

Record of operational decision

Decision title:	Decision to make additional payments to Homes for Ukraine Sponsors to support them with the increased costs of hosting over the winter months November 2025 to March 2026
Date of decision:	30/09/2025
Decision maker:	Corporate Director Community Wellbeing
Authority for delegated decision:	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.
Ward:	Countywide
Consultation:	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 Refugee Resettlement and Migration Support Team. Supporting sponsorship arrangements to continue, reduces the demand on temporary accommodation and homelessness services. 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.
Decision made:	An additional payment of £200 per month to be made to each Homes for Ukraine sponsor for the months of November 2025 through to the end of March 2026. New hosting arrangements during that period will qualify for pro rata payments.
Reasons for decision:	<p>There are currently 211 guests staying with 107 hosts. Of these hosts, 90 are in receipt / due thank you payments and therefore will receive winter payments.</p> <p>It should be noted that a decision has already been taken by Herefordshire Council has already decided (Record of Officer Decision – 03/01/2025) to top up the Government’s £350 payment to sponsors by £150 per month with effect from 1st April 2025 including those with guests who are now on the Ukraine Permission Extension Scheme.</p> <p>The additional monthly winter payments of £200 means that each sponsor will receive a total of £700 per month between November 2025 and March 2026. 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. Thereafter (April 2026) the total thank you payments to each sponsor will revert to £500 per month.</p> <p>The additional winter payments will be made through the Refugee Resettlement and Migration Support Team which also manages the thank you payments to hosts.</p>
Equality Considerations	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.
Highlight any associated risks/finance/legal/equality considerations:	<p>It is estimated that making the additional winter payments will cost approximately £90,000. All of the costs in this decision will be met by funding provided by the central government to facilitate and support the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme outlined below.</p> <p>The Government agreed to pay local authorities as part of the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship scheme £10,500 per Ukrainian guest arriving by 31st December 2022 and £5,900 after this date. It should be noted that government provides separate funding for thankyou payments to sponsors (£350 per month for their Ukrainian guests who have Homes for Ukraine and Ukraine Permission Extension 18 month extension visas).</p>
Details of any alternative options considered and rejected:	<p>Not to make an additional payment to sponsors: this option is not recommended as cost-of-living pressures continue to be an issue. If sponsors are ending sponsorship arrangements on the basis that they can't afford to continue to host any longer, guests may have to access homelessness services. The pressure on temporary accommodation is significant, and the additional pressures faced by those placed in such accommodation including the likelihood that they will have to move away from their schools and the community that they have established themselves in.</p> <p>Maintain payments at £250 per month for five months as per last winter: it has been decided to reduce the additional amount available from £250 per month to £200, to reflect the funds still available to support the ongoing costs of supporting the Homes for Ukraine scheme, as well as the uncertainty of when the war will end in Ukraine.</p>
Details of any declarations of interest made:	None

Signed: Date: