

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE	COUNCIL	8 MAY 2024	9
FULLY FUNDED REVENUE BUDGET INCREASE - HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND ROUND 5			

PUBLIC ITEM

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

RELEVANT LEAD MEMBER

This item is within the remit of the Lead Member for Finance and Resources, Councillor Ellie Gaunt.

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide details of further government grant funding for Household Support.

To draw down from Lancashire County Council (LCC) £261,853 from the fund to support low-income families using similar approaches applied for the previous three rounds of Household Support Fund.

The matter was considered by the Executive Committee at its meeting on 25 April 2024, and recommended that Council approve a fully funded budget increase.

RECOVERABILITY

This decision is not recoverable because it relates to a recommendation to the council.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council approve a fully funded revenue budget increase of £261,853 in 2024/25, fully funded from the government Household Support Fund grant.

REPORT

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUNDING

- In September 2021, the government announced that vulnerable households across the country would be able to access a £500 million support fund to help them with essentials over the winter period. This funding was provided to LCC with £150,000 allocated to Fylde Council. The grant was to directly help residents who needed it most based on various criteria around income, family size etc. with funds distributed through small payments that supported vulnerable households to meet daily costs such as food, clothing, and utilities. The funding was available to individuals and families irrespective of age. The Environmental, Health and Housing Committee has received updated information on the programme expenditure and outcomes.
- In July 2022, Fylde Council received a further £270,000 from the Household Support Fund through LCC which was to be more targeted at support for the elderly.

3. In October 2022 a third round of Household Support Fund grants was allocated to Fylde Council through LCC, and a further £270,000 was made available to support households in need up to March 31, 2023, this was allocated on a similar basis to the first round of funding made in September 2021.
4. In March 2023 a fourth round of Household Support Fund grants was allocated to Fylde Council through Lancashire County Council a further £540,000 was made available to support vulnerable households for the period running to 31st March 2024.
5. Over the past five cohorts of the Household funding administration, we have utilised a comprehensive multiagency approach to ensure the effective and efficient use of resources. We have collaborated with multiple sectors; engaged with the voluntary sector, faith sector, and involved community members in smaller cohorts to enhance the reach and impact of our initiatives. Partnership with key organizations such as the Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and working closely with Housing, HomeStart, and Foodbanks, to address the diverse needs of households and provide tailored support. This collaborative approach has enabled us to maximize the impact of the household support funding, ensuring that it reaches those in most need and delivers tangible benefits to the community.
6. A fifth round of Household Support Fund grants has been announced by the government with £421 million allocated to upper-tier authorities to provide support in the period up to 30 September 2024. Fylde Council has been notified by Lancashire County Council that it will receive £261,853 to provide support to vulnerable households for the period running to 30th September 2024. The funds should be spent or committed by 30th September 2024 and should not be carried forward for future use.
7. The Household Support Fund is provided by the Department for Work and Pensions to support those most in need. This fund can be used to help households with children, households with pensioners, households with disabled persons and other households towards the cost of:
 - a. Food
 - b. Energy/water needs
 - c. Essentials linked to energy and water
 - d. Wider essentials, where appropriate, such as clothing, broadband, period and hygiene projects.
 - e. Housing costs
 - f. Reasonable administrative cost.
8. The funding should be used to meet the immediate needs and help those who are struggling to afford energy and water bills, food, and related essentials. Authorities can use the funding to support households who are struggling to afford other essentials and housing costs.
9. Authorities have been encouraged to work in partnership with third-party organisations to identify individuals and families where there is greatest need. Fylde has taken this approach when allocating the first three rounds of Household Support Fund working with local charities (CAB, Food Bank, Homestart etc) community groups (Well Church, Hope Church, YMCA etc) and Lancashire County Council as well as other neighbouring authorities on initiatives.
10. Appendix 1 of the report provides details of the indicative schemes that the fund will support, many of the initiatives are tried and tested in Fylde from earlier funding rounds. The target population is well-known and well-informed.
11. The Executive Committee considered the matter at its meeting on 25 April 2024 and recommended that Council approve a fully funded budget increase.

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 that Council approve a fully funded revenue budget increase of £261,853 in 2024/25, fully funded from the government grant funding stream for Household Support Fund.
Legal	The council has put in place accountable and transparent decision-making powers.
Community Safety	There are no implications.
Human Rights and Equalities	There are no implications.
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	There are no implications.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	There are no implications.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Finance & Democracy 24th January 2022 – Approval of a revenue budget increase of up to £150,000 in 2021/22, fully funded from the government grant funding stream for Household Support Grant (Round 1).

Full Council 4th July 2022 - Approval of fully funded budget increase in the sum of £270,000 in 2022/23, fully funded from the government grant funding stream for Household Support Grant (Round 2).

Full Council -5th December 2022 - Approval of fully funded budget increase in the sum of £270,00 in 2022/23, fully funded from the government grant funding stream for Household Support Grant (Round 3).

Urgent Decision in May 2023 as reported to Community Focus Scrutiny Committee 22 June 2023 – Approval of fully funded budget increase in the sum of £540,000 in 2023/24, fully funded from the government grant funding stream for Household Support Grant (Round 4)

Executive Committee 25 April 2024 - Recommend to Council to approve a fully funded revenue budget increase of £261,853 in 2024/25, fully funded from the government Household Support Fund grant.

BACKGROUND PAPERS RELEVANT TO THIS ITEM

Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Household Support Fund (National)	February 2023	Household Support Fund Guidance
Household Support Fund (Fylde)	September 2021	Household Support Fund Help
Household Support Fund (LCC)	September 2021	Household Support Fund Lancashire

LEAD AUTHOR

Tracy Manning

CONTACT DETAILS

tracy.manning@fylde.gov.uk & 01253 658506

DATE

10/4/2024

Appendix 1 - Indicative Allocation of Household Support Fund Round 5 (to 30th September 2024)

- **CAB:** energy bills and essential support through applications £195,000
- **Foodbanks:** community support through vouchers and food parcels £30,000-£40,000
- **Homestart:** white goods purchases through signposting / referrals from professionals and partners £10,000
- **The Housing Service:** multiple schemes as set out below. £15,000

Aldi vouchers

The fund has been used previously for providing Aldi Vouchers. Payments of £10 or £20 for a single person and £50 for a family have supported clients to purchase food when the food bank is not open usually in an emergency. This scheme has had the biggest impact where households are in B&B prior to going into temporary self-contained accommodation in St Annes, the vouchers have assisted with the extra costs of providing food.

Argos Vouchers

The fund has been used to provide household support packs which included cutlery, bedding, toasters, kettles etc. The provision of such items has been essential when clients move into new accommodation. The use of vouchers to provide household items essential for everyday living has been very successful in previous funding rounds with demand still evident.

White goods and carpets

The ability to assist clients with up to £400 towards cooker/fridge/carpets made a significant difference to households moving into accommodation along with the smaller items support scheme.

Top up Rent in Advance and Bond/RIA for households in employment

The Housing service currently has a high number of households in temporary accommodation whose options for social housing are affected by the lack of turnover in housing stock and private rental levels being unaffordable given their present circumstances. Households in receipt of HB can apply for rent bond or rent in advance from DHP and Vickers Relief. Many can source accommodation slightly above LHA rates, concerns around affordability after 6 months results in applications to DHP and Fylde Council Help 2 Rent scheme being refused. The additional funding has been used to fund a top up from HB levels for 6 months' rent in advance enabling the move into independent accommodation out of temporary accommodation. For households in employment the options for rent bond or RIA are limited to Vicars Relief Charity as they are not eligible for DHP funding. The additional funding would be used to assist these households into independent accommodation and based on affordability would cover the rent bond and rent in advance.