

Subject:	Allocation of Contain Outbreak Management Funds 2020/21		
Date of Meeting:	28 April 2021		
Report of:	Acting Chief Finance Officer		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Nigel Manvell	Tel: 01273 293104
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT

- 1.1 On the 12th October 2020, Local Authorities became eligible for a series of payments from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund to support proactive containment and intervention measures. Payments for the post-June period to 2nd December were based on £8 per person and this authority received £2.327m in this respect.
- 1.2 On 2nd December, Brighton and Hove City remained in Tier 2. As a result of this the council received £2 per person for December or £0.665m. From January the country entered a further national lockdown and payments were made at £4 per person for January, February and March, totalling £3.823m. All Contain Outbreak Management Funding is one-off and for 2020/21 totals £6.815m. Given the restrictions and lockdowns in place since the funding was announced, the funding will need to be carried forward to the 2021/22 financial year when identified containment and Covid-19 related costs will be incurred as set out in the report.
- 1.3 A range of proactive containment measures were outlined by the government in a letter to Local Authority Chief Executives on 19th October. These are outlined in paragraph 3.3.
- 1.4 Contain Outbreak Management Funds are in addition to the Local Authority Test and Trace Service Support Grant issued in June 2020 which totalled £300m nationally and from which this authority received £1.863m. This grant is managed and allocated under Emergency Planning powers through the Health Protection Board. The majority of activities identified in the 2020 Local Outbreak Plan are funded from this source. This includes Covid-19 surveillance, infection prevention and control, outbreak management, local contact tracing, engagement and communications, advice and compliance monitoring of Covid-secure environments and support for vulnerable and/or self-isolating people via the Community Hub.
- 1.5 This report proposes the allocation of 2020/21 Contain Outbreak Management Funding received to date, including delegations for the management of those allocations.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee:

- 2.1 Notes the receipt of £6.815m Contain Outbreak Management Fund from central government for 2020/21 and a further £2.070m for 2021/22.
- 2.2 Approves the carry forward of 2020/21 Contain Outbreak Management Funds of £6.815m to 2021/22.
- 2.3 Agrees to allocate the remainder of the £6.815m Contain Outbreak Management Funds carried forward from 2020/21 to meet the unapproved costs identified in Table 2 of the report.
- 2.4 Delegates any adjustment to approved allocations from the 2020/21 COMF funding to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the S151 Chief Finance Officer and the Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee.
- 2.5 Notes that information on the usage of the funds against the approved allocations will be reported in the regular Targeted Budget Management (TBM) monitoring reports to Policy & Resources Committee.
- 2.6 Agrees to defer the allocation of 2021/22 Contain Outbreak Management Funds until later in the financial year when more information on potential local test, trace and support to self-isolate and surge testing costs will be known together with information on the city's progression through the roadmap to recovery.

3 CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 England, along with the rest of Europe, saw an increase in cases of COVID in September following the reduction after the first 'peak' of the pandemic in the spring of 2020. In October 2020 the government introduced Local COVID Alert Levels. From the 12th October 2020, Local Authorities became eligible for a series of payments from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund to support proactive containment and intervention measures.
- 3.2 On 2nd December, Brighton and Hove City was in Tier 2. As a result of this the council received £2 per person for December or £0.665m. From January the country entered a further national lockdown and payments were made at £4 per person for January, February and March, totalling £3.823m. All Contain Outbreak Management Funding is one-off and for 2020/21 totals £6.815m. Given the restrictions and lockdowns in place since the funding was announced, the funding will need to be carried forward to 2021/22 to meet identified containment and Covid-19 related costs as set out in the report. The table below shows the breakdown of Contain Outbreak Management Funding for 2020/21.

Table 1: Contain Outbreak Management Funding 2020/21	
Announcements:	£
Post-June 2020 core funding (£8 per person)	2,327,080
Tier 2 - 2nd Dec to 29th Dec 20	664,880
Tier 4/Lockdown 30th Dec to 26th Jan 21 (£4 per person)	1,163,540
Lockdown 27th Jan to 23rd Feb 21 (£4 per person)	1,163,540
Lockdown 24th Feb to 31st Mar 21 (£4 per person)	1,495,980
Total 2020/21 Contain Outbreak Management Funds	6,815,020

- 3.3 The grants are paid under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 and are to provide financial support for local authorities to put in place additional public health

and outbreak response measures. The grant conditions are not overly restrictive and the policy states that funded activities should be based on local need, and the Department of Health & Social Care has provided the following example projects/activities that may be appropriate to fund:

- a) Targeted testing for hard-to-reach groups out of scope of other testing programmes.
- b) Additional contact tracing.
- c) Enhanced communication and marketing e.g. towards hard-to-reach groups and other localised messaging.
- d) Delivery of essentials for those in self-isolation.
- e) Targeted interventions for specific sections of the local community and workplaces.
- f) Harnessing capacity within local sectors (voluntary, academic, commercial).
- g) Extension/introduction of specialist support (behavioural science, bespoke comms).
- h) Additional resource for compliance with, and enforcement of, restrictions and guidance.
- i) Measures to support the continued functioning of commercial areas and their compliance with public health guidance.
- j) Funding Military Aid to the Civil Authorities (marginal costs only).
- k) Targeted support for school/university outbreaks.
- l) Community-based support for those disproportionately impacted such as the BAME population.
- m) Support for engagement and analysis of regional areas to assess and learn from local initiatives.
- n) Providing initial support, as needed, to vulnerable people classed as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable who are following tier 3 guidance.
- o) Support for rough sleepers.

3.4 The activities above align well with the Brighton & Hove Local Outbreak Plan and a wide range of other activities being undertaken across the authority through both its Recovery & Renewal Programme and its continuing support for services to groups at high risk of Covid-19 outbreaks such as those at risk of homelessness or rough sleeping.

3.5 A primary condition of the grant is to provide information to government on how the grant has been and is planned to be used. Four returns have been made so far for the period January 2020 to the end of March 2021 setting out the potential uses of the grant. However, as the council's financial position has considerably improved in 2020/21 and Public Health outbreak management activity has so far been funded from the separate Test & Trace Service Support Grant announced in June 2020 (£1.862m), no allocation from Contain Outbreak Management Funds is now required in 2020/21. This is not problematic as the funding can be carried forward into 2021/22 with a final outturn provided to government in June 2022 signed off by the Chief Executive and Chief Internal Auditor

3.6 The government's Contain Outbreak Management Policy Letter of 1 December 2020 published by the Department of Health & Social Care expects activity to be based on local judgement and for allocations to be made in co-ordination with the Director of Public Health. For this reason and to demonstrate compliance with the policy directive, the primary delegations in this report are recommended to be provided to the Director of Public Health.

4 PROPOSED ALLOCATION OF 2020/21 FUNDING

- 4.1 As noted above, the total 2020/21 Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) available is £6.815m. The proposed allocation is summarised in Table 2 below and the detail of each proposed allocation is set out in paragraph 4.2 below.

Item	Proposed Allocation (Items in Bold are already approved)	£'000
1	Outbreak Management and Surge Management	0.566
2	Support to address barriers to self isolation	0.100
3	Extension of Local Welfare Assistance and Hardship Support	0.660
4	Neighbourhood & Community Support	0.750
5	Support for Food Bank and Community Food Provision	0.100
6	Next Steps Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (P&R 18/03/21)	2.043
7	Managing the City Safely and Outdoor Events Programme 2021 (P&R 29/3/21)	1.010
8	Early Years Providers	0.107
9	Sports and Leisure Facilities (Freedom Leisure) support (P&R 29/3/21)	0.363
10	Support to Schools (pupil share)	0.703
11	Underpinning Council Services ensuring operational support for delivery of the Local Outbreak Plan	0.413
	TOTAL PROPOSALS	6.815

- 4.2 Allocations shown in **bold** above (6, 7 and 9) have already been approved by Policy & Resources Committee or Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee. In this respect, allocations of £3.416m have already been approved. The details of other proposed allocations are set out below according to the Item number shown in Table 2.

1. **Outbreak Management and Surge Management (£0.566m)**

This allocation will complement the funding allocated in Summer 2020 and continue the delivery of the Brighton & Hove Local Outbreak Plan including additional support for Covid-19 surveillance, infection prevention and control, outbreak management, local contact tracing, enhanced engagement and communications, advice and compliance monitoring of Covid-secure environments and support for vulnerable and/or self-isolating people via the Community Hub

2. **Support to address barriers to self-isolation (£0.100m)**

The Community Hub provides residents with a holistic support offer that joins up the contact tracing activity with the provision of help and advice regarding the financial and practical support available to people to enable them to successfully self-isolate.

This allocation will provide additional support to those required to self-isolate for a 10 day period who don't qualify for the government self-isolation support payments or have financial constraints due to precarious work patterns.

3. **Extension of Local Welfare Assistance and Hardship Support (£0.660m)**

This proposal will provide a preventative approach to people in hardship or on the cusp of hardship and to ultimately avoid further risk of homelessness or rough

sleeping. This will contribute to overall outbreak management in the city, including providing support for those who find it most difficult to self-isolate. The project proposal includes a number of strands all aimed at debt and hardship prevention as follows:

- Debt & Mental Health £0.045m. This is a continuation of a role that will improve and link up services across multiple sectors, ensuring that referral routes are clear, and that best practice is adopted across debt advice, debt collection, primary care and mental health services. There will also be a requirement for a continued presence to set up and embed new processes around debt and mental health, including the setting up and managing of Debt/Mental Health caseworkers.
- Money and Health Case workers £0.080m. A proposed new role of Money & Health Caseworker would be based in the council supporting vulnerable people as they emerge from the pandemic, with increasingly challenging debt issues.
- Debt Advisors £0.080m. Debt is one of the highest risks facing residents during the pandemic and as the city moves into the Covid recovery period. The Breathing Space initiative is a statutory framework beginning in May where debtors can have a hold put on their debt while they seek accredited debt advice. It is anticipated that there will be a high number of cases through this mechanism.
- Local lift-up scheme £0.175m. To pioneer a new service exploring jointly with the DWP how best to support people who do not qualify for standard benefits, Universal Credit or Council Tax Reduction and yet face significant financial difficulties due to debt, ongoing expenses and other impacts of Covid. Project requirements are a Team Leader and Benefits Officer at a cost of £0.075m together with a discretionary fund for distribution of £0.100m; a total cost of £0.175m.
- Winter Grants Scheme £0.090m. The aim of the scheme would be to provide grants of up to £5,000 to voluntary sector organisations that provide direct support for food, fuel and essential items. This would also enable support for Youth and Young People schemes, something that is known to be an area of significant demand. The scheme would be intended to run from October 2021. The proposed scheme would replicate these previous funding at £0.090m.
- Local Welfare Assistance funding £0.100m. Funding to enable the council to continue providing Covid-enhanced features of the Local Discretionary Social Fund (LDSF), for example:
 - Emergency food and fuel
 - Warmth for wellbeing
 - The 3 3 3 scheme
- Funding to commission innovative digital solutions in the voluntary sector for vulnerable people £0.050m This proposal would allow the council to open a grant process for the voluntary sector to develop innovative digital solutions in order to support vulnerable people. A fund of £0.050m is proposed.
- Data Insight Project £0.040m. This project proposal would provide much needed understanding of the impact of Covid on vulnerability and financial health and contribute to longer term strategies for improving debt prevention.

- In the emergency response and ongoing lockdowns, the local Covid response has been attempting to understand the impact of Covid on the financial health of the city. It is proposed to set aside funding for a role that would focus on fully understanding the longer term impacts on household finance, vulnerability and complex needs.

4. Neighbourhood & Community Support (£0.750m)

Provision of an additional 'Communities Fund' of £0.300m for BAME, LGBTQ+, disability, and women's community and voluntary groups across the city for whom evidence points to a disproportionate impact from Covid, including health inequalities, financial and economic impacts, impact from home schooling on future attainment, barriers to accessing information and support including language barriers, digital exclusion, mental health, and violence towards women. The funding would be managed through a similar process to the Communities Fund. Bids would be encouraged from a wide range of organisations to address both individual needs for these groups, and intersectional needs. The Equalities and Access Workstream Interim Report of August 2020 would guide the detailed planning around funding criteria.

Funding for CVS infrastructure organisations' support to the CVS sector to emerge from lockdown, return to face-to-face delivery of services, providing guidance around health and safety and to support the sector to find suitable premises to enable safe delivery of services (£0.075m).

Support to small community based organisations in the most deprived parts of wards of the city to support recovery from the pandemic (£0.125m). The funding would be allocated in a similar way to the Healthy Neighbourhood Fund. To manage the proposed grant processes above, an additional Senior Officer post would be required in the CETS team (£0.040m).

To provide advice and support for migrant residents whose needs during and after the pandemic are made more complex by their history of migration or by their immigration status by providing an additional 'connector' role and support to associated support organisations. The proposed allocation is £0.150m.

To support the resilience and recovery of communities disproportionately affected by Covid-19 by funding a pilot of 3 reporting centres including the Racial Harassment Forum, Rainbow Hub, and Possability People to cover all hate crime strands, with a need for £0.060m funding for the initial establishment and pilot for one year.

5. Support for food bank provision and community food provision in the city (£0.100m)

Food banks across the city have reported both an increase in demand but also an increase in need for capacity building and support, particularly as the majority are facilitated by volunteers.

The city continues to maintain a focus on sustainable food provision, healthy lifestyles and community wealth, as well as the practice of food growing and easy access to locally grown food in communities.

In addition, more informal groups have emerged that are focused on sustainable food provision and community need. To ensure the continued sustainability of community-based organisations focused on emergency food provision, it is recommended that funding is set aside to help build capacity and resilience for grass-roots led organisations responding to local need in this way.

6. Next Steps Homelessness and Rough Sleeping (£2.043m)

This allocation was approved by Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 18 March 2021.

7. Managing the City Safely and Outdoor Events Programme 2021 (£1.010m)

This allocation was approved by the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee on 29 March 2021.

8. Private, Voluntary and Independent Early Years Providers (£0.107m)

Early years and childcare providers have incurred several increased costs due to the pandemic including contact tracing, cleaning and PPE. Settings and childminders have worked extremely hard throughout this time to ensure that their premises are safe for children and staff, in line with DfE and Public Health guidance, whilst continuing to offer high quality care and learning. Most early years settings have been open to all children since January as well as vulnerable children and children of critical care workers and have played a key role in supporting families throughout the pandemic and especially during the winter lockdown.

A COMF grant allocation would help the sector to meet ongoing additional costs and continue to support Infection Prevention and Control measures, Covid-secure working practices and outbreak management provision as they work through the government roadmap at a time when many of these providers are already managing significant losses of income.

Other authorities are known to be making COMF funding available for this purpose, with up to £750 available for day-care/pre-school settings, including council-run nurseries, and up to £250 for childminders. Maintained school nursery classes and nursery schools will be funded from the schools' allocation. Providers would need to be open with children attending to be eligible.

It is proposed to provide a similar offer in Brighton and Hove which would give rise to total costs of £0.107m if all providers applied as follows:

- 106 Nurseries at £750 = £79,500
- 110 childminders at £250 = £27,500.

To ensure consistency with schools the final allocations to each provider will take account of number of funded children attending in the spring term. It is expected that the maximum funding for each provider will be £1,700 and minimum £100.

9. Sport and Leisure Facilities (Freedom Leisure Contract Extension) (£0.363m)

This allocation was also approved by the Policy & Resources (Recovery) Sub-Committee on 29 March 2021 enabling community access to Covid -Secure facilities.

10. Support to Schools (pupil share) (£0.703m)

The city's family of schools are in contact with the council on a daily basis regarding the additional costs of managing the pandemic, including outbreak management, and continuing to provide safe educational settings to protect pupils and staff. Many are struggling financially with additional costs such as:

- PPE and cleaning materials and additional cleaning regimes ;
- Class supply cover for absent staff;
- Utility costs (heating ventilated classrooms, additional waste, water, etc);
- Management and admin for contact tracing, guidance, communications etc;

- Provision of remote learning

In common with other neighbouring authorities, it is proposed to allocate a population share of COMF funding to schools which would provide them with £0.703m to contribute to the costs of Infection Prevention and Control measures, Covid-secure working practices and outbreak management.

11. Underpinning Council services ensuring operational support for delivery of Local Outbreak Plan (£0.413m)

Covid-19 has resulted in a step change in the use and reliance upon digital methods of delivering services to residents and in the day-to-day work of individuals and teams within the council.

To ensure that council services are fit for purpose when delivering services that protect the most vulnerable in the pandemic, investment is required in providing enhanced resilience to IT&D infrastructure and supporting covid secure future ways of working. The investment will modernise services, expanding on capacity to meet the additional demands and build support to frontline services. This will assist in supporting containment, enabling self-isolation and providing timely support for those affected by the pandemic including our most vulnerable communities.

5 PROPOSED ALLOCATION OF 2021/22 FUNDING

- 5.1 As noted in paragraph 9.5 below, a further allocation of Contain Outbreak Management Funding for 2021/22 was issued on 8 April 2021. It is proposed that the allocation of this funding is considered later in the financial year, informed by the development of the pandemic to ensure that the implications and impact of recovery and progress through the roadmap are understood and the extent of the recovery of the business and visitor economies can be seen. The requirement for further resources for additional scaling up of test and trace, and support for self-isolating will be monitored and reviewed. It will also provide time to understand the success or otherwise of the council's actions to manage recovery, in particular, the situation concerning homelessness and rough sleeping where there are challenging requirements to 'move-on' people in hotels and other emergency and temporary accommodation.

6 ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 6.1 The proposals set out in the report for the allocation of carried forward 2020/21 COMF grant have been drawn up over a period of weeks by officers from all directorates. The proposals have been reviewed by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) to ensure that they:
- a) Are consistent with the Public Health aims of the grant which are to tackle Covid-19 by investing in services and initiatives that will directly or indirectly support outbreak containment;
 - b) Enable the delivery of the local Covid-19 Outbreak Plan;
 - c) Are consistent with the council's Recovery & Renewal Programme and can enhance and support the programme;
 - d) Reach a wide range of settings and sectors, from education to CVS, help to support outbreak management and address a wide range of pandemic impacts, from homelessness to hardship, and reach people and communities known to be at risk of Covid-19 and suffering from specific impacts or vulnerabilities.
- 6.2 The proposals identified are those where ELT have identified either the most pressing unmet needs or where funds can have, potentially, the greatest beneficial

impacts in containing Covid, managing outbreaks, protecting the vulnerable, and supporting / ensuring compliance with Covid-secure environments. As noted earlier, this includes the allocation of £3.416m funding which has already been approved by Policy & Resources Committee or its sub-committee.

7 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Although no direct consultation has been undertaken, the proposals have been drawn up by teams and services who have been and are working very closely with CVS and statutory partners, as well as members, throughout the pandemic and have developed a strong understanding of where funds can help to address pandemic impacts, ensure settings can operate safely, and where people can be assisted to directly or indirectly contribute to outbreak management.

8 CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Contain Outbreak Management Funds can be used to support a wide range of activities as set out in paragraph 3.3 above. Some allocations have already been approved by Policy & Resources Committee and this report sets out proposals to allocate the remaining 2020/21 funding to support outbreak management.
- 8.2 The report recommends that allocation of the recently announced 2021/22 funding is deferred until later in the financial year when the progression through recovery and the understanding of ongoing impacts will be better informed.

9 FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 9.1 In October 2020 the council received notification of Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) of £2.327m from the Department of Health & Social Care. The grant was based on £8 per person and awarded to support proactive containment and intervention measures. Since then, further announcements of £4.488m have been made for 2020/21, bringing total COMF funding up to £6.815m
- 9.2 The letter from the Department for Health & Social Care states that the 'primary condition on this funding is agreement, from eligible Local Authorities, to provide information regarding how funds received from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund have been allocated to date'. The monitoring process for this funding is a monthly return to demonstrate how funding has been allocated against similar headings to those outlined in paragraph 3.3.
- 9.3 The approved and proposed spend against the 2020/21 COMF funding is set out in the body of the report with all funds to be spent in 2021/22. This therefore requires the carry forward of 2020/21 COMF funds for which approval is requested in this report.
- 9.4 Approval of this report also delegates any further decisions on spending or allocation of the carried forward 2020/21 COMF funding to the Director of Public Health in consultation with the S151 Chief Finance Officer and the Chair of Policy & Resources Committee.
- 9.5 A further announcement of COMF funding for 2021/22 was issued on 8 April 2021 and confirmed funding of £2.070m for Brighton & Hove City Council. The report recommends that decisions on the allocation of this funding are reserved until later in the financial year.

Finance Officer Consulted: James Hengeveld

Date: 14/04/21

Legal Implications:

- 9.6 Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides the council with a general power of competence, allowing the council to do anything that individuals generally may do. The Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 (as amended by the Health and Social Care Act 2008) contains powers to deal with pandemics and to manage an infection which presents or could present “significant harm to human health.”. These powers enable the council to allocate the funding as proposed in this report.
- 9.7 It is likely that further guidance will be issued by the Department of Health & Social Care in relation to testing and tracing and Local Outbreaks and the council will be required to comply with this guidance as it emerges, in addition to ensuring compliance with the funding conditions already set out in the report.

Lawyer Consulted: Elizabeth Culbert

Date: 09/04/21

Equalities Implications:

- 9.8 Covid-19 has had a greater impact on more deprived communities and people from ethnic minorities. The proposed allocations to support CVS organisations working with people from ethnic minorities and other communities will help to address this and provides a local response to some of the Public Health England recommendations in their health disparity report.

Sustainability Implications:

- 9.9 None directly.

Brexit Implications:

- 9.10 None directly.

Any Other Significant Implications:

Public Health Implications:

- 9.11 The approved and proposed allocations in this report support the Local Outbreak Management Plan, directly and indirectly, by focusing allocations on homelessness, visitor, educational and other settings as well as providing support to vulnerable or impacted groups and communities who, without support, may otherwise present a higher outbreak risk, for example, through homelessness or needing to leave their homes for other reasons.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 9.12 The proposed allocations, including those already approved, are expected to assist the city through the roadmap to recovery by providing additional support across a range of priority of sectors to safely manage their settings and the minimise outbreaks among the residents, customers and visitors who use them. This is in addition to allocations to support Public Health in delivering the Local Outbreak Management Plan through support for test and trace, and surge capacity.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. None

Background Documents

1. None