

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Equalities, Community Safety and Human Rights Committee

## Agenda Item 18

**Subject:** Update on Brighton & Hove support to refugees and asylum seekers

**Date of meeting:** 13<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Report of:** Executive Director of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities

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**Ward(s) affected:** All

**For general release**

### 1. Purpose of the report and policy context

- 1.1 The report provides an update to the Equalities, Community Safety and Human Rights Committee on Brighton & Hove's support to refugees and asylum seekers in the city arriving through a range of pathways. These include via national government schemes: the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Programme, Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme, and Hong Kong British National Overseas Programme. It also includes Afghan households arriving from Bridging Hotels in other parts of UK, and asylum seekers placed by the Home Office in dispersed accommodation (houses) and/or initial contingency accommodation (hotels) in the city. The report builds on the detail provided to [the Tourism, Equalities, Communities and Culture committee 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022](#) which includes background to many of these programmes.
- 1.2 The report gives detail about the income and expenditure to date on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- 1.3 The report outlines the plan to re-procure support services for refugees using central government funding. See section 6 of the report.
- 1.4 The report updates committee on the agreed priorities for the city to work on to improve the welcome and integration of refugees and migrants to the city, seeking to work holistically and collaboratively despite the many channels of migration. Appendix 2.
- 1.5 This report does not cover Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) under the care of the local authority, former UASC care leavers nor the arrangements related to the hotel accommodation in the city which has

been used by the Home Office as overflow contingency accommodation for UASC.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Committee notes the council and its partners' work between September 2022 and September 2023 related to refugees and asylum seekers and developments in central government policy and practice over this period.
- 2.2 That Committee notes the Homes for Ukraine funding and expenditure to date as detailed in paragraph 3.10.
- 2.3 That Committee notes the steps being undertaken to secure City of Sanctuary re-accreditation in 2025 in accordance with the Council Plan.
- 2.4 That committee approves the re-procurement of refugee support services as outlined in section 6 of the report and delegates authority to the Executive Director for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities to take all steps necessary or incidental to undertake this re-procurement and to award the contract.

## **3. Context and Background Information – Homes for Ukraine Programme**

- 3.1 The UK government launched the Homes for Ukraine Scheme on 14 March 2022. Since then, over 100,000 Ukrainian refugees have arrived in the UK.
- 3.2 The city's response is coordinated by the council's Communities, Equality and Third Sector Team (CETS) through the work of the Ukraine Programme coordinator and an agreed governance structure involving other statutory agencies and partners from the community and voluntary sectors as well as community representatives.
- 3.3 The main elements of the programme and its mobilization were set out in the TECC committee report 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022. The Ukrainian refugees covered by the programme have three years right to remain, the right to work, study and access public funds, for example, a care assessment, statutory homeless duty, benefits and a pension.

### **Homes for Ukraine Programme - Policy Developments**

- 3.4 In December 2022, the government announced the following updates to the programme:
  - The per capita tariff to Local Authorities was reduced from £10,500 to £5,900 for all new arrivals from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023.
  - The £350 'thank you' payments for hosts were extended from 12 months to a maximum duration of two years. This means that guests who may not yet be ready to move into independent accommodation, will be able stay in sponsorship for longer with an existing or new host.
  - The minimum 'thank you' payment for hosts was increased from £350 per month to £500 per month, once a guest has been in the UK for 12 months. This additional support is aimed at helping existing hosts to

continue with their sponsorship as well as new hosts who come forward to offer a home to a Ukrainian family, including those rematching with guests already in the country.

- Local Authorities will continue to receive separate funding in 2023/24 for the Ukraine Education tariff under the terms previous set (a per child tariff of £3,000 for early years, £6,580 for primary and £8,755 for secondary calculated on a pro-rata basis).
- Local Authorities were allowed to roll forward any remaining 2022/23 funding to 2023/24.

## Homes for Ukraine Programme – Operational Update

### 3.5 Arrival numbers and trends

The population of Ukrainians who had arrived in Brighton & Hove on the Homes for Ukraine scheme and who were still resident in the city at the end of August 2023 stood at 305 including 78 children aged 1- 18 years. They comprised 201 households sponsored by 200 local hosts. After the initial three months of high arrivals (April – June 2022), the numbers have reduced progressively, mirroring the national picture. In Quarter 1 of 2023/4 we had 20 arrivals. It is anticipated that numbers will fall to an average of 5 people arriving per month.

Table 1: Homes for Ukraine number of guests arriving per month (March 2022-July 2023).



In addition to Homes for Ukraine arrivals, we are aware of a small number of arrivals through the Ukrainian Family Scheme and the Ukraine Visa Extension scheme. The government does not provide funding for Ukrainians who are here under these schemes. However, most of our services are open to all Ukrainians.

### 3.6 Homes for Ukraine - Council Response

- The **Community Hub** (former Covid-19 Response Hub) has been an essential part of the council's support to Ukrainian refugees, acting as first point of contact for Ukrainian refugees and their hosts. The Hub fulfils a 'welcome' role and ensures that guests are safe through property checks and checks on prospective hosts. It also processes 'welcome' and 'thank you' payments for guests and hosts respectively and provides general advice and guidance on various welfare matters. The Community Hub runs a weekly drop-in service for guests at Jubilee Library. Following a review of its service in May 2023, it has adopted a new leaner staffing structure and will continue to work closely with other services to support Ukrainian refugees. There is a dedicated email address for guests and hosts – [ukrainiansupport@brighton-hovegov.uk](mailto:ukrainiansupport@brighton-hovegov.uk) and webpages tailored for guests and host: [Supporting the Ukrainian humanitarian crisis \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/supporting-the-ukrainian-humanitarian-crisis)

The **Ukrainian Housing Needs Team** provides advice on housing sustainment and move-on including to the Private Rented Sector. So far, the team has processed 160 referrals including 138 from Homes for Ukraine, 11 from the Ukrainian Family Scheme, 3 from the Ukraine Visa Extension scheme and 8 not related to any Scheme.

### 3.7 Other council support funded by Homes for Ukraine programme include:

- Additional capacity in council's Front Door for Families to provide private fostering support to 4 Ukrainian males (ages 16-18) across 4 households. Two of these have turned 18 and remain with host families, 1 has moved to Poland.
- ESOL teacher training programme to increase the number of ESOL teachers in Brighton and Hove
- Additional capacity in Family Hubs with a family coaching service to support Ukrainian families with additional support requirements.
- Funded Libraries Service to run a refugee inclusion programme at Jubilee library.
- Additional capacity in our Ethnic Minority Achievement Service (EMAS) which provide support to schools with bilingual children to support the increased number of Ukrainian children in schools.
- Covering additional Home to Schools Transport costs for eligible Ukrainian refugee children
- Care Link Plus with their support for the council's home inspector team recruited and trained to carry out the host property checks.

### 3.8 Homes for Ukraine Funded Third Sector Support

Alongside the deployment of in-house services, the council has been working with community and voluntary sector (CVS) partners. In 2022-23, the council spent £317,305 on projects delivered by CVS partners. These included:

- The Network of International Women: for a weekly drop-in at All Saints Church in Hove allowing guests and hosts to access to a wide range of services from other agencies (Stand for Ukraine, DWP, Council's Ukrainian Housing Needs Team, Together Co)
- The Brighton and Hove Chamber of Commerce: for job-matching support
- The Trust for Developing Communities: for their Multicultural Employability Support Hub
- Sussex Interpreting Service and Together Co for: interpreting and translation support for agencies and social subscribing
- Hummingbird: for their global social club
- Latest Group CIC: for the 1<sup>st</sup> Ukraine International Film Festival in Brighton
- The Launchpad Collective: for job coaching and mentoring
- University of Sussex: for transport support for English learners
- Phoenix Therapy Practice: for one-to-one and group counselling provision
- Brighton Swimming Centre and Brighton Tennis club: for sports activities
- Best Foot Music: for community music events
- VYD – CIC: for Youth engagement and ESOL through Football
- Sussex Refugee Migrant Self-help Group: for a Refugee Valentine Event

Their contribution to our city's support for Ukrainian and other refugees has been invaluable.

To ensure that the programme was being informed by the needs and experiences of the Ukrainian refugees in December 2022, the council conducted a survey into the needs and concerns of the Ukrainian refugees. Based on the findings and the insights from our regular engagement with our delivery partners seven key priorities were identified and used to inform a new grants scheme that was successfully launched in March 2023.

In total, £814,129 was awarded in grants to 16 local CVS organisations, including newly formed Ukrainian community groups, for delivery of services for Ukrainian and other refugees for 15 months from July 2023 (Appendix 1 for more details).

All voluntary sector partners meet monthly through a community support and integration meeting where progress updates are given on funded projects. The meeting is an opportunity to share good practice and community intelligence and promote joined-up working.

### **3.9 Homes for Ukraine Support for Hosts**

The programme has put in place support activities for hosts in the form of online training about hosting and conflict mediation. In addition, the Community Hub runs a drop-in at Jubilee Library for existing and prospective hosts.

In recognition of the increase in the costs of living all hosts were granted a £400 one-off payment for the winter period in the last financial year (November 2022 to February 2023).

In addition, the programme offered an additional payment of £600 to all hosts who committed to keeping their guests for a full twelve-month period, rather than the 6 months originally requested by central government. In June 2023 the Programme conducted a survey of current hosts, as part of the campaign to increase expressions of interests for hosting. A key finding was that more financial support could help maintain existing sponsorships and attract new ones. From July 2023, all hosts in Brighton and Hove receive an uplifted “thank you” payment of £750 per month.

### **3.10 Homes for Ukraine Income and Expenditure**

Below is a summary of spend and commitments from the Homes for Ukraine budget as at end August 2023. The council has received £5,295,116 from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUCH) for this work. This is made of the per head tariff (£10,500 for all arrivals until 31<sup>st</sup> January, reduced to £5,900 on arrivals from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2023). The total grant amount given here does not include the education tariff nor the ‘thank you’ payments made to hosts. Education settings where Ukrainian children have been enrolled have received a per head tariff to help children settle. The council is reimbursed for thank you payments up to the minimum rates set by government.

The total actual expenditure in 2022/23 was £1.255 million and the forecast for 2023/24 is £3.0111 million. More details in table 2 below:

The programme has three main expenditure areas:

- Direct and indirect programme staffing costs: which pay for all council staff involved in delivery: coordination, finance, communication, administration, Community Hub, Ukrainian Housing Needs Team and other in-house services (see paragraph 3.7 above).
- Programme operational costs (council & third parties) which cover all non-staff costs such as additional one-off payments and increase in monthly thank you payment for hosts, home visits, drop-ins, transport costs, the Private Rented Access scheme and services provided by external bodies like the post office who process payments to guests.
- Programme operational costs (third parties): which cover the grants scheme for third party delivery partners.

Table 2

	<b>22/23 Actual (£000)</b>	<b>23/24 Forecast (£000)</b>	<b>Actual (£000) to 31/08/2023</b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
HFU grant	5,295	816	
HFU grant carry forward	0	4,040	
<b>Total income</b>	<b>5,295</b>	<b>4,856</b>	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Direct and indirect programme staffing costs	661	832	373
Programme operational costs (council)	173	1214	202
Programme operational costs (external services and grants to CVS)	421	965	374
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,255</b>	<b>3,011</b>	<b>949</b>
<b>Grant Remaining</b>	<b>4,040</b>	<b>1,845</b>	

#### **4 Afghan Resettlement Programmes – the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS)**

4.1 'Refugee resettlement' is the process by which the UK government agrees to receive and support the integration of refugees into the UK within funded and managed programmes. These programmes differ from the Homes for Ukraine programme because, on arrival, the beneficiaries are granted Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK (rather than the 3 year visas of the Homes for Ukraine arrivals). Also, the model is - in theory and historically-

based upon local authorities resettling refugees on arrival into their own self-contained private rental properties.

- 4.2 In the months following the withdrawal of Western powers from Afghanistan in August 2021, and the subsequent air evacuation of 15,000 Afghans from Kabul under Operation Pitting, the government set up two resettlement programmes for Afghan citizens – the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) which resettles Afghans who were working with British forces in Afghanistan and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) which provides protection to others at risk in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.
- 4.3 Given the speed and volume of arrivals, the ARAP and ACRS Afghan households were accommodated by central government in ‘bridging’ hotels around the UK, pending their resettlement in self-contained properties to be provided within the private rented sector through local authorities. The bridging hotel arrangements ended on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023.
- 4.4 There were no bridging hotels in Brighton & Hove but the city has welcomed 22 households (83 individuals) on the Afghan programmes, some originally from bridging hotels and some who had been accepted on Masters courses at the University of Sussex in 2021 and could not return to Afghanistan.
- 4.5 Integration funding is provided to local authorities, for children’s education and for health care over a three-year period per person.
- 4.6 Homes for Afghans have, to date, been found in the private rental sector and the provision of casework support has been commissioned from local refugee charity Voices in Exile. This approach has been in place since 2015 when the local authority started receiving Syrian refugees on the Vulnerable Person’s Resettlement Scheme (replaced in 2021 with the UK Resettlement Scheme – see section 4).
- 4.7 In the months running up to the closure of the bridging hotels, the government introduced new measures and funding arrangements to encourage Afghans to find their own accommodation in the private rental sector and to facilitate local authorities to provide accommodation for those being evicted from the hotels. Afghans on the ACRS and ARAP who can evidence that they were in bridging hotels can present to any local authority up to August 2025 and extra funding can be accessed to place them in emergency accommodation and assist them into the private rental sector. One family has so far been placed by Brighton & Hove in an emergency placement under these arrangements.
- 4.8 Using the per head integration tariff from the ARAP and ACRS along with new government funding to support the acquisition of accommodation for people from the bridging hotels, the council is establishing a new Private Rented Sector scheme, building on the success of the Home for Ukraine Housing Needs team’s learning and work. This will provide dedicated specialist knowledge and resource in housing services to support refugees arriving via government refugee schemes into the private rented sector.



4.9 National government has also provided funding to councils under the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) to enable the part purchase of properties specifically for this cohort. Brighton & Hove City Council has received two tranches of funding. LAHF1 has provided £910,289 for the part purchase of three 4+ bed properties for larger Afghan families coming from bridging hotels. LAHF2 is providing a further £1.87 million for the part purchase of 10 smaller properties of which five will be allocated to Afghan beneficiaries. The others will become temporary accommodation stock. The remaining costs of purchasing these properties will be funded through council borrowing, paid for from the rental income stream. These properties will remain part of the councils housing stock when no longer required for resettlement.

4.10 Thousands more Afghans entitled to evacuation from the region are still waiting to be brought to the UK from Pakistan and it is not yet clear when this will take place.

## **5 UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) and support for all resettled refugees**

5.1 The UK Resettlement Scheme, launched in April 2021 has had a slow start nationally and locally due to the urgency of the need to accommodate those arriving on the ACRS and ARAP. Under this scheme, properties are sourced by local authorities and submitted to central government for allocation from a large pool of exceptionally vulnerable households with a resettlement need from across the world. Brighton & Hove city council remains committed to participating in the UKRS. So far three Syrian families have arrived in the city on this scheme.

## **6 Support Services for Resettled Refugees**

- 6.1 The council has commissioned specialist casework support for resettled refugees since 2015 from local charity Voices in Exile (ViE). The service provided is holistic, starting with preparing properties for new arrivals, welcoming refugees into their new homes followed by an intensive period of support to help them access services in the city. Casework support continues over the three-year period that the families are on the resettlement scheme, moving them to independence and self-sufficiency by year 3. Service provision from ViE has been excellent and has been adaptable and flexible to the ever and sudden evolvement of new government resettlement programmes, starting with the VPRS, then the UK resettlement scheme and the recent ARAP and ACRS.
- 6.2 The current contract expires 1<sup>st</sup> October 2024 and has an annual value of circa £273,000 with moderate in year variations depending on number of arrivals.
- 6.2 Due to the value and duration of the current contract the council is legally obliged to tender for the casework services. The current provider has been informed of this necessity.

- 6.3 Officers are consulting with refugees who arrived on previous programmes, other stakeholders and local authority peers (through the City of Sanctuary local authority network) to inform the tender.
- 6.4 The recommended route to market is competitive procedure with negotiation. This is deemed the optimal procurement route as it gives the council the flexibility of having stages to the tender process and ensuring that the service requirements are aligned to any changing needs.

## **7 Hong Kong Welcome Scheme**

7.1 A new immigration route opened on 31 January 2021, providing British National (Overseas) (BN(O)) status holders from Hong Kong and their dependants with the opportunity to come to the UK to live, study and work, on a pathway to citizenship. This is not a refugee resettlement programme as such, though local authorities have received some government funding to assist the newly arriving Hong Kongers. This is referred to as the Hong Kong UK Welcome Programme.

7.2 The council is working closely with neighbouring authorities to understand the extent of immigration from Hong Kong and the needs of the new arrivals. Officers are engaged with the community group formed from the Hong Kong diaspora. Current estimates are that over 2000 Hong Kongers have arrived in the Greater Brighton area.

7.3 Hong Kong BN(O)s are permitted to work and study in the UK but do not have access to benefits. There is additional funding from English Language tuition (ESOL) and to cover costs of accommodating and supporting those who may become destitute. To date research into the Hong Kongers arriving in the UK indicates that the new arrivals have financial resources and can rent or purchase properties.

7.4 The city council has used 2022 – 23 Hong Kong Welcome funds of £21,923 to support the development of the local diaspora Hong Kongers in Brighton group, including events and activities and to fund English Conversation clubs and resilience training delivered through the Trust for Developing Communities.

## **8 Sudan crisis**

8.1 Between 25th and 2nd May 2023, the British government evacuated around 2200 British nationals and people with permission to live in the UK from Khartoum in response to the deteriorating security situation in Sudan.

8.2 Brighton & Hove has a large Sudanese community, so it is not surprising that a number of the evacuated households made their way to join this community here in the city.

8.3 There is no way of knowing exactly how many Sudanese newcomers arrived in Brighton & Hove. However, information from the Sudanese diaspora, community and voluntary sector groups and the numbers of those

presenting to the council would indicate that 7-10 households arrived in the city in the days following evacuation from Sudan. Most of these had nowhere to live.

- 8.4 There was a cross council response to supporting these newcomers including placements in emergency housing, the involvement of children's social care to advise and the issuing of emergency vouchers and items through the Local Discretionary Social Fund. Officers also liaised closely with the Sudanese community group and attended a welcome event for the new arrivals.
- 8.5 It is important that our future planning around international migration considers the possibility of unexpected and non-programmed arrivals of vulnerable people from overseas such as that described above. In this case the arrivals were largely British nationals or their dependents (rather than refugees as such) but this still raised challenges with regard to access to benefits (due to the Habitual Residency Test which was later lifted for this group) and the disorientation and trauma of people being forced to flee a dangerous and traumatic situation.

## **9 Asylum Seekers**

- 9.1 Many thousands of asylum seekers are housed in hotels across the UK by government contractors as a form of 'contingency' or emergency accommodation because there is not enough longer-term accommodation (known as 'dispersal accommodation'). Clearsprings ReadyHomes is the accommodation provider contracted by the Home Office. SBHL is sub-contracted by CRH to managed the hotels.
- 9.2 There are currently two contingency hotels for asylum seekers in the city. As of end of August one hotel housed 53 single men and the other hotel housed 85 people who are either in family groups or are single women. The family hotel opened in October 2021 and the hotel for single men opened in October 2022. Full board meals are supplied, and the asylum seekers receive £9 per head per week. The children are enrolled in school and all of the hotel residents are registered with a GP. The key challenge is the length of time that the asylum seekers have had to live in the hotel.
- 9.3 Council officers chair monthly asylum hotel meetings with all the stakeholders, including the Home Office, Clearsprings, Migrant Help and other statutory services, as well as Sanctuary on Sea who represent the wider community and voluntary sector at the meetings to raise and resolve issues faced by the residents.
- 9.4 Clearsprings Ready Homes (CRH) also provides 67 bedspaces of dispersal accommodation in Brighton and Hove in 12 properties which are mostly Houses of Multiple Occupancy (HMOs) for adult men.
- 9.5 The Home Office has been seeking to increase the estate of self-contained accommodation available for asylum seekers in the South East, thereby

reducing the need for hotel accommodation as well as spreading the accommodation more equitably around the UK. However the shortage of affordable housing in Brighton and Hove has led to CRH being unable to find more than a handful of new properties in the city over the past 12 months. A small number of properties have also been discontinued with the result that the total number of bedspaces has been almost static over the past 12 months.

- 9.6 An un-ringfenced one off payment of £3,500 is made to local authorities by the Home Office for each new bedspace acquired by CRH. So far only four such payments have been made (total £14,000).
- 9.7 In addition to this, a one-off payment of £250 per asylum seeker placed in the area at 27<sup>th</sup> March 2022 (£45,250) was made to the council. This was increased by the government to a one-off payment of £750 for every asylum seeker placed in the area at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 (£162,000).
- 9.8 The £45,250 was used to fund specific items requested by the local migrant support groups providing help on the ground to the hotel residents, for example: hire of storage units for donations, room hire at a local church for 'Sanctuary' sessions and English language classes for hotel residents, school uniforms and sun cream which is not provided by the Home Office nor their contractors.
- 9.9 Of the £162,000, £60,000 has been allocated to assist the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service's work in schools to settle and support the children who live at the hotels. The intention is for the remaining funding to be used to further support the community and voluntary sector through the creation of a small grants programme.
- 9.10 CVS groups are well networked through regular meetings (chaired by Sanctuary on Sea) which have continued since they were originally set up to co-ordinate the migrant sector response to Covid. National charity Migrant Help provide remote advice to asylum seekers in dispersal and hotel accommodation via a multilingual helpline and website, under a national Home Office contract.
- 9.11 Those who have been granted asylum are eligible to work, claim benefits and to homelessness assistance under the same rules as any other resident. A key challenge for the council and the CVS is that only 28 days' notice is given between the Home Office notifying a person of its decision and the cessation of Home Office accommodation and support. This creates challenges for newly recognized refugees and those supporting them in finding suitable, available affordable accommodation quickly.
- 9.12 The government has committed to reducing the large backlog of asylum applications through the implementation of a Streamlined Asylum Process (SAP) for certain nationalities. This has led to a recent increase in the serving of positive asylum decisions i.e. grants of refugee status. This is a positive development in that those affected can move on with the process of settling in the UK. However, it has also lead to an increase in asylum

support cessations from the hotels and the dispersal properties at short notice and pressure for both the migrant support groups and the council's homelessness prevention response.

- 9.13 As well as the monthly multiagency meeting specifically for the asylum seeker contingency (hotel) accommodation, a separate meeting will focus on post decision move-on for all asylum seekers when it meets in October 2023.

## **10 Co-ordination and Planning around Migration**

- 10.1 This area of social policy and local government business is rapidly changing. Brighton & Hove's response needs to be flexible and joined up across the city council and other statutory and voluntary sector stakeholders and take a holistic approach despite the many channels of migration. In 2022 the council agreed a set of priorities for the council with partners to ensure that the local system was focused on the salient priorities and working as collaboratively and efficiently as possible. Appendix 2 sets out the priorities, the work over the last 12 months and planned activity.
- 10.2 An upcoming challenge for all local authorities will be the implementation of the Illegal Migration Act which will change the way that migrants are treated if they enter the UK illegally, removing their right to seek asylum. Local authorities across the UK are considering the implications of this, especially if the government is unable to achieve its stated ambition of either detaining or removing those who enter the country illegally. This may lead to there being a new population of migrants whose status in the UK is undetermined and who will have no route towards becoming regularized.

## **11 City of Sanctuary Reaccreditation**

- 11.1 The achievement of Brighton & Hove's reaccreditation as a City of Sanctuary is stated in the Council Plan 2023 – 27. The reaccreditation process provides a useful [framework](#) by which the local authority's work in this area can be assessed and supported by peers.
- 11.2 We will be working collaboratively with the local City of Sanctuary group (Sanctuary on Sea) on the actions required to achieve our reaccreditation as a city of sanctuary. The process and timeline for this work will be agreed by the end of 2023. It is anticipated that our application for reaccreditation will be submitted to the national City of Sanctuary body by the end of 2024.

## **12 Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

No other options were considered.

## **13 Community engagement and consultation**

The priorities have been identified by officers based on numerous meetings with community partners and the questions and queries which arise during the quarterly Refugee & Migrant Forum meetings.

The Homes for Ukraine Community Support and Integration Workstream has met monthly and engages directly with representatives from the Stand for Ukraine group who have been able to bring the concerns arising in the community for discussion.

#### **14 Financial implications**

The financial implications and funding arrangements for refugees and asylum seekers are within the body of the report. The government funds different groups of refugees in different ways, some year by year, some for three years and some for five years. Therefore, the service needs to ensure effective monitoring of costs against grant funding and plan to enable a smooth transition once grant sources end, to minimize any pressure on council budgets.

Members will be aware that there are many competing demands for affordable rented housing in the city which is currently in short supply and that wider use may potentially impact on other council budgets such as homelessness unless the supply of affordable housing increases accordingly.

Name of finance officer consulted: Monica Brooks      Date consulted  
28/9/23:

#### **15 Legal implications**

This Committee discharges the Council's functions relating to equalities, neighbourhoods, community development and the third sector. Its status as the delegated body for (amongst other things) coordinating the Council's approach to equalities as well as all matters relating to community safety and inclusion make it the proper body for considering this report.

Name of lawyer consulted: Victoria Simpson      Date consulted 27.09.2023.

#### **16 Equalities implications**

- 16.1 The work described in this report describes the holistic approach taken across the city to advance equality of opportunity for newcomers. The primary focus of the City of Sanctuary approach is the promotion of good relations between sanctuary seekers and longstanding communities.
- 16.2 The council continues to promote a nuanced and intersectional understanding of the needs of newcomers who may have protected characteristics alongside their country of birth, nationality or first language.

#### **17 Public health implications:**

Work to promote the inclusion of refugees, asylum seekers and other newcomers to the area benefits public health by increasing trust and confidence and encouraging engagement with NHS and other health services.

### **18 Social Value and procurement implications:**

The services fall within the ambit of the 'Light Touch Regime' of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The total contract value (when known) is going to/likely to exceed the relevant threshold of £663,540. Given this, the Services must be advertised to market.

The council's Contract Standing Orders (CSOs) will also apply.

### **Appendices**

1. Homes for Ukraine funding
2. Update on refugee and migrant development activity 2022/23

