

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	4 JANUARY 2022	4
HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT GRANT			

PUBLIC ITEM

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

SUMMARY

In September 2021 the government announced that vulnerable households across the country will be able to access a new £500 million support fund to help them with essentials over the winter period. The funding, named the household support grant, will be available until 31 March 2022 inclusive.

The grant will directly help those who need it most and will be distributed through small payments to support vulnerable households meet daily costs such as food, clothing and utilities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. To note the position with respect to the allocation and spend to date of the Household Support Grant which has been allocated under the Chief Executive’s delegations pursuant to Section 101 of the Local Government Act 1972
2. To approve the projected spending against projects identified within this report
3. To recommend to Finance and Democracy Committee a revenue budget increase of up to £150,000 in 2021/22 fully funded from the government grant funding stream for Household Support Grant

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Emergency decision making powers utilised as included within the report.

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	

REPORT

HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUNDING

1. In September 2021 the government announced that vulnerable households across the country will be able to access a new £500 million support fund to help them with essentials over the winter period. The funding will be available until 31 March 2022 inclusive.
2. The funding was awarded to Lancashire County Council as the upper tier authority who made an indicative allocation to Fylde Council of £150,000. Although the money, at the time of writing this report, had yet to be received it was made clear that the council must launch a scheme in good faith that the money would be passed to the council by LCC by late January.
3. The grant will directly help those who need it most and will be distributed through small payments to support vulnerable households meet daily costs such as food, clothing and utilities.
4. The grant should be used primarily to support households in the most need of food, energy and water bills; however it can also be used with wider essential costs such as boiler service/repair and the purchase of equipment such as fridges and freezers.
5. At least 50 per cent of the available funding must be allocated for vulnerable households with children, and the delivery of the funding can be made through several differing routes including vouchers, making direct provision of food, or issuing grants to third parties.
6. Funds should be spent, or committed, before 31 March 2022 and cannot be held over for future usage.

EMERGENCY DECISION-MAKING POWERS USE

7. Due to the need to commence the scheme as soon as possible the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the council, together with the Chairman of the Environment Health and Housing Committee on 29th November 2021, invoked emergency powers to initiate the grant scheme in anticipation that it would be fully funded going forward.

FYLDE HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT SCHEME

8. A full list of the services offered under this grant scheme is shown at Appendix A together with the initial funding provided. The level of funding will be adjusted dependent on demand and an update regarding take-up of the grant will be provided at the January meeting.

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

9. The Council's financial regulations, which form part of the constitution, require funded budget increases to be approved. The level of approval depends on the expenditure. Increases of up to £50,000 may be approved by the Chief Financial Officer (following consultation with the Chairman of the Finance and Democracy Committee). Increases of between £50,000 and £250,000 require approval by the Finance and Democracy Committee, following consideration by the relevant programme committee hence the latter recommendation referring the matter to the Finance and Democracy Committee in anticipation that the funding awarded will be in excess of £50,000.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The report recommends to the Finance and Democracy Committee approval of an anticipated fully funded revenue budget increase of £150,000 in 2021/22 to be met in full from the government grant funding stream as detailed in the report. Spend against the budget has been approved in advance utilising the Chief Executive's emergency decision-making powers.
Legal	The council needs to put in place accountable and transparent arrangements in relation to its decisions on how the fund is used.
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

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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Attached documents

Appendix A – Fylde Household Support Schemes

Appendix A - Fylde Household Support Schemes

Fylde Citizens Advice Bureau

Initial grant of £15 000 funding to provide:

- i) Energy - voucher scheme for topping up prepayment meters and/or direct contact with suppliers to clear debt for billing customers*
- ii) Water - as above*
- iii) Winter Coat Scheme - a voucher scheme with ASDA to buy a coat for families in need*
- iv) White Goods - a voucher scheme with Curry's to provide necessary white goods and include delivery, fitting, and removal costs*
- v) Travel to work - a voucher scheme to use on Petrol, ASDA*

Administered via the Housing team

- vi) Boiler repair/service*

Housing Team

Initial grant of £5000 (including boiler repair/service budget outlined above). Clients to be working with the Housing Team for support to resolve housing situation.

- vii) Court Costs added to rent accounts following possession proceedings action from Landlord*
- viii) Rent arrears, if once paid the property is affordable moving forward and if not affordable accessing support to look at rehousing options*
- ix) Shortfall in rent in advance for 6 months with an affordability plan after 6 months*
- x) Household essential items – all applicants can apply for up to two grants of £50, but a third will require the tenancy training course (20 mins online) or the debt/welfare advice service referral. All will be entitled to two dated daily bus passes per person for attending interviews or appointments etc which are limitless. There will also be a miscellaneous option for things such as removal costs etc.*