

## Record of operational decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	To approve a travel grant to individual Homes for Ukraine guests to support their resettlement in Herefordshire.
<b>Date of decision:</b>	18 <sup>th</sup> August 2023
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Corporate Director for Community Wellbeing
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	The <a href="#">Support for Ukraine Cabinet decision made in October 2022</a> approved that authority is delegated to the Corporate Director for Community Wellbeing to take all operational and budgetary decisions in relation to their proposals and the implementation, including the use of contingency sums and budget variations within the overall approved budget.
<b>Ward:</b>	Countywide
<b>Consultation:</b>	<p>Consultation with voluntary and community organisations supporting hosts and guests under the Homes for Ukraine scheme has taken place as well as providers and commissioners of existing transport schemes to support Ukrainian guests.</p> <p>It is clear from the feedback that access to services is a pressing issue for both Ukrainian guests and their hosts, especially as many homes offered under the Homes for Ukraine scheme has been in rural areas. Lack of public transport options in rural areas has meant that guests have needed to rely on others, particularly their hosts, when needing to travel any distance. Lack of access to other transport options is resulting in less independence for Ukrainian guests which is a real drawback in the resettlement phase.</p> <p>A number of schemes targeted at Ukrainian guests and existing transport options have been supported including community transport and a free bus travel pilot in the HR 9 area. Feedback from the voluntary and community sector supporting Ukrainian guests and hosts indicates that although there has been some take up of these options, they are not suitable for many Ukrainians.</p> <p>The cabinet member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing has been briefed on this option as part of a wider briefing on Refugee and Migration Services in July 2023.</p>
<b>Decision made:</b>	Funding is allocated to support the roll out of a transport grant for individual Ukrainian guests. This would be available to all Ukrainians (aged 5 and above) on the Homes for Ukraine scheme and would be a maximum of £500 per eligible individual.
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	The Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme was launched on the 14th March 2022.

	<p>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.</p> <p>To date 700 Ukrainians have arrived in Herefordshire through the scheme, with about 30% aged 18 years old or younger. There are still more Ukrainians seeking to move to the UK, but this is limited by the number of hosts who are available.</p> <p>The vast majority of Ukrainian guests arriving through the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme do not have access to their own transport. Due to the nature of the sponsorship scheme, families from the Ukraine are living in both urban and rural areas spread across the whole county.</p> <p>During the first year of the Homes for Ukraine scheme, there has been activity focussed on supporting Ukrainians to access services, training, work and social opportunities without being fully reliant on their sponsors. Specifically grants were provided to the community transport providers; a trial free bus travel pilot in the HR 9 area; free school travel for children where required. As at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, £151,000 was spent on these three schemes. No further grant funding is anticipated for the community transport schemes, as the initial award is judged to be sufficient, based on existing use. It has been decided not to continue or extend the free bus travel pilot, due to the lack of take up and the logistics of rolling out such a scheme across the county which would mean working with at least five bus operators. The Homes for Ukraine scheme will continue to offer free school transport where required.</p> <p>Feedback from Ukrainian guests and hosts as well as voluntary sector organisations is that there is a continued need to support travel around the county. Given the partial success of options already tried, it has been decided to offer a travel grant of £500 to all Ukrainians aged 5 and over who have been granted a visa through the Homes for Ukraine scheme and are living in Herefordshire. The grant can be used for any form of help towards transport including public transport / taxi costs, buying a vehicle / bike (together with running costs), support to obtain a driving licence. The Homes for Ukraine Team will process grant requests and validate them using the government database. On application, the recipient will need to describe how they will use the grant and sign a declaration that it will be used for transport expenses associated with living in Herefordshire. The Team will follow up on a sample of the grants issued to ensure that they have been used for the approved purpose.</p> <p>The grant will give the Ukrainian guests choice to select the mode of transport which will help them access essential services, work and social activities, all of which are significant elements of the resettlement process.</p>
<p><b>Equality Considerations</b></p>	<p>The proposals in the Support for Ukraine Cabinet report in October 22 sought “to offer people fleeing the war in Ukraine the opportunity to live, work and integrate into the community in Herefordshire. People arriving in Herefordshire from the Ukraine are entitled to all of the services and support that is available to UK citizens, including those with protected characteristics”.</p> <p>Ukrainian guests face a number of disadvantages in accessing transport, such as the language barrier, living in rural areas, low income, lack of networks and understanding of transport options. The opportunity to</p>

	travel and access services will improve Ukrainian guests' opportunities to integrate within the local community, and allow them to choose the best travel option, depending on their needs and situation.
<b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b>	<p>All of the cost detailed in this decision will be met by funding provided by the Government for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme outlined below.</p> <p>The Government has agreed to pay local authorities a tariff per person arriving under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. The tariff payment was £10,500 from the start of the scheme to 31.03.22 and £5,900 from 01.01.23.</p> <p>The total maximum value of this decision is £330,000. This is based on an estimation of a maximum of 600 guests taking up the grant and allowing 10% for administration. It is anticipated that the overall figure of £679,000 earmarked for support for transport costs (to 31st March 2024) in the Support for Ukraine Cabinet decision in October 2022 will not be exceeded. All of the cost detailed in this decision will be met by funding provided by the Government for the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme.</p>
<b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b>	<p>Alternative proposals to improve access to transport options in the county have already been explored, such as free bus travel (pilot in the HR9 area) and community transport. The option of an individual travel grant allows Ukrainian guests to choose the best option for their circumstances. An exercise to follow up on a sample size of grants issued will give some assurance that the grant has been used for the purpose it has been given. An alternative of procuring a prepaid card option, which would allow any purchases to be limited to those linked to travel and transport has been considered, but an assessment concluded this was not fool-proof and with set up and administration costs taken into consideration, it was not value for money for a one-off grant.</p>
<b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b>	None

Signed..... Date:  
Hilary Hall – Director Community Wellbeing.

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