

Teignbridge District Council
Full Council
5 September 2023
Part i

**Refugee Spend Report – Homes for Ukraine and Local Authority
Housing Fund**

Purpose of Report

1. To seek approval for the expenditure of grant funding to meet local need of Ukrainian families and their hosts. The grant funding being the Homes for Ukraine tariff funding (HfU) and Devon County Council's contribution to Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF).

Recommendation(s)

The Council RESOLVES to:

- (1) Approve expenditure of grant funding as outlined in this report.
- (2) Delegate authority to the Housing Needs Lead to ensure appropriate delivery of the scheme, in accordance with the grant conditions, for future funding.

Financial Implications

Outline costs to utilize the funding are detailed in sections 3 and 4 with a summary in 6.1.

Martin Flitcroft
Head of Corporate Services
Email: Martin.flitcroft@teignbridge.gov.uk

Legal Implications

There are no specific legal implications arising out of this report. Expenditure of the external funding being determined by the grant providers.

Paul Woodhead Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer
Email: Paul.Woodhead@teignbridge.gov.uk

Risk Assessment

Report author to comment on the Risk Assessment
Tammy Hayes, Housing Needs Lead
Email: @teignbridge.gov.uk

There is medium risk to this scheme. The funding in this report has been provided

Committee
Date of meeting

through Government grants to meet the costs of supporting Homes for Ukraine households. We are seeking a flexible approach to utilise the funding to meet those needs most successfully and to respond to an evolving situation effectively.

Environmental/ Climate Change Implications

Low - There is no identified environmental or climate change impact in this report.

Tammy Hayes, Housing Needs Lead
Email: tammy.hayes@teignbridge.gov.uk

Report Author

Housing Needs Lead
Email: tammy.hayes@teignbridge.gov.uk

Executive Member

Martin Wrigley - Leader

1. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

1.1 Homes for Ukraine

Teignbridge District Council has a duty to fulfil the requirements of the Homes for Ukraine funding scheme.

The grant conditions make it mandatory for Teignbridge District Council to provide:

- Thank you payments to hosts
- Welcome payments to guests
- 5 stage safeguarding checks including property inspections
- Commissioned wraparound support including benefit advice, welcome visits and support to hosts and guests
- Rematching service when host / guest relationships irreparably break down or when hosts decide to stop hosting
- Homeless Assistance including providing temporary accommodation to Ukrainian households that may become homeless and to support to secure alternative accommodation.

The UK Government has committed to pay Devon County Council £10,500 per Ukrainian guest that arrives in Devon. Teignbridge District Council (TDC) received 60% for guests arriving before the end December 2022, and £5,900 for guests

arriving after 01 January 2023. The remainder being utilised by the County Council. At the time of writing, TDC has 297 Ukrainian guests registered as having arrived within its district and has received £1,519,600 in tariff grant funding. It is anticipated that a further £287,300 will be forthcoming for more recently arrived Ukrainian households but this has not yet been received.

The funding can only be used for the delivery of services to Ukrainian households in Teignbridge who arrived through the Homes for Ukraine scheme. TDC only receives the funding once per Ukrainian guest. If a Ukrainian guest is re-matched into Teignbridge from outside the district, TDC receives no money from Government for this additional guest. The funding covers a wide variety of current and future costs in order to fulfil TDC’s aforementioned duty, including staffing costs to administer the scheme.

This funding cannot be used to pay the hosts £350 a month ‘thank you payments’ as this is funded separately by the Government.

Devon County Council directs the funding it receives to provide English courses, healthcare, education and supports in monthly returns on safeguarding checks and finances of the scheme.

TDC is required by the grant conditions to complete homeless updates and quarterly financial returns specifically for this funding. If the funding is not utilised in accordance with the grant conditions or indeed required to support the Ukrainian households and or hosts, the Secretary of State will request the return of the allocated funding.

The following table summarises expenditure as of June 2023

Number of Ukrainian Guests in Teignbridge since start of scheme	296
Number of Ukrainian Households since start of scheme	144
Total number of households currently in host placements	87
Total number of households financially supported into settled accommodation through CVS and TDC	20
Total cost of financial support to secure alternative accommodation until June 2023	£55,151
Total number of households who have self-funded settled accommodation with support from CVS	20

Total number of households returned to Ukraine	13
Number of households that have left Devon Hosts and made own arrangements	4
Total number of households who have been provided temporary accommodation	11
Total net expenditure on temporary accommodation between March 22 and June 23	£17,691
Number of Welcome Payments processed by TDC	283
Total cost of Welcome payments until June 2023	£56,600
Number of “thank you” payments to Hosts by TDC	1178
Total cost of top up “thank you” payments to Hosts	£109,050
Number of home inspections by TDC	220
Number of rematches to alternative hosts through CVS	11
Number of Home for Ukraine clients seen by Citizens Advice Teignbridge since November 2022 to June 2023	261
Number of issues to address through Citizens Advice Teignbridge	818
Financial gains achieved by Citizens Advice Teignbridge	£125,564
Cost of new staff to support scheme delivery until June 2023	£32,322
Cost of redeployed existing staff to scheme until June 2023	£51,922
Wraparound Support Cost – CVS/Citizens Advice and other community groups	£140,649

1.2 Devon County Council LAHF Grant Funding

The Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) funding bid was secured by the Housing Enabling Team to meet the capital costs for the acquisition of 18 units of accommodation. There was no funding available for other associated costs, set up or management of the units within the bid.

A funding Agreement dated 01 April 2023, between TDC and Devon County Council (DCC) has enabled TDC to draw down £320,444 of one-off revenue funding to support the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF). This funding can be used only for the purposes of the project.

The conditions of the grant allow for the funding to be used to support TDC in the delivery of these new homes. If the funds are not spent by 31 March 2025, they must be returned.

As both schemes are intended to support refugees and are being actioned by various teams within the Housing department, this report considers the funding from both schemes.

2. EXPENDITURE ESTIMATES TO END OF MARCH 2025

The future of the Homes for Ukraine scheme is difficult to predict as much depends on the situation in Ukraine and future decisions by the Government regarding rights to remain in the UK beyond March 2025. Currently, the right to remain in the UK is for the period of 3 years from the date of entry. However, host payments are seemingly only in place for the period of 2 years.

The consequences being that from February/March 2024, payments to many of the district's hosts may cease which may result in many hosts asking their guests to leave. TDC must therefore prepare for a significant increase in households seeking support through its homelessness service, requiring temporary accommodation and further support to secure alternative accommodation including further property inspections on private rental homes.

A survey is currently being conducted with local host families to better understand their needs and options that may be available to their guests to try and expand current offers to meet those needs and prevent Ukrainian households becoming homeless.

Should the Government choose not to extend host payments beyond March 2024, the Council may be able to utilise other existing funding for that purpose providing such use would not be contrary to any future guidance/regulation.

The Council needs to continue in line with grant conditions to maintain provision of wraparound support to hosts and guests and is therefore recommending an extension of the current CVS contract to March 2025.

3. PROPOSED ALLOCATION OF FUNDS 2023/24 AND 2024/25

3.1 Homes for Ukraine

Homes for Ukraine return headings	Already Spent to 31st March 2023	Est 2023/24	Est 2024/25

Vetting, host home visits, compulsory checks	£585	£10	£0
Welcome Payments	£55,600	£1,000	£0
Thank you payment top ups	£77,850	£68,400	£0
CVS Wraparound Support (including Citizens Advice)	£111,205	£87,073	£90,000
Bonds, Deposits and rent assistance to secure alternative homes	£36,767	£50,000	£73,538
Home improvements (where possible to remain in host placements or to make good private rented offers)	£1,405	£10,998	£5,287
Staffing Costs – Existing staff redeployed to HfU	£42,447	£37,900	£36,970
Staffing Costs – New staff employed specifically for HfU	£12,704	£121,408	£116,000
Temporary accommodation costs	£17,053	£100,000	£365,400
Totals	£355,616	£476,789	£687,195

The forecast for the contract cost with CVS is an estimate based on previous contract with inflationary cost added.

“Thank you” payments and “Welcome Payments” are estimated on current Government guidance at the time of this report and our current payments to hosts.

All other costs in relation to funding to secure alternative private rentals, deposits, and temporary accommodation costs are provisional allocations for the funding. There is a requirement to allocate funding as part of the grant agreement. This will be monitored throughout the scheme with a view of reallocating funding for temporary accommodation to secure settled accommodation when required.

The aim is to support all Homes for Ukraine guests to secure settled accommodation, whether that be with their current hosts or into alternative accommodation. Market rentals in the Teignbridge area remain high and significantly higher than the set local housing allowance rates. To support any

household into private rented accommodation there is a need to ensure that the accommodation is affordable to them and that it meets the legal requirements for rental purposes. This will require additional staff to effectively:

- manage the additional units of temporary accommodation purchased for Ukrainian households
- proactively support efforts to secure affordable private rentals to assist Ukrainian families into settled accommodation

Whilst much of the grant funding has been allocated to ensure temporary accommodation costs are covered, the aim to use as much of this funding to prevent and relieve homeless as is possible rather than for use on temporary accommodation per se.

The Housing Solutions service exceeded the 2022/23 allocated budget for net temporary accommodation by 152%. The cost-of-living challenges have significantly impacted the ability to prevent homelessness or secure alternative affordable private rental homes. Therefore, it is essential the Council mitigates against the risk of the remaining 87 families in host placements requiring temporary accommodation. There is also a need to factor into the estimations of spend, the potential for additional family members currently in Ukraine joining their families in Devon, Ukrainians already in the UK being rematched to hosts in Devon, relationship breakdowns creating more households requiring housing and those already successfully rehoused being served notice to quit/requiring possession by the landlord.

3.1.1 CVS CONTRACT PROVISION

The contract with CVS provides:

- Single point of contact for hosts and guests with home visits on arrival and monthly thereafter where required, signposting and general advice and mediation services
- Contract management including monthly contract monitoring and management of risks

- Dedicated program advice service through Citizens Advice Teignbridge which includes but not limited to financial advice, welfare and benefits, employment rights, back to work assessments, immigration issues and housing. Home visits where required and attendance at drop in sessions
- Drop-in Sessions/Networking events for guests
- Support for Host and Ukrainian families, parents and children delivered by Roots and Homestart through a dedicated telephone service for hosts and guests to discuss concerns or source information in regard to family, parenting, child support. The scheme also works with other community providers to design trips out/activities for children and parents and supports parenting groups and Anxiety Cafes

3.2 LAHF

It is proposed to allocate £150,000 of LAHF to furnish each property, fund any translation costs, moving costs and initial maintenance of the properties. The remainder to be allocated to additional staffing resources for the remaining period of the scheme as detailed in section 4 below.

4. STAFFING COSTS

The acquisition of 18 homes by TDC (16 units of which will be for additional temporary accommodation) is being led by the Council's Housing Enabling Team. Much of the Homes for Ukraine and LAHF scheme has so far been delivered with existing staff redeployed to work on these schemes leaving other duties/tasks delayed which need to be resumed. This includes additional work for Strata, Finance, Revenue and Benefits, Housing, Enabling, Private Sector Housing and Temporary Accommodation teams.

With much of the work still to come with the scheme as placements end and limited new host opportunities, additional staff will be required to try to work to prevent households becoming homeless and securing alternative accommodation quickly.

Current Newly Appointed Staff for HfU	Proposed Appointment of Staff
2 x Housing Caseworkers to manage homeless approaches, rematching, housing advice and financial payments to secure settled accommodation	1 x Rent Support Officer to support in securing private rental properties for HfU families and support inspection responsibilities
1 x Rent Collection Officer for HfU Temporary Accommodation for additional placements and units of temporary accommodation	1x Temporary Accommodation Coordinator to support in the management of an additional 16 units of temporary accommodation for HfU households

The posts recommended are full time (fixed term contracts) and dedicated to the delivery of the schemes to ensure we are meeting the needs of Ukrainian refugees in full, giving them the very best of opportunities in terms of gaining employment, housing and settling into the UK. The posts are required as they relate to statutory and financial functions of homelessness and management of temporary accommodation procured through Local Housing Accommodation Fund (LHAF) for Ukrainian families. This aims to mitigate the costs to the Council exceeding the grant funding provided. Further resources by utilising additional hours by existing staff have also been included. For example, to deal with additional Devon Home Choice applications.

LAHF property acquisition is predominantly carried out by a Housing Enabling Officer, who's post is externally funded by the Teignbridge Affordable Housing Partnership partners. This work is not for the benefit of the Partnership and therefore it is proposed to use £40,000 of LAHF to enable the post holder to continue as a single point of contact for developers/legal, leading on the acquisition, inspection, snagging and works necessary to bring properties up to a lettable standard as expediently as possible.

The scheme is developing at pace and the teams need to be able to respond quickly to changes. There is a need to be able to make decisions quickly and dynamically to reallocate funding to meet arising demands. Therefore, whilst intentions to allocate the current funds has been set out, this may need to change in the future dependant on circumstances that present themselves. Delegating authority to the Housing Needs Lead provides the ability to react to contract and staffing

requirements, provide continuity and offer assurance to partner agencies as the scheme develops.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

CVS/Citizens Advice Contract

Members may wish the funding for ongoing support to be provided to a different organisation.

Officers are very satisfied with the support CVS and Citizens Advice have provided to hosts, guests, and to Teignbridge District Council in delivering this scheme flexibly and at pace.

The demands of this scheme on CVS and Citizens Advice will be continued to be monitored with regular meetings and review of work being completed.

Seeking alternative providers may be possible through a procurement process, but this would be at the risk of a failure of TDC not meeting the grant requirements and provision of ongoing wraparound support.

6. Implications, Risk Management and Climate Change Impact

6.1 Financial

The proposed allocation of funds for both schemes makes best use of the funding to meet the needs of those the funding is intended for and is within the requirements of the funding conditions. By providing resources to successfully administer the scheme, it is expected to avoid additional pressure on Housing budgets. HfU reporting to Devon County Council uses the headings in the proposed allocation table above and will be monitored against actual spend.

6.2 Risks

Risks	Mitigations
Increase of homelessness	Utilising the funding dynamically will allow us to allocate funding to best meet the arising needs.
Failure to spend the grant and therefore needing to be returned	Ongoing monitoring of expenditure, meetings with CVS and Citizens Advice to identify gaps and additional areas of support needed

Failure to meet the resource demands of the authority	Ongoing monitoring of workloads as a result of the Refugee Schemes to ensure sufficient staffing are available to meet the need.
Host placements funding ceasing	Where there would be a duty to provide temporary accommodation, options for the local authority to consider utilising this funding to continue to support host placements
No additional future funding	New posts are limited to 2 year fixed term contracts. Additional hours for staff on an ad- hoc basis does not change their contract provision and can be stopped at any point TDC meet regularly with DHLUC and Devon County Council and are monitoring for any future impacts

6.3 Environmental/Climate Change Impact

There are no environmental/Climate Change impact linked to this report.

7. Alternative Options

None that can be reasonably achieved and maintain the current level of support to Homes for Ukraine households.

8. Conclusion

The proposed planning of expenditure of funding meets the grant conditions for each of the schemes. It is recommended that the funding of CVS and Citizens Advice to support Homes for Ukraine households and the additional staffing resources detailed in the report be continued. In delegating responsibility for the management of this funding, TDC will continue to be able to provide timely response to local needs and legislative changes to provide the best outcomes possible for Homes for Ukraine refugees.