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- JPB reflected on the valuable discussions of the previous day, offering specific thanks to Anna and Mohtas for sharing their lived experiences.
- I've been asked to share some thoughts on the role of national government in enabling Community Sponsorship.
- There are a number of people in the room that will know the origins of the UK's Community Sponsorship Scheme, having themselves been heavily involved in its design. But for those who don't, the scheme was born out of a desire to harness public and community support for refugees amidst the crisis in Syria in 2015.
- In the UK, groups are asked to raise money, provide integration support for a year and identify suitable housing that will be available for at least 2 years. In reality, we know they do much more.
- From informal language exchange, to facilitating relationships within new communities, to helping new arrivals get into work, and even to showing families where to get the best bread.
- This is the power of sponsorship: capitalising on the skills and desire of local communities. This is the **first role** of government - **making the most of the skills that exist within civil society**.
- The UK government has been proud to have worked with these communities in the co-design of our scheme from the very start. Working with them to shape and deliver this unique form of resettlement.
- Community Sponsorship has now become an excellent example of community welcome and a strong demonstration of the impact that we can have when communities play a direct role in the welcome of refugees. The credibility that Community Sponsorship has brought is a key factor in the UK government building a scheme that has the principles of sponsorship at its heart, as our key humanitarian route for those fleeing Ukraine.
- The **second** role of government is to **provide an enabling environment that empowers communities to take increasing ownership of the scheme**. This means creating the structures and processes around a scheme that ensures we are setting the scheme up for long-term success.
- Often as a new policy or programme beds in, it becomes clear to those integral to its delivery where improvements can be made. When the scheme launched, there were understandably a number of processes and policies in place to control it and to protect and safeguard refugees, whilst we tested the model and grew to understand its success more fully.
- Government's role in listening to those with expertise and on the ground experience is crucial. Given our experience and the success of the Community Sponsorship Scheme, we are more mindful of the need to ensure continued review and to ensure that our policies don't create unnecessary burdens to participating groups.
- I'm sure Mark will have views on some of the processes that we could streamline. And we recognise that there is a balance to be struck between ensuring we have appropriate safeguards and streamlining the approach for those communities that want to support refugees. But we will always listen to the views of civil society, and continue to do what we can to respond to their concerns.

- **Thirdly**, there is an important role for government in **promoting growth, including using its platform to showcase success stories** of Community Sponsorship, of which there are so many.
- The UK has a wonderful story to tell – through Homes for Ukraine and Community Sponsorship, there is no shortage of examples of the British public dedicating themselves to support refugees and giving them the best possible start to their new life in the UK.
- And this success goes both ways, with many communities benefiting immensely from the experience themselves. There are countless amazing stories of welcoming communities finding common ground with those they are welcoming and we know that integration outcomes for refugees who have come to the UK under community sponsorship are often more impactful than those who have come through other paths.
- Through our plans for growth, which UK Ministers have committed to through the New Plan for Immigration, our ambition for Community Sponsorship is that it continues to bring benefits to both refugees and communities, but on a larger scale and therefore with a bigger impact.
- Demonstrating the benefits of community sponsorship both for refugees and the communities that welcome them will remain an important tenet of this growth.