



To: Leadership Board

On: 20 April 2022

Report by: Chief Executive

Heading: Update on Humanitarian Crisis in Ukraine

1. Summary

- 1.1 This paper provides an update on the local response to the humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, with a specific focus on the recent development of schemes by the UK Government which allow Ukrainian nationals to come to the UK to seek refuge here.
- 1.2 Section 4 of the report provides an overview of the main routes of entry, and provides an overview of the role that the Council has in terms of supporting resettlement through these routes.
- 1.3 Section 5 outlines initial work that has been progressed in Renfrewshire at the request of the Scottish Government, to establish a Welcome Hub at Glasgow Airport to support any arrivals through this port of entry. This places very specific resource requirements on the organisation, and the paper provides an update on the work that has been undertaken to date, and the mutual aid arrangements that have been initially agreed with other local authorities to support the operation of the welcome hub, should this be required.
- 1.4 Officers across the Council have worked at pace to prepare for the resettlement of refugees in recent weeks, and separately to establish the Welcome Hub arrangements. Renfrewshire has strong partnership networks which have supported refugees arriving in Renfrewshire through the Syrian and Afghan resettlement programmes, and have established expertise within the organisation through our refugee resettlement and unaccompanied

asylum seeking children and young people teams. These provide strong foundations for building the support that is required to support Ukrainian people to settle in Renfrewshire.

2. Recommendations

2.1 It is recommended that members of the Leadership Board:

- Note the contents of this report;
- Note that the Council will have a role in the resettlement of refugees who may come to Renfrewshire via one of the visa schemes outlined in Section 4 of this paper.
- Note the additional requirement for the Council to establish and manage welcome hub arrangements for refugees who enter via Glasgow Airport.
- Delegate authority to the Chief Executive to put in place such arrangements and resources as may be required to support both the operation of the Welcome Hub and the resettlement and support of refugees from Ukraine within Renfrewshire.

3. Background

3.1 In response to the invasion of Ukraine and the unfolding humanitarian crisis, Council agreed a motion on 3rd March which specifically noted that:

“Council stands ready to assist in all appropriate ways with humanitarian support and refuge to the people of Ukraine in this ordeal” and “Additionally Council instructs officers to urgently investigate what steps Council can take to assist UK based international aid groups and charities in the collection of public donations in regards to personal goods, medical and relief supplies in order to assist the Ukrainian people in their time of need”

3.2 Work was undertaken quickly to investigate the options for offering support to people impacted by the crisis, given the very strong desire of local people and communities to do something to help those who have had to flee their homes with little or no possessions.

3.3 In line with the advice from national and international aid agencies, the Council has used its social media channels and website to signpost local offers of support to fundraising appeals co-ordinated by the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC), SCIAF and UNICEF. Aid agencies have advised that financial donations rather than physical donations allow these organisations to respond flexibly and at pace to emerging need on the ground, and therefore to target need more effectively. As agreed by Council on 3rd March, the Council made a donation of £10,000 to the DEC Appeal in respect of the pressures on its UK based activities as a result of the crisis.

- 3.4 As elected members will be aware, the humanitarian crisis has worsened significantly in Ukraine in recent weeks, and it was estimated by mid April that in excess of 4.5m people had fled the country to seek refuge in surrounding countries such as Slovakia, Poland, Hungary and Moldova amongst others. Many more Ukrainians are displaced within the country itself, with many seeking safety in more Western areas of the country.
- 3.5 In recent weeks, the UK Government have introduced various routes by which Ukrainian nationals can come to the UK to seek refuge. Section 4 of this paper provides an overview of these key routes, with subsequent information on the role of the Council and its partners in supporting Ukrainian refugees that may come to Renfrewshire as a result.

4 Overview of recent developments

- 4.1 In response to the humanitarian crisis, the UK Government has established several routes by which **Ukrainian nationals can come to the UK to seek refuge and support.**
- The Ukraine Family Scheme allows family members of British nationals, UK settled persons and certain others to come to or stay in the UK.
 - The Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme allows Ukrainian nationals and their family members to come to the UK if they have a named sponsor under the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.
- 4.2 ***It is important to note that these arrangements are not the same as resettlement programmes that have operated in relation to for example Syrian refugees.*** Under these specific arrangements, Ukrainian nationals and their families receive a visa to access the country independently and to live in the UK for a period of up to 3 years, with the ability to work, and to access support such as benefits, housing, health and education. Further detail on these entry options are available at : [UK visa support for Ukrainian nationals - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/uk-visa-support-for-ukrainian-nationals)

Homes for Ukraine scheme

- 4.3 On 14 March, the UK Government launched its Homes for Ukraine Scheme to enable people in the UK to volunteer accommodation to be used by people escaping the conflict. The Homes for Ukraine Scheme will offer a route to the UK for people who have linked up with someone in the UK who is willing to provide them with a home, or a room or rooms within their home. It will enable individuals (and subsequently charities, community groups and businesses) to volunteer accommodation and provide a route to safety for those forced to escape their homeland.
- 4.4 Sponsors are asked to provide accommodation for a minimum of 6 months, and the UK Government will offer a thank you payment of £350 per month for the first 12 months period of this agreement. Local authorities across the UK

issue, including local social landlords and are making preparations to support the resettlement of Ukrainian people in Renfrewshire. This would include the need to support people in relation to employment, benefits, health needs, school requirements etc.

- 4.13 As elected members may be aware, the organisation has in place specialist resource to support the resettlement of refugees and asylum seeking children or young people. There are very strong foundations upon which to build support requirements for Ukrainian people that come to Renfrewshire, with commitments from wider community planning partners and local community and third sector organisations to welcome people to the area and to support their longer term integration and resettlement.
- 4.14 A multiagency group has been established since early March and has been preparing for arrivals through a number of workstreams. Local welcome packs have been developed to supplement national information sources that have been developed.

Resource requirements

- 4.15 In recognition of the additional resource that will be required to support resettlement, Scottish Government have confirmed that £7.2m of additional funding will be made available to local authorities. Funding of £100,000 will be allocated initially in Renfrewshire to support local resettlement teams to manage additional demand on these services. This will be utilised to recruit additional officers to provide practical resettlement support in the first instance. It is anticipated that the balance of the national funding will be made available within local authority areas to support improvements to properties required or to fund wider community support, however this is subject to ongoing discussion and agreement.

5 Establishment of Welcome Hubs

- 5.1 To facilitate a “warm welcome” to Scotland, Scottish Government have asked several local authorities to establish Welcome Hubs at entry points to the country. The purpose of these hubs is to ensure that any Ukrainian individual or family is able to be signposted to relevant information and support if this is required. Three Welcome Hubs have been established at key points of entry – Glasgow Airport, Edinburgh Airport and Cairnryan Port.
- 5.2 For people arriving under the super-sponsor arrangement, the Welcome Hub will also provide temporary accommodation and support, and an initial assessment of need and requirements will be made and passed to the COSLA Migration team to allow matching of the family or individual to offers of accommodation within local authority areas across Scotland.
- 5.3 Renfrewshire Council has been asked to lead the Glasgow Airport Welcome Hub and has established all initial requirements. A small number of arrivals have been supported to date, and mutual aid arrangements have been put into place with a number of other local authorities that have offered to support the operation of the Welcome Hub, should numbers increase significantly over a short period of time.

5.4 Scottish Government have indicated that costs incurred by local authorities hosting welcome hubs will be met, and agreement on the detail of this financial arrangement is currently being progressed by officers through COSLA.

6. Next steps

6.1 Whilst there remains considerable uncertainty about the scale of any Ukrainian resettlement, officers have undertaken significant preparations to ensure the council and partners are ready to deal with arrivals at both the Welcome Hub and through formal resettlement in Renfrewshire.

6.2 Given this level of uncertainty, and the requirement of the local authority to respond at pace to any requests for support, it is recommended that the Chief Executive is authorised to put in place such arrangements and resources as may be required to support both the operation of the Welcome Hub and the resettlement and support of refugees from Ukraine within Renfrewshire.

6.3 It is intended that regular updates will be continue to be provided to all elected members as this emerging situation develops further.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** –. The paper notes the funding that will be allocated to local authorities by the UK Government for each arrival through the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Funding arrangements for the Welcome Hubs remain subject to further agreement with the Scottish Government. £100,000 initial funding has been allocated by the Scottish Government to strengthen the capacity of our local resettlement team.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – none
3. **Community/Council Planning** – the recommendation in this report supports ‘Our Renfrewshire is fair’ and ‘Our Renfrewshire is safe’ given the potential for addressing inequalities and protecting the vulnerable.
4. **Legal** - none
5. **Property/Assets** - none
6. **Information Technology** - none
7. **Equality and Human Rights** - The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals’ human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report because it is for noting only. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council’s website.

8. **Health and Safety** - none
 9. **Procurement** – none
 10. **Risk** – none
 11. **Privacy Impact** – none
 12. **COSLA Policy Position** – COSLA Leaders agreed that local authorities would support those seeking refuge in Scotland through the UK Government schemes, and would work with Scottish Government to ensure support was in place to any Ukrainian arriving through the super sponsor arrangements in place as part of the wider Homes for Ukraine scheme
 13. **Climate Risk** – none
-

List of Background Papers:

Author: Laura McIntyre, Head of Policy and Commissioning

