

## Record of operational decision

<b>Decision title:</b>	Decision to make additional payments to Homes for Ukraine Sponsors to support them with the increased costs of hosting over the winter months November 2023 to March 2024
<b>Date of decision:</b>	6 November 2023
<b>Decision maker:</b>	Director of Community Wellbeing
<b>Authority for delegated decision:</b>	The Support for Ukraine Cabinet decision made in October 2022 approved authority delegated to the Corporate Director for Community Wellbeing to take all operational and budgetary decisions in relation to the proposals and the implementation set out in the Support for Ukraine report, including the use of contingency sums and budget variations within the overall approved budget
<b>Ward:</b>	Countywide
<b>Consultation:</b>	<p>Feedback on the need to support hosts in their sponsorship role has been received from a range of stakeholders as well as Housing Services and the Homes for Ukraine Operational Team.</p> <p>Supporting sponsorship arrangements to continue, reduces the demand on temporary accommodation and homelessness services. As at October 2023 there are currently 21 Homes for Ukraine households for which the local authority owes a full housing duty. As well as reducing the risk of homelessness, sustaining the relationships between guests and sponsors also supports community integration as guests become more imbedded in the local community over time and children benefit from a sustained period in local schools etc.</p>
<b>Decision made:</b>	An additional payment of £200 per month to be made to each Homes for Ukraine sponsor for the months of November 2023 through to the end of March 2024. New hosting arrangements during that period will qualify for pro rata payments.
<b>Reasons for decision:</b>	<p>As of the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2023, 717 Ukrainian guests have arrived in Herefordshire. There are currently over 320 guests staying with 125 hosts.</p> <p>This additional monthly payment of £200 means that each sponsor will receive a total of £700 per month between November 23 and March 24. Thereafter the monthly payments will be £500. If sponsors start hosting Ukrainian guests during this period, they will be paid the additional winter payment pro rata for the months of the guests' stay. Based on current figures, the cost of this additional payment will be approximately £125,000.</p> <p>The decision being made is comparable with the <a href="#">Record of Officer Decision taken on 02.12.22</a>, which also saw sponsors receive additional winter payments over the same five months in 2022/23 to £700 per month.</p> <p>It should be noted that Herefordshire Council has already decided (<a href="#">Record of Officer Decision – 22.03.23</a>) to top up the Government's £350 payment to sponsors whose guests have been with them for up to a year, so that all sponsors receive £500 per month. The payment to hosts for guests after a</p>

	<p>year will be maintained at £500, as this is the amount of the Government's increased payment for the second year.</p> <p>Payments will be made through the Homes for Ukraine operational team.</p> <p>The team already manage the thank you payments to hosts.</p>
<b>Equality Considerations</b>	<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". It is anticipated that increasing the thank you payments over the winter period will sustain the host / guest sponsorship arrangements and continue to give Ukrainians the opportunity to remain in a supportive environment, including those with protected characteristics.</p>
<b>Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:</b>	<p>It is estimated that making the winter payments will cost approximately £125,000. All of the costs in this decision will be met by funding provided by the Government to facilitate and support the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme outlined below.</p> <p>The Government has agreed to pay local authorities as part of the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme £10,500 per Ukrainian guest arriving by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2022 and £5,900 after this date.</p>
<b>Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:</b>	<p>Not to make an additional payment to sponsors. This option is not recommended as it is increasingly clear that cost of living pressure will continue to be an issue well into 2023/24. If sponsors are ending sponsorship arrangements on the basis that they can't afford to continue to host their Ukrainian guests it is possible that the guests will need to access homelessness services. The council's in county supply of temporary accommodation is already at capacity meaning that families may have to move out of county, away from their schools and the community that they have begun to establish themselves in.</p>
<b>Details of any declarations of interest made:</b>	<p>None</p>

Signed

Date: 6 November 2023

Hilary Hall  
 Director of Community Wellbeing