

Council

Date of Meeting:	18 th May 2022
Report Title:	Homes for Ukraine Schemes – Grant Funding
Report of:	Helen Charlesworth-May Executive Director – Adults, Health and Integration
Ward(s) Affected:	All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. This report outlines the Homes for Ukraine scheme and what is expected of the Council. It outlines the funding allocations for Councils to resource these expectations and recommends that delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive Officer to receive the funding in a timely manner.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. To inform Full Council of the expectations on Local Authorities as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme and to delegate authority to the Chief Executive to accept funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, up to £12,600,000. This sum makes provision for up to 1,000 Ukrainian guests (£10,500 per individual) arriving and residing in 500 sponsor properties (a £4,200 thank you payment per annum per property).
- 2.2. The recommendation within this report demonstrates the following strategic priorities:
- A council which empowers and cares about people
 - Ensure that there is transparency in all aspects of council decision making.

3. Recommendations

That Council:

- 3.1. Approves a supplementary revenue estimate of up to £12,600,000 for the 2022/23 Financial Year; and
- 3.2. Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to accept up to £12,600,000 of grant funding from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.
- 3.3. Authorise the Chief Executive to take all other action, including the distribution of grant monies, as she deems necessary, to ensure that the grant funding can be properly administered

4. Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1. To allow timely acceptance of grants for the Homes for Ukraine scheme to be appropriately resourced.

5. Other Options Considered

5.1.

Option	Impact	Risk
Not to delegate authority to receive funding	Resource implications due to timely funding provided	Medium

6. Background

- 6.1. National government has announced schemes to support Ukraine nationals escaping the war in Ukraine. There are two main schemes – the Ukrainian Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine.
- 6.2. The Ukraine Family Scheme is open to allow Ukraine nationals to join family members in the UK or to extend their stay in the UK. People applying under this visa route must be applying to join/accompany a UK-based family member, be a Ukraine national (or the immediate family member of a Ukraine national applying to the scheme) and have been residing in Ukraine on or immediately before 1st January 2022.
- 6.3. The Homes for Ukraine scheme is a sponsorship route to allow Ukrainians to join named sponsors in the UK. While, in the first phase of the scheme, the Ukraine ‘guest’ and sponsor must be known to each other, they do not have to be family members (family members are covered by the Ukrainian Family scheme). They could be friends, work colleagues, pen pals, or have been

introduced via a charity or other organisation. The sponsor will have committed to provide accommodation for a minimum of six months.

- 6.4. We do not know at this stage how many Ukrainian guests we can expect under the Homes for Ukraine scheme, but the borough has a proud tradition of supporting people escaping persecution and violence in their homelands. The council has previously played key roles through the asylum seeker dispersal programme, the Syrian vulnerable person resettlement programme and most recently, the Afghan relocations and assistance policy.
- 6.5. Expectations of Councils under the Homes for Ukraine scheme are as follows:
- Providing 'welcome' information and ongoing information about the scheme to both refugee and sponsor;
 - Safeguarding checks on accommodation and individuals, including disclosure and barring service (DBS) checks;
 - Arranging payments related to the scheme to refugees and sponsor households;
 - Managing school and early-years placements for children of Ukrainian families;
 - Working with primary health to make referrals to health services;
 - Managing data sharing across organisations;
 - Providing information about work and benefits; and
 - Supporting integration into the community and signposting to community support.
- 6.6. As at 4th May 2022, 174 sponsors in Cheshire East have volunteered properties to accommodate one or more refugees, with over 400 Ukraine nationals registered to come to the borough under the scheme. It is anticipated that these numbers will continue to change as the scheme progresses.
- 6.7. As the numbers of Ukraine guests is uncapped and Sponsor led it would be reasonable to expect up to 1000 guests in the coming weeks and therefore delegate the accepting of grants up to £12,600,000 is sought to facilitate timely assistance.
- 6.8. If the funding is forecast to exceed £12,600,000 further approvals from Council will be sought.

7. Implications

7.1. Legal

- 7.1.1. The Government has issued Homes for Ukraine: guidance for councils, which, it should be noted, does not remove councils' statutory duties or responsibilities.

7.1.2. The Department for Work and Pensions laid emergency regulations on 21st March 2022 so that those arriving in the UK from Ukraine as a result of the Russian invasion can access Universal Credit and jobs support immediately. Ukraine nationals will also be eligible for Housing Benefit, Pension Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Child Disability Living Allowance and Carers Allowance, and Attendance Allowance. Contributions-based Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), and Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) are also available for those Ukraine nationals who meet the criteria.

7.1.3. From the Constitution: Chapter 3 Part 3

Policy Framework – In-year Changes

Changes (including modifications, revisions, variations, withdrawal or revocation) to Policy Framework plans or strategies must ordinarily be approved by the Council.

7.1.4. Directors may make applications for grants, where the application does not create a commitment, financial or otherwise, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, and, if grant funding is in excess of £1m then the Corporate Leadership Team must be consulted in advance.

7.1.5. Successful grant applications require a supplementary estimate to incur spending, in line with the approval limits set out in the Constitution (Chapter 3Part 3). Receipt of grant funding over £1m requires Council approval. Delegation of acceptance of the funding to the Chief Executive will facilitate timely dissemination of grant funding to meet need.

7.2. Finance

7.2.1. The recommendation is supportable. The number of arrivals and therefore total expenditure is an estimate at this stage. The grant tariff provided by the government is expected to be sufficient to meet the objectives of the scheme. Therefore, this decision will not impact on the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

7.2.2. The grant must be spent in line with the grant conditions. The grant funds are un-ringfenced. However it's possible that funds may need to be returned if the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities decide to reclaim any unspent or mis-spent balances.

7.2.3. The Home Office have promised further guidance in respect to the funds administration & conditions. We expect further detail on the role of councils in administration of the thank you payments & the payment system for the £10,500 per person funding.

7.2.4. The Home Office will also provide additional funding to councils to for education services for children from families. Details of this are expected to be provided by the Home Office soon.

7.2.5. Spending plans are currently being developed. Prudence is being practiced, matching the trajectory of arrivals with phases of planned expenditure. i.e., mainly aiming to control spend to match confirmed numbers of guests.

7.2.6. A breakdown of estimated grant value:

Funding Element	Tariff (£) per annum	Quantity	Estimated Funding (£)	Note
Standard Tariff (paid per guest received)	£ 10,500	1,000	10,500,000	Estimated number of guests is 1000 at this stage
Thanks You Payments (paid per eligible sponsor)	£ 4,200	500	2,100,000	Thank you payments of £350 per month, to be made to eligible sponsors for a minimum of 6 & a maximum of 12 months. Estimated number of based on an expected average of 2 guest per sponsor
Total			12,600,000	

7.3. Policy

7.3.1. The Government has issued Homes for Ukraine: guidance for councils, which, it should be noted, does not replace or contradict councils' statutory duties or responsibilities.

7.4. Equality

7.4.1. The recommendation does require an Equality Impact Assessment. The Homes for Ukraine scheme, equality assessments are being made as part of the integration support e.g., translation and access to information.

7.5. Human Resources

7.5.1. The recommendation does not have any HR implications. The resource and capacity to effectively deliver the Homes for Ukraine Scheme provision is being explored outside of this report.

7.6. Risk Management

7.6.1. The Homes for Ukraine scheme will be managed accordingly. The financial risk is funding not provided by Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities timely.

7.7. Rural Communities

7.7.1. The recommendation does not have a rural implication. The Homes for Ukraine Scheme provision is sponsor led with many of the properties being offered in rural communities. As part of the integration support guests will be

informed about the rural community, they are residing within to make local connections.

7.8. Children and Young People/Cared for Children

7.8.1. The recommendation does not have a children and young people/cared for children implication. The Homes for Ukraine Scheme provision supports children to access education and integrate them with local schools.

7.9. Public Health

7.9.1. The recommendation does not have a public health implication. The Homes for Ukraine Scheme provision supports guests to access health services and understand current public health guidance. Any unforeseen public health issues will be addressed through working with primary care

7.10. Climate Change

7.10.1. The recommendation does not have a climate change implication. The Homes for Ukraine scheme is sponsor led, the guests will require to travel across the borough to access local amenities. D&G buses have agreed as part of their corporate social responsibility to provide free bus 2 months to each Ukraine national to make use of the local transport offer and therefore reduce their personal Carbon Footprint.

Access to Information	
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Appendices:	Homes for Ukraine: guidance for councils - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)