

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
HEAD OF CORPORATE SERVICES	FINANCE AND DEMOCRACY COMMITTEE	28 SEPTEMBER 2022	7
FULLY FUNDED REVENUE BUDGET INCREASE – HOMES FOR UKRAINE SCHEME			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

The Homes for Ukraine Scheme was launched by the government on 14 March 2022. This scheme allows people living in the UK to sponsor a named Ukrainian national or family to come to live in the UK with them, providing they have suitable accommodation to offer.

As part of the government's commitment to helping people flee the conflict in the Ukraine, district councils have been asked to help to support the Ukrainian families via integration events in the community and support if they become homeless.

Fylde has been provided with an initial allocation of £155,000 to deliver this part of the scheme

Funding has been made available to deliver a community integration events and financial provision in the incident that the Ukrainian guest become homeless. The funding is per Ukrainian guest and is broken down to £1,000 per guest to support the integration of the Ukrainians into the community and a further £2,500 per guest to support the Ukrainians in the event of homelessness.

The Finance and Democracy Committee is invited to approve a fully funded budget increase for this programme of support.

RECOMMENDATION

The Finance and Democracy Committee is requested to approve a fully funded revenue budget increase of £155,000 in 2022/23 to deliver the Homes for Ukraine Scheme as detailed within the report.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

There have been no previous decisions on this matter in relation to grant provision.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	✓
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	✓
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	✓
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	✓

REPORT

Background

1. The Homes for Ukraine scheme was launched on 14 March 2022 by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)
2. This scheme is open to Ukrainian nationals who were residents in Ukraine prior to 1 January 2022 and to their immediate family members (for example spouse/partner and children under 18) who may be of other nationalities, to be sponsored to come to the UK. Applicants can apply from Ukraine or from any other third country. The "register-interest-homes-ukraine" scheme allows individual members of the public (sponsors) to sponsor named people from Ukraine (guests) who meet the eligibility criteria of this scheme. The number of people who can access this scheme is uncapped and is dependent on the capacity of the sponsors who come forward.
3. Guests will be able to live and work in the UK for up to 3 years and access benefits, healthcare, employment, and other support. Those arriving need to meet standard security checks prior to being issued with a visa. Sponsors and all adults in sponsors' households will also be subject to initial Police National Computer (PNC), criminal records and Warnings Index checks by the Home Office.
4. Borough councils are responsible for a range of support including initial property checks, post arrival checks, payments to sponsors, ongoing support with community integration, and information about the local area.
5. The "sponsor guidance" sponsor guidance makes it clear that prospective sponsors will be subject to accommodation and welfare checks. Local councils must make at least one in-person visit prior to the arrival of guests wherever possible and confirm that they have checked that the accommodation exists and identify needs for DBS checks for sponsors who will house children.
6. Sponsors are eligible for an optional 'thank you payment' of £350 per month, for as long as the guest remains in their accommodation for up to 12 months. This payment will be tax free and should not affect the sponsor's entitlement to benefits or council tax status
7. The government is providing further funding at a rate of £10,500 per person to councils to enable them to provide support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities. Responsibility for this support rests with both the upper and lower tier councils within Lancashire.
8. The Department will make regular payments to councils, each covering three months of the programme, in arrears. Payments are based on the actual number of Homes for Ukraine guests (for the £10,500 per person tariff) and the actual number of payments to sponsoring households (for the £350 'thank you' payments) within each area. DLUHC will conduct a reconciliation process at the end of the financial year to ensure that councils receive their correct entitlement for both the £10,500 tariff and £350 'thank you' payments.
9. In two tier areas, both districts and counties have access to funds for their relevant duties under the scheme, and Lancashire County Council has granted £155,000 to Fylde Council for support to Ukrainian guests who have arrived in the Borough during the period March to July 2022. The funding is per Ukrainian guest and is broken down to £1000 per guest to support the integration of the Ukrainians into the community and £2500 per guest to support the Ukrainians in the event of homelessness.
10. Fylde Council will play a key role in supporting the integration of Ukrainian families into the local community. Integration support might include the organisation of community events, the use of community champions and interfaith networks, increasing local authority contact/interaction with people from Ukraine, access to translation services and working with local voluntary sector organisations and faith groups to help signpost advice and support. Local authorities are expected to work together with local policing leads, local anti-slavery partnerships and modern slavery policy leads to put in place preventative measures to reduce the risk of refugee exploitation in their area. It is this aspect of the programme that the £1,000 per guest for integration activities will be focused. In order to provide a cohesive support programme the intention is that the three Fylde Coast authorities will work closely together to offer this integration and support programme. This

element of the programme is also supported by Lancashire County council with bi-weekly meetings attended by all Lancashire districts sharing good practice and safeguarding concerns. Locally we are working with several worship places, relevant volunteer partners and the local police to support the Ukrainian community as they start their new life in the UK.

11. Whilst the priority is to ensure as many sponsorship relationships as possible are sustainable and can support guests for six months and longer, in a minority of cases this will not be possible. Councils will be able to rematch Homes for Ukraine guests with new sponsors in certain circumstances during the initial 6-month stay, and more broadly following the end of an initial sponsorship. Finding another host is also available as an option for those who are not ready to leave sponsorship and move into their own alternative accommodation, but can't stay with their current host, following the end of their initial stay. If the rematch process fails and the guest has not found alternative accommodation it is the responsibility of the lower tier authority to provide homelessness assistance. This accounts for another part of the grant offered from Lancashire County Council in order that support can be provided should such unfortunate circumstances arise.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The Finance and Democracy Committee is requested to approve a fully funded revenue budget increase of £155,000 in 2022/23 to deliver the Homes for Ukraine Scheme as detailed within the report.
Legal	No legal implications arising because of this report
Community Safety	No Community Safety implications arising because of this report
Human Rights and Equalities	We are working closely with partners to ensure that there are no exploitation and other issues with respect to our guests.
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	No Sustainability and Environmental impact implications arising because of this report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No Health & Safety and Risk Management implications arising because of this report

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
Edyta Paxton	edyta.paxton@fylde.gov.uk	20 th September 2022

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
NA		