

Report to: Cabinet



Date of Meeting 2 November 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A

Homes for Ukraine transition policy

Report summary:

This report seeks member's endorsement of the Homes for Ukraine Private Rented Sector (PRS) transition policy. The policy has been developed by Team Devon and was agreed by the Leaders and Chief Officers of all Devon local authorities at their meeting on the 5/10/2022.

The policy provides an additional top up payment for Homes for Ukraine hosts. It also sets out the general principles that will be followed in relation to re-matching guests with new hosts, what to do where host/guest relations breakdown, and support for a guest's transition to the Private Rented Sector.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

Cabinet:

- (1) Adopt the Homes for Ukraine Private Rented Sector transition policy as attached to this report, and
- (2) Approve the additional flat rate top-up thank you payment of £150 per host per month for 12 months, and
- (3) Approve the Private Rented Sector transition proposals as shown in the attached report with the final decision on any payments (and the amount to be paid) to be delegated to the Service Lead – Housing, and Strategic Lead Finance; and
- (4) Agree that this scheme be delivered within the finances provided by the UK Government

Reason for recommendation:

To provide Cabinet with the Homes for Ukraine Private Rented Sector transition policy proposed by Team Devon, to highlight the parts in the report which are the discretion of the authority to set and to ensure by adoption of this policy that Ukrainian guests are continued to be welcomed and settled in this area and that host families are supported until a longer term exit strategy is developed by the UK Government.

Officer: **Andrew Hopkins, Communications Consultant**

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action and Emergency Response
- ☐ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☐ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- ☒ Democracy, Transparency and Communications

- ☐ Economy and Assets
- ☒ Finance
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☒ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☐ Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Medium Risk; There is an assumption that these new proposals will be funded by the government grant to support Ukrainian guests. We are seeking a flexible arrangement to allow for the increase in guests and/or host offers. A flexible approach will also allow us to address any changes required as a result of changes to government guidance.

Links to background information

[Report to Cabinet \(minute 54\) – Wednesday 7 September 2022](#)

[Team Devon PRS Transition Policy](#)

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☒ Better homes and communities for all
- ☐ A greener East Devon
- ☐ A resilient economy

Homes for Ukraine PRS scheme transition policy

The Homes for Ukraine scheme has been in operation since April, the UK Government subsequently tasked local councils to facilitate the housing of Ukrainian guests. EDDC has assembled a team of officers to make sure this happens and has commissioned Citizen's Advice East Devon (CAED) to provide wraparound support and a re-matching service.

Hosts sign up to a 6-month hosting agreement and as these hosting agreements start to expire there was a concern Ukrainian guests could end up homeless. Due to a shortage of social housing in the county this policy has been developed to try and avoid this worst case scenario.

The main premises of the PRS transition policy is to keep Ukrainian guests in properties with a host, either their existing host or re-matching them with a new host or transitioning guests to the private rented sector.

It is proposed due to the cost of living crisis that the thank-you payment for hosts (Currently £350) is topped up by £150 to become £500 per month backdated to all claims from 1 November 2022.

The Private Rented Sector transition policy will create the following:

- Guest grants in terms of a deposit for a suitable private rented home, rent in advance, a top-up to cover any initial rent shortfall, to cover rent if there is a delay in benefits being processed or other relevant tenancy set-up costs such as moving and furniture.
- Landlord incentive grant to encourage properties to be let to Ukrainian guests
- Cover legal expenses if a landlord needs to repossess a property subject to the claim being validated by the EDDC Housing Options Team
- Rent assurance in case of any non-payment of rent
- If temporary accommodation has to be used any excess costs of this temporary accommodation will be reimbursed from the funds provided by the UK Government for this scheme

We propose assessing these requests on a case by case basis having regard to the costs involved and suitability of the accommodation.

We will only operate the scheme for as long as we have assurance on funding being made available to meet our costs from central government via Devon County Council. We have undertaken some financial modelling of costs based on the numbers and size of households being accommodated in East Devon, and believe that we can operate the Thank You Payment top up and access to the private rented sector within the budget allocated.

Financial implications:

It has been agreed that EDDC will receive from Devon County Council £6,300 per Ukrainian guest out of the £10,500 to paid to them by Government. Currently EDDC payment is estimated to be in the order of £1.8m. From existing commitments including our own associated costs there currently remain an uncommitted balance of around £0.8m in order to implement this policy. Although this is seen at this stage as sufficient to meet the costs of these proposals the uncommitted sum is constantly changing and it is very difficult particularly with the private rented sector costs to estimate as they will depend on individual cases as they occur. The overarching financial principle of the scheme is that it will be funded from available government funding, if in monitoring the actual expenditure is estimated to be greater than the available funding we will approach Devon County Council for additional funds from what they are holding from Government, if this is not possible we will then have to stop making payments under the scheme.

Legal implications:

It is within the power of the Council to use the funding for the purposes specified. Otherwise, there are no specific legal implications requiring comment.