

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	<p>To establish an operational team to run the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme within the Council.</p> <p>To allocate budgets to, and where needed, increase the capacity of teams across the Council to allow them to respond to the increased demand placed upon services as a result of the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme including Early Help, Safeguarding, Interpretation and Translation services, Housing Solutions, Commissioning Support and the DBS checking service at Hoople Ltd.</p>
Date of decision:	31.10.2022
Decision maker:	Corporate Director Community Wellbeing
Authority for delegated decision:	<p>The Chief Executive's scheme of delegation SA09; Commissioning, quality assurance and contract management relating to all ages.</p> <p>The directorate scheme of delegation: Corporate Centre item number 151. Section 151 Officer to accept terms and conditions attached to any Government grants and complete grant returns.</p>
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	<p>As part of the wider commissioning and spending plans for the Ukraine programme, this proposal has been developed through engagement with Council services including Talk Community, Delegated Grants Team, Community Learning Team, Housing Solutions Team, Transport Team and through wider consultation with voluntary and community organisations. These include those groups already working with Ukrainians in Herefordshire.</p> <p>The proposal has been reviewed and approved through internal governance processes and at a Cabinet Briefing held on the 28th July 2022.</p>
Decision made:	<p>This decision seeks approval for the activities detailed below, these being required urgently to support the resettlement of individuals and families arriving in Herefordshire through the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme.</p> <p>Due to the uncertainty around the number of Ukrainian guests arriving through the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme the Council have adopted a minimum and maximum forecast, based on 450 guests and 900 guests respectively. The final spend amount will be linked to the actual number of guests that arrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish an operation team to run the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme for Herefordshire Council. The maximum spend for the operational team will be £389K until April 2023. • Funding is allocated for additional capacity in the Early Help Team to ensure that families arriving from the Ukraine are adequately supported as they resettle into the county. The maximum spend for this service is £774K. • Funding is allocated for additional capacity in the Safeguarding Children's Team to ensure that all of the essential safeguarding

	<p>checks required by the Government are undertaken and that there is capacity for follow up support where required. The maximum spend for this service is £60K.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding is allocated for translation and interpretation services to help Ukrainian guests to access essential services and support; primarily to be channelled through the Hereford Language Network and Knockhundred Translations Ltd. The maximum spend for this service is £308K. • Funding is allocated for additional capacity in the Housing Solutions Team to ensure that sufficient resources are in place to support Ukrainian guests in housing need. Specifically to manage, operate and administer a variety of housing support initiatives for Ukrainian guests resettling in Herefordshire. The maximum spend for this service is £105K. • Funding is allocated towards the cost of commissioning support linked to the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme including procurement of services and the management and monitoring of grant monies. The maximum spend for this support service is £30K. • Funding is allocated for DBS checks in line with Government guidance; DBS checks are being undertaken by Hoople Ltd. The maximum spend for this service is £42K. • Funding is allocated to cover the cost of administering the Support for Ukraine Community Integration Grant Scheme. This community grant scheme was launched in September 2022 to support a wide range of new and existing projects aimed at supporting Ukrainian guests and sponsors. The grant scheme is being administered and managed by the Delegated Grants Team. The maximum spend for this service is £78K. • Funding is allocated for a co-ordination role in the Talk Community Team. Talk Community is the access point for support for people applying to the Homes for Ukraine Community Integration Grant Scheme and a contact point for people running projects in the community. They will ensure a joined up approach to projects and support across the county, maximising the benefits of grant investment for the whole community. The maximum spend for this service is £30K. <p>The maximum total value of this decision is therefore £1,816m.</p> <p>All of the cost detailed in this decision will be met by funding provided by the Government for the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme. No additional funding is required from the council.</p>
<p>Reasons for decision:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme was launched on the 14th March 2022. • The scheme enables people living in the UK to offer accommodation in their own homes or property they own to individuals and families displaced from the Ukraine due to the war with Russia. • Sponsors are expected to provide guests with accommodation for up to 12 months, but a minimum of six months. Thank you payments to sponsors are scheduled to end after 12 months. • It is anticipated that sponsors will support and help guests to adapt to life in the UK.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of people who can access this scheme is uncapped and is dependent on the capacity of the sponsors who come forward. Those arriving need to meet standard security checks prior to being issued with a visa. • Councils have a number of important functions in supporting the Homes for Ukraine scheme including initial checks with sponsors, payments to sponsors and ongoing support. An operational team has been established in order to ensure that these tasks are completed. • To date 509 guests have already arrived through the scheme to over 188 sponsors. Initial indications are that approximately 37% (188) of guests are children and young people aged under 18 years old. • Government data indicates that Herefordshire can expect at least another 171 guests. • The council’s school admissions team has placed over 130 Ukrainian children in schools across Herefordshire. • Safeguarding checks for sponsors and their families are an essential element of the Homes for Ukraine process, but little is known about the families that are arriving from the Ukraine and what their needs might be. Additional capacity for Safeguarding and Early Help mean that any concerns can be dealt with efficiently and that packages of support can be put in place to support families as they integrate into life in Herefordshire. • Translation and interpretation are essential to the integration process, enabling people from the Ukraine to access services and support whilst they learn or improve their English language skills. Translation and interpretation services can be used by a wide range of partner agencies and voluntary sector organisations to support the Ukrainian community. • Securing long term, affordable housing solutions, is a significant challenge for Ukrainian guests currently being hosted by sponsors. The Government guidance is clear that sponsorship arrangements are for a minimum of 6 months and that ‘thank you’ payments to sponsors are available for a maximum of 12 months. • The Council have encouraged eligible Ukrainian guests living in sponsorship arrangements to register with Home Point, Herefordshire’s choice based letting system. • As well as advice and support, the Housing Solutions team are implementing a range of measures such as rent top ups, goodwill payments, landlord incentives and rent in advance, all of which need to be resourced. • The Homes for Ukraine Community Integration Grant Scheme is a significant investment that has been designed to support new and existing projects that benefit Ukrainian guests and their hosts in line with Government guidance. The grant scheme is administered by the Delegated Grant Team. Applicants and projects are being supported by Talk Community.
<p>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All of the cost detailed in this decision will be met by funding provided by the Government to facilitate and support the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme outlined below. • The Government have agreed to pay local authorities £10,500 per person arriving under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. Each person

	<p>arriving through the scheme receives an initial payment of £200 from this sum, leaving a total of £10,300 to be allocated by the Council towards support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any additional staff will be recruited on a fixed term contract of 18 months starting in September 2022 up until 31 March 2024. • The Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme Guidance for Council's gives a high level outline of how the funding should be spent and states that any unspent funds shall be repaid.
<p>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</p>	<p>There are no other financially viable options available. The Council and its main partners do not have the staffing resources to provide all of the support required.</p> <p>The need for additional capacity can only be met through the Homes for Ukraine budget and is directly linked to the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme and the resulting increase in demand for these services.</p>
<p>Details of any declarations of interest made:</p>	<p>None.</p>

Signed..... Date:

Please ensure that signatures are redacted before publishing.