

Policy Committee

Tuesday, 5 April 2022 at 6.30pm

Urgent Item

The Chairman, Councillor Foster, has agreed that an urgent report should be considered under item 11 on the agenda:

Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme. Report attached.

Purpose of Report – To propose that Craven District Council engage in the Government's Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, working with North Yorkshire county, district and borough councils.

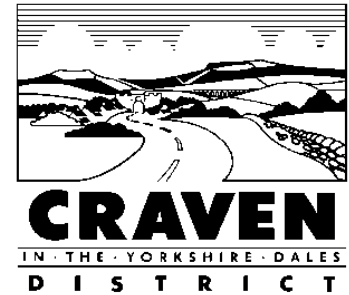
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1 April 2022

Policy Committee – Date 5 April 2022

Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme

Report of the Policy Committee

Lead Member – Cllr Foster



Ward(s) affected: All

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To propose that Craven District Council engage in the Government's Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme, working in partnership with North Yorkshire county, district and borough councils.

2. Recommendations – Members are recommended to:

- a. Approve engagement in the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme in partnership with North Yorkshire county, district and borough councils, within Government issued guidance.
- b. That the Director of Services be given delegated authority to enter into any necessary agreements to engage in the scheme and accept any relevant funding from the Government, in consultation with the Council Leader or relevant Lead Member.

3. Report

- 3.1 The Government has launched the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme whereby households and organisations in the UK can offer to sponsor and host guests (evacuees) from the war in Ukraine.
- 3.2 Offers must be made through the Government online portal and the Home Office undertakes initial vetting of sponsors and guests before considering whether to accept the sponsorship offer and issue a visa to the guests.
- 3.3 Unlike other refugee schemes, the Government is assuming that all local authorities will participate, rather than inviting local authorities to participate and enter into a specific agreement with the Home Office.
- 3.4 The Government has issued initial guidance, which includes roles for local authorities including checking accommodation is suitable, DBS checks on sponsors, making payments to sponsors and an initial payment to guests, and ensuring the provision of wrap around support to evacuees. There are several areas where additional guidance is to follow.

3.5 Officers of the County Council and district and borough councils are meeting regularly to coordinate activities. Craven District Council have identified lead Officers to oversee the scheme and be the main points of contact.

4. Financial and Value for Money Implications

4.1 Local Authorities will receive a fixed amount per guest (£10,500 per person, which includes an initial £200 subsistence payment) and will be reimbursed for paying sponsors £350 per month for up to 12 months. It is not clear at this stage which local authorities (upper or lower tier) will receive these payments.

4.2 The full scale of the costs and the funding arrangements are still to be clarified and therefore there is the potential for there to be additional costs to local authorities in the medium term.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 Engagement in the Homes for Ukraine scheme sits outside existing agreed arrangements for supporting refugees and therefore a specific decision on this is required.

6. Contribution to Council Priorities

6.1 Participation in the scheme contributes to supporting the wellbeing of our communities.

6.2 Impact on the declared Climate Emergency

No specific impact.

7. Risk Management

7.1 There are risks which are currently unquantifiable. The numbers of guests that may arrive in the county is unknown. Funding needs to be sufficient for the provision of wrap around support to guests and local authorities will have responsibility for managing the impacts of any breakdowns of sponsorship arrangements (including any safeguarding issues and providing alternative accommodation).

These risks will last for at least three years (the length of the visas to be issued by the Government to the guests) and potentially beyond if guests remain after the three years.

7.2 Chief Finance Officer (s151 Officer) Statement

It is important that any applications made for support undergo due diligence to ensure these payments are distributed appropriately.

7.3 Monitoring Officer Statement

A Monitoring Officer statement is not required for this report.

8. Equality Impact Analysis

8.1 An equality impact analysis is being undertaken.

9. Consultations with Others

9.1 Officers are working closely with North Yorkshire County Council and North Yorkshire District and Borough Councils.

10. Background Documents

Government guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/homes-for-ukraine-guidance-for-councils>

Government online portal:

<https://homesforukraine.campaign.gov.uk>

11. Appendices

None

12. Author of the Report

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Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.