

Manchester City Council Report for Information

Report to: Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee - 7 November 2024
Executive – 11 December 2024

Subject: Anti-Poverty Budget Update

Report of: Deputy Chief Executive

Summary

This report provides a mid-year review and update of the Anti-Poverty budgets, including the Household Support Fund.

The report covers:

- i) The Council's core anti-poverty measures:
 - Council Tax Support Scheme
 - Vulnerable Renters Fund
 - Discretionary Housing Payments
 - Welfare Provision Scheme
 - Discretionary Council Tax Payments

- ii) The additional funding provided since 2021 to address the Cost of Living Crisis:
 - Household Support Fund
 - Cost of Living Fund (Residents at Risk)
 - Council Tenants' Support Fund

- iii) The longer-term activity through Making Manchester Fairer
 - Making Manchester Fairer – Anti Poverty Strategy

Recommendations

The Committee is invited to:

- Note and comment on the allocation and impact of the 2024/25 Anti-Poverty budgets covered in the report. The progress and impact of Making Manchester Fairer (MMF) and the integrated Anti-Poverty Strategy is being considered through Health Scrutiny and the MMF governance. A future report will be brought before Committee, which will set out recommendations for future anti-poverty provision and support.

The Executive is recommended to:

- Note and comment on the allocation and impact of the 2024/25 Anti-Poverty budgets covered in the report. The progress and impact of Making Manchester Fairer (MMF) and the integrated Anti-Poverty Strategy is being considered

through Health Scrutiny and the MMF governance. A future report will be brought before Committee, which will set out recommendations for future anti-poverty provision and support.

Wards Affected: The anti-poverty schemes are provided across all wards in the city. The wards with higher deprivation have higher levels of residents in receipt of means tested benefits and discretionary awards.

<p>Environmental Impact Assessment - the impact of the issues addressed in this report on achieving the zero-carbon target for the city</p>	<p>The range of anti-poverty measures covered in this report represent a mix of neighbourhood based, digital, phone and postal support based on the most effective way of meeting resident need. The mix of support mechanisms helps to limit the requirement to travel to access support.</p>
<p>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion - the impact of the issues addressed in this report in meeting our Public Sector Equality Duty and broader equality commitments</p>	<p>[Outline how the service, policy or function could impact on different protected or disadvantaged groups, and how this has been considered either through the completion of the Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA). If an EqIA has not been completed, then you must explain why the service, policy or function does not impact on different protected or disadvantaged groups].</p> <p>For further advice and guidance please see the <u>Equality Diversity and Inclusion</u> pages of the Intranet.</p>

Manchester Strategy outcomes	Summary of how this report aligns to the Our Manchester Strategy/Contribution to the Strategy
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	The anti-poverty mechanisms covered in the report are aimed at maximising residents' financial well-being and contributing to wider economic recovery.
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	The anti-poverty mechanisms covered in the report are aimed at maximising residents' financial well-being and building individual capacity to contribute to and benefit from the city's economic success.
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	This report provides details of anti-poverty schemes that provide support to residents on a low income and assist in building individual capacity to contribute to and benefit from the city's economic success.
A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	The report provides details on plans to maintain support to residents to respond to the cost-of-living pressures and to build individual capacity to contribute to and benefit from the city's economic success.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Digital Inclusion activity is supported from the Cost of Living budget.

Full details are in the body of the report, along with any implications for:

- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Risk Management
- Legal Considerations

Financial Consequences – Revenue

The Council continues to invest both mainstream and Government Grant resources to provide support to residents. This report sets out details of the financial resources available to support residents in 2024/25, and whilst there is still uncertainty around what future Government resources will be available, officers will continue to review all existing budgets and ensure that maximum benefit for residents is derived from the available budgets.

Financial Consequences – Capital

There are no capital implications arising from this report.

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Background documents (available for public inspection):

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy, please contact one of the contact officers above.

[Anti-Poverty Budget Options Report January 2024](#)

[Revenues and Benefits Update Report of 5 Sept 2024](#)

Welfare Provision Scheme Policy 2024/25
[Welfare provision scheme policy | Manchester City Council](#)

Discretionary Housing Payments Policy 2024/25
[Discretionary Housing Payments policy | Manchester City Council](#)

[Household Support Fund 5 Scheme](#)

[Early evaluation of Discretionary Housing Payments, DWP ad hoc research report no. 087](#)

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides a mid-year review and update of the Anti-Poverty budgets, including the Household Support Fund. The Council has adopted an Anti-Poverty Strategy, which sets out our approach to preventing people falling into poverty, mitigating the impacts of poverty, and providing pathways out of poverty. These activities are wide ranging and have grown over time, as Council officers have developed targeted responses and extended reach, to mitigate the impact of poverty and the cost-of-living crisis affecting those residents facing the greatest financial hardship.

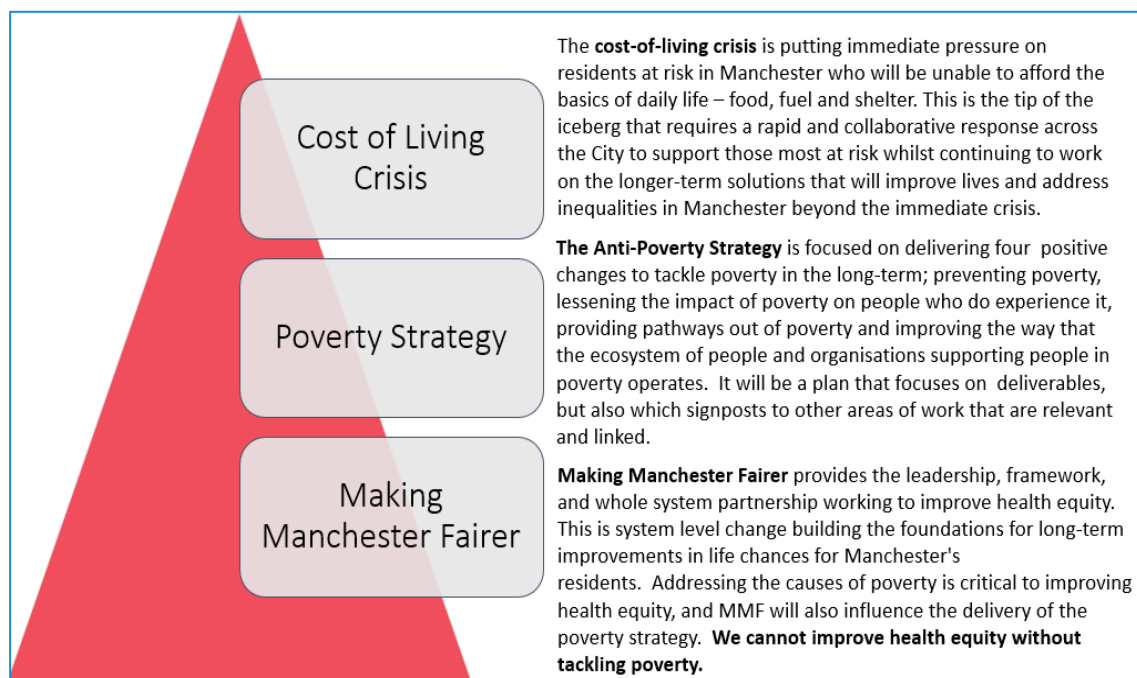
1.2 Two core drivers within the report are:

1. The current uncertainty around the future levels of discretionary and temporary government funding that will be provided from April 2025 and beyond.
2. Seeking a balance across the short, medium, and long term in meeting the demand for support from residents in crisis while seeking to build capacity for self-sufficiency within households.

2.0 Background

2.1 While many of the policy drivers in relation to poverty are national, in response to the pandemic and the cost-of-living crisis the Council has provided support to residents using a range of budgets and mechanisms. The Council's approach can be seen in operation in three parts (Figure 1):

- Short-term response – Range of crisis support schemes
- Medium-term response – Anti-Poverty Strategy
- Long-term response – Making Manchester Fairer



(Figure 1)

- 2.2 An Anti-Poverty Budget Options Report was presented to Resources and Governance Scrutiny Committee on 11 January 2024. This report builds on the earlier report and provides an update on progress to date.
- 2.3 The focus of this report is on the short-term and medium-term responses and looks at the schemes and budgets providing support to residents during 2024/25.
- 2.4 Successful interventions in these areas are expected to support the delivery of long-term aims. Tackling poverty and its impact is fundamental to addressing health inequalities and Making Manchester Fairer in the long-term. The appropriate balance needs to be struck in funding across the short, medium and long term interventions with a view to shifting towards those longer-term measures.
- 2.5 Making Manchester Fairer
 - 2.5.1 Making Manchester Fairer (MMF) is Manchester City Council’s five-year action plan to address health inequalities in the city with a longer-term ambition. It focuses on addressing the foundational building blocks of good health also known as the social determinants. Tackling poverty is fundamental to this and is a corporate priority for the City. The delivery of MMF can be captured by its eight themes and four ways of involving communities.



Framework for Making Manchester Fairer

(Figure 2)

2.5.2 The programme delivery is underpinned by six principles which are considered essential to achieving its ambitions:

- Proportionate universalism and focus on equity
- Respond to and learn from the impact of COVID 19
- Tailor to reflect the needs of Manchester
- Collaboration, creativity, and whole system approach
- Monitor and evaluate to ensure we are Making Manchester Fairer – narrowing gaps with Manchester as well as regional and national averages
- Take a life course approach with action on health inequalities starting before birth and right through to focus on ageing and specific needs of older people

2.6 Anti-Poverty Strategy

2.6.1 The Anti-Poverty Strategy (APS) was formally adopted at Executive in January 2023 and is the main route to delivering against the MMF theme of reducing poverty and debt. It sets out our vision that the whole of Manchester will work together to reduce poverty and lessen the impact of poverty on our residents.

2.6.2 The strategy has four themes which are:

- Preventing Poverty
- Mitigating Poverty
- Pathways out of Poverty
- Inclusive Delivery

2.7 Cost of Living Crisis

2.7.1 Evidence shows that there are over 100,000 households in Manchester, which struggle with cost-of-living pressures. In response, the Council reinstated the Residents at Risk group in October 2022. The group brings together MCC services and health partners to support our residents and neighbourhoods who need it most. Underpinned by the Cost-of-Living Advice Line (freephone & online), the offer includes financial support and advice, community food response, support for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations to increase their resilience and capacity, targeted support for communities experiencing the most adverse impacts, neighbourhood response with events targeted at priority wards, warm spaces, work with schools and digital inclusion.

3.0 Anti-Poverty Budgets 2024/25

3.1 Through the Making Manchester Fairer governance structures, the city council and its health partners are working to tackle the social determinants that result in poor health outcomes and poverty for too many of our residents. This includes modest investment in evidence-based interventions that make a difference. However, there is also a need to respond to the here and now

pressures and the Council's anti-poverty response during 2024/25 is described in the following sections.

3.2 Whilst the Council cannot mitigate for the changes to the welfare system there are important contextual factors which impact on the level of demand for discretionary support. To date the Government response to the cost-of-living pressures has provided a range of nationally and locally delivered short-term government funded schemes to support immediate need. In Manchester, ongoing financial pressures indicate a continuing and substantial need for welfare support.

3.3 A number of other budgets not included in this report are covered in detail in the Revenues and Benefits Update Report of 5 Sept 2024 listed as a background report in this paper.

3.4 Core Anti-Poverty Measures

Manchester City Council has over many years and in spite of austerity, taken budgetary decisions to support our residents facing the greatest financial hardship and the Council's core anti-poverty measures constitute:

- Council Tax Support Scheme
- Vulnerable Renters Fund
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Welfare Provision Scheme
- Discretionary Council Tax Payments

Table 3 sets out the core Anti-Poverty budgets utilised during 2024/25:

Core Anti-Poverty Budgets 2024/25				
Scheme	Budget £'000	MCC Funded £'000	Govt Funded £'000	Statutory Y/N
*CTS (ongoing)	17,431	17,431	0	Y
Vulnerable Renters Fund (ongoing)	3,700	200	3,500	N
Discretionary Housing Payments (ongoing)	2,700	1,300**	1,400	Y
Welfare Provision Scheme (ongoing)	1,300	1,300	0/	N
***Discretionary council tax support	750	750	0	N
Total	25,881	20,981	4,900	

(Table 1)

*CTS funding was rolled into the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) in 2014 where it has been assumed CTS has reduced year on year in line with the cuts to Manchester's Settlement Funding Assessments (SFA). Reported budget excludes precepting authorities.

** £300k of the £1.3m allocated from the £3.55m Cost-of-Living Group budget.

***Funded from the Council Tax Collection Fund

3.4.1 Council Tax Support 2024/25

Council Tax Support (CTS) pays up to 100% of Council tax liability for eligible pension-age households and up to 85% for working-age households (previously 82.5%). At 31 August the CTS caseload of 46,621 covered 15,267 pension-age households and 31,354 working-age households. CTS represents the biggest Council spend in support of residents facing financial hardship.

In April 2014 CTS funding was rolled into the Revenue Support Grant (RSG), where it has been assumed CTS has reduced year on year in line with the cuts to Manchester's Settlement Funding Assessments (SFA). As of 30 June 2024, the notional 2024/25 CTS funding from Government was estimated at £20.9m, while the cost of the scheme is £38.4m, which means the Council is subsidising the scheme by £17.5m.

Based upon the proportion of Council tax liability attributable to Manchester City Council and excluding the precepting authorities' elements (Fire/Police/Mayor) the increase to maximum CTS of 85% in 2024/25 Tables 2a and 2b shows the amount working-age households on maximum CTS will pay in 2024/25.

Property Council tax Band	CTS recipients by Council tax Band	2024/25 (+4.99% MCC Only) (£)	2024/25 amount to pay after 85% CTS award (£)
Band A	38,507	1,132.67	169.90
Band B	4,977	1,321.45	198.22
Band C	2,244	1,510.24	226.54
Band D	5,55	1,699.00	254.85
Band E	158	2,076.57	311.49
Band F	37	2,454.11	368.12
Band G	6	2,831.67	424.75
Band H	0	3,398.01	509.70

(Table 2a)

Band A (Single)	849.50	127.43
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(Table 2b)

83% of those receiving CTS live in a Band A property, 11% live in a Band B property.

3.4.2 Vulnerable Renters Fund

The Vulnerable Renters Fund (VRF) is used as a key tool in enabling the Council to secure privately rented accommodation for households who would otherwise be placed in temporary accommodation. The VRF is partly funded by the Government's Homeless Prevention Fund of £3.5m, and £200k mainstream city council budgets to give total budgets of c£3.7m. The cost

avoidance realised by the Council in utilising VRF to limit the use of temporary accommodation is estimated to be in the region of £20m in 2024/25.

3.4.3 Discretionary Housing Payments

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) provide support to households in rented accommodation who need help covering rent shortfalls. DHP is funded in part by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) £1.4m with an additional £1.3m funding provided by the Council.

The DWP increased Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates from April 2024 and there was a view that the increase in LHA rates may reduce the level of DHP demand and spend. However, given that the benefit cap was not increased at the same time, a significant gap remains between rents charged and the level of Universal Credit support paid. Therefore, demand has remained strong and the Q1 DHP spend is around £350k higher in 2024 compared to 2023. It is forecast that the full £2.7m DHP budget will be spent this year.

As private tenancies end and rents are increased the overall pressure on DHP is increasing. Evidence of this can be seen when comparing the number of private tenancy DHP awards paid at £100 per week or above. On 27 November 2022 we were paying 7 private tenants DHP at or over £100 per week; on 25 November 2023 the number had risen to 37 and on 1 September 2024 the number stood at 55.

Table 3 shows that total DHP awards for private tenants are on average £492 (74%) higher than for social housing tenants.

01.04.23 to 31.03.2024	Number of claims	Average per claim	Total DHP paid £000's
Private Tenants	1,123	£1,160	£1,302
Social landlord (Council, Council Homeless and HAs)	1,691	£668	£1,130
Total	2,814	£864	£2,432

(Table 3)

DWP commissioned research published in February 2024 found that 75% of respondents reported that they would not have managed to pay their rent without DHP support. The research found that DHPs helped to prevent evictions; many recipients reported they would have been evicted without it. The findings suggest that from the recipient's perspective, DHPs are meeting key policy objectives of supporting vulnerable individuals and preventing eviction and potential homelessness.

3.4.4 Welfare Provision Scheme

The Welfare Provision Scheme (WPS) is a discretionary scheme providing financial support in the form of cash and household goods to Manchester residents who are suffering acute financial hardship. This includes supporting residents moving from temporary accommodation into general needs accommodation; providing small sums of cash to respond to fuel poverty and financial hardship; and supporting carers, including those households where a child or young person is the carer. MCC has maintained our Scheme while many councils no longer run them.

The 2024/25 WPS budget of £1.3m is funded by the Council. £0.522m (40%) had been spent by 30 September 2024, representing 2,433 individual awards.

3.4.5 Discretionary Council Tax Payments

Discretionary Council Tax Payments (DCTP) are funded from the Council tax Collection Fund and used to support households to pay towards Council tax shortfalls in exceptional circumstances. DCTPs includes support for care leavers.

By 31 August 2024, £438k had been paid out to support 545 care-leavers. £66k had been paid to 331 households under the core DCTP Scheme. These have been considered on the individual merits of the presenting circumstances in accordance with the Council's policy.

The Council also operates the following flexibilities to support residents:

- An informal breathing space for residents when referred by an Advice Agency or a Manchester Councillor
- Offering longer arrangements with lower payments where appropriate to allow residents to sustain payments while managing their other financial pressures.

3.5 Cost of Living Crisis Budgets

Funding provided since 2021 to address the Cost of Living Crisis is covered here:

- Household Support Fund
- Cost of Living Fund- Residents at Risk
- Council Tenants' Support Fund

Table 4 sets out the core Anti-Poverty budgets utilised during 2024/25:

Cost of Living Crisis Budgets 2024/25				
Scheme	Budget £'000	MCC Funded £'000	Govt Funded £'000	Statutory Y/N
HSF 5 and 6	12,900	/	12,900	Y
Cost-of-Living Fund – Residents at Risk	3,550	3,550	/	N
Council Tenant Support Fund (HRA)	300	300	/	N
Total	16,750	3,850	12,900	

(Table 4)

3.5.1 Household Support Fund

The Household Support Fund (HSF) was first introduced in October 2021 and supports residents facing cost of living pressures. HSF is government funded and is the largest temporary Anti-Poverty budget administered by the council. The Government has announced a further extension of HSF from 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025. The full details were released on 25 September 2024 confirming that the Council will receive a further £6.453m, which is the same funding as for previous iterations of the scheme.

Government guidance around the scope of the scheme has changed over time but the primary expectations of addressing fuel and food poverty and targeting support at the most vulnerable households have remained constant.

The use of the HSF is split between targeted payments to residents who meet the criteria and on other forms of support agreed by the Council. Given the high levels of child poverty in Manchester, to date around 50% of the HSF budget has been used to maintain Free School Meals (FSM) provision across the school holidays representing c£6.4m per year. The extension of HSF funding means that holiday FSMs will be maintained up to and including February 2025 half-term. If HSF, or a comparable Government funded scheme, is not announced for 2025/26 it is expected that holiday FSM provision will end.

In addition, HSF has been used to top up the Holiday Activity Fund (HAF) by £95k for each half-term week because only the main Easter, Summer and Winter holidays receive Government funding for HAF. Other targeted funding includes support for care leavers and disabled residents.

The Chancellor's decision to restrict Winter Fuel Payments to households in receipt of Pension Credit from the winter of 2024 means that a proportion of HSF6 will be used to support households that will miss out on the Winter Fuel Payment.

No New Burdens funding is provided to address the cost of administration of HSF.

The full range of households supported by HSF5 and the projected final spend is shown at Appendix One.

The intended allocation of the HSF6 budget is shown at Appendix 2.

3.5.2 Cost of Living Fund - Residents at Risk

Investment of £3.55m was approved as part of the 2023/24 budget process, and this funding is to support the work of the Cost of Living group and provide short term support to residents who are most adversely impacted. The budget is allocated in line with Making Manchester Fairer and Anti-Poverty principles, including proportionate universalism and a cash first approach. The budget is allocated to meet need and add value to mainstream budgets and this year has been back ended to the second half of the financial year, to ensure that the Council maximised the HSF 5 spend and able to respond to residents needs during the winter: It has been allocated as per the table below:

Cost of Living Fund – Residents at Risk		
	2024-25 (£'000)	Projection (£'000)
Cash first initiatives		
Discretionary Housing Payments	300	300
Communities of identity	250	250
Food Poverty Priorities through Manchester Food Partnership		
Food Response & Staffing	1,151	901
Food response advice line	49	37
VCSE Grants Programme (food and fuel poverty, advice, alleviating impact of CoL crisis)		
VCSE	1,000	1,000
Other Support Offers		
Additional advice offer	100	200
Digital Inclusion	47	47
Comms and engagement	80	80
Holiday Activity Fund	190	0*
MMF Anti-Poverty Priorities**	180	180
Health/Learning support (MAES)	100	100
Contingency	103	80
Total	3,550	3,175

(Table 5)

*Now funded from HSF6.

**£180k of Cost of Living Crisis budget is currently going towards longer term activity through MMF-Anti Poverty work (see section 3.3). Any underspend could be used to support longer-term anti-poverty and Making Manchester Fairer initiatives for

example supporting more young people with financial and mental health issues by extending the Young Person's Kickstarter to the end of March (£123k), with any remaining budget contributing to reducing the corporate overspend.

3.5.3 Voluntary sector support

A large number of Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations in Manchester support anti-poverty measures, ranging from emergency response support (such as provision of food and warm spaces) to longer-term support (including employability skills, adult education and support to access unclaimed benefits).

Within the scope of this report the team administered a £0.6m VCSE Cost of Living Grant Programme in 2023, supporting VCSE groups to deliver sustainable support to residents experiencing poverty. This budget funded 44 voluntary and community organisations, supporting circa 34,000 residents. A second round of the fund is being delivered in 2024 from a budget of £1 million, with grants up to £15,000 available. The fund will support circa 66 organisations from mid-October 2024 to at least 31 March 2025. The current and upcoming rounds of this fund will be evaluated to assess impact.

3.5.4 Council Tenants' Support Fund

The £300k Council Tenants' Support Fund is funded by the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and administered by Housing Services to be paid to MCC tenants presenting with immediate financial need. The main drivers for support are fuel poverty and basic financial hardship. £54k had been paid out in support of tenants by the end of August 2024 and demand is expected to increase during the winter months.

3.6 Making Manchester Fairer – Anti Poverty Budgets

3.6.1 MMF and APS work and actions currently support the objective to provide medium to long term interventions and provisions that prevent and tackle poverty and create whole system changes that address the causes of poverty.

3.6.2 MMF Programme delivery is funded by £719k from a one-off reserve of £3m. This includes APS delivery, staffing costs, communication, and other commissioned activity.

3.6.3 In addition, £180k from the Cost-of-Living Crisis Budget has been allocated to support Anti-Poverty Strategy Priorities. This includes the following activities:

- Benefits maximisation – Working age adults and 50+ and targeted work with retired people around access to entitlements such as Pension Credit and Attendance Allowance and linking into the new Age Friendly Strategy.
- Work with organisations supporting young people to deliver a series of workshops/activities that support financial inclusion and greater financial literacy.

- Commission the collation and management of a single source of information for professionals to support residents, in response to resident feedback that it is difficult to navigate support when it is most needed.
- Supporting the poverty proofing of the school day particularly focusing on support VCSE organisations regarding affordable school uniforms.

3.7 Total Anti-Poverty Budget 2024/25

3.7.1 The table below summarises all the Anti-Poverty, Cost of Living and Making Manchester Fairer budgets for 2024/25 and identifies any variances in spend.

3.7.2 The total amount of budgeted resources that have been used is c£41.9m. Of this £17.8m is funded by central government with £24.1m directly funded by the Council.

Anti-Poverty Budgets 2024/25				
Scheme	Budget	Projected Spend	Variance	Recommendations / Comments
	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Anti-Poverty Support				
CTS	17,431	17,489	58	Variance reflects moderate shifts in the shape of the CTS caseload.
Vulnerable Renters Fund	3,500	3,651	151	The overspend will be met from within existing Homelessness budgets and funding.
Discretionary Housing Payments	2,400	2,400	-	Budget excludes the £300k contribution from COL budget. Expect to spend in full
Welfare Provision Scheme	1,300	1,300	-	Demand increasing in comparison to 2023/24. Expect to spend in full
Discretionary council tax support	750	750	-	Funded from CTax Collection Fund. Expect to spend in full but not a target.
Cost of Living Crisis Support				
HSF5	6,453	6,453	-	Funded 1/4/24 - 30/9/24. See Appx 1 for breakdown.
HSF6	6,453	6,453	-	Funded 1/10/24 - 31/3/25. See Appx 2 for breakdown.
Council Tenants' Support Fund	300	300	-	It is expected that demand will increase during the winter months and that the budget will be spent in full
£3.55m Cost of Living Support				
Cash first initiatives				

Discretionary Housing Payments	300	300	-	DWP funded DHP budget spent before MCC budget drawn on. The Vulnerable Renters Fund helps to manage demand on DHP. Expect to spend in full.
Communities of identity	250	250	-	Expect to spend in full
Food Poverty Priorities through Manchester Food Partnership				
Food Response and staffing	1,151	901	(250)	Projected underspend, £100k of which has been allocated for additional advice offer.
Food response advice line	49	37	(12)	Budget for 10 months – vacancy filled in June
VCSE Grants Programme (food and fuel poverty, advice, alleviating impact of CoL crisis)				
Support to VCSE	1,000	1,000	-	Expect to spend in full
Other Support Offers				
Additional advice offer	100	200	100	Expect to spend in full
Digital Inclusion	47	47	-	Expect to spend in full
Comms and Engagement	80	80	-	Expect to spend in full
MMF Anti-Poverty Priorities	180	180	-	Expect to spend in full
Health/Learning support (MAES)	100	100	-	Expect to spend in full
Contingency	103	23	(80)	
Total	41,947	41,914	33	

(Table 6)

3.7.3 Subject to meeting HSF criteria and continuing to deliver Manchester priorities such as support for families eligible for Free School Meals during holiday periods, the recent announcement of HSF6 presents the opportunity to fund the following elements presently funded from the £3.55 Cost of Living budget from HSF6:

Scheme	COL Budget current allocation £'000	COL Budget freed up if funded from HSF6 £'000
Holiday Activity Fund	190	190
Care Leaver Uplift	84	84
Total	274	274

(Table 7)

4.0 Anti-Poverty Budget Framework and Future Options

- 4.1 On 2 September 2024 the Government confirmed a further extension of HSF covering 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025. At the time of writing the Government has offered no indication of the likelihood of further HSF funding or their intentions for any other cost of living support, including the Holiday Activity Fund where Government funding presently ends after the Christmas Holidays 2024. These details may be clearer following the Autumn Budget on 30 October 2024.

5.0 Conclusions

- 5.1 The Council is committed to the delivery of Making Manchester Fairer and Anti-Poverty Strategy priorities in the medium to long-term, while recognising that households facing the greatest financial hardship need short term support through the cost-of-living crisis. This report provides an overview of the Council's core and cost-of-living short and medium-term responses and budgets, providing support to residents, who most need it during 2024/25.
- 5.2 Although the uprating of working age and pensioner benefits in April 2024 increased the income of households on welfare benefits, the loss of HSF funding from April 2025 will have a significant impact on the Council's financial capacity to provide support to some of Manchester's most vulnerable households. It restricts support to largely maintaining and delivering crisis support schemes.

6.0 Recommendations

- 6.1 The Committee is invited to note and comment on the allocation and impact of the 2024/25 Anti-Poverty budgets covered in the report. The progress and impact of Making Manchester Fairer (MMF) and the integrated Anti-Poverty Strategy is being considered through Health Scrutiny and the MMF governance. A future report will be brought before Committee, which will set out recommendations for future anti-poverty provision and support.

7.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – HSF5 Spend 1/4/24-30/9/24

Appendix 2 – Allocation of HSF6 Budget 1/10/24-31/3/25