

<b>Notice of:</b>	Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Public Safety, Highways and Transport
<b>Decision Number:</b>	PH40/2022
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Antony Lockley, Director of Strategy
<b>Relevant Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Neal Brookes, Cabinet Member for Enforcement, Public Safety, Highways and Transport
<b>Date of Decision</b>	4 May 2022

## HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

### 1.0 Purpose of the report:

- 1.1 To outline how the Council will support residents with Government funding that has been provided for the Household fund. The total award for Blackpool is £1.745M

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

- 2.1 To approve the Eligibility Criteria attached at Appendix A for the period until 30 September 2022.
- 2.2 To agree that a number of processes and schemes as outlined below will be implemented to ensure that the fund will support the most vulnerable residents and to meet the overall fund requirements.

#### 1. Targeted help:

##### Extension to free school meals

Families eligible for free school meals will receive support during May/June bank holidays and for summer holidays. Support will be provided to families by vouchers that will be distributed by schools. Vouchers will be provided at £3 for each eligible day.

Total estimated budget £874,000

##### Pensioners

Those pensioners identified to be in hardship through eligibility for pension credit. A payment of £100 per eligible person will be sent. Payments will be sent automatically and residents will not need to apply.

Total estimated budget £550,000

## **2. Application and criteria based help**

### **Discretionary support scheme**

Application based for residents facing hardship with energy bills, food etc. A payment of £100 available to households without children and £150 to households with children.

Total estimated budget £186,000

### **Third sector grants scheme**

Voluntary, community and faith organisations will be able to apply for funded projects of up to £5000 to deliver support for those that are hard to reach. Grants will be awarded by an application process and a panel will evaluate proposals and make awards.

Total estimated budget £50,000

## **3. Contingency and administration expenses**

The terms of the funding allow for contingency and administration expenses

Total estimated budget £85.857

### **3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):**

3.1 Whatever approach they use, Councils must have a clear rationale or documented policy/framework outlining their approach including how they are defining eligibility and how households access the scheme.

For this round of funding there is a requirement that at least one third of the grant is spent on families with children and at least one third is spent on pensioners. The arrangements detailed above meet these requirements.

The above schemes are considered the most effective methods to reach those people requiring support in a timely manner.

3.2 Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? Yes

3.3 Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

#### **4.0 Other alternative options to be considered:**

4.1 There is a requirement to provide support to eligibility residents as soon as possible and these arrangements are considered the most effective to provide timely support.

#### **5.0 Council priority:**

5.1 The relevant Council priority is: "Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience".

#### **6.0 Background information**

6.1 The Household Support Fund was originally launched by the DWP on 6 October 2021 and has now been extended with a second round of funding until 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022. In England the money is being given to county councils and unitary authorities.

6.2 For the period from 1 April until 30 September 2022 Blackpool Council has been awarded £1.745M.

6.3 Each local authority can draw up its own procedures and targets for awarding payments, as long as they stay within the DWP's overall guidelines.

6.4 The money should be primarily be used to help pay for food, energy and water bills for vulnerable households, but other costs can also be covered.

6.5 Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

#### **7.0 List of Appendices:**

7.1 Appendix A Household support fund - Eligibility and operating criteria

#### **8.0 Financial considerations:**

8.1 Funding will be received from Central Government in arrears. The Council will need to fund the cost of the scheme from reserves until such time as reimbursement has been received. The schemes will end on 30 September 2022 or sooner if funds have been spent.

#### **9.0 Legal considerations:**

9.1 The funding is being used in accordance with the requirements laid down by Central Government.

**10.0 Risk management considerations:**

10.1 Overall project management and monitoring will be undertaken by the Corporate Delivery Unit. Monthly budget monitoring and reporting will take place. There will be a monitoring process for Third Sector grants.

**11.0 Equalities considerations:**

11.1 An Equalities Impact assessment (EIA) initial screening has been completed using benefit data. The funding is intended to benefit those who are more likely to be on low incomes compared to the overall population of Blackpool. The Third Sector grants scheme will allow further flexibility to target minority groups and those people that are unlikely to approach the council direct for support.

**12.0 Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

12.1 App and voucher schemes will be used where practicable to reduce the need for paper documentation.

**13.0 Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

13.1 Consultation has taken place with relevant Stakeholders including Education, Finance, Revenues and Benefits, Public Health.

**14.0 Background papers:**

14.1 Eligibility and operating criteria.

**ONLY APPLICABLE FOR REPORTS WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY BE CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE/CABINET MEMBER**

**15.0 Key decision information:**

15.1 Is this a key decision? No

15.2 If so, Forward Plan reference number:

15.3 If a key decision, is the decision required in less than five days? No

15.4 If **yes**, please describe the reason for urgency:

**(NOTE: This reason must be a sustainable one and not just because it was late and missed the agenda dispatch. Delete this message prior to submission of this report).**

**16.0 Call-in information:**

16.1 Are there any grounds for urgency, which would cause this decision to be exempt from the call-in process? No

16.2 If **yes**, please give reason:

**TO BE COMPLETED BY THE HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE**

**17.0 Scrutiny Committee Chairman (where appropriate):**

Date informed:

Date approved:

**18.0 Declarations of interest (if applicable):**

18.1 None.

**19.0 Executive decision:**

19.1 The Cabinet Member agreed the recommendations as outlined above namely:

1. To approve the Eligibility Criteria attached at Appendix A.
2. To agree that a number of processes and schemes as outlined below will be implemented to ensure that the fund will support the most vulnerable residents and to meet the overall fund requirements.

1. Targeted help:

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#### 3. Contingency and administration expenses

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Total estimated budget £85.857

#### **20.0 Date of Decision:**

20.1 4 May 2022

#### **21.0 Reason(s) for decision:**

21.1 Whatever approach they use, Councils must have a clear rationale or documented policy/framework outlining their approach including how they are defining eligibility and how households access the scheme.

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arrangements detailed above meet these requirements.

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**22.0 Date Decision published:**

22.1 4 May 2022

**23.0 Executive Members in attendance:**

23.1

**24.0 Call-in:**

24.1

**25.0 Notes:**

25.1