



# EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

<b>REPORT OF:</b>	Executive Member for Public Health, Prevention & Wellbeing
<b>LEAD OFFICERS:</b>	Strategic Director, Adults & Health (DASS)
<b>DATE:</b>	11 <sup>th</sup> August 2022

**PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:** Various given the range of services provided to Ukrainian Evacuees

**WARD/S AFFECTED:** (ALL);

**SUBJECT:** Homes 4 Ukraine Resourcing

## 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Government's Homes 4 Ukraine scheme opened on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2022 for visa applications from Ukrainian evacuees looking to be homed by a UK family. Up to mid June 2022, 342 people in Blackburn with Darwen had put themselves and their home forward as a sponsor. Of those, 30 have been matched, with 57 adults and children that are either in Blackburn already or are to arrive imminently. The increase in the speed of visa processing means we are now receiving on average 1-2 families per day.

There will be no limit or cap on the sponsorship route. The UK has stated it will welcome as many Ukrainians as wish to come and for whom there are sponsors.

It is difficult to predict how many of the sponsors will receive evacuees. With this in mind we are looking at an incrementally scaled up support programme for them, aligned as closely as we can to numbers of people matched to sponsors and in line with national guidelines. The government is providing funding at a rate of £10,500 per person to councils. This is to provide a number of important services to include:

- Data Sharing with Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DHLUC) and the Home Office through their Foundry System
- Initial safeguarding checks, checks on Sponsors and DBS processing.
- Accommodation checks
- Ongoing welfare checks
- Application of statutory safeguarding duties to adults and minors.
- Interim payment to evacuees.
- Re-Matching and Homelessness prevention.
- Homelessness duty
- Co-ordination of support
- Work and Benefit support
- Community Integration
- Sponsor thank you payments (Separately funded)

Based on the funding rate agreed the Council will claim funds at a rate per person and incur expenditure, against the income claimed, for the services identified above.

## 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- **Notes the funding package being made available to local authorities to meet the costs of supporting Ukrainian Evacuees;**
- Gives approval to a supplementary revenue estimate of £598,500 to support the Homes 4 Ukraine programme funded by the grant referred to above;
- **Acknowledging that the number of Ukrainian Evacuees may continue to increase, give delegated authority to the Strategic Director, Adults & Health (DASS) in consultation Executive Members for Public Health, Prevention and Wellbeing and Finance and Governance, to agree the allocation of funding (subject to it being fully funded by Government Grant) on recommendation from the Homes 4 Ukraine Programme Board.**

### **3. BACKGROUND**

Over 3 million people have fled the war in Ukraine; primarily women, children and the elderly arriving in a number of EU countries that border Ukraine, the majority to Poland. Males between 18 and 60 are required to stay in Ukraine if in good health.

Currently people from Ukraine need a visa to enter the UK. There are two visa routes identified to support Ukrainian nationals who want to come to the UK – the Ukrainian Family Scheme and Homes for Ukraine.

Eligibility for, and approval of, visas is the responsibility of the Home Office, with the 'Homes for Ukraine' scheme specifically being administered by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). There is no cap on the number of visas that can be issued; they will be demand-led. There is no proposal to apportion people applying to a particular area/region of the UK. Where people move to will depend on where they have family or sponsors depending on the scheme they enter the UK under. To mid-June 2022, 342 individuals from Blackburn with Darwen have applied to be a sponsor with 57 Ukrainian nationals in 30 family groups being matched and either in the borough already, or arriving imminently.

### **4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS**

The scheme is operating, and a high number of sponsors have put their name forward from the Borough. The Council needs to rapidly maintain and/or put the key infrastructure in place to undertake checks and provide timely support for both sponsors and evacuees to ensure their safe arrival and integration into our communities. The resources outlined in this report will make sure Blackburn with Darwen can achieve this.

It is difficult to predict how many more sponsors will come forward, or how many of those that have been sponsored will go on to receive evacuees. We are therefore adopting a phased approach to resourcing the programme to mitigate financial risks to the council in commissioning or recruiting more resource than funding available.

### **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The government has set out guidance to local authorities stipulating the requirements of the Homes 4 Ukraine Scheme. The resourcing requirements outlined above will provide the infrastructure required in order to offer full assurance that the council will discharge the requirements of the guidance and receive the funding as outlined by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities.

## 6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The council will receive £10,500 funding for each evacuee received into the authority. The expenditure detailed below will be incurred against this income. To date, 57 evacuees have been matched and are here, or on their way. The claim for these individuals will total £598,500 of which £273,000 has already been submitted.

The total costs indicated are £368,927 with the balance of any costs yet to be established. Further authorisation of expenditure will be delegated to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the Executive Members for Public Health, Prevention and Wellbeing and Finance and Government on recommendation from the Homes 4 Ukraine programme board. Any such costs will be maintained within the claim value for evacuees that have arrived or we know to be imminently arriving.

Based on the funding rate agreed by government, the first claim has been sent for the 26 evacuees that had arrived up to 6<sup>th</sup> June deadline. From claim period 1, Blackburn with Darwen will receive £273,000. The second claim for those we know are arriving will be a minimum of £325,500. The minimum expected claim for periods 1 and 2 combined is therefore £598,500.

To provide support in all the areas required, the Departments that are already, or are best placed to provide it, have estimated the following likely costs:-

<b>Housing Services</b> Personal cash payments (required for each evacuee), administration and weekly returns to government, co-ordination for all evacuees to include Ukrainian language specialist	£128,700
<b>Housing Standards</b> Accommodation checks and support for sponsors with certification	£31,000
<b>Policy &amp; Support</b> Documentation and translation	£1,000
<b>Integration &amp; Community</b> Employment with training, cohesion and community integration support	£130,000
<b>Social Care Support and Assessment</b> Assessment and support costs for elderly and infirm evacuees	£78,227
<b>Total</b>	<b>£368,927</b>
<b>Balance to be allocated</b>	<b>£228,573</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£598,500</b>

The above programme areas can deliver against the core requirements of the programme for up to 100 evacuees, but are estimates based on expected need. The balance of the grant will increase as more sponsors are matched. It is therefore requested future allocations to cover costs of both the specific needs of the evacuees outside of the core offer and additional capacity in those areas identified already are delegated to the programme board overseeing its operation. This will include further funding for specific needs around social care, and costs for responding to sponsor changes and homelessness protection due to sponsor breakdown that are difficult to estimate. This will allow timely responses to such circumstance.

## 7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

## 8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Resources required of the programme are funded through the programme.

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## 9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1  Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2  In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3  In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

## 10. CONSULTATIONS

Consultation with council departments, education colleagues, health and third sector colleagues, asylum and refugee groups, Ukrainian evacuees and members.

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## 11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

## 12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded and published if applicable.

<b>VERSION:</b>	<b>1</b>
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<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	<b>Mark Aspin</b>
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<b>DATE:</b>	14/06/22
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<b>BACKGROUND PAPER:</b>	N/A
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