

24 July 2020**Agenda Item: 8**

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE & HEALTH

REVIEW OF THE BETTER CARE FUND PROGRAMME AND USE OF BETTER CARE FUND RESERVE FOR SHORT-TERM TRANSFORMATION PROJECTS

Purpose of the Report

1. To seek approval from the Health & Wellbeing Board for recommendations to improve the implementation and oversight of the Better Care Fund programme in Nottinghamshire.
2. To seek approval from the Health & Wellbeing Board for the Adult Social Care & Health department to use Nottinghamshire County Council's Better Care Fund reserve to fund 16 proposed short-term transformation projects.

Background Information

3. The Better Care Fund programme (BCF) was established in June 2013 within the Government's Spending Review. It was described as creating a national £3.8 billion pool of NHS and Local Authority monies intended to *"join-up health and care services, so that people can manage their own health and wellbeing, and live independently in their communities for as long as possible."* The programme was created to *"improve the lives of some of the most vulnerable people in our society, placing them at the centre of their care and support, and providing them integrated health and social care services, resulting in an improved experience and better quality of life."*
4. The BCF pooled budget consists of various existing funding streams to Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and local authorities, anticipated annual grants, and recurrent capital allocations. Each organisation has a specified minimum allocation that must be contributed to a BCF pooled fund.
5. Within the BCF pooled budget, the funding streams are:
 - a. Protecting social care – to fund adult social care pressures
 - b. Care Act 2014 implementation – to fund the cost of the new responsibilities required of Local Authorities
 - c. Improved BCF – funding to reduce pressure on the NHS (including hospital discharge), and to stabilise the social care provider market

- d. Winter Pressures grant – originally provided in Winter 18/19 to Adult Social Care to support increased demand over the winter, but then made recurrent from April 2019 (same amount over the full year)
 - e. CCG funding for community services (primary, mental health, community or social care), local authority delivery of reablement and carer support services.
 - f. Disabled Facilities Grants – capital funding for Housing Authorities to provide adaptations to homes and discretionary schemes that meet the aims of the BCF and support people to stay living independently at home creating a “joined up approach”.
6. The value of the BCF pooled budget in 2019/20 was £92.2m for Nottinghamshire.
 7. The partners involved in the BCF programme are:
 - Nottinghamshire County Council
 - All district and borough councils in Nottinghamshire
 - NHS Bassetlaw Clinical Commissioning Group
 - NHS Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
 8. The BCF programme and associated work is subject to nationally set performance management targets largely established when the BCF was first initiated.
 9. For further background about the BCF programme, please see Appendix 1.
 10. The budget and partnership work programme is overseen by the BCF Steering Group which is made up of Officers from the core partners. A review of the BCF programme was carried out between September 2019 to March 2020. The findings were reported to the BCF Steering Group. The recommendations from this review are set out in the paragraphs below.
 11. The Pooled Budget is fully allocated each year. When the full amount of allocated spend for the Adult Social Care & Health department is not utilised within any financial year, the spare funding is held in a Better Care Fund reserve. There are various reasons why the actual spend may not equal the allocated spend. For example, the service or project may not be fully staffed during the year or the original cost predictions may have been too high. A reserve of £2.6m has built up over the last two years. Reserves can only be used for one-off areas of spend.

The BCF Review

12. The context, scope and main findings of the BCF Review are set out in Appendix 2. In summary, it has been concluded there are some strong areas of integrated service provision across Nottinghamshire and 10 examples of services that are jointly commissioned with health. However, there are various national documents that offer best practice guidance about how to promote integrated approaches. Compared to this guidance, achievements to date in Nottinghamshire show a mixed picture.

The BCF review recommendations

13. To develop a vision for how residents who have a range of health, housing and care needs will be supported in future by services acting in more joined up ways. This vision will be based on stories about the recent experiences that people have had with our services, where they have a range of housing, health and care needs. This will help the BCF programme become more person-centred and make it clearer how integration can improve the experience for residents.

14. To agree and implement developments to improve working arrangements across partners in three priority areas:
- Housing responses to support hospital discharge – including homelessness.
 - Assistive Technology: share best practice, learn about new developments, have compatible systems, use data more proactively to see where people have escalating needs.
 - Digital integration across partners (e.g. automated workflows to speed up processes between OTs and DFG officers in district / borough councils, sharing information for a single view of the citizen, automated alerts between organisations).
15. To renew the governance structure and reorganise the work that we do together by replacing the BCF Steering Group with two BCF officer groups to focus on:
- Integration of Health and Adult Social Care – to provide oversight of existing arrangements and establish a vision, strategy and work plan to expand our integrated approaches in prioritised areas of provider services and commissioning activities.
 - Housing Partnership – to provide oversight of key workstreams that are needed to coordinate action on issues related to housing, care and health as well as provide a communication channel for housing, health and care to discuss matters of interest as well as build trust and relationships.
16. To establish a BCF business group to manage the administrative aspects of the Plan and reporting requirements across the partners.

Progress since March 2020 and the impact of COVID-19

17. The BCF Steering Group received the review report in February 2020 and discussed the recommendations. A workshop was planned for the Nottinghamshire Health & Wellbeing Board on 1 April 2020 so that members could consider the findings and next steps in 2020/21. Due to the COVID-19 emergency, the Health & Wellbeing Board workshop was cancelled and further development work was paused.
18. A significant consequence of the COVID-19 crisis response was that many positive integrated approaches have developed very quickly across the BCF partners in Nottinghamshire. This was enabled by a variety of factors, including the imposed creation of the Local Resilience Forum structure, new national guidance, the strong working relationships already in place between partners, and the willingness at senior levels to push normal boundaries in order to rise to the crisis.
19. Examples of new integrated partnerships created to respond to COVID-19 include:
- New virtual hospital discharge “hubs” in North and Greater Notts, where adult social care and community health staff work together seven days per week to agree on the best discharge arrangement for people who need support to leave hospital safely.
 - The Humanitarian Assistance Group and the Community Support Hubs, which link vulnerable people with a range of volunteer support.
 - Coordinated support from health and social care partners is being provided to care homes and home care providers, to help them to sustain their services safely during the emergency.
20. Over the last month, all health and care partners have been reviewing the new services that were put in place to respond to the COVID-19 emergency so that these models can be adapted appropriately as the recovery process continues.

21. The recommendations within this report will support Nottinghamshire to build on lessons related to integration from the COVID-19 emergency and sustain a strong recovery.

Proposed usage of the BCF Reserve

22. A list of proposed short-term transformation projects were developed in 2019/20 (i.e. before the COVID-19 emergency) by the Adult Social Care & Health department to utilise Nottinghamshire County Council's BCF reserve of £2.6m. The projects are summarised in Appendix 3. All the proposed projects were designed to enable social care to manage demand, meet its responsibilities, support the NHS to reduce its pressures, and stabilise the social care market.
23. Approval of the projects could not be sought from the Health & Wellbeing Board before this time as meetings were cancelled in response to the COVID-19 emergency. The projects have been considered in the light of the COVID-19 emergency and some changes have taken place to ensure they are still relevant and supportive of the direction that the Adult Social Care & Health department wishes to take as services move into the recovery phase. All projects will be monitored and evaluated so that any service implications and lessons can be considered towards the end of each project. The total spend allocated is £2.18m which leaves £0.420m remaining in the reserve.
24. The Health & Wellbeing Board are asked to note that the Adult Social Care & Health department will continue to review all actions and plans for recovery. This will be an ongoing exercise as services adapt to new ways of working, create new service offers and find ways to meet the resulting costs. Therefore, some changes may need to be made to the use of the BCF reserve over coming weeks and months.
25. NHS colleagues from NHS Nottingham & Nottinghamshire Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Bassetlaw Clinical Commissioning Group indicated in March 2020 that they supported the use of Nottinghamshire County Council's BCF reserve for the purposes set on in Appendix 3.
26. The BCF programme will continue until 2023/24. It is recommended that any future underspend on the Adult Social Care & Health department's expenditure from the BCF will continue to be held in a reserve to fund future transformation projects.

Other BCF-related work impacted by the COVID-19 emergency

27. Financial work has continued to confirm overall Quarter 4 BCF expenditure, the Handy Persons Advisory Scheme expenditure in 2019/20 and Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) expenditure by district / borough councils in 2019/20. Local authorities have been advised that the submission of Quarter 4 reports has been "paused" until the end of July 2020 and will be reviewed at that point.
28. Work to complete the Better Care Fund Section 75 Agreement for 2020/21 is progressing now, having been paused during April and May 2020. The BCF agreement will be varied to include the 2020/21 funding in addition to a new schedule to incorporate hospital discharge terms (as per government guidance in March 2020) and the merger of the Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Other Options Considered

29. The BCF review proposed some other topics that were not ranked as top priorities for countywide work by all members of the BCF Steering Group, as they felt these issues could be developed more effectively at a local level.
30. The BCF Review considered whether to recommend retaining the existing governance structure (i.e. the BCF Steering Group) and the requirement for all business cases for use of capital grant to be approved by the BCF Steering Group. These options were rejected as being less effective than the proposed option.
31. In addition to the proposed projects listed in Appendix 3, other projects were put forward for consideration by the Corporate Director for Adult Social Care & Health in January 2020. These other projects have either been rejected or proposed for funding from other sources.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

32. The Health & Wellbeing Board is requested to approve the recommendations of the BCF Review because they present an opportunity to improve the effectiveness of the BCF Programme in Nottinghamshire and have received the support of the partners represented on the BCF Steering Group. The recommendations also support the sustainability of the integrated partnership developments that have been implemented to respond to the COVID-19 emergency.
33. The Health & Wellbeing Board is requested to approve that the proposed transformation projects should be funded from Nottinghamshire County Council's BCF reserve, as listed in Appendix 3. These projects will enable social care to manage demand, meet its responsibilities, support the NHS to reduce its pressures, and stabilise the social care market.

Statutory and Policy Implications

34. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

35. The total spend allocated to the transformation projects is £2.18m which leaves £0.420m remaining in the reserve.

Human Resources Implications

36. HR implications involve the following workforce changes:
- a. The temporary Programme Manager Partnerships post (1fte, Band F) within the Integrated Strategic Commissioning & Service Improvement Division to be extended until the end September 2020, to allow for further review of the future requirements for this role.
 - b. The temporary Business Support Officer post (0.8 fte, Grade 3) to be extended to end in September 2020, to support recruitment and retention initiatives for front line roles in social care.

- c. One Commissioning Officer post (0.8 fte, Band B) to be established for 12 months to implement the Dementia Advance Care Planning & Support project.

Implications for Service Users

37. There are a wide variety of implications for services users that will be delivered by the 16 proposed projects. The outcomes of these projects will benefit all service user groups including older adults, homeless people and people living with disabilities or who need reablement to recover from a health or care crisis. One project will also benefit carers and any other resident who needs access to general advice and information relevant to health and social care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) To develop a vision for how residents who have a range of health, housing and care needs will be supported in future by services acting in more joined up ways.
- 2) To agree and implement developments to improve working arrangements across partners in three priority areas:
 - a. Housing responses to support hospital discharge
 - b. Assistive Technology
 - c. Digital integration across partners.
- 3) To renew the governance structure and reorganise the work that we do together by replacing the BCF Steering Group with two BCF officer groups to focus on:
 - a. Integration of Health and Adult Social Care
 - b. Housing Partnership.
- 4) To establish a BCF business group to manage the administrative aspects of the Plan and reporting requirements across the partners.
- 5) To approve the list of BCF-funded transformation projects, as set out in Appendix 3.
- 6) The BCF programme will continue until 2023/24. It is recommended that any future underspend on Adult Social Care & Health expenditure from the BCF will continue to be held in a reserve to fund future transformation projects.

Melanie Brooks

Corporate Director: Adult Social Care & Health
Nottinghamshire County Council

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Wendy Lippmann
Programme Manager: Partnerships
Nottinghamshire County Council
Telephone: 0115 977 3017
Email: wendy.lippmann@nottscc.gov.uk

Financial Comments (OC 15/07/20)

38. £2.60m is currently in the BCF Reserves of which £2.18m of this has been allocated to the transformation projects for 2020/21, leaving £0.42m in the BCF Reserves.

HR Comments (SJJ 18/06/20)

39. The temporary contacts for the current incumbents in the posts of Programme Manager and Business Support Officer will be extended and the temporary Commissioning Officer post will be recruited to on a fixed term contract.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

- Simple Guide to the Better Care Fund in Nottinghamshire (Appendix 1)
- BCF Review – context, scope and findings (Appendix 2)
- List of transformation projects (Appendix 3)
- BCF Review reports – first and second stage (available on request)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

- All.