

REPORT TITLE: THE HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT/HOMES FOR UKRAINE PROGRAMME – SPENDING PLAN 2022/23

22 JUNE 2022

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Paula Ferguson, Cabinet Member for Community and Housing

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WARD(S): ALL

PURPOSE

The Council has recently had confirmation of two significant grants to support its work on homelessness prevention and the Homes for Ukraine scheme. This report sets out and seeks approval for the proposed spending plans for both schemes.

The Council spends over £660k per annum on Homelessness Prevention from its core General Fund budget and invests more per head of population on this important work than other Hampshire councils. To supplement this work and support the delivery of a key Government priority, the Council has now received the 2022/23 Homeless Prevention Grant (HPG) of £308,247 allocated by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). The grant enables local authorities to further control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness.

In addition, Hampshire County Council has confirmed that a proportion of the central Government allocation per refugee for the Homes for Ukraine scheme will be allocated to district councils to fund housing related services and community support activities for Ukrainian guests. With Winchester hosts welcoming the highest number of guests across Hampshire 459, this will result in a minimum of £740,880 being allocated to the City Council in 2022/23 (this will increase as and when more guests arrive in the area). With demands on council services already increasing, the immediate need to provide direct support to guests as they arrive in the area and the community support hub in Winchester already established, approval for spending proposals is required to help fund this work and to commit the allocation awarded to the Council.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Approve that homelessness prevention grants 2022-23 onwards are funded from the annual homelessness prevention grant award the Council receives from central government.
2. Approve the award of homelessness prevention grants to voluntary and community organisations for 2022-23, as set out in the Officer's report.
3. Approve the spending plan for the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.
4. Delegate authority to the Service lead for Strategic Housing and the Service lead of Communities and Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Community and Housing to be able to amend and extend the spending plan as we respond to the needs and requirements in respect of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

## IMPLICATIONS:

### 1 COUNCIL PLAN OUTCOME

- 1.1 Homes for all
- 1.2 Provision of good quality affordable housing options meet the needs of our most vulnerable and socially excluded residents, maximising opportunities to support people out of homelessness.
- 1.3 Vibrant Local Economy
- 1.4 Provision of good quality affordable housing contributes to the local economy and with greater employment opportunities provides a pathway out of poverty and homelessness. To provide equal employment opportunities to the guests we have welcomed on the HFU scheme.
- 1.5 Living Well
- 1.6 The provision of good quality housing is linked to and has a direct impact on wellbeing and health inequalities often faced by those vulnerably housed or homeless. To ensure that the council supports the guest to integrate into our communities be able ensure all our services are accessible.
- 1.7 Your Services, Your Voice
- 1.8 Working with TACT to ensure tenants have a direct say in service priorities and delivery to include tenant led “scrutiny reviews” of Housing services.
- 1.9 Delivering on the Governments White Paper - ensuring residents in social housing are listened to and have account to redress should things go wrong.

### 2 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The council’s core general fund budget for Homelessness Prevention services totals £663,000 per annum. This is significantly higher per head of population, than many of our neighbouring authorities, which reflects the Council’s commitment to maintaining its “gold standard” approach to delivering homelessness prevention services.
- 2.2 In addition to the general fund budget, all housing authorities have in recent years been allocated an additional Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) to assist with managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness.
- 2.3 The grant for 2022/23 is £308,247. A detailed spending plan which sets out how this full amount will be committed in this financial year is set out in section 13 of this report. The grant determination is set each year and so this is a one off spend for the financial year 2022/23. It should be noted that there

is no guarantee the council will be awarded this level of funding for future years.

- 2.4 HPG awards in the last two years has not been fully committed, partly due to a number of exceptional 'one time only' grants issued by the government. The government funding was awarded to the council to react to Covid-19 pressures regarding homelessness and in-particular rough sleeping initiatives and these funds are unlikely to be reciprocated in 2022/23. Uncommitted funds are held in reserves and currently amount to £426,000
- 2.5 The current HPG reserve and 2021/22 underspend of grant has been earmarked to support;
- A potential reduction in the government's HPG allocation due to a new formula being applied to local authority grant determinations in 2023/24.
  - To prepare for significant funding reductions following the HCC Balancing the Budget consultation and likely cuts to the council's allocation of the social inclusion grant in 2023/24.
  - To commission or match fund local established homelessness services that may lose a percentage of funding through the HCC Balancing the Budget consultation to provide continuity of service.
  - To reevaluate post pandemic service delivery to meet the increasing complex demands associated with homelessness and appropriate provision, such as new Domestic Abuse duties, private sector evictions and associated increase in homelessness due to a cost of living crisis.
- 'One time only' grants include £62,923 to assist private sector housing tenants (vulnerable renter's fund) to support those who have been adversely affected by Covid-19. And Year 4 of Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) funding of £132,000.
- 2.6 In addition to its core homelessness prevention services, Housing and Communities teams are facing increasing pressures as a result of the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Until now, no funding has been allocated to support the Council's work. However, in recent weeks, Hampshire County Council has confirmed that a share of the Government funding they have received will be passed to districts to support housing related demands and community support services for Ukrainian guests. The County Council receive £10,500 of Government funding per guest and will pass £1680 of this to districts. HCC has confirmed the City Council's first instalment will be £740,880. This will increase as our number of refugees increase. HCC are holding back 52% of the £10.500 funding for medium and long term support. It is possible that districts may receive a proportion of this 52% going forward.
- 2.7 As the Council is facing immediate pressures to help support the resettlement and integration of Ukrainian guests into the local community, a detailed

spending plan for committing this additional money is also included in this report. However, some flexibility is required to allow officers to vary the specific proposals in light of emerging needs and therefore delegated authority is sought to permit this, subject to consultation with the Cabinet member for Community and Housing.

### 3 LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The council holds a statutory homelessness duty under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. The legislation places a duty on the council so that everyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness has access to meaningful help as long as they are eligible for such assistance. Councils must try to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place.
- 3.2 The recommendations in this report implement an accurate implementation of this statutory duty. The proposals outlined in the report for expenditure of this grant funding are all either compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (contracts) or are permitted under the subsidy control regime (grants). Ongoing legal support will be provided, as required, in relation to the expenditure of this grant.

### 4 WORKFORCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5 To be resourced within the existing staff structure and through partnership working opportunities with voluntary sector and statutory partners sharing staffing resources and grant funding through the government's Preventing Homelessness Grant and council core grants programme.
- 5.1 Delivering the programme as set out in this report relies on an additional staff resource. It is proposed that two additional posts are funded directly from the HPG grant as set out in section 12.20.
- 5.2 Additional staffing and community resources will be required in order to implement the HFU spending plan.

### 6 PROPERTY AND ASSET IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Recommendations within the report have no immediate impact on council property and assets.

### 7 CONSULTATION AND COMMUNICATION

- 7.1 Consultation with local voluntary and housing partners took place on the proposed Preventing Homelessness Grant spending plan through the homelessness pathway group.
- 7.2 The front line Housing Options team were consulted and provided input regarding service delivery gaps and identified future spending needs.

- 7.3 Consultation through a spending review workshop was held with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Asset Management and the Corporate Head of Housing, for both spending plans.
- 7.4 Consultation with a partnering local authority acting as a critical friend to provide challenge and advice on the spending plan initiatives and projects.
- 7.5 The spending plan presented and discussed at BHP Committee on the 01 March 2022, and was well received by the committee. The committee provided comments regarding the approach, details of the proposed spending plan and the proposals for managing the reserve. The committee were positive and supportive of the new services/projects in the proposed plan. The committee recommended a full briefing on the projects later in the year.
- 7.6 The Hampshire Strategic Housing Officer Group (SHOG) worked in partnership with lead agencies on the HFU scheme to recommend an allocation proposal in respect of the £10,500 per refugee funds to enable the districts to fulfil their statutory homeless duties, full housing needs assessment and community support. The proportion of funds being distributed to the districts has taken this into consideration.
- 7.7 With the confirmation of the HFU scheme allocation only just being announced and because of the urgent need to respond to increasing demands for support, it has not been possible to consult on the spending plan proposals set out in this report. It is important that the proposals is kept under review and can be amended in light of experience. Further information on progress with this scheme will be reported to members in the next six months.

## 8 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Improved city centre environment through reduced street homelessness and associated street activity by offering sustainable housing provision and support, quality housing options, outreach and community support.

## 9 EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSEMENT

- 9.1 An Equality Impact assessment has been completed to assess the Impact of this decision. The Impact assessment as found at Appendix 1 which concluded that discrimination against homeless people is acts of treating people, or people perceived to be homeless unfavourably. In respect to community integration and access to services, consideration is given to the spending plan and its initiatives which seeks to mitigate such impacts and discrimination.

- 9.2 Cabinet should refer to the equality impact assessment at Appendix 1. Overall, the proposed decision is considered to contribute towards advancing equality of opportunity in particular due to on persons with protected characteristics

## 10 PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY

10.1 Under s149 (1) of the Equality Act the council must have due regard, in the exercise of its functions, (and Cabinet must, as the decision maker in respect of the proposed decision, have due regard) to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited by the Act.
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them.
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share relevant protected characteristics and persons who do not share them.

## 11 DATA PROTECTION IMPACT ASSESSMENT

11.1 Any subsequent change to council service delivery and policy will undergo a Data protection Impact Assessment with service privacy statements reviewed.

## 12 RISK MANAGEMENT

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Mitigation</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
Financial –. Risk of not committing resources in line with spending plan	Core duties met from General Fund budget. Grant used to enhance and improve service provision	Increasing and promoting earlier intervention and homelessness prevention services. Exploring alternative and discretionary housing options. An opportunity to offer enhanced and wider community support to the most excluded and vulnerable residents.
Risk of Govt not continuing HPG funding in future years.	All proposals set out in report are “one-off” or fixed term and create no long-term liability on the General Fund  Budget monitoring and reviews. SLA with partner agencies	
Risk of HFU monies being insufficient to meet needs of hosts and guests	County wide Finance group and HCC keeping demand under review	

Additional costs to Homelessness services if Homes for Ukraine scheme results in increased breakdown of host arrangements	Specific provision in HFU scheme spending plan to set aside resources to cover accommodation costs resulting in breakdown of host arrangements	
Exposure to challenge	Compliance with the council's Preventing Homelessness duties is a legislative statutory duty.	
Innovation – Opportunities for the council to work in partnership with statutory and voluntary partners on joint preventing homelessness initiatives above its statutory duties.		Opportunity to positively enhance the council's reputation through discretionary and joint preventing homelessness initiatives and projects funded through the HPG spending plan.
Reputation- Risk of failing to deliver the councils statutory preventing homelessness duties.  Risk of failing to adequately support the needs of HFU hosts/guests	Prevent and relief homelessness duties implemented at the earliest opportunity.  Community hub established with funds to extend if needed	Opportunity to positively enhance the council's reputation by reducing homelessness and increasing alternative housing options. Good news stories publicly opportunities
Achievement of outcome- Meeting homelessness statutory duties. Making best use of the governments Preventing Homelessness Grant. Demonstrating best practice service delivery	Government statistical returns. Budget monitoring and reviews. SLA with partner agencies.	Opportunity to positively enhance the council's reputation through discretionary and joint preventing homelessness initiatives and projects funded through the PHG spending plan.



through partnership working and discretionary grant funding.		
Risk of the Homes for Ukraine spending Plan not addressing customer and service needs	Delegated authority to amend the plan in light of experience is sought in the recommendations	Additional resource has been retained by HCC pending assessment of long term need

### 13 SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

#### **PART 1: Homelessness Prevention Grant spending plan 2022/23**

##### 13.1 **Background**

13.2 The 2022/23 Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) of £308,247 as awarded by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) is to enable local authorities to have control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and to support those who are at risk of homelessness.

13.3 It is recognised that the council cannot prevent or solve homelessness alone. As such the homelessness prevention spending plans sets out areas of spend that best support partnership working opportunities whilst underpinning the council's statutory housing responsibilities to ensure preventative initiatives are central to service delivery.

13.4 The HPG is the primary central government funding stream to assist the council and wider community in delivering their homeless services. The grant is ring fenced to ensure local authorities are fully resourced to take action to prevent homelessness and to continue to embed the changes required through implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017)

13.5 The purpose of the HPG grant is to;

- Support the council to continue to meet its legislative duties under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- To prevent and end rough sleeping by increasing activities to prevent single household homelessness.
- Reduce the number of families living in temporary accommodation by maximising family homeless prevention opportunities.
- To reduce the use of bed and breakfast and emergency accommodation for families providing more stable interim housing opportunities.

- 13.6 The government has significantly increased homelessness grant funding over the past two years to enable local authorities to respond to the changing complex nature of homeless with focus on reducing rough sleeping and to help meet the challenges and positive changes in practice identified during the pandemic.
- 13.7 Whilst the HPG is the primary source of central government funding to meet the objectives set out in 13.5 and supports projects and initiatives, the council does receive other funding streams to support wider service provision to prevent homelessness and rough sleeping. Over the past 4 years the council has been successful in bidding for Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) funding which has previously or continues to support the complex needs navigators, emergency accommodation placements, severe weather emergency protocol and implementing 'Housing First'
- 13.8 The current HCC commissioning grant for homelessness support services in Winchester totals £407,000 per annum with supporting agency contracts in place until 2023/24. The HCC grant supports the most vulnerable single household clients with complex needs across 52 homelessness beds, with a small contribution towards outreach services targeted at people rough sleeping. However, the grant funding allocated to the Winchester district is proposed to significantly reduce in 2023/24, as part of HCC Balancing the Budget consultation. The spending plan and decisions within this report takes account of the potential HCC cuts to local homelessness services.

#### **Proposed Spending Plan**

<b>Homeless Prevention Activity</b>	<b>Proposed Spend</b>
Social Inclusion Grant to HCC	£50,000
Flexible Prevention and Rent Deposit Fund	£40,000
SWEP and Cold Weather Placements	£20,000
Young Persons Emergency Beds	£10,000
The Beacon	£10,000
Mental Health Step Out Pathway	£50,000
Homelessness Out of Hours Provision	£10,000
Enhanced Outreach Service	£20,000
Personalised Budget for Outreach Provision	£10,000
City of Sanctuary	£15,000
Staffing resource (Fixed term contracts)	£72,672
<b>Total</b>	<b>£307,672</b>

- 13.9 The council's Homelessness Prevention Grant spending plan for 2022/23 focuses on change and building on positive housing sector initiatives, practices and partnership working. The spending plan also supports service recovery plans and meet the objectives of the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleepers Strategy 2019-2024.

13.10 The introduction of the HRA 2017 which was enacted in April 2018 significantly changed the council's homeless statutory duties and administrative burdens. The council now has a statutory duty to prevent homelessness which is blind to priority need and local connection. The Government acknowledged that these new duties were unlikely to be delivered from existing funding sources and as such the allocation of the HPG to the council was significantly increased. If the HPG is not spent on initiatives to prevent homelessness, funds would have to be found from an alternative source or the council would be at risk of not being able to fulfil its statutory duties.

13.11 **Social Inclusion Grant.** The council currently co-commission with Hampshire County Council (HCC) accommodation and support for the most complex single homeless households. A contribution of £50,000 secured from the HPG will help support the provision of 29 units of accommodation at West View House and 13 units of accommodation at Sussex Street. HCC's contract has been extended to March 2023 and the joint commission of services ensures that suitable accommodation is available to prevent people from rough sleeping by targeting support to the most excluded and in need. **Proposed spending budget of £50,000**

13.12 **Flexible Prevention and Rent Deposit Fund.** A flexible prevention and rent deposit fund of £40,000 to allow front line Housing Options Officers to prevent and relieve homelessness through spend to save initiatives. Including securing accommodation in the private rented sector to cover rent in advance, deposits and security bonds. The fund offers financial help to prevent homelessness through eviction, assisting with court costs to secure a stay of eviction and help to clear current or historic rent arrears or other debts, acting as a barrier to securing and sustaining accommodation. The fund is critical to prevent vulnerable households seeking high interest loans from loan sharks placing them further into poverty and homelessness.

The fund will also be used to reduce digital exclusion. The link between poverty and digital exclusion means the poorest and most vulnerable are less likely to be online preventing them to digitally connect with benefit, employment and health services. Officers will be able use the fund to purchase basic mobile devices and/or help with Wi-Fi charges. **Proposed spending budget of £40,000**

13.13 **Severe Weather Emergency Provision (SWEP) and Emergency Cold Weather Payments.** The council has a responsibility to deliver SWEP to ensure safe emergency accommodation is available to anyone sleeping rough during periods of extreme cold or hot weather. The COVID-19 government advice to local authorities is that shared accommodation spaces are no longer suitable as SWEP and expect councils to provide self-contained emergency accommodation. The council works in partnership with Trinity Winchester and Two Saints who offer emergency placements and support within their housing provision to assist the council to meet its SWEP duties. The council offers financial assistance to meet the costs incurred by of both agencies, should

demand increase the council may also need to make use of hotel or other accommodation to meet its housing duties. A budget of £20,000 is suggested to cover SWEP costs. **Proposed spending budget of £20,000**

- 13.14 **Young Persons Emergency Beds.** To continue to fund 2 emergency beds with high level support for local homeless young persons aged 16-21 years that are accommodated at A2 Dominion supported housing project commissioned by HCC. **Proposed spending budget of £10,000**
- 13.15 **The Beacon Winchester.** To cover void costs incurred by The Beacon Winchester when homeless clients referred by the council fail to attend. Funding the loss of revenue incurred by The Beacon Winchester provides the financial security to allow them to hold the vacancy for a limited time and to continue to prioritise council referrals above other agency referrals. The fund helps to support local homeless people out of rough sleeping. **Proposed spending budget of £10,000**
- 13.16 **Mental Health Step Out Pathway.** There has been an increase in people accessing mental health services during the pandemic. Households who leave mental health in-patient services are more at risk of being placed in unsuitable accommodation on discharge increasing demand on statutory services. Households with complex mental health needs are also at a higher risk of losing their home. Identifying and securing suitable housing pathways is identified as a significant enabler for successful discharges and sustainment of tenancies.
- The mental health step out pathway is a specialist area of work for the housing options team to undertake and the HPG allows an opportunity to trial a secondment with a dedicated Mental Health Practitioner to bridge the knowledge and skill gap between homelessness services and mental health services. Providing an in house specialist resource to direct mental health assessments and coordinated support for a complex caseload of service user's unable to move on from the council's temporary accommodation. The post will support those rough sleeping who present for assistance with undiagnosed or crisis mental health issues. The post will work in partnership with the Community Mental Health Team to meet joint homelessness outcomes. **Proposed spending budget of £50,000.**
- 13.17 **Homelessness Out of Hours Provision:** The council has a statutory duty to provide a comprehensive homeless service that requires members of the team providing a homelessness duty service on evenings, weekends and bank holidays throughout the year. The associated cost for the out of hour's service standby rates is £10,000 per annum. **Proposed spending budget of £10,000**
- 13.18 **Enhanced Outreach Service:** Gaps have been identified in the current outreach service to help people out of rough sleeping. An enhanced outreach service will include working evening and weekend shifts and include support across the wider Winchester district. This builds on the outreach work that is already being carried out in the week. The council will work in partnership with

Winchester Trinity and The Beacon Winchester to scope objectives and requirements to provide an enhanced outreach service with joint identified outcomes to prevent rough sleeping. **Proposed spending budget £20,000**

- 13.19 **Agencies Personalised Housing Budget.** To provide Winchester Trinity and The Beacon Winchester with a small grant of £5,000 each to fund non statutory interventions that prevent homelessness and help to reconnect households to their home area. **Proposed Spending Budget £10,000**
- 13.20 **City of Sanctuary.** To continue the council's commitment for Winchester to be a City of Sanctuary, enabling households who are fleeing violence and/or persecution to settle and remain in the district, creating sustainable communities. Working in partnership with key charities, community groups and other support organisations to support the building of cohesive communities that welcome households seeking sanctuary to make their home in Winchester. **Proposed Spending Budget £15,000**
- 13.21 **Staffing Resources.** To continue to employ, on fixed term contracts, a front line Housing Options Officer and Strategic Housing Support Officer paid through the homelessness grant to manage the increased burdens and the council's responsibilities under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 and the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The additional resource provides the staffing resilience to meet the council's statutory preventative homelessness duties. **Proposed spending budget of £72,672**

#### 14 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 14.1 The option of not committing the grant for the whole year is rejected as it would significantly reduce early intervention and preventative homelessness work due to a short term commitment of funding. With a potential to increase costly statutory duties to accommodate homeless households when councils are required to prevent people from becoming homeless in the first place.
- 14.2 The option of retaining the HPG grant to balance the general fund or to underpin the core homelessness service is rejected as not sustainable as the government grant is not guaranteed and is awarded on a yearly basis.

### **PART 2: Homes for Ukraine Scheme spending plan 2022/23**

#### 15 **Background**

- 15.1 In March 2022 the Government launched the Homes for Ukraine Scheme. This scheme enables families to open up their homes to families fleeing the war in Ukraine. Since the scheme was launched there have been 933 expressions of interest from families to host in Winchester and as of 23.05.22, 201 hosts have been matched to Ukrainian families, with 73 families already settled in Winchester. Winchester has the highest number of host families in Hampshire and is in the top ten across the country. Ukrainian Families are eligible to access public funds for 3 years, this means they can apply for benefits, work and apply for social housing.

- 15.2 The Government guidance is very clear that from 6 months of the family settling with their host, it is for the host and the Local Authority to support the family into their own accommodation if they are unable to or do not wish to return to Ukraine.
- 15.3 This increases the caseload and pressures on the housing team significantly. Based on the data of 23.05.22, this would mean an additional 200+ families requiring the council's support into independent accommodation or possible homeless applications if suitable accommodation can't be secured. The numbers are likely to increase as many hosts haven't completed their application process yet or been matched to a Ukrainian Family.
- 15.4 The Government has funded each refugee £10,500 to support their resettlement and integration into this country. The Strategic Housing Officers group put a proposal together to HCC to request a proportion of this funding to enable to employ more case officers to complete housing needs assessment & personalised housing plans, provide tailored support and fundamentally prevent homelessness. Guidance also stipulates that the council's statutory homelessness costs are to be drawn down from this funding.
- 15.5 HCC have agreed with the districts that each district will initially receive £1,680 per refugee. HCC have confirmed our first instalment will be £740,880. This will increase as our number of refugees increase. HCC are holding back 52% of the £10,500 funding for medium and long term support. It is possible that districts may receive a proportion of this 52% going forward.

## 16 **Overall Proposal**

- 16.1 Outlined below is a proposal of how Strategic Housing and Communities, with the wider support of the WCC Ukrainian project team and officers will plan for the possible increase in homeless presentations to WCC and to be able to support the host and family, find move on accommodation and integrate the family into Winchester's community.
- a) The host is required to house the family for a minimum of 6 months and if possible, up to 12 months. The host will be paid £350 a month as a 'thank you' payment. The host receives one payment regardless of how many families they are hosting. The payments are administered by HCC and the first payment will be administered by the end of May 2022. The payments will cease after the 12<sup>th</sup> month
  - b) If the relationship between the host family and the Ukrainian family breaks down, and the Ukrainian family are rendered homeless, the Local Authorities statutory homeless duties are instigated.
  - c) Department of Levelling up, Housing and Communities are collating data fortnightly from LA's and have confirmed that they are forecasting that 30-40% of host arrangements will breakdown.

New guidance has been released regarding local connection and suitability of accommodation. Based on a 30-40% break down in relationships, this could mean 80 plus presentations to the housing options team based on current data, this could increase. The housing options officers already have caseloads of the recommended amount. The housing options team are also preparing for an increase in caseload due to the cost of living crisis and the lifting of evictions after the pandemic.

- d) It may be possible to prevent homelessness if we can use some of the funding to resolve with the core issues that might result in the relationship with the host breaking down.
- e) The re-matching guidance has been released and a family can only be re-matched if the host has failed their DBS check or there is a safeguarding concern, this makes it more difficult for the council to swap families and hosts to primarily prevent homelessness.
- f) Based on current data, they will be over 200 families looking to find alternative accommodation either via the housing register (Hampshire home choice) or into the private rented sector. There is already a shortage of affordable accommodation within the district, they may need assistance with bonds and deposits to secure alternative accommodation.
- g) All 11 districts have been awarded funding to assist with homeless prevention duties and to employ specialist housing case officers, therefore it is proposed we recruit officers to support the concerns outlined above. All 11 districts will be sourcing similar roles to support this programme of work and therefore this poses a recruitment challenge
- h) Communication can be a barrier. Many Ukrainians have limited English, an average housing options interview based on those we have conducted is taking 3 hours. This is a potential cost of £180 per interview. This may change as we build up a bank of translators and the families might find friends to assist them.

## **SPENDING PLAN**

1. To employ 3 case officers, 1 being a Housing Options Officer (Ukrainian lead) and 2 'Homes for Ukrainian Resettlement Officers'. The HOO will report into the Housing Options Manger and the HOO will line mange the resettlement officers. Their main duties would be to;
  - Visit all the Ukrainian families to ascertain the sustainability of the accommodation, support needs of the host and family and devise a support

plan ( this will enable us to identify who is most at risk of homelessness and try and prevent this) 60% of our hosts are in the parishes and the families may not have access to transport and therefore home visits are essential

- To complete a full housing needs assessment for each Ukrainian family and complete the personalise housing plans
- Work with the family and host to find alternative move on accommodation in the private rented sector, inclusive of liaising with private landlords, keeping a register of prospective private landlords, conducting affordability assessments and assisting with bonds and deposits.
- Assist the family in applying to Hampshire Home Choice, liaising with the allocations team, assist with bidding where required.
- The HOO will also make any homeless decisions that are required, along with attending partnering Ukrainian meetings, completing government data returns, operational lead with HCC, signing off temporary accommodation placements
- Signposting and supporting the families to other support such as employment and benefits.
- Participating in any events/hubs that the council or partnering organisations organise that relate to the Ukrainian refugee's
- Partnership working with all relevant partners
- Work closely with the communities team to identify support needs and map out future services

3 officers are based on a case load of 25 each, 73 families have arrived already, as of 23 May, so we already have a backlog of 73 families that we need to assess and visit. **Proposed amount £120,000.**

Going forward we need to plan corporately if the numbers increase, how and at what point we review staffing levels and pressures. Our allocation of funding will increase as numbers of guests increase.

2. To prepare for an increase in homeless presentations and the possibility of having to use emergency accommodation placements. Basing the assessment on the possibility of a 40% break down of relationship between host and guest, based on current data that 80 families may be rendered homeless and need emergency accommodation for a period of six weeks.

With emergency accommodation costing an average of £100per night in Winchester that equates to £4,900 per family for six weeks, (average size family is 2). **Proposed amount of £392,000.**

The guidance regarding funding states that the £10,500 for each refugee has to cover any costs accrued due to homelessness. If the funding isn't used for this purpose, then the costs will have to be sourced from alternative budgets The Budget for Emergency accommodation from the General Fund is only £5,000 and could not sustain this increase in emergency accommodation costs.



If the funding isn't required for emergency accommodation it can be redirected to other identified needs such as community integration and long term housing needs.

3. To fund a translation service (based on 23 May data):

Based on 201 families needing translation, average of 3 hours per family, £180 x 201. **Proposed amount £37,000**

4. Access to a homeless flexible prevention fund to assist the host and Ukrainian refugee to sustain their current accommodation. This will allow the officers to prevent and relieve homelessness through spend to save initiatives. **Proposed amount £50,000**
5. For the staff to access specialist mental health support for supervision, wellbeing and reflective practice. It is acknowledged that the Ukrainian's have suffered severe trauma and maybe witnessed war crimes. The Ukrainian's may talk to the staff and the staff need support and a safe place to be able to process this. Possibility of exploring trauma informed war crimes/refugee training for the relevant staff. Possibility of co-funding the mental health practitioner that is being seconded in from the Southern health and purchasing bespoke training  
**Proposed amount £10,000**

### **Community Support and integration**

A proportion of this funding will be spent on supporting the guests to integrate into Winchester's community across the district. As we identify future needs, this will enable the council to procure bespoke services to support the guests and hosts. The resettlement officers will be key in identifying the fundamental support needs in their assessments and liaising with the community's team to decide how best to deliver these.

The Communities team have initially identified the need for a Ukrainian Community Liaison officer to work 10 hours a week to facilitate the Community Hub and liaise between all the networks that are supporting the Ukrainian guests. The post will also help to develop and ascertain future support needs.

In order to provide integration support in the district for our Ukrainian guests we require the recruitment of one Ukrainian Community Engagement Officer (Ukrainian speaking).

The officer's primary role will be to ensure accessibility to council and other critical services via the provision of a support hub (centrally and at other locations within the district for example in our market towns). Ensuring that families can access community organisations and agencies who can provide longer term assistance and transitioning to independence.

The role will also be required to work across the district engaging with a range of stakeholders: businesses, voluntary organisations, parish councils etc to organise activities/drop-ins/social events for integration in order to provide our guests with maximum exposure to social interaction with local groups. The officer will work with our Economy team in order strengthen and create links to local employers in order to raise awareness of employment opportunities within the district.

The officer will also be required to work alongside the housing team in order to maximise the guests support and smooth transition including their independence in the district.

It is proposed to recruit a part time administrator to support both Housing and Communities team to collate and administer data and performance information, to monitor activity and budget commitments and to prepare regular reports to support future review and decision making

### Summary of Spending Plan

Activity	Spend
Recruits 3 FTE housing option/resettlement officers on a 12 month contract	£120,000
Emergency Accommodation costs	£392,000
Translation Costs	£37,000
Homeless Prevention Fund	£50,000
Mental health wellbeing support and training for staff	£10,000
Recruit temporary Liaison Officer for the support hub – June 2022 (initial 4 week period with the provision to extend for another 6 weeks until the permanent post is established )	£8,000
Recruits 1 FTE officer on a 12 month contract	£45,000
Translation costs (materials)	£2,000
Interpretation costs	£10,000
Central hub x 12	£7,000
Outreach hub (in 5 locations)	£7,000
Community integration and cultural district events	£10,000
CVS voluntary sector community support work	£10,000
Recruit 0.6 .06 FTE officer on a 12 month contract	<b>£19,000</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£727,000</b>

#### 17 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 18 This is an urgent response to the war in Ukraine and the council needs to retain flexibility on how the funding is allocated to be able to respond to change in need.
- 19 Consideration has been given to commissioning of services / activities however, given the urgency and nature of the provision we feel that there isn't the timeframe to undertake this within the timescales.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:-

Previous Committee Reports:-

[BHP004, PREEVNTING HOMELESSNESS & ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY & ACTION PLAN 18 JUNE 2019](#)

[BHP019 HRA WELFARE FUND AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTING GRANT SPENDING PLANS 22 June 2021.](#)

Other Background Documents:-

None

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1- Equality Impact Assessment