

NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE LEADERSHIP TEAM'S
REPORT TO
CABINET

10 January 2024

Report Title: Health Inequalities Grant Projects

Submitted by: Service Director - Regulatory Services

Portfolios: Community Safety and Wellbeing plus Leisure, Culture and Heritage

Ward(s) affected: All

<u>Purpose of the Report</u>	<u>Key Decision</u>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>To outline to Cabinet the opportunity to bid for funding from Staffordshire County Council to enable the Council to deliver projects that meet the Health Inequalities agenda. Through the Better Care Staffordshire Programme there are identified health priorities across the County, within Newcastle there are many residents living with health issues that would benefit from additional non-medical support.</p>			
<p><u>Recommendation</u></p> <p>That:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet acknowledges the submission of bids as set out in the report and approves acceptance of any funding allocated as part of the Covid Outbreak Management Funding (COMF). The Service Director – Regulatory Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing is authorised to spend the grant in relation to Housing and Health Hot-spot areas, entering into any agreements necessary to deliver the projects in line with the grant. The Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage is authorised to spend the grant in relation to strengthening existing health and wellbeing programmes entering into any agreements necessary to deliver the projects in line with the grant. 			
<p><u>Reasons</u></p> <p>The Council's Constitution sets out that Cabinet should review funding bids of this scale, as it is over £100,000. It is therefore appropriate that Cabinet reviews the COMF opportunity and supports the bids for the hoarding and damp/ mould projects plus the health-based referral programme.</p>			

1. Background

- 1.1** District/boroughs have the opportunity, via the County Council's Health Inequalities Directors' Group (HIDG), to access funding to tackle health inequalities. One of these opportunities is to utilise some of the remaining Covid Outbreak Management Funding (COMF), held by Staffordshire County Council (SCC).

1.2 There are three proposed funding streams as follows:

1.2.1 **Stream 1 - Health and Care Hardship Fund:**

This fund stream is to create a longer-term hardship fund / discretionary assistance fund for partner organisations to utilise to help create a system solution to address health and care scenarios when hardship issues are impacting on a solution to a problem.

Across Staffordshire we are seeing an increasing number of scenarios / situations that are 'falling between the gaps' in service provision and these are impacting on people's health and / or care.

Some recent examples of complex scenarios where the hardship fund would have been beneficial include:

- Flea infestations in properties which have resulted in restrictions to the level of district nursing care provided and a delay to hospital discharge.
- Homeless case of an infectious disease where there was a requirement to self-isolate to prevent the spread of infection.
- Deep clean/declutter to ensure a continuation of care.

The hardship fund, which would be accessed by partner organisations rather than individual residents of Staffordshire, aims to provide a resource to enable timely solutions to problems, however it is not intended to remove or mitigate the statutory responsibility of partner organisations. Consideration not only needs to be given to the health of the individual, but also the wider impacts on adult social care and hospital avoidance and discharge.

Collaborative multi-agency approach required including ICB, MPFT, Fire Service, mental health service, registered social landlords, housing officers, and environmental health officers, and importantly the voluntary sector and communities.

1.2.2 **Stream 2 - Strengthening existing health and wellbeing programmes or offsetting in year spend.**

This fund stream is to scale-up or to bolster existing health and wellbeing programmes. Must be aligned to health inequalities / health outcomes, as well as existing public health priorities (e.g. Better Health Staffordshire). In principle, the funding would be used to either off-set in-year spend aligned to wider determinants of health/health inequalities, which will create a longer-term 'funding pot' to address local priorities and health inequalities; or bolster/expand existing health and wellbeing programmes prior to September 2024.

Spend plans must demonstrate clear political governance for the proposed investment in addition to providing details of anticipated outcomes and evidence of impact of addressing health inequalities. With accountability of delivering actions and outcomes taken to Staffordshire Leader's Board.

Any COMF spend will need to meet the COMF grant conditions and demonstrate a measurable impact on improving health and reducing inequalities. This funding is an opportunity to ensure that agreed work programmes have the greatest impact on target populations and on addressing health inequalities.

Jointly developing and agreeing the spend principles will create effective local partnership structures that can drive collective action on tackling inequalities via the wider determinants of health.

1.2.3 Stream 3 - Housing and Health Hot-spot areas

Good housing supports health across the life course, from childhood through working life and into older age. Housing is particularly important in ensuring a healthy start in life and is a key factor in the generation of health inequalities. People's health is particularly affected by living in poor-quality housing and unintentional injuries in the home are a leading cause of morbidity and mortality.

This funding is for specific intervention / activity related to housing and health, with the aim of proposing and delivering specific targeted intervention(s) to address the housing issues identified in the hot-spot areas, based on a data informed approach.

Ten wards have been identified as having 'high' level of need, accounting for 63,400 residents or 51% of the borough population.

These wards are: Bradwell, Cross Heath, Kidsgrove & Ravenscliffe, Town, Holditch & Chesterton, May Bank, Clayton, Crackley & Red Street, Silverdale and Wolstanton.

2. Issues

- 2.1 The County Council have allocated £250,000 to the Health and Care Hardship Fund (Stream 1) which will be distributed on a county-wide basis, potentially through a voluntary sector partner.
- 2.2 Newcastle had been given a notional allocation of £404,604 which comprises £253,592 for Strengthening existing health and wellbeing programmes (Stream 2) and £151,012 for Housing and Health Hot-spot areas (Stream 3).
- 2.3 The funding proposal for Stream 2 is based on health referrals for a range of targeted exercise classes.
 - 2.4.1 The Council operates a successful wellness suite that is used by a wide range of people either maintaining their physical fitness or recovering from an illness. The Wellness Suite is fitted with supported exercise machines which enable people to build up their muscle mass sufficiently to utilise standard gym equipment. The Council also offers land and water-based exercise through Good Boost, this enables people to develop their exercise at a rate to meet their personal needs. The proposal is to extend the offer for a wide range of medical needs both based at J2 and in community locations.
 - 2.4.2 Referrals will be for a junior programme aged 12-16 years then an adult programme over 16 years. Those on the junior programme will be able to access the classes with a buddy of their choice whether it be a carer, parent or friend. It will be a twelve-week exercise referral programme, including rehabilitation classes: Pulmonary, Cancer, Obesity, Escape Pain, Slips, trips and falls plus a move or it or lose it exercise programme aimed specifically at the over 60's. Sessions will also support customers with mental wellbeing. Specific session based around nature and nurture will be run from the Brampton Museum and Brampton Park.
- 2.4 The funding proposal for Stream 3 comprises two projects:

- Hoarding Support - to provide dedicated support to individuals with hoarding tendencies following de-cluttering of premises. The project is to complement the declutter with support for the next steps to allow a long-term sustainable solution. This may include making a housing application, going on viewings, supporting with the practicalities of moving alongside supporting to access services and treatments that address underlying causes that have led to hoarding behaviour. All with a purpose of developing long term behaviour change enabling suitable, secure safe homes that provide a place to thrive.
- Damp and Mould - The essence of this project is housing on prescription, where a referral is made from a medical professional who has identified an ill health associated with housing so that it can be investigated, and improvement measures applied. The project would initially focus on developing links with social prescribers and medical professionals to establish a referral pathway. To then investigate the housing conditions, commissioning specialist services as appropriate to review damp and mould conditions. Carrying out either enforcement activity or fund finding for improvements. Hence making long term improvements to the property and improving the overall housing stock.

2.5 All projects are set to run for a minimum until September 2024, however subject to demand the aim is to enable them to run for 12 months. In addition, for some projects should as exercise classes there will be some sustainability through offering J2 membership to enable the health benefits to continue beyond the grant programme.

2.6 The business cases have been reviewed and approved with a total funding allocation of £410,592 being allocated to the three initiatives.

3. Recommendation

3.1 That:

- 1) Cabinet acknowledges the submission of bids as set out in the report and approves acceptance of any funding allocated as part of the Covid Outbreak Management Funding (COMF).
- 2) The Service Director – Regulatory Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Wellbeing is authorised to spend the grant in relation to Housing and Health Hot-spot areas, entering into any agreements necessary to deliver the projects in line with the grant.
- 3) The Deputy Chief Executive in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage is authorised to spend the grant in relation to Strengthening existing health and wellbeing programmes entering into any agreements necessary to deliver the projects in line with the grant.

4. Reasons

4.1 Officers have developed bids based on the notional spend profiles set out by the Health Inequalities Directors Group and kept to the splits recommended between streams 2 and 3. Officers have highlighted that should further funding become available should another district not take up their allocation that Newcastle can expand our delivery programme accordingly.

4.2 Staffordshire County Council have reviewed the bids and approved funding of £410,592 to deliver the three projects.

5. Options Considered

- 5.1 To not submit proposals for projects and funding.
- 5.2 To submit proposals for the full financial allocation.
- 5.3 To submit proposals for over the full allocations, should other Local Authorities not utilise their full provisional allocation, that this may be awarded to Newcastle-under-Lyme to benefit our communities.
- 5.4 To accept or decline the £410,592 funding from Staffordshire County Council.

6. Legal and Statutory Implications

- 6.1 The funding is not directly supporting the delivery of the Council's statutory duties but is providing complementary services which are needed by our residents.

7. Equality Impact Assessment

- 7.1 The programmes will be developed to assist our most vulnerable customers who are either living in unsuitable housing conditions or struggling with significant health issues.
- 7.2 Whilst the programmes are based on need some are clearly directed to specific groups such as the junior health programme and the over 60's exercise programme.

8. Financial and Resource Implications

- 8.1 If district/boroughs are unable to meet the September 2024 spend deadline they can offset this against eligible 2023/24 expenditure within their base budget; a proportion of this is carried forward to 2024/25 (and potentially future years) as a reserve.
- 8.2 Newcastle has been given a notional allocation of £404,604 which comprises £253,592 for Strengthening existing health and wellbeing programmes (Stream 2) and £151,012 for Housing and Health Hot-spot areas (Stream 3).
- 8.3 The project proposals have been developed on the following financial models:
 - Leisure & Health = £253,592 with option for extension for further months dependent on funding availability.
 - Hoarding Support = £91,000 with option for extension for further months dependent on funding availability.
 - Damp & Mould = £60,000 with option for extension for further months dependent on funding availability.
- 8.4 The grants awards across the County are a total of £2,600,000, should other Local Authorities not submit proposals for their full notional allocation, then this may be reallocated to other Local Authorities. Each of the projects has an element of extension proposed to utilise this additional funding, if available.

8.5 In terms of the 12 week health referral programme it clearly takes longer than 12 weeks to change some-one's health, therefore the key is to change their lifestyle and to make regular exercise part of their weekly routine. If attending sessions at J2 or in the community are suitable for them then they need to continue beyond the 12 weeks and it is known that if the person has made some payment then they are more likely to attend and continue attendance into the mainstream offer. Following discussions with those operating a similar scheme in Cheshire their charges are based on 3 months of prescription charges, in Cheshire health colleagues accept that customers have to pay this amount for medicines or non-medical treatments. Subject to the bid being successful officers will discuss this approach with referring agencies and adopt the charges following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Heritage.

8.6 Staffordshire County Council have received the bid submission and provided £410,592 funding for the delivery of the three projects.

9. Major Risks & Mitigation

9.1 A GRACE risk assessment has been completed including the following main risks:

- The risk is the lack of engagement from the target residents. The key risk is of not being able to engage with social prescribers or medical professionals to identify households for the project to work with.
- The delivery of the exercise referral programme is reliant on the recruitment of additional exercise trainers.

9.2 Controls have been identified and implemented in order to control these risks; the main controls include:

- Initial engagement has already begun to develop good working relationships and mitigate this risk.
- This is mitigated by having a dedicated support person with a role to develop that relationship. Evidence from case reviews shows usually time is the key to building this up.
- Within Leisure discussions are taking place with potential software providers to deliver a referral programme which will then also record customers health needs and participation which will in turn be useful data to prove the success of the programme.
- Recruitment of additional exercise instructors and use of current J2 staff will be considered to ensure the delivery of the new programme.

10. UN Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG)

10.1 The funding is clearly aimed at improving residents' health and the following UNSDG goals:



11. Key Decision Information

11.1 This is a key decision due to the level of funding being requested and it will affect residents in wards across the Borough.

12. Earlier Cabinet/Committee Resolutions

12.1 None.

13. List of Appendices

13.1 None.

14. Background Papers

14.1 The funding bids are available on request.