

# Report to the Transformation & Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

26<sup>th</sup> March 2014

## Better Care Fund Submission



**Report Author:** Mark Bailey  
**Job Title:** Head of Business improvement & Partnerships  
**Email:** [mark.bailey@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk](mailto:mark.bailey@newcastle-staffs.gov.uk)  
**Telephone:** (01782) 742751

### Introduction

To inform Members of proposals set out as part of the development of the Better Care Fund (BCF) across Staffordshire and within Newcastle. This item is also due to be considered by Cabinet at its meeting in April 2014. These proposals include the transfer of the Disabled Facilities Grant funding into the BCF from April 2015

### Background

The Better Care Fund (BCF) aims to provide people with better integrated care and support in Staffordshire. In pursuing this aim, the BCF is focused on preventative work such as reablement, support for carers and services to allow disabled people to live independently.

The Fund has been created from a range of different existing budgets and from April 2015, the existing Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) budget – which is currently provided directly to district/borough councils – will be allocated to the BCF, although the statutory duty will remain with district/borough councils.

The Better Care Fund (BCF) itself was previously known as the Integrated Transformation Fund and was announced nationally in June 2013 with the aim of providing people with better integrated care and support.

NHS England will want these funds to be hosted by a Clinical Commissioning Group (North Staffordshire CCG in the case of Newcastle-under-Lyme) rather than by a local authority. The allocation to Staffordshire from the national BCF pot will be £56.1m in 2015/16 (£3.8m of which will be the DFG component).

The first draft of the Better Care Fund Plan for Staffordshire was submitted to NHS England on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2014, following consultation with the Health and Well

Being Board for Staffordshire and others. A copy of this submission can be found at Appendix A.

The Plan itself includes all district/borough councils as parties to the Plan; seeks to reflect the focus on prevention in the Staffordshire Health and Well Being Strategy (and also the local version of the Strategy in Newcastle under Lyme); refers to the role of district/borough councils in engaging with providers and communities; and acknowledges the positive contribution of DFGs in preventing falls and other key areas of work.

Having said that, the BCF Plan is limited in terms of its references to the role of district/borough councils – there are few references to them beyond those listed above. It does, however, seem likely that the scope of the funding channelled into the BCF nationally will expand over time and may provide opportunities for district/borough councils to promote the needs of the local communities in the borough and also input into the preventative agenda via a number of council services (e.g. leisure/culture; economic development; housing; community safety; and environmental health) – although this is, at the present time, no means certain.

The issue of DFG funding is one of immediate concern, however, to councils such as NULBC (who will still have a legal duty to deliver adaptations where certain criteria are met). A letter was issued, therefore, in December 2013 from the Departments of Health and Communities and Local Government stated that the DFG element of BCF for 2015/16 must be allocated back to the relevant housing and strategic housing authorities. NULBC's allocation will be £654,000.

To this end, therefore, the report to Cabinet is proposing that the Council signs up to the BCF only until the end of 2015/16, pending a review of the position regarding DFGs. Obviously, it remains a risk to this Council if it remains statutorily responsible for DFGs but without the certainty of ongoing funding. NULBC is therefore proposing (subject to Cabinet approval) that a review of the position relating to DFGs is organised by the Departments of Health and Communities & Local Government in Staffordshire, with the involvement of all local authorities in the county.

In terms of future working, it is likely that a Partnership Agreement (covering section 75 of the NHS Act 2006 allowing the NHS and local authorities to pool budgets) will be needed to underpin the governance and management of the BCF. District/borough councils will not be obliged to sign up to the s75 Agreement and will be able to receive funding from the BCF without such an agreement in place, but not to do so could exclude NULBC from discussions on future allocations of funding and it may be difficult for additional funding to be invested from the BCF into NULBC work and also into the DFGs as a preventative activity. Further details on this will become available later in the year and a further report will be presented to the Committee at that time.

## **Questions to be Addressed**

- How will the transition arrangements be undertaken prior to the changes to DFG funding in April 2015? What is the role of NULBC in this process?
- Will this Council be assured of its DFG funding in 2015/16 and what will happen beyond April 2016?
- What is the position regarding NULBC in terms of the potential wider focus on the BCF and integrated commissioning – will the Council be commissioned to do more work and how will this be implemented?
- What are the details underpinning the development of s.75 Partnership Agreements as set out in this note?

## **Outcomes**

- To understand the current position with regard to the development of the Better Care Fund in Staffordshire
- To analyse and understand the implications for NULBC in terms of Disabled Facilities Grant, including the future funding picture
- To gain some insight into the thinking of partner organisations around future commissioning opportunities for NULBC
- **Supporting Information**
- Staffordshire Better Care Fund – First Draft Submission
- Better Care Fund – Outcomes and Metrics
- Better Care Fund – Financial Summary

## **Invited Partners/Stakeholders/Residents**

Representatives from the Staffordshire Health and Well Being Board

## **Constraints**

- Future commissioning plans still to be developed by different organisations involved in the BCF
- Work to be done on future of DFGs post 2016

## **Conclusions**

This report provides information on the current position with regard to the development of the Better Care Fund in Staffordshire.

There is a request from the Staffordshire Health and Well Being Board that all district/borough councils sign up to the Fund submission.

The Council is seeking reassurances and further information on the future of DFGs and also the future involvement and role of district/borough councils in the BCF and also in terms of wider commissioning.

**Relevant Portfolio Holder(s)**

Cllr Gareth Snell, Communications, Policy & Partnerships

**Local Ward Member (if applicable)**

N/A

**Background Materials**

See 'supporting information'

**Appendices**

Appendix A – Staffordshire Better Care Fund – Draft Submission

Appendix B – BCF – Outcomes/Metrics & Financial Summary