

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND HOUSING SERVICES	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	19 FEBRUARY 2024	5
2024/25 AFFORDABLE WARMTH GRANT			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

RELEVANT LEAD MEMBER

This item is within the remit of Councillor Chris Dixon, Lead Member for Social Wellbeing

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Affordable Warmth grant allocation from Lancashire County Council has previously been reported to Environment, Health and Housing Committee in November 2022 and Executive Committee in May 2023. The purpose of the funding is to provide capital measures for home energy improvements to vulnerable residents, where an affordability issue has been identified. The funding aims to reduce levels of death and illness over the winter months and to improve people’s wellbeing.

The allocation for 2024/25 is £61,156 for the delivery of an Affordable Warmth Initiatives. Funding is in two parts; Part one required a proposal to be submitted once 80 percent of 2023/24 grant award had been spent; Part two is to be requested before the end of March 2024, allocated in June 2024.

The purpose of this report is to approve an addition to the capital programme in 2024/25 for the sum of £61,156 and authorise drawdown of the expenditure to be fully funded by the Affordable Warmth Funding to be received from Lancashire County Council.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Committee are requested to:

1. Approve an addition to the capital programme in 2024/25 for the sum of £61,156 and authorise drawdown of the expenditure to be fully funded by the Affordable Warmth Funding to be received from Lancashire County Council

BACKGROUND

1. On the 14th of July 2022 Lancashire County Council (LCC) gave approval for the allocation of £1,000,000 to local authorities over 2022/23 to help residents across Lancashire to live in warmer homes, as part of its efforts to support residents impacted by the cost-of-living crisis. The funding is to assist residents on low incomes and those who are vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home.
2. LCC have split this funding between the district authorities based on the development of eligibility criteria, together with the current guidance from the former department of Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy BEIS on identifying fuel poor households and those on a low income and vulnerable to the effects of living in a

cold home for the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) Flexible Eligibility. Appendix 1 contains the funding application that has been submitted.

3. Table 1 contains the percentage of fuel poor households for 2021 within each authority. Fylde Councils allocation for 2024/25 is £61,156 to be awarded on approval of the proposal submitted by Fylde on the 29th January 2024. The funding is to be allocated to capital projects within residential dwellings only. LCC has announced the allocation of further funding which is in line with the BEIS statistics of sub-regional fuel poverty shown in table one.

Table 1

Fuel Poor Households by Administrative Area 2021 Published 27th April 2023				
Area	Number of households*	Number of households in fuel poverty*	% of Lancashire's Fuel Poor Households	Allocations £
Lancashire	536,423	78,472		
Burnley	40,699	7,972	10.16	101,590
Chorley	51,172	5,690	7.25	72,510
Fylde	38,383	4,799	6.12	61,156
Hyndburn	35,539	6,614	8.43	84,285
Lancaster	61,310	9,446	12.04	120,374
Pendle	38,885	7,704	9.82	98,175
Preston	60,897	9,345	11.91	119,087
Ribble Valley	27,312	3,648	4.65	46,488
Rosendale	31,194	4,797	6.11	61,130
South Ribble	49,653	4,969	6.33	63,322
West Lancashire	49,532	6,492	8.27	82,730
Wyre	51,847	6,996	8.92	89,153

*Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-2023>

INTERVENTIONS

4. The funding aims to reduce levels of death and illness over the winter months and to improve people's wellbeing; consequently, we also hope to see a reduction in hospital admissions and in demand for health and social care services.
5. Fylde sent a proposal to Lancashire County Council for approval of the AFW Grant on the 29th of January 2024 outlining our intended usage of the funding (attached document 2) this was approved with all the interventions fitting the grant and likely to be effective.
 - Servicing and repairs, replacement boilers and heating systems and associated works, including controls and unsafe heating systems.
 - Repairs to new radiators and radiator reflectors.
 - Loft insulation
 - Failed Glazing improvements
 - Emergency heating and dehumidifier measures
 - Portable heaters for use whilst heating systems are repaired.

Housing service will also signpost enquiries to the appropriate agencies for:

- Advice on fuel poverty, how to reduce costs through fuel switching, income maximisation, managing fuel bills & debts, warm home checks.
- Energy top-up vouchers/fuel cards.

ELIGIBILITY

6. Lancashire County Council have provided guidance on the eligibility criteria for access to the grant scheme. Being on a low income, living in thermal inefficient home, having higher heating needs, and high fuel costs can increase the risks of living in a cold home. The funding is aimed at the most vulnerable to harm from cold or damp homes. This could include a wide range of individuals at serious risk of experiencing poor health and wellbeing due to a cold home.
7. The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidance on '[Excess winter deaths and morbidity and the health risks associated with cold homes](#)', identifies several groups particularly vulnerable to the effects of living in a cold home.

Vulnerabilities:

- people with a diagnosed cardiovascular condition
 - people with a diagnosed respiratory condition (in particular, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and childhood asthma)
 - people with diagnosed mental health conditions
 - people with diagnosed disabilities
 - older people (65 and older)
 - households with young children (up to the age of 5)
 - pregnant women
 - people who are terminally ill
 - people with suppressed immune systems (e.g. from cancer treatment or HIV)
 - people who have attended hospital due to a fall
8. The following vulnerable groups will be considered on referral from a professional organisation
 - people who move in and out of homelessness
 - people with addictions
 - Recent immigrants and refugees.
 9. Households will be eligible for funding if they meet at least one of the following vulnerabilities and have a low income.

Low income

- Someone being in receipt of means tested benefits
- Have a total household income not in excess of £31,000¹
- A 'declaration' by the Local Authority or health / social care professional that affordability issues are present.

DELIVERY AND COST OF FINANCING THE SCHEME

10. The scheme is fully funded by Lancashire County Council without the need of Fylde Council to provide any match funding or financial contributions.
11. Fylde Council will be required to administer the scheme, this will be undertaken within the existing resources of the Housing Services section.
12. Means testing will be carried out by Fylde Council before referrals are made in, accordance with BEIS ensuring that vulnerable groups, those on low incomes, and properties with an EPC rating of D or below receives the funding.

13. Fylde council will be required to report monthly on the costs and types of measures which have been installed to Lancashire County Council.
14. The scheme is not tenure specific however private rented properties would be expected to firstly meet their obligations under the Housing Act 2004 in relation to heating and insulation without grant assistance.
15. Social housing would also be expected to meet this obligation, interventions/contributions from housing associations/other partners should be sought in the first instance. In addition, contributions will be asked for from the housing provider prior to the approval of any affordable warmth funding. Therefore, it is expected that the majority of funding will be directed towards owner occupied properties.
16. Funding will be paid to Fylde Council in advance and upon Fylde meeting 80% of 22/23 expenditure. This process is already underway, the aim of this is for Local Authorities to be offering funding as soon as it becomes available and upon committee approval.
17. The grant allocated for 2022/23 is expected that 100% off the funding will be spent this winter and before the end of March 2024.
18. The housing team have been delivering the grants since December 2022. A total of 54 applications have been approved and delivered to date, with a further 30 applications on the waiting list. Table 2 below summarises the type of measures the affordable warmth grant is delivering.

Completed since Nov 2022	
Boiler Repairs	2
Boiler Replacement	12
Heating Systems repaired	2
Radiator repair	6
Failed Glazing	18
Loft Insulation	11
Emergency heating	3

CORPORATE PRIORITIES	
Economy – To create a vibrant and healthy economy	✓
Environment – To deliver services customers expect	✓
Efficiency – By spending money in the most efficient way	✓
Tourism – To create a great place to live and visit	

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The report recommends a fully funded capital scheme Affordable Warmth 2024/25 in the sum of £61,156 from a grant from Lancashire County Council.
Legal	None arising directly from this report
Community Safety	None arising directly from this report
Human Rights and Equalities	None arising directly from this report
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	Improving the energy efficiency of dwellings will contribute to sustainable communities and improve the environment
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None arising directly from this report

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

1. [15th November 2022 – Affordable Warmth Grant – Environment Health and Housing](#)
2. [23rd May 2023 – Affordable Warmth Grant – Executive Committee](#)

BACKGROUND PAPERS RELEVANT TO THIS ITEM

Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
ECO4 Guidance: Local Authority Administration	June 2022	https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/publications/eco4-guidance-local-authority-administration
Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) Guidance: Delivery	October 2022	Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) Guidance: Delivery Ofgem
LEAD AUTHOR		
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Cheryl Bennett	Email Cheryl.bennett@fylde.gov.uk Tel 01253 658691	02/02/2024

Attached documents.

Appendices - Appendix 1 - Interventions submitted to LCC for Approval