

Chichester District Council

Cabinet

7 June 2022

Community Support for Ukrainian Refugees as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet recommends to Council that WSCC funding of £1,000 per refugee be accepted.
- 2.2 That Cabinet recommends to Council to delegate authority to allocate these funds to the Divisional Manager for Communities and Customer Services as set out in para 5.2 and 5.3 to provide community support.

3. Background

- 3.1 On the 24 February 2022 Russian troops began the invasion of Ukraine and since that date millions of Ukrainians have fled their home country. The UK Government responded by setting up the Family Visa Scheme on the 4 March 2022 which allowed Ukrainians with family already in the UK to join them and also for any Ukrainians living in the UK to extend their stay. Anyone accessing this scheme has the right to live, work or study in the UK and access public funds and healthcare.
- 3.2 The UK Government announced the Homes for Ukraine scheme on the 14 March 2022 whereby members of the public could offer up a room in their home or an empty property to accommodate and sponsor a Ukrainian family or individual. Refugees coming into the country under this scheme have the same rights as those under the family visa scheme but would be matched to a sponsor who would undertake to host them for a minimum of 6 months. The sponsors are eligible for an optional monthly payment of £350 whilst the arrangement continues. The refugees, known as “guests”, have the right to stay in the UK for up to 3 years.
- 3.3 Councils have a number of important functions in supporting the Homes for Ukraine scheme the majority of which are being undertaken at County level. As a Council we are supporting West Sussex County Council (WSCC) with undertaking home inspections prior to guests arriving. There is also an expectation, set down in government guidance, that we support the integration of Ukrainian families and

individuals into their local communities. This might include community events, use of community champions and working with the local voluntary sector organisations to help signpost for help and support. We are also responsible for ensuring the guests receive any Council administered benefits they are entitled to and support any homeless applications should the sponsor guest relationship breakdown.

- 3.4 WSCC, as the lead authority for the scheme, receive funding from the government of £10,500 per guest and have proposed that they pass £1,000 of this to District & Borough Councils to fund community support.

4. Outcomes to be achieved

- 4.1 Voluntary organisations are already working with refugees in the district and the Homes for Ukraine scheme could see numbers on an unprecedented scale coming into the district which will have a significant impact on demand for their services. This funding if agreed will make a huge difference in what they can offer refugees from Ukraine and ensure they are quickly supported to access services and feel part of a new community after being torn from their own
- 4.2 Displaced Ukrainian families and individuals will have timely access to a variety of support and services to help them settle into a new community and way of life which may be very different from the one they left behind.

5. Proposal

- 5.1 Upper tier authorities are being allocated by Government £10,500 per refugee that arrives in their area to cover education, social care and other associated costs, WSCC have agreed to pay each District & Borough Authority £1000 per refugee arrived in those local areas. There are no caveats on how this money will be spent other than it is to be spent on community support and integration. The total fund is expected to significantly exceed £150,000.
- 5.2 The community response to the covid 19 pandemic demonstrated the amount of goodwill Chichester residents have to help others and a large network of support is still available in the district. In order to harness this local support in relation to Ukrainian refugees it is proposed to allocate £100,000 of this funding to Voluntary Action Arun Chichester (VAAC) who will further allocate the funds to other voluntary organisations including Sanctuary in Chichester. This will enable those voluntary organisations to further develop and strengthen their response to refugees in the district. A further £50,000 will be allocated for smaller groups to bid for in a similar way that the Community Safety Partnership allocate funding and using a simple bidding form. There will be an MOU in place with VAAC around this allocation of funds.
- 5.3 It should be noted that the £150,000 of expenditure in paragraph 5.2 will need to happen up front in order to put in place the necessary resources to support refugees. However, the intention is that all of the costs will be recovered from the funding made available to us from WSCC. The issue for CDC is one of cashflow as funding will be received after commitments are made.

- 5.4 Cabinet are recommended to approve delegation of the allocation of these and future funds received in this regard to the Divisional Manager Communities and Customer Services.

6. Alternatives that have been considered

- 6.1 The Council could wait for the funding to be received from WSCC before allocating funds, this could be piecemeal, take more time and may not necessarily cover all the costs the Voluntary sector have indicated they need now to support vulnerable refugees. This could delay appropriate support being available to people who have already arrived in the district and been through significant trauma.

7. Resource and Legal Implications

- 7.1 Any staff resources needed to progress this proposal will be provided within existing resources.
- 7.2 The initial expenditure of £150,000 will be replenished on receipt of the £1000 per refugee from WSCC. In effect the funding will be received in arrears. This is a common issue for externally funded schemes. The Council's S151 officer has been consulted and is content that this is manageable from the Council's cashflow.

8. Consultation

- 8.1 Key voluntary sector organisations have been consulted on what resource would be necessary to support this influx of refugees and that allowed an estimate of the costs necessary to develop this work. WSCC have also been consulted on this approach and are supportive.

9. Community impact and corporate risks

- 9.1 There is a small risk that the actual number of arrivals of refugees in the district may not meet the necessary number to cover the £150,000 although current projections suggest this should not happen.
- 9.2 By allocating this funding it is hoped those refugees coming into Chichester district are supported to integrate quickly and sensitively so they feel welcomed, less isolated and to avoid any potential community tensions from developing.

10. Other implications

	Yes	No
Crime & Disorder: Good early community integration can prevent any community tensions developing which may lead to unsettled communities and potential crime and disorder.	x	
Climate Change and Biodiversity:		x
Human Rights and Equality Impact:	x	

Positive impact in supporting vulnerable people.		
Safeguarding and Early Help: Positive impact in identification and referral of issues if identified.	x	
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR):		x
Health and Wellbeing Access to support and good community integration will be of significant wellbeing benefit to those refugees who have fled their home country to live in the district.	x	

11. Appendices

None

12. Background Papers

None