



DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	COUNCIL	19 OCTOBER 2020	9
MHCLG NEXT STEPS FUNDING TO SUPPORT HOMELESS HOUSEHOLDS IN FYLDE			

PUBLIC ITEM

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

SUMMARY

Fylde Council, working jointly with Wyre Council, are two of the 247 Councils in the UK that have been awarded Next Steps Funding from MHCLG to help vulnerable households accommodated as part of the Covid 19 emergency response. The Next Steps Accommodation Programme makes available the resources needed to support local authorities and their partners to ensure that the current provision that has been set up to safeguard people who were taken safely from the streets is able to continue, until appropriate and suitable accommodation can be sourced, having particular focus on the successful resettlement and recovery of those who have or are at risk of rough sleeping.

Secretary of State for Communities and Housing, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP said:

“The incredible national effort to support rough sleepers during the pandemic has protected many lives and is widely regarded as one of the most successful programmes of its kind in the world. I’m hugely grateful to all those involved. This funding will ensure that vulnerable people and rough sleepers continue to have safe accommodation and the care and support they need, to ensure as few as possible return to the streets.”

The funding has been awarded jointly with Wyre Council and the total across the two authorities is £112,210 (Fylde £55,444.50 and Wyre £56,765.50). Wyre Council will invoice Fylde Council for their element of £56,765.50. The funding has several distinct elements – including securing of 5 rooms in B&B accommodation in St Annes, Rent in Advance, Rent in Advance top up for under 35's who are only entitled to the shared room rate of Housing Benefit and essential items required to establish the tenancy, for example white goods, carpets and furniture.

Due to the requirement for the funding to be spent by March 2021, Council are requested to approve a fully funded revenue budget increase in the sum of £112,210 in relation to the initiative, to be funded by Next Steps Funding provided by MHCLG, of which £56,766 will be transferred to Wyre Council as the partner authority in the delivery of the joint scheme.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Council is requested to:

1. Note the contents of the report and the approach the Housing Service have put in place to ensure the funds are fully spent by March 2021,
2. Approve a fully funded revenue budget increase for 2020/21 in the sum of £112,210 in respect of the Next Steps homelessness initiative to be met by Next Steps Funding provided by MHCLG, of which £56,766 will be transferred to Wyre Council as the partner authority in the delivery of the joint scheme.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

None

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	✓
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	✓
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	

REPORT

FYLDE COAST HOMELESS HEALTH RESPONSE CELL

1. On 26th March 2020, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) wrote to local authorities outlining a joint responsibility to safeguard as many homeless people as possible from COVID-19 as part of the nationwide 'Everyone In' in response to the pandemic. The MHCLG outlined a strategy based on NHS medical guidance and support which aimed to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on people facing homelessness and ultimately prevent deaths during this public health emergency.
2. There was additional guidance, agreed with NHS England and Public Health England stating that where possible people should be triaged into three cohorts:
 - The symptomatic group - this group should be placed in **COVID-CARE** sites.
 - The asymptomatic high clinical risk group - this group should be placed in **COVID-PROTECT** sites.
 - The asymptomatic and low risk group – this group should use current service provisions or be placed in accommodation to enable them to meet current guidance on self-isolation.
3. The guidance also suggested that all partners needed to be involved in a coordinated and planned way including; Local Authority – for leading on securing and funding accommodation, Local Authority public health including commissioned drug and alcohol treatment services, social care and support; NHS –for commissioning and provision of primary care, community services, urgent and emergency care, hospital discharge and mental health; Voluntary Sector for providing shelters, hostels, outreach support and food banks.
4. The main aim of this provision was to reduce the spread of COVID-19 both among the homeless client group and the wider community, and to ensure that basic needs were provided for during a period where other services usually supporting the homeless (such as soup kitchens) were stopped.
5. In response to this national guidance the Fylde Coast Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) implemented a local Homeless Health Response Cell to include partners from Fylde Coast CCGs, Blackpool Borough Council, The Ashley Foundation, Blackpool Teaching Hospitals, Lancashire & South Cumbria Foundation Trust, Lancashire County Council, Fylde Borough Council, Wyre Borough Council, Fylde Coast Medical Services, Substance Misuse Services, Mental Health Services and Her Majesty's Prison, Probation and Police Services. From 9th

April 2020 this 'local response cell' was co-ordinated and co-chaired by the CCG and Blackpool Borough Council.

6. During the pandemic Fylde Council housed 60 people in B&B in Blackpool and St Annes and the 10 units of temporary in St Annes were fully occupied. Weekly stats were provided to MHCLG via the Covid 19 Rough Sleeper Accommodation Survey (This was no longer required from the 24th September 2020). By the end of September we had managed to move 31 people into appropriate and suitable accommodation within both the private and social rented sector.
7. Clients housed as part of the Homeless Health Response Cell were either rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. Reasons included loss of tied accommodation with employment, at risk family members requiring to self-isolate, friends or families no longer able to accommodate and relationship breakdown.

NEXT STEPS ACCOMMODATION PROGRAMME IN FYLDE

8. The Next Steps Accommodation Programme is to enable this support to continue by making available the resources needed to support local authorities and their partners to ensure that the current provision that has been set up to safeguard people who were taken safely from the streets is able to continue, until appropriate and suitable accommodation can be sourced, having particular focus on the successful resettlement and recovery of those who have or are at risk of rough sleeping.
9. Table 1 below details the allocated breakdown of the funding for Fylde.

Item	Funding
Support Staff	£15,000
B&B	£29,680
Rent in Advance, Deposit and top up Rent in Advance for clients under 35	£14,000
Essential items	£8,000
Cleaning/damage/contingency	£2437.50
NET TOTAL	£69,117
Match HB income	- £13,672.50
TOTAL	£55,444.50

10. **Support Staff £15,000** – the intention is to reinstate the Housing Options Customer Services Specialist Post that was created under the Trailblazer funding to deal with all initial housing enquiries from customers to provide a comprehensive front line housing service and signposting to other organisations with a focus on preventing homelessness wherever possible. The role will provide advice and assistance to households on the range of housing options available to them in Fylde and make appointments with the Homelessness and Housing Advice Officers and Private Sector Team, as appropriate.
11. **Bed and Breakfast £29,800** - A requirement of the funding is that clients are placed in emergency temporary accommodation within the local authority area of Fylde. During the Covid 19 pandemic Fylde Council Housing Services have been able to develop a relationship with a B&B in St Annes. Discussions have already taken place with the owner to secure 5 rooms from 01/10/2020 to the 31/03/2021 and this is included in the funding bid. In addition there is an element of funding for damage and cleaning of the room in line with Covid 19 guidance if a client is placed who is required to self-isolate due to suspected Covid 19. Rooms will be void in accordance with Covid 19 guidelines prior to a full clean for 72 hours.
12. **Match HB income** - The funding bid include an element of income from HB totaling £13,672.50 and all clients placed who would be eligible for the funding will be supported to complete HB forms.
13. Clients placed who have no recourse to public funds will also be eligible for the funding, if they have been placed during the Covid 19 pandemic.
14. **Rent in Advance, Deposit and top up Rent in Advance for 6 months for clients under 35** – The funding includes an element of £14,000 to support clients to move into accommodation. One of the biggest factors affecting the availability of accommodation for under 35's is the shared room rate restriction for housing benefit purposes, where claimants are only entitled to £61.50 per week. The fund will be used to pay the top up required between the shared room rate £61.50 and one bedroom rate £85, paid direct to the Landlord for

the first 6 months of the tenancy. Due consideration will be given to affordability after the 6 months, but the alternative is that the client remains in temporary accommodation.

15. Where a decision has been made to offer a 6 months Rent in Advance shortfall payment clients need to be supported to start actively bidding for accommodation with MyHomeChocie at 4 months of their 6 month assured shorthold tenancy, and are expected to attend regular sessions with the DWP Job Coach. The Housing Service will continue to source funding for Rent Bond from other charitable sources, for example Vicars Relief Fund, administered by St Martins in the Field, wherever possible.
16. **Essential items** - The fund includes £8,000 to assist clients with essential items required to set up their home. This can include larger items such as carpets and white goods, vouchers for Argos and Aldi for smaller items such as kettles, toasters, cutlery etc. The Housing Service will continue to apply, where applicable for clients, to existing services for essential items such as Lancashire County Council Crisis Support, Swallowdale and Kensington Foundation. For clients in employment this support is not available therefore the funding can be used to prioritise more vulnerable households.
17. Fylde Council as lead authority will be responsible for submitting monthly returns to MHCLG on progress with the fund and number of households supported.

CONCLUSION

18. Council are requested to:
 1. Note the contents of the report and the approach the Housing Service have put in place to ensure the funds are fully spent by March 2021,
 2. Approve a fully funded revenue budget increase for 2020/21 in the sum of £112,210 in respect of the Next Steps homelessness initiative to be met by Next Steps Funding provided by MHCLG, of which £56,766 will be transferred to Wyre Council as the partner authority in the delivery of the joint scheme

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	This report requests approval to a fully funded revenue budget increase for 2020/21 in the sum of £112,210 to be met by Next Steps Funding provided by MHCLG.
Legal	None
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	Equality Impact Assessment on the 8 main characteristics required
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
Kirstine Riding	Kirstine.riding@fylde.gov.uk & Tel 01253 658569	9 th December 2019

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Fylde Council Rough Sleeping and Homelessness Strategy 2020-2025	2020	CMIS > Meetings Calendar