of disorder, with commitments to issue clearer guidance and processes around communications. The potential for a Wales-wide prevent group, with papers to be taken to the All-Wales Prevention Board on 26th November.

One of the actions from that meeting was on obtaining addresses of people in properties at risk, and engaging with REDACTED – SEC 38(1) to share insights and lessons learned.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) reflected on a similar extraordinary meeting within criminal justice in Wales. She emphasized the importance of linking discussions on civil unrest with the Wales Migration Partnership and offered to share a paper from Public Health Wales and the Violence Prevention Unit on prevention aspects and recent learnings.

Action 1 – REDACTED SEC 40(2) to share a paper from Public Health Wales and the Violence Prevention Unit on prevention aspects and recent learnings. with the WSMP.

Agenda Item 4: UK Disorder Response and Recovery - Community Cohesion and Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan

The discussion began with an introduction to the topic by the Chair, who emphasized the importance of working together to bring community cohesion and the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan developments into the response efforts.

The Chair condemned the exploitation of the tragic events in Southport targeting refugees and asylum seekers, highlighting the fear and racism experienced by many people in Wales. Meetings were mentioned with communities and REDACTED SEC 38(1) to provide reassurance and share information. The First Minister, issued a written statement about the disorder and the Welsh response, promoting strong, cohesive, and anti-racist communities.

Andrew Charles provided an update on the potential for a Wales-wide prevent group and the importance of clear communications during times of disorder.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) reflected on a similar extraordinary meeting within criminal justice in Wales and emphasized linking discussions on civil unrest with the Wales Migration Partnership.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) expressed the need to be linked into the prevent conversation and sought clarity on the communication strategy in Wales.

She raised concerns about information sharing during protests and the need for updated guidance from the Home Office.

Tim Rymer reassured that there are clear processes for sharing address information of asylum seekers with statutory partners and highlighted the collaboration with police during recent disorders.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) suggested bringing together public service officers to share lessons learned and develop a coordinated approach in Wales.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) discussed the actions taken around sharing questions from the previous meeting and the ongoing work of REDACTED – SEC 38(1) in Wales.

The Chair thanked all participants for their contributions and emphasized the importance of continuous engagement and collaboration to promote community cohesion and implement the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan.

Action 2 – Welsh Government & Tim Reyman to consult with Home Office colleagues and community leaders and Local Government to develop clear processes communicating sensitive information sharing including addresses and go through lessons learned from the Stradey Park.

Agenda Item 5: Nation of Sanctuary Vision Update

The discussion on the Nation of Sanctuary Vision update began with reflections on the journey since 2019. The Chair recalled launching the plan with REDACTED SEC 40(2) and emphasised the progress made so far, while also acknowledging the many goals yet to be achieved.

The Chair assured the attendees that efforts would be made to ensure the plan is fully representative of the initial vision set in 2019. It was highlighted the significant achievements delivered under the plan and the ongoing commitment to further progress.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) commented on the scale of the plan and the importance of ensuring its comprehensive implementation. they reiterated the need for continuous efforts to meet the plan's objectives.

The Chair invited additional comments from other attendees, emphasizing the collaborative nature of the initiative and the importance of collective efforts to achieve the vision of a Nation of Sanctuary.

Action 3 – REDACTED SEC 40(2) to consult with attendees as to what can be done to improve communication around the integration of the migration plan into the anti-racist Wales.

Action 4 – Individual organisations commit to contribute towards the policy statement written from Cabinet Secretary, terms of what it means and what the individual organisational responsibilities are also what has been achieved and provide best practice and examples.

Agenda Item 6: New UK Government Priorities

The discussion on the new UK Government priorities began with the Chair introducing the topic and highlighting the recent meeting with the UK Minister for Border Security and Asylum, Dame Angela Eagle, and Lord Wajid Khan. The Chair emphasized the productive and constructive nature of the introductory meeting.

The Chair mentioned the strong commitment to work closely with Welsh governments and Welsh local authorities. It was noted that while there was limited time to explore the policy priorities of the new UK government, there was a clear message that innovative approaches and made-in-Wales solutions would be considered. It was reported that both UK ministers emphasised the need for more respect to be shown to the devolution settlement. Hope was expressed for a strong new partnership and productive working arrangements, particularly for colleagues in local government.

Tim Rymer added that the new government, about 100 days in, is keen on a constructive and collaborative relationship with the Welsh Government and all devolved governments.

He mentioned that Home Office ministers are focused on the end-to-end asylum system and the resumption of asylum decision-making.

Tim Rymer highlighted the importance of working closely with Welsh governments and local authorities to manage the impacts of the asylum system. He indicated that there is an appetite among ministers to examine a broad set of options for the future.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) referenced the positive meeting held earlier in the week with Dame Angela Eagle and Lord Khan, and the request for a co-productive response approach¹⁰. She emphasized the need for solutions that fit local circumstances and the importance of a place-based approach. REDACTED SEC 40(2) discussed the challenges of asylum dispersal in rural areas and the support for developing models that suit these areas. She noted the request for more regular meetings with local authorities and the positive steps being taken.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) provided an update on the proposals sent to the bill team and the ongoing conversations about which proposals could be taken forward.

The Chair concluded the discussion by emphasizing the importance of working together and sharing experiences to improve the asylum support system and legislative processes.

Agenda Item 7: AOB / Matters Arising

The Chair opened the floor for any other business or matters arising.

The Chair mentioned the Anti-Racist Action Plan as an item of AOB and invited any additional points from the attendees.

REDACTED SEC 40(2) raised a question about the consolidation of the Nation of Sanctuary Plan into the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. He inquired about the timeline for the refresh of the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan and how the consolidation would be presented. The need for a clear timeline to share with his team members was emphasized.

The Chair confirmed that the refreshed Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan would be published, and an oral statement would be made on the first Tuesday in November. It was mentioned that the Nation of Sanctuary would have a dedicated chapter within the Anti-Racist Wales Action Plan. The Chair Assurance was given that there would be separate communications and a statement specifically about the Nation of Sanctuary section.

Action 5 – REDACTED SEC 40(2) to keep attendees up to date with the published dates of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan.

Future Meetings

The Chair confirmed the next meetings would be scheduled for February and June and that efforts would be made to ensure the Co-Chair Cllr Nia Wyn Jeffreys would be able to attend. The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and contributions.

Actions

No.	Action	Lead(s)	Update
1	Share a paper from Public Health Wales and the Violence Prevention Unit on prevention aspects and recent learnings. with the WSMP.	REDACTED SEC 40(2)	Completed 17-10-2024
2	Consult with Home Office colleagues and community leaders and Local Government to develop clear processes communicating sensitive information sharing including addresses and go through lessons learned from the Stradey Park.	Welsh Government & Tim Reyman	
3	Consult with attendees as to what can be done to improve communication around the integration of the migration plan into the anti-racist Wales.	REDACTED SEC 40(2)	
4	Commit to contribute towards the policy statement written from Cabinet Secretary, terms of what it means and what the individual organisational responsibilities are also what has been achieved and provide best practice and examples.	Individual organisations	
5	Keep attendees up to date with the publishing dates of the Anti-racist Wales Action Plan.	REDACTED SEC 40(2)	