

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Tourism, Equalities, Communities and Culture Committee

## Agenda Item 26

**Subject:** Brighton & Hove's response to refugees and asylum seekers

**Date of meeting:** 15<sup>th</sup> September 2022

**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 updates the Tourism, Equalities, Communities and Culture Committee on the Brighton & Hove response to the government's national schemes to receive refugees, including those from Ukraine, and to support immigration from Hong Kong. The report also updates members of the committee on the local response to asylum seekers placed in the city by the Home Office and unaccompanied asylum seeking children cared for by the council.
- 1.2 The report gives detail about the income and expenditure to date on the Homes for Ukraine scheme.
- 1.3 The report is presented to Committee to fulfill the request of the Notice of Motion '*Solidarity with refugees*' to Full Council on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2022 in which the council restated its ongoing commitment to support refugees and asylum seekers. It was also requested that the TECC committee should '*receive regular reports, so residents and councillors remain informed of ongoing work to support all refugees, as well as any capacity and resource needs affecting the local authority*'.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That the Tourism, Equalities, Communities and Culture Committee notes the council's work related to refugees and asylum seekers.

- 2.2 That the Tourism, Equalities, Communities and Culture Committee notes the Homes for Ukraine funding received by the council to date and its expenditure as detailed in paragraph 3.17 and the detailed breakdown at Appendix One.
- 2.3 That the Tourism, Equalities, Communities and Culture Committee notes the priorities for the council's support of refugees and asylum seekers (paragraph 3.60) for the coming year.
- 2.4 That the Tourism, Equalities Communities & Culture Committee recommends that the Policy & Resources Committee notes the Homes for Ukraine funding received and expenditure defrayed to date to fulfil the obligations placed on local authorities by the government's Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme.
- 2.5 That the Tourism, Equalities Communities & Culture Committee recommends that the Policy & Resources Committee notes the priorities for the council's support of refugees and asylum seekers for the coming year as set out in the report.
- 2.6 That the Tourism, Equalities Communities & Culture Committee recommends that the Policy & Resources Committee gives delegated authority to the Executive Director Housing, Neighbourhoods & Communities, in consultation with the Chief Finance Officer, to defray unallocated current and future resources in accordance with the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme requirements and conditions and to fulfil the council's obligations under the scheme.

### **3. Context and background information**

#### **Ukraine**

- 3.1 In mid-March, the government launched its Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme. This gave Ukrainians the right to apply for a visa if they have a named eligible sponsor (or host) who will provide accommodation in the UK. Committee will note that updates on this scheme have previously been provided by a written briefing to all members dated 29<sup>th</sup> July as well as verbal updates at Policy and Resources Committee on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and 12<sup>th</sup> May 2022.
- 3.2 The Ukrainian refugees covered by the scheme have 3 years right to remain, the right to live, work and study and to access public funds, for example, a care assessment, statutory homeless duty, benefits, a pension.
- 3.3 The original/initial matches between sponsor and refugee are made privately and central government carries out checks on the individuals concerned. Local councils have no role in the initial matching and none of the obligations on local authorities influence the government's decision on granting a visa to Ukrainians through the scheme. The council is informed about hosts and guests on the Homes for Ukraine scheme through a government portal

3.4. Ukrainians can also apply to enter the UK on the Ukraine Family Scheme if they have pre-existing family in the UK. Local authorities are not informed about arrivals in their area on the Family Visa Scheme. However staff developing services for Ukrainians are mindful of the needs of this additional population of new arrivals, whose size is unknown.

3.5 Local authorities have the following obligations in the scheme:

- Ensure the hosts have Basic or Enhanced DBS checks
- Carry out at least one in-person visit to the host property for a property and welfare check
- Pay a one-off £200 subsistence payment to each guest (all ages)
- Pay a monthly optional £350 'thank you' payment to the host for up to 12 months.
- Assist the refugees to access education, benefits and encourage community integration

3.6 Local authorities receive funding to fulfil their obligations:

- One-off un-ringfenced payment of £10,500 per guest (all ages with the exception of new born babies). The £200 subsistence payment comes from this funding
- Education costs: one-off per child/young person of £3,000 at early years, £6,580 primary age and £8,755 at secondary age. These tariffs include support for children with special educational needs and disabilities.
- Ringfenced funding for the £350 thank you payments to hosts.

3.7 The purpose of the Homes for Ukraine tariff grant of £10,500 per head is to support local authorities to provide wrap-around support to individuals and families to rebuild their lives and fully integrate into communities. Government has confirmed funding for one year only.

3.8 The council has mobilized and re-orientated the community hub established during the Covid pandemic to provide both an inward and outward point of contact for the hosts on the Homes for Ukraine scheme as well as any Ukrainian arriving in the city, regardless of their route into the country. The hub provides information, advice, and referral to other services. It also provides valuable community intelligence to the rest of the programme about the emerging needs of the Ukrainians. The hub staff have built up trusted relationship with the majority of guests and the hosts on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

3.9 The community response to the arrival of Ukrainians started promptly as soon as the first arrivals were in the city. The Network of International Women and the nascent Stand for Ukraine group set up weekly drop-in sessions at All Saints Church in Hove for guests and hosts, allowing access to a wide range of services who also attend these sessions. This built on the valuable relationships already formed to provide a social space for the asylum seeker residents of the hotel (see below).

- 3.10 Apart from the sessions at All Saints, many and varied initiatives are underway to support the Ukrainians arriving in the city. There is strong collaboration between services supporting refugees and other newcomers towards education and employment, This was evidenced at a recent employability event held at Brighton Job Centre, attended by council teams, Brighton Chambers of Commerce, the voluntary sector and many employers and providers. This was extremely well attended with around 160 jobseekers of whom around 120 were Ukrainian.12 hiring employers promoted 43 vacancies and 121 interviews took place with 54 progressions towards employment.
- 3.11 By the end of the summer term, the vast majority of Ukrainian children arriving in the city had started school and were being supported when needed by the city’s Ethnic Minority Achievement Service.
- 3.12 A multi – agency operational group meets fortnightly including a range of council departments, the DWP, Sussex Police, East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and the Third Sector. A number of workstreams feed into this operational group including: Housing sustainment, employment and benefit support, access to education, unaccompanied minors, community tensions and safeguarding, access to health and public health.
- 3.13 There is a fortnightly community support and integration workstream which brings the local third sector together with representatives from the Ukrainian community, the community hub and Communities, Equality and Third Sector team to co-ordinate the wider third sector response in partnership with the council. Sanctuary on Sea are present at this meeting to ensure join-up with the established refugee support sector.
- 3.14 Council officers including public health staff attend a range of NHS meetings where access to health care for refugees and asylum seekers – including those from Ukraine – are discussed.
- 3.15 The end of the 6 month initial hosting period on the Homes for Ukraine Scheme presents a challenge for all local authorities. As outlined in Appendix 1, resource has been allocated towards homelessness prevention staff and an initial fund to be spent to assist, when needed, Ukrainians to enter the private rental sector if no other solution (such as rematching with a second host) can be found.

**3.16 Numbers as at 26/8/2022, taken from the government ‘Foundry’ system**

Total number of registered hosts in Brighton & Hove	281
Number of hosts with guests who have arrived	201
Number of guests who have arrived	385 (246 adults and 139 children)

Age ranges of children who have arrived	1-4 = 18 5-11 = 62 12-15 = 35 16-18 = 24
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### Current income and expenditure on Homes for Ukraine to date

3.17 Below is a summary of spending commitments from the Homes for Ukraine budget as at 22/08/2022 with further detail in Appendix One. These figures exclude the 'thank you' payments made to hosts which are reimbursed to local authorities in addition to the per head tariff payments. Funding requests have been agreed since the start of the project at the fortnightly Homes for Ukraine Strategy group chaired by the Executive Director of Housing, Neighbourhoods and Communities. The council has received (as detailed in paragraph 3.6 above) £2,835,000 from the Home Office so far for this scheme. This is the per head tariff payment for the first 270 guests who arrived in the city before the end of June 2022.

3.18 Plans are being worked up to use the unallocated spend in a range of ways which will benefit all those who have had to seek sanctuary in the city including, for example : a programme of staff training to improve awareness and good practice in working with newcomers, improvements to the city-wide systems for co-ordinating and allocating learners to ESOL provision, possible partnerships with the local Third Sector to step up the provision of immigration legal advice. The funding may also be used to further support the Ukrainian community groups and initiatives which have been springing up as a result of the enormous resourcefulness and skills of the Ukrainians themselves as well as further support and information for hosts.

Recipient Service/organisation	Funding spent or allocated £	Explanation - see more detail in Appendix One
Per head payments to guests and property check costs	80,500	£200 welcome payments, DBS checks, property checks
Brighton & Hove City Council staffing and spending directly through council services	1,180,187	See detail in Appendix One
Funding to Third Sector	167,294	See detail in Appendix one
<b>Total funds allocated</b>	<b>1,427,981</b>	
<b>Grant funding to Date</b>	<b>2,835,000</b>	Payments for first 270 guests
<b>Yet to be allocated</b>	<b>1,407,019</b>	

### Other managed and funded refugee and migration programmes

3.19 'Refugee resettlement' refers to the managed and funded process by which refugees, usually identified by the United Nations High Commissioner for

Refugees (UNHCR) are given permission to enter the UK, transported and settled in local authority areas. Brighton & Hove's recent history of refugee resettlement begins with the Gateway Protection Programme in 2006 when a group of mostly Oromo refugees from East Africa settled in the city. More recently resettled refugees have arrived on the Vulnerable Person's resettlement scheme (VPRS) for those fleeing Syria, the new UK Resettlement Scheme (UKRS) and the two schemes set up to resettle Afghans.

- 3.20 Since 2015 the council has commissioned local charity Voices in Exile to deliver a programme of support to resettled refugees from Syria and Afghanistan. Resettled refugees are eligible to work, claim benefits and can settle indefinitely in the UK, eventually being eligible for British Citizenship.
- 3.21 Housing for the above programmes has been sourced from the private rental sector. In many cases sympathetic private landlords have offered affordable rents and therefore a sustainable home in the city. When this has not been possible, discretionary housing payments have been made and/or the refugee resettlement budget has made up the shortfall when needed.

### **Syria**

- 3.22 Twenty one vulnerable Syrian households (around 80 individuals) arrived in the city on the VPRS between 2015 and 2021. The funding package of £20,520 per head (tapering off over 5 years) has covered the support from Voices in Exile, administration of the programme, childcare, English language provision, deposits and other housing costs associated with setting the refugees up in tenancies etc as well as emergency interventions when needed. Additional funds are made available for support in schools and to the NHS for primary and secondary care.
- 3.23 A number of the families brought to Brighton & Hove under the VPRS include disabled children and/or family members with chronic health conditions or injuries sustained in the conflict in Syria, requiring a high degree of care and support from services. Exceptional costs associated with this extra support were claimed from central government.
- 3.24 The VPRS ended in 2021 and became the UK Resettlement Scheme. The funding arrangements and requirements for this scheme are almost identical to the VPRS but the difference is that the British government has undertaken to take refugees needing protection from anywhere in the world. Brighton & Hove has taken two cases through the UKRS, both Syrian families with high support needs.
- 3.25 Brighton & Hove has pledged to take two more UKRS cases in the current financial year.

### **Afghanistan**

- 3.26 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: those who have stood up for values such as democracy, women’s rights, freedom of speech, and rule of law and vulnerable people, including women and girls at risk, and members of minority groups at risk (including ethnic and religious minorities and LGBT+).

- 3.27 The funding for local authorities, for schooling and the NHS are the same as for the VPRS and the UKRS but the local authority funding is spread over a three year period, rather than the five years of the aforementioned schemes. There are also additional payments available to help secure accommodation.
- 3.28 Brighton & Hove has so far resettled twelve households on these schemes. The first three cases were the families of Masters students at the University of Sussex who were on the Chevening Scholarship programme. All the households who have arrived in the city have been transferred to Brighton & Hove from ‘bridging’ hotels in London and the South East or Birmingham. The government is now encouraging refugees in hotels to find their own accommodation in the private rental sector before receiving local authority support and one of the above families did this before the local authority accepted responsibility for supporting them under the scheme.
- 3.29 As with the VCRS and UKRS, housing has been found from the private rental sector for the Afghans and Voices in Exile have provided casework for the new arrivals. The profile of the arriving refugees has differed from the Syrian arrivals. Often (but not always) a member of the family, usually the male head of the household, has had excellent English prior to arrival in the UK. The long stays in hotels have also changed the advice and support required once people arrive in the city. There are no Afghan ‘bridging hotels’ in Brighton & Hove.
- 3.30 A letter of 27<sup>th</sup> June to local authorities from the Minister for refugees outlined the ongoing challenge for government as 12,000 Afghan citizens remain in hotels where they were placed following their evacuation. Thousands more Afghans entitled to evacuation from the region are also still waiting to be brought to the UK.
- 3.31 The council has pledged to government that it will take twelve Afghan households during 2022 – 23, of which four have already been received.

### **Hong Kong**

- 3.32 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 who are leaving their homes as a result of the actions of the Chinese government. This is referred to as the Hong Kong UK Welcome Programme.

- 3.33 The city 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 also engaging with the community group formed from the Hong Kong diaspora. Current estimates are that around 2000 Hong Kongers have arrived in the greater Brighton area.
- 3.34 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 are able to rent or purchase properties.
- 3.35 The city council has so far focused on a programme of support for entrepreneurs and start up businesses to be delivered and commissioned by the Business and IP Centre in Jubilee Library, using £11k from the above 'Welcome Programme' funds which have been distributed to local authorities via the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration.

### **Asylum seekers**

- 3.36 An asylum seeker is someone seeking protection from the British government through being recognised as a refugee under the 1951 UN Convention on Refugees. The top countries of origin for those seeking asylum in the UK during the early part of 2022 include Afghanistan, Albania, Iran, Syria and Eritrea.
- 3.37 The number of those seeking asylum in the UK (after crossing the channel or entering by other means) has been rising at a time when the Home Office accommodation and support system was already strained by the effects of the pandemic and delays in asylum determination decisions. As a result, many thousands of asylum seekers are housed in hotels as a form of emergency accommodation until longer term accommodation (known as 'dispersal accommodation') can be found for them.
- 3.38 The Home Office currently provides 67 bedspaces of dispersal accommodation in Brighton and Hove which are generally in Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) for adults. The properties are acquired and managed by Clearsprings Ready Homes who hold the Home Office contract for all asylum accommodation across London and the South East of England. Ward members have been informed confidentially about accommodation in their wards.
- 3.39 A multi-agency asylum dispersal stakeholder group which includes Clearsprings, local and national charities and other services is chaired by the city council to monitor and co-ordinate services to asylum seekers dispersed to the city.

- 3.40 The council is not provided with details of those resident in dispersal accommodation until their asylum claims have been decided and they are asked to leave the accommodation by the housing provider. Those who have been granted asylum are eligible to work, claim benefits and to homelessness assistance in the same way as any other resident. One challenge is that only 28 days notice is given between notification of a decision and the cessation of accommodation and support from the Home Office, leading to challenges for newly recognised refugees and those supporting them in finding suitable accommodation.
- 3.41 In an effort to increase the estate of self-contained accommodation available to the Home Office (thereby reducing the need for asylum seekers to live in hotels) as well as spreading the accommodation more equitably around the UK, a new policy of 'Full Dispersal' has been implemented by Government since July 2022. This means that local authorities no longer have to consent in principle to the acquisition of dispersal accommodation in their areas, although there is still a commitment on the part of the Home Office and Clearsprings to consult with the authority and local police on individual addresses before they are acquired for this purpose.
- 3.42 An un-ringfenced one off payment of £3500 will be made to local authorities for each new bedspace acquired through the 'Full dispersal' programme in their areas.
- 3.43 Whilst Brighton & Hove city council has welcomed asylum seekers since 2019, the policy of 'full dispersal' is likely to result in a stepping- up of the acquisition of properties in the city if the high cost of rental accommodation allows. This is because Government is planning to link the number of dispersal units to local population numbers across the country meaning that target numbers for the South East region will greatly increase. Officers are attending the relevant meetings and briefings on these issues convened by the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration on behalf of the Home Office. As of 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2022, no new asylum dispersal properties had been acquired in Brighton & Hove under these new "full dispersal" arrangements.
- 3.44 Separate to the dispersal accommodation and due to the stress on the system as described in 3.36 above, there is currently one contingency hotel for asylum seekers in Hove where (as at 2/9/22) 107 people (mostly families and single women) are housed. The hotel is managed by a sub-contractor of Clearsprings on behalf of the Home Office. Meals are supplied and the asylum seekers receive only a very small amount of cash. Children are enrolled in schools as soon as possible to get them out of the hotel setting but the key challenge remains the length of time that the asylum seekers have had to live in the hotel, originally envisaged as a short-term solution at a time of acute stress on the system. Council officers chair regular 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.

- 3.45 Local migrant support and faith groups are tirelessly providing support on the ground to the hotel residents. Groups are well networked through regular meetings (chaired by Sanctuary on Sea) which were originally set up to co-ordinate the migrant sector response to Covid and which council officers attend. 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.

### **Unaccompanied asylum seeking children**

- 3.46 There is a second hotel in Hove which, alongside three other hotels in the south east, acts as a short term reception facility for unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) before they are placed with local authorities around the UK under the government National Transfer Scheme. The hotel and the move-on process for the young people are managed directly by the Home Office. Over one thousand young people have moved through the facility (including a second hotel for UASC in Hove, now closed) since it opened in July 2021.
- 3.47 The local authority maintains oversight of child safeguarding matters for those resident at the hotel and there is regular liaison between the Home Office staff managing the hotel, the council's safeguarding team, and other agencies including Sussex Police to pick up concerns, including when children go missing from the hotel. As with the family hotel, the local community, voluntary and faith groups have provided a range of support and activities for the young people for the short time (usually under a month) that they remain in the area.
- 3.48 Brighton & Hove city council is also responsible for a population of children in care and care leavers who entered the UK as UASC. At the end of July there were 40 UASC children in care (10% of all children in care). The number of former UASC care leavers was 119. The numbers have risen since 2021 and are predicted to continue to rise substantially. A dedicated team of social work staff support these children and young people to help them settle in the city and navigate the asylum system. The younger children are in foster care and supported lodgings provide a home for many of the care leavers.
- 3.49 Some areas of challenges the UASC Social Work team face are:
- absorbing and managing the complexities of National Transfer Scheme work, including the impact on children waiting up to/ over 12 weeks to be transferred to another local authority
  - developing the infrastructure to meet the support and care needs of UASC with complex needs including in particular the current lack of mental health support to address issues such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Some children require inpatient treatment and support from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services.
  - the lack of appropriate education provision – particularly ESOL courses when children arrive – as courses are often full or have waiting lists, leading to placement in private language schools.
  - The lack of affordable and stable local placements

- the needs of this cohort in terms of the commitment to anti-racist practice given the day to day lived experiences of racism.
- 3.50 One consequence of asylum dispersal and the reception of UASC in a local authority area is a potential rise in the population of those who have been refused asylum and no longer have access to Home Office support. People in this position are likely to have No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) and also no right to work.
- 3.51 The situation is exacerbated by the lack of immigration legal advice, as illustrated by a recent [Refugee Action report](#) .Without immigration legal advice, those who might have grounds to regularise their immigration status find it more difficult to argue this case. Moreover the impact on those in the asylum determination process, including UASC and those caring for them, is very detrimental – mental health suffers considerably as people wait in limbo for progress on their asylum cases
- 3.52 In a small number of cases the local authority is responsible for accommodating and supporting people with NRPF if they have children or identified care needs under the Care Act 2014.

### **City of Sanctuary and Inclusive Cities**

- 3.53 Committee should note that the above groups do not represent the entirety of those seeking sanctuary in Brighton & Hove. Given the diversity of the city, there will be others who were forced to flee their home countries who choose to settle in the city without government intervention, joining settled communities from particular countries and those who speak their language. The 2021 census figures should provide more information on this population.
- 3.54 Moreover not all refugees require support over a long period if and when they have the right to work. Many are highly skilled and qualified and can move quickly into employment and start contributing to the city's economy and community efforts to assist the more vulnerable, including by joining the city council's own workforce This process is greatly assisted through the creation of a culture of welcome at a local level as promoted by the City of Sanctuary movement.
- 3.55 An intersection with the city's anti-racism strategy is also important and made easier by the fact that the work on anti -racism is being led from within the Communities, Equality and Third Sector (CETS) team which is leading the work on refugees. Moreover the siting of this work within the CETS team maximises the opportunity of the response to international migration taking an intersectional approach to those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.56 As agreed by this committee in September 2019 (see Appendix 2) , the council is a participant city in the [Inclusive Cities programme](#) which provides the council and the city with insight into new approaches to newcomer inclusion through our partner cities as well as the evidence based work and recommendations from the Centre on Migration Policy and Society at the

University of Oxford. Originally due to end in 2022, the project has been extended to June 2023 due to delays caused by the pandemic.

- 3.57 This work on newcomer inclusion goes hand in hand with Brighton & Hove's City of Sanctuary status. This committee instructed officers in March 2021 to work with the local City of Sanctuary Group (Sanctuary on Sea) to progress an application to City of Sanctuary UK for the council's reaccreditation as a City of Sanctuary, endorsing the City of Sanctuary Charter being a member of the City of Sanctuary Local Authority Network steering group. (Appendix 3)
- 3.58 Being a member of this steering group enables Brighton & Hove to play a part in leading the national advocacy carried out by the City of Sanctuary movement, in particular to raise concerns facing local authorities as a result of government policy and new legislation.
- 3.59 The Covid19 pandemic and the urgent operational responses required for the opening of the asylum contingency hotel, the Afghan resettlement programme and the Ukraine response have all meant that less work was carried out over the past two years on strategic work such as the Inclusive Cities Action Plan and the City of Sanctuary re-accreditation.

**3.60 Priorities for coming 12 months September 2022 – September 2023.**

- A. Further develop the city's coordinated, flexible and holistic package of **support for all Ukrainian refugees in partnership with the Third sector and business community** (see paragraph 3.14 above for some examples). The city will use the government funding and the heightened interest and awareness of how to help and safely accommodate Ukrainians to benefit all those seeking sanctuary in the city wherever possible within the constraints of the funding instructions issued by government.
- B. Develop **pro-active and positive communications** in partnership with the Third Sector, including Sanctuary on Sea, celebrating Brighton & Hove's welcome to refugees and other migrants, including at a neighborhood level, and enabling the voices of individual refugees and other newcomer residents (adults and children) to be amplified. This is a key objective of the Inclusive Cities work –*Leading in the development of a shared local story of inclusion.*
- C. **Review the support package for refugees arriving on the current resettlement programmes** (UKRS, ARAP and ACRS), learning from the experiences of beneficiaries of the programmes to date (including the above schemes and the experiences of those who have been here significantly longer through the VPRS and even the GPP). The package will be improved in line with this review which will include consultation on the specification of the integration and support services to refugees commissioned by the city council.
- D. Continue to work collectively with partners in the Third Sector to improve **housing pathways for all non UK nationals** This includes **reviewing the**

**current package offered to landlords** interested in renting their properties to refugees, learning from best practice in other Inclusive City local authorities. This will maximise the chance of recruiting and retaining interested landlords whilst offering accommodation solutions to newcomers which are as sustainable as possible in the current housing crisis, and do not impose further pressures on council housing and homelessness provision.

- E. Continue the partnership work between the local NHS, BHCC and third sector to **improve mental health services** for refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants, including children. For adults this has already been taking place through the work of the Migrant, Refugee and Asylum Seekers Mental Health Working Group which feeds into the transformation of community mental health services. Some of the work already undertaken by this group includes the development of a trauma screening protocol as well as training for primary care staff.
- F. Work with local Third sector partners, the two universities, existing providers of legal advice, funders and neighbouring authorities (through the South East Strategic Partnership for Migration) to progress initiatives to **increase access to free immigration legal advice** for newcomers on a low or no income. This will prepare the city for the possible future advice needs of the Ukrainians as well as help other adults and children with insecure immigration status.
- G. Continue to support the local Third Sector to create a culture of welcome for adults and children seeking sanctuary in the city, through the council community grants programmes and ringfenced funding for refugee resettlement and asylum seeker support.
- H. Review the infrastructure which supports English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to **strengthen connectivity between ESOL and pathways to employment**. This includes ensuring there is joined up and sufficient provision of ESOL from pre-entry to Functional Skills Level 2(English for Speakers of Other Languages) and exploring opportunities to prepare learners for jobs where the city has labour shortages such as the visitor economy, voluntary sector, and health and social care. A new 'Refugee Employment workstream' will pick up the employability work with the Ukrainian arrivals and bring this together with other employment initiatives to maximise the benefits of learning and good practice in this area.
- I. The local NHS in Brighton & Hove is identifying their PLUS groups to support the Integrated Care Board in its delivery of the NHS Planning Guidance, working jointly as a Place-based partnership (ICP) under the new Integrated Care System structure. The council is setting out plans for reducing health inequalities (poorer access, experience or outcomes) experienced by these groups, and are proposing interventions to support them in navigating and accessing complex health and care systems. It is suggested that 'globally displaced communities' form one of these PLUS groups and if this is agreed, the local authority will continue to work with the local NHS to develop those interventions for refugees, asylum seekers and other globally displaced adults and children resident in the city.

- 3.61 Alongside the ongoing work and using the above priorities as a guide, the city council will continue to work with Sanctuary on Sea to agree the actions needed for re-accreditation as a City of Sanctuary. These priorities and their linked actions will form the council's Inclusive Cities Action Plan. The council and Sanctuary on Sea will also, together, review the remaining recommendations of the International Migrants Needs Assessment (published in 2018) which have not yet been prioritized for action.

#### **4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options**

- 4.1 No alternative options are suggested

#### **5. Community engagement and consultation**

- 5.1 The local City of Sanctuary group has been consulted on these priorities.  
5.2 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 which have continued throughout the pandemic.  
5.3 The Community Support and Integration Workstream has met fortnightly at the council 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.

#### **6. Conclusion**

- 6.1 The report lays out the complexity of the current local authority 'landscape' around the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers. In particular it describes the Homes for Ukraine spending so far which Committee is requested to note.

#### **7. Financial implications**

- 7.1 The income and expenditure to date on the Homes for Ukraine Sponsorship scheme is set out in the main body of the report, alongside the funding arrangements for the arrival of refugees and asylum seekers.

Name of finance officer consulted: Michael Bentley      Date consulted  
06/09/22

#### **8. Legal implications**

- 8.1 A refugee is defined under the Refugee Convention 1951 as someone who has fled their country due to a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion". The report sets out the various schemes under which refugees and asylum seekers are settling in the city and the funding streams available to support them. Funding under such schemes may only be distributed in accordance with the specifics of the scheme. Specific legal duties and the entitlements of individuals in terms of support vary according to their status and

situation, alongside potential general duties to secure welfare under such legislation as the Care Act and Children Act.

Name of lawyer consulted: Natasha Watson

Date consulted: 06/09/2022

## **9. Equalities implications**

9.1 As a public authority we must have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- advance equality of opportunity
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

9.2 The work described in this report describes the holistic approach taken across the city to advance equality of opportunity for newcomers.

9.3 The primary focus of the City of Sanctuary approach is the promotion of good relations between sanctuary seekers and the longstanding communities. The council continues to promote a nuanced understanding of the needs of newcomers who may have protected characteristics alongside their country of birth, nationality or first language.

9.4 The longstanding community tensions meetings monitor tensions that may be arising as a result of immigration to the city and decide on appropriate action.

## **10. Sustainability implications**

No specific implications identified

### **Public health implications:**

11.1 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.

## **Supporting Documentation**

### **1. Appendices**

1. Appendix One : table detailing breakdown of Homes for Ukraine spend as of 22/8/2022
2. Appendix Two: previous report to TECC on Inclusive Cities
3. Appendix Three: previous report to TECC on City of Sanctuary.

