

A FULL REPLACEMENT PAPER SHALL BE PROVIDED PRIOR TO COUNCIL TO REPORT TO MEMBERS THE MOST CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT.

Potential Ukrainian Refugee Relocation

Report by Kevin Anderson, Executive Director Place

Report for Decision

1 Recommendations

Council is recommended to note the content of this report and consider Midlothian Council's participation in any potential UK Government Ukrainian Refugee relocation scheme and the prospective Scottish Government arrangements.

If it is agreed to participate, delegated authority is also requested to permit officers to manage the necessary requirements following this final Council meeting of the current term to;

- i. Advise the UK Government Home Office of the Council's willingness to participate in any scheme, and
- ii. Advise the Scottish Government of the Council's willingness to participate in any scheme
- iii. Approve delegated authority for officers to undertake to relocate households into Midlothian.

2 Report purpose/Summary

People coming to the UK under any potential scheme, may arrive either as a whole family unit or with the lead person arriving first and their dependants joining them at a later point, depending on their individual circumstances.

At this time, it is expected households will predominantly consist of women and children as males aged between 18 - 60 years are being retained in-country to defend Ukraine.

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3 Background

3.1 An escalation of the situation and military offensive in Ukraine in February 2022 has turned an already volatile situation into a full-scale emergency. People are leaving their homes to try to find safety elsewhere within the country and are crossing borders into neighbouring countries. The situation remains extremely dangerous for anyone inside Ukraine.

3.2 In light of the rapidly evolving humanitarian crisis in Ukraine, UNHCR (the UN Refugee Agency) is working with authorities, other UN agencies, internally displaced community groups and partners to provide humanitarian assistance. Over 3 million refugees are estimated to have fled to neighbouring countries and that number is rising.

4. Support and the Care for People Group

5.1 The Care for People Group was established to comply with the Council's responsibilities under the Civil Contingencies Act 2004. The group specifically support Scottish Government guidance, "Preparing Scotland, Care of People Affected by Emergencies". This multi-agency group includes representatives from NHS Lothian, Police Scotland, utilities, voluntary sector and faith groups..

5.2 Clearly, the traumatic experiences in the loss of homes, livelihoods, communities and families will have an impact on individuals and result in considerable anxiety, concern and emotional distress. Having recognised the continued uncertainty that refugees are experiencing and the inevitable disruption that has occurred in their lives, the Care for People Group will be focusing on the physical and mental wellbeing of those potential resettlement refugees as residents of Midlothian.

5.3 Support requirements will include access to cultural, dietary, religious facilities as well as translation and interpretation services. Some households will be particularly vulnerable and require particular additional support through the relocation process.

5.4 Integration into Midlothian communities will involve school provision requests, registering with doctors, obtaining National Insurance numbers and biometrics to be eligible to access services and benefits.

Report Implications (Resource, Digital and Risk)