



EXECUTIVE BOARD DECISION

REPORT OF:	Executive Member for Public Health, Prevention & Wellbeing
LEAD OFFICERS:	Strategic Director of Adults and Health
DATE:	Thursday, 9 February 2023

PORTFOLIO/S AFFECTED:	Adults Social Care & Health
WARD/S AFFECTED:	(All Wards);
KEY DECISION:	Y

SUBJECT: Homelessness Prevention Grant

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Government has allocated £682,962 to Blackburn with Darwen over the next 2 years (April 2023 to March 2025) under the Homelessness Prevention Grant programme. The allocation includes additional funding in support of the expansion of priority need to those who are homeless as a result of domestic abuse. This came into force as part of the Domestic Abuse Act (2021).

Blackburn with Darwen have received an allocation from this programme in previous years. This is however the first multi-year commitment and represents a circa 10% increase on the 22/23 allocation, and more than double that of 2020/21.

The funding is used on a range of prevention and intervention measures as part of our overall approach to tackling homelessness and rough sleeping in the borough.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Executive Board:

- Notes the funding being made available to Blackburn with Darwen.
- Gives approval to supplementary revenues estimates for the homelessness prevention grant as set out in the financial implications over the next 2 years.
- Approves expenditure against this budget in discharging the requirements of the grant conditions.

3. BACKGROUND

The Government has made commitments to reducing rough sleeping and preventing homelessness, asking council's to work with the voluntary, faith and community sectors to intervene swiftly when someone is at risk of homelessness or already sleeping rough. As part

of this commitment the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities has made available a range of grants for Councils to apply for, and invest in local services to help achieve their commitment of “ending rough sleeping for good”.

Whereas some of the grants require application, this grant is an allocation using a formula that predicts demand for homelessness prevention and rough sleeper services. This formula has been updated meaning a moderate increase for Blackburn with Darwen over the next 2 years. This includes an allocation of approximately 5% of the total in support of discharging additional duties on the local authority under the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act.

As part of the councils suite of support services, this specific grant funds:

- Provision of Temporary accommodation – The council sub-lets a number of properties from Registered Social Landlords to provide support for vulnerable individuals and families that would otherwise be homeless while longer term accommodation is secured. The majority of these properties are used by individuals or families at risk of domestic abuse as an alternative to refuge where that is not the best alternative.
- Deposits – For individuals who are unable to secure accommodation due to their personal financial circumstances and they are at risk of homelessness as a result. This can include where additional deposits or security is required to accommodate those in need of extra support and who in the eyes of landlords carry additional risk.
- Specialist support staff – Direct outreach support through the councils housing needs team for those developing their skills in being able to manage and maintain a tenancy. This can include young parents, refugees, as well as individuals with wider needs around their mental health and substance misuse.

4. KEY ISSUES & RISKS

Blackburn with Darwen has been in receipt of this grant in previous years. A two year commitment over previous annual agreements is welcomed, and will allow us to plan and consolidate what is already a positive and pro-active response. That said, this is a long term systemic issue that requires a sustained response as part of our broader homelessness strategy. Should Government not provide similar funding beyond 2025 there would be a significant drop off in our support capabilities risking the significant progress we have made to date.

While small changes will be made as we look to continually improve our offer, as much of the infrastructure is already in place there is a low risk of deviation from the grant in terms of either under or over spend.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The council has been in receipt of funding for the grant in previous years and fits well with our current strategy and wider policies.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Blackburn with Darwen will receive £332,350 for 2023-24 and £350,612 for 2024-25 in respect of Homelessness Prevention Grant.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Government Ministers are empowered to give grants to local authorities under s31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and such grants are paid on such conditions as the person paying it may determine. This authority must therefore ensure it complies fully with any applicable conditions in this instance.

Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 recently amended by Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 gives to local authorities a duty to secure permanent accommodation for unintentionally homeless people in priority need. Local authorities, since 2017, have had a duty to prevent homelessness for all eligible applicants threatened with homelessness; and a duty to relieve homelessness for all eligible homeless applicants. In addition there is also a duty to provide or secure the provision of advice and information about homelessness and the prevention of homelessness, free of charge. This advice and assistance must be made available to any person in the authority's area "including people who are not eligible for further homelessness services as a result of their immigration status."

The programme of initiatives set out in this report is being undertaken in accordance with these powers and duties.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Resources required of the Homelessness offer available in the borough will be funded through a range of grants. Planning for the use of this funding is underway with the vast majority of the resources already in place from previous allocations and in expectation of this grant allocation. Any amendments will be approved through an executive member decisions when developed.

9. EQUALITY AND HEALTH IMPLICATIONS

Please select one of the options below. Where appropriate please include the hyperlink to the EIA.

Option 1 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) not required – the EIA checklist has been completed.

Option 2 In determining this matter the Executive Member needs to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA link here)*

Option 3 In determining this matter the Executive Board Members need to consider the EIA associated with this item in advance of making the decision. *(insert EIA attachment)*

10. CONSULTATIONS

Consultation was undertaken with members, the councils housing needs team, alongside wider departments, service users, the local community and 3rd sector organisations directly in developing our homelessness offer. Regular consultation with beneficiaries of the programme will be undertaken throughout delivery.

11. STATEMENT OF COMPLIANCE

The recommendations are made further to advice from the Monitoring Officer and the Section 151 Officer has confirmed that they do not incur unlawful expenditure. They are also compliant with equality legislation and an equality analysis and impact assessment has been considered. The recommendations reflect the core principles of good governance set out in the Council's Code of Corporate Governance.

12. DECLARATION OF INTEREST

All Declarations of Interest of any Executive Member consulted and note of any dispensation granted by the Chief Executive will be recorded in the Summary of Decisions published on the day following the meeting.

VERSION:	1
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CONTACT OFFICER:	Mark Aspin
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BACKGROUND PAPER:	
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