

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND HOUSING	EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE	25 JUNE 2024	6

HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION GRANT FUNDING 2024-25

PUBLIC ITEM

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

RELEVANT LEAD MEMBER

This item is within the remit of Lead Member for Housing, Councillor Chris Dixon.

PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The purpose of the Homelessness Prevention Grant (HPG) is to give Local Authorities control and flexibility in managing homelessness pressures and supporting those who are at risk of homelessness. This report is requesting the uplift in HPG for 2024/25 and top up amounts received, be placed within the Housing Services base budget to deliver on statutory homeless duties under the Homeless Reduction Act 2018 (HRA).

A report was taken to Full Council in October 2022 advising of the changes to the funding arrangements related to the HPG from 2022/23 onwards. Prior to this date Local Authorities were able to commit the funding flexibly to deliver homelessness services. From 2022/2023 there is a requirement for spend to be identifiable for services provided under the Homelessness Reduction Act duties: provision of temporary accommodation, staffing costs, homelessness prevention, relief, and main housing duty support.

The Local Authority was awarded £107,457 in 2022/23 and this was placed in the Housing Services base budget to form the basis of future years income and corresponding expenditure budgets. In 2023/24 the HPG allocation was £117,192 and the allocation for 2024/25 is £123,821.

In 2024/25 Fylde Council have been awarded further Top Up grants totalling £92,380 made up from £60,970.80 HPG Top up (66%) and £31,409.20 HPG Ukraine Top Up 34%. The total HPG that will be received in 2024/25 will be £216,201 and there is a requirement for this spend to be identifiable for services provided under the HRA.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To approve a fully funded budget increase to the Homelessness Prevention Grant base budget of £16,364 (currently the base budget is £107,457 taking it to £123,821 per annum); and
2. To approve a fully funded budget increase to the Homelessness Prevention Grant for 2024/25 for the HPG top-up grants totalling £92,380 to deliver additional homelessness prevention and relief services in 2024/25.

REPORT

HOMELESS REDUCTION ACT 2018

1. The Government is committed to preventing homelessness before it occurs and the Homeless Reduction Act 2018 (HRA) was focussed on ensuring more people get help earlier, reducing the risk of households becoming homeless with intervention at its earliest stage. DLUHC (Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) data shows that intervening when a household is at risk of losing their accommodation is overall more effective in tackling homelessness.

2. HRA was implemented by Local Housing Authorities across England from 1st April 2018 and its introduction significantly reformed England’s homelessness legislation by placing duties on local authorities to intervene at earlier stages to prevent homelessness in their areas. It also requires housing authorities to provide homelessness services to **all** those affected, not just households who are in a ‘priority need’ category.
3. Enhanced prevention and relief duties were introduced prior to the statutory main housing duty and the periods households could be classed as being threatened with homelessness was increased from 28 days to 56 days. This meant that local authorities are now required to work with people to prevent homelessness at an earlier stage.

HOMELESS PREVENTION GRANT (HPG)

4. The HPG is awarded annually, and the amounts awarded are determined by the quarterly HClick returns on homelessness pressures within the borough. There is a requirement for spend to be identifiable for services provided under the Homelessness Reduction Act duties: provision of temporary accommodation, staffing costs, homelessness prevention, relief, and main housing duty support.
5. Table 1 (below) details the history of grant funding Fylde Council have received from central Government, to take forward their statutory duties under HRA. Funding has been committed up to 2023/24 through the Committee reporting systems into the implementation of projects that ensured the housing service has adapted to the changes in approach required under HRA.
6. The basic base budget allocation has increased in 2024/2025 to £123,821 with a Top up grant of £92,380.

Table 1 – Central Government Funding towards Homelessness Services

Financial Year	FHSG standard allocation	FHSG Top Up	HPG Top Up	Section 31 HCLIC new Burdon’s funding	HRA New Burdon’s funding	Homeless Reduction Grant	HPG Allocation	Total
2017-18	£45,834.98				£8,409			£54,244
2018-19	£51,026.56	£11,000	£5,000	£2,953	£7,703			£77,683
2019-20	£42,766	£11,000	£5,000	£2,228	£9,927			£70,921
2020-21	£42,766					£26,655		£69,421
2021-22							£107,457	£107,457
2022-23							£107,457	£107,457
2023-24			£9,735				£107,457	£117,192
2024-25			£92,380				£123,821	£216,201

HCLICK RETURNS

7. Homelessness pressures data is reported via H-Click returns, sent quarterly to Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC). Table 2 below provides an overall summary of service demand over the last 4 years since 2020/21. This demonstrates a continued increase in demand for homelessness and advice services in Fylde.
8. The number of enquiries the service is responding to has increased year on year. In 2023/24 we dealt with 1,027 enquiries for housing and homelessness advice and assistance, of this 33% required a full homeless assessment. In 2022/23 this percentage was 37% therefore we have seen a slight drop in full assessments required based on number of approaches for advice.
9. There is a marked increase of 50% from 2020/21 to 2023/24 in households to who the Local Authority has accepted a Homeless Relief Duty towards in 2024, indicating households are approaching the service where there are limited options to prevent homelessness.
10. A result of this is the number of clients in temporary accommodation at year end has doubled since the end of 2020/21 to the end of 2023/24 from 27 to 49.
11. Fylde Council work to keep families with children out of B&B accommodation and a requirement of the HPG grant funding is that families with children should not be in B&B type accommodation for over 6 weeks. At the end of March 2024, the Local Authority had four families in B&B accommodation with 6 children, and fourteen families with 29 children in self-contained accommodation.

12. The service continues to see a high number of single households. At the end of 23/24 this stood at 31 single households and one couple.
13. The service continues to be successful in moving clients on into settled accommodation. Throughout 2023/24 we have assisted 146 households into permanent accommodation and successfully negotiated between the tenant and landlord to enable 42 clients to remain in their own home.
14. During 2023/24 the Housing Service had been successful in applying for and receiving Local Authority Housing Fund 2 (LAHF2) to increase the provision of temporary accommodation in the Borough alongside the provision of accommodation under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme (ACRS). This will increase supply during 2024/25 to additional 9 units of temporary accommodation and 5 units of ACRS accommodation. The partner Registered Provider is Humankind and these properties are coming on-line throughout 2024/25, with 6 units already in use.
15. The service has also entered into a Homeless Partnership Agreement with the YMCA to provide an additional 12 units of homeless temporary accommodation for single households under the age of 35. These units came online on the 1st April 2024.
16. The service has a long-standing arrangement with Progress Housing who provide 10 units of homeless temporary accommodation under a Homeless Partnership Agreement. By the end of 2024/25, 31 units of temporary accommodation will be available in the Borough to reduce the reliance on B&B accommodation out of Borough and the cost of this provision.

Table 2 – H-Click Data

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total number of housing enquiries	650	773	784	1,027
Enquiries of which from Duty to Refer from Statutory Partners	80	109	87	178
Number of full homelessness assessments undertaken	163	349	292	343
Clients in Temporary accommodation at year end	27	28	47	49
Prevention Duty Owed year total	56	112	127	97
Assisted to source alternative accommodation in Prevention Duty	11	49	75	48
Assisted to remain in accommodation in Prevention Duty	2	9	30	42
Relief Duty Owed year total	105	157	165	200
Assisted to source alternative accommodation in Relief Duty	14	66	76	98
Main Housing Duty owed (after Prevention and Relief Duty expired)	16	27	62	60

CONCLUSION

17. The funding will be placed across a number of housing budgets to assist the Local Authority to continue with its statutory functions under the HRA 2018 – staffing costs, provision of temporary accommodation, void loss

and damage re-charges, financial support for Bond and Rent in Advance and a range of other services including debt advice, tenancy training and interpretation services.

18. The purpose of this report is to request an increase the Homelessness Prevention Grant base budget from 2024/25 by £16,364 taking it to £123,821 and to commit the top-up grant funding totalling £92,380 to continue to deliver homelessness prevention and relief services during 2024/25.

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	Revenue budget increase to the Homelessness Prevention Grant housing service base budget of £16,364, to £123,821 per annum and fully funded budget increase for the HPG top-up grants totalling £92,380 available for 2024/25.
Legal	None
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS
<p>Homeless Prevention Grant – Full Council 12th October 2022 Recommended that future HPG funding from 2022/23 under the annual allocation of from DLUHC be placed within the Housing Services Base Budget (£107,457).</p> <p>Local Authority Housing Fund – Full Council – 18th December 2023 Approval of an addition to the Capital Programme of £2,784,000 in respect of LAHF2 and S106 developer contributions to enable the purchase of units for temporary and ACRS accommodation to meet the funding priorities.</p>

BACKGROUND PAPERS REVELANT TO THIS ITEM		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Homeless Prevention Grant 2023-25	February 2024	Homelessness Prevention Grant: 2023 to 2025 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Local Authority Housing Fund	June 2023	https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-housing-fund

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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