

Safer Stronger Communities – Homes for Ukraine Support

Date: 13th June 2022

Report of: Chief Officer Safer Stronger Communities

Report to: Director of Communities, Housing and Environment

Will the decision be open for call in? Yes No

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? Yes No

What is this report about?

Including how it contributes to the city's and council's ambitions

- In March 2022 the government set up the Homes for Ukraine scheme for visa applications from Ukrainian applicants who have named people in the UK willing to sponsor them and provide a minimum of 6 months accommodation.
- Alongside the generous offer of accommodation sponsors will be making, the government are providing a substantial level of funding to local authorities to enable them to provide much wider support to families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into our communities.
- The Safer Stronger Communities Team will take the leadership role on the development of the Leeds response and will also provide operational support to co-ordinate activities and services. Support has been provided by the Safer Stronger Communities in the short term by flexibly deploying staff from elsewhere within the service, however this is not sustainable and there is a need to create a number of temporary posts to ensure that this activity is maintained.

Recommendations

- a) The Director of Communities, Housing and Environment approve the creation of four fixed term contract positions to provide operational support to co-ordinate activities and services.

Why is the proposal being put forward?

- 1 Since the launch of the Homes for Ukraine scheme on 14 March 2022, the Safer Stronger Communities team has developed and coordinated activities and services to ensure support for 370 Ukrainian refugees that are matched to sponsor households in Leeds. Current data on the government system suggests that there are approximately 2500 sponsors who have expressed an interest as potential sponsors for Ukrainian refugees.
- 2 To date the coordination of the effort has been provided by staff being flexibly deployed from existing roles within the Migration Team, however this is not sustainable as other existing work programmes are being adversely affected and could lead to potential high risk situations developing should some focus not be returned to the migration priorities.
- 3 The co-ordination work has proved to be very labour intensive, with a significant amount of resource being spent liaising with the Home Office, Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities, Housing, DIS, Councillors, Disclosure Barring Service and potential sponsors. This workload is likely to increase over the next 12 -18 months as more sponsors are matched with refugees.
- 4 In addition to the co-ordination work that is currently being completed, further work is expected to come on board supporting the Home Office reporting requirement and any potential relationship breakdown issues between the sponsors and refugees that will require efforts to re-match refugees with new sponsors both within and outside of Leeds.
- 5 To ensure that sufficient resource is available to meet all these demands it is recommended that four temporary posts are created to work on fixed contracts until March 2025.
 - a) PO4 – Migration Project Leader x 1
 - b) PO2 – Migration Senior Project Officer x 1
 - c) SO2 – Migration Project Officer x 2
- 6 The posts will form part of the Migration Team and work under the Migration Team Manager ensuring that all aspects of the coordination effort are fulfilled.

What impact will this proposal have?

Wards affected:

Have ward members been consulted?

Yes

No

- 7 The proposal will have a significant beneficial impact on the sustained delivery of the Homes for Ukraine scheme within Leeds, ensuring that there is sufficient resource to deal with the co-ordination efforts.
- 8 The proposal will also have significant positive impacts on the staff currently providing this flexible resource, ensuring that they can refocus on other competing priorities and return to a sustainable work life balance, that has been unachievable of since March 2022.

What consultation and engagement has taken place?

- 9 Consultation has taken place with Head of Community Relations and Cohesion and the Migration Team Manager and staff that are currently deployed on the co-ordination activities.

What are the resource implications?

10 The costs for the additional four posts are shown below, it is proposed that the posts are funded from the additional funding expected from the government (£10,500 per person).

		2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
Migration Project Leader	PO4	22,029	52,870	52,870
Migration Senior Project Officer	PO2	19,688	47,250	47,250
Migration Project Officer	SO2	17,699	42,477	42,477
Migration Project Officer	SO2	17,699	42,477	42,477
Total per annum		77,114	185,074	185,074
Total			447,261	

What are the legal implications?

11 The recommendations within this paper are not subject to Call In as they are within the delegated authority of the Director of Communities, Housing & Environments.

What are the key risks and how are they being managed?

12 Risks associated with delivering the requirements of the service have been identified, and the new posts will seek to mitigate these risks through an effective team performance and accountability framework, which will be monitored on a regular basis.

Does this proposal support the council's three Key Pillars?

Inclusive Growth Health and Wellbeing Climate Emergency

13 Consideration has been given to staff in relation to Health and Wellbeing and their work life balance.

Options, timescales and measuring success

What other options were considered?

14 It was considered to remain providing co-ordination of operational activities on a flexible deployment basis, however, concern was raised from management and staff currently within this arrangement that service demand levels significantly outweighed the resources currently available and was leading to high levels of stress and potential for all staff to experience burn out.

How will success be measured?

15 Success will be measured by the implementation of a team performance and accountability framework and the subsequent monitoring of the agreed key performance indicators.

What is the timetable for implementation?

16 tbc

Appendices

17 None

Background papers

18 Executive Board Report – April 2022 – Response to the Ukraine Crisis