

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE

meeting date: THURSDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2022
title: COMMUNITY INTEGRATION
submitted by: NICOLA HOPKINS, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING
principal author: NICOLA HOPKINS, DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update Members on community integration in respect of the Ukrainian refugees living in the Ribble Valley
- 1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:
- Community Objectives – To address housing needs across the borough.
 - Corporate Priorities:
 - To ensure the Council is a well-run authority.
 - To help make people's lives safer and healthier

2. BACKGROUND

- 1.3 Members will be familiar with the ongoing humanitarian crisis following the Russian invasion of the Ukraine. To assist, the government announced the Homes for Ukraine scheme providing an opportunity to UK residents to help support Ukraine refugees fleeing conflict to move to the UK under a sponsorship arrangement.
- 1.4 There are two main schemes to support refugees – the Homes for Ukraine Scheme (HFU); and the Ukraine Family Scheme. The Ukraine Family Scheme allows applicants to join family members or to extend an existing stay in the UK and is a different scheme to the HFU that the Council is assisting in delivering.
- 1.5 The District Council's role at present to assist in the delivery of the HFU scheme by undertaking checks on sponsor accommodation to ensure it is suitable. These checks are carried out by the Housing team following notification of sponsors' addresses by the County Council. In addition, the Borough Council is administering the "Thank-you" grants the government has introduced of £350 which provides the option for sponsors to claim a monthly support payment for as long as they have guests living in their accommodation. The Housing team are dealing with the administration of this scheme.
- 1.6 The government has also provided funding to local authorities to help support the additional workloads generated by the scheme; the Council will receive a payment per guest to support the additional housing related workloads, together with a per guest payment to support activities to assist with community-based support and cohesion. £1000 per guest has been provided to support community integration.
- 1.7 Several community support groups have been established in the area to provide community-based support for families in the Ribble Valley area.

3. COMMUNITY INTEGRATION

- 1.8 Whilst we were originally under the impression that LCC, who receive this funding from Central Government, would identify community groups suitable for assisting in community integration across the County this transpired not to be the case and this funding was subsequently passported to the districts.
- 1.9 Part of the £1000 per guest community integration funding has been utilised as follows. The Council's Homes for Ukraine Administrative Assistant has been working closely with the Ukraine community within the Borough and the support groups which have been set up to assist with the refugees integrating into the community. The Mayor hosted a lunch for the refugees and we have provided passes to our swimming pools. Additionally, a pool party has been held and we organised a trip to Blackpool Pleasure Beach for our Ukrainian residents.
- 1.10 At a recent Homes for Ukraine District Meeting the Refugee Integration Team at LCC raised a potential option for fully utilising this community integration funding. The Fylde Coast Grant Scheme has been created, supported by the team at LCC, covering 3 districts Blackpool, Wyre and Fylde. This scheme enables community groups within the three areas to bid for the community integration funding to support the refugees. A similar level of assistance was offered to all the districts.
- 1.11 Following this offer discussions with the team at LCC commenced to understand whether such a scheme would be suitable for the Valley.

4. GRANT SCHEME

- 1.12 A specific grant scheme has been created for Ribble Valley which community groups will be able bid into to, the Scheme can be accessed using the link below:
<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/council/grants/ukraine-community-grant-scheme/?page=1>
- 1.13 Whilst the specification will not be prescriptive bids which involve projects and activities that target and benefit communities where Ukrainian guests are resettled in the Valley will be encouraged. Proposed projects should also aim to benefit Sponsors and other members of the local community. Proposals that seek to meet localised needs and that educate and inform members of specific social groups will also be considered.
- 1.14 Proposals will be required to be very clear about what they are going to use the grant for and must clearly demonstrate intended outcomes. The following criteria will be used to assess the suitability of proposals:
- High quality, innovative proposals, including pilots
 - Proposals that are based on evidence and engagement with users
 - Proposals that demonstrate long term impact and potential legacies
 - Proposals which target new audiences, which are not usually introduced to refugee or asylum seeker communities
 - Proposals where members of the Ukrainian community are integral to the planning and running of events/activities
 - Value for money, defined as high impact, low spend projects
 - Match funding from bidders (or other funders)

- Experience of working with refugees (and resettled refugees in particular) is not required; however, proposals from organisations that do not have experience of working with refugees must evidence that they have the required understanding of refugees' issues and local community integration needs
- Added value, i.e. non-duplication of existing activities

1.15 It is proposed to utilise a proportion of the funding we have received (after the community integration work already undertaken, we have £12,000 remaining) for groups to bid into for the benefit of the Ukrainian community and their sponsors. Applications will be welcomed from:

- Voluntary and community organisations
- Registered charities
- Constituted groups or clubs
- Social enterprises
- Group of organisations, if led by a voluntary/community organisation or social enterprise
- Community Interest Company (with two or more directors)
- Statutory Organisations

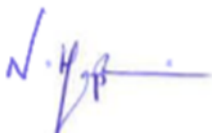
5. DELIVERY

1.16 The grant will be administered by the Integration Team at LCC who will publish the specification with a deadline for community groups to apply for the fund (available to view via the link above). We will advertise this through our social media channels and directly with the contacts the Housing Team have already established.

1.17 The submissions will be assessed by a panel which will consist of our Homes for Ukraine Administrative Assistant and our Housing Strategy Manager along with members of the LCC Integration team. An appropriate level of grant will be offered to successful bids.

8. RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE

1.18 Note the Grant Scheme aimed at assisting with community integration for Ukrainian refugees living in the Valley.



NICOLA HOPKINS
DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING