

BRIEFING NOTE FOR MANAGEMENT TEAM

13 AUGUST 2024

Public Health Grant and Funding

PURPOSE OF THE BRIEFING NOTE

To highlight to Management Team the updating of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) by Essex County Council (ECC) for the public health post and associated funding.

BACKGROUND SUMMARY

ECC have provided funding to local authorities across Essex including Tendring District Council to part fund a Public Health Practitioner Post and to provide some funding for that post to deliver public health projects.

The MOU for this funding has now been updated and ECC now requires that the local authorities sign the MOU prior to release of any funding.

As part of this MOU review ECC are also proposing to offer greater funding to Tendring due to the significant deprivation within the district.

CURRENT POSITION

An MOU has been in existence with ECC's Public Health Team for the part funding of the Public Health Practitioner post and also as a grant to spend on public health projects. This funding was initially allocated in 2015 with an officer in post from May 2016.

The Public Health Team recognised the value of delivering public health locally and have continued to fund the post and associated grant since that time.

£20,000 has been provided each year as part of the contribution to the Public Health Improvement Coordinator post. In addition in the region of another £20,000 has been provided to undertake public health work. This extra grant to deliver public health work has varied over time as there has previously been top slicing to support for example, the Livewell brand which was agreed across Essex authorities early on in the existence of this arrangement.

ECC's original approach was to provide a post to cover both Colchester and Tendring. Both Council's saw the value of the post and contributed further funding which allowed for a full time post to be placed separately, one in Colchester and one in Tendring. Subsequent to that Tending mainstreamed the post so it was put on the establishment for three days per week which allowed for the grant to make up the other two days and would allow for a full time post. The current post holder works part time doing three days per week.

The ECC contributions have always been dependent on the public health grant they receive from the Government and currently they have confirmed the funding for 2024/25 and an additional two years are tentatively planned.

In 2023/24 the funding for the post was £20,000 and the public health grant was £20,900.

An MOU was in place since the beginning of the funding in 2015.

During 2023/24 work was undertaken by ECC to evaluate this public health programme and

subsequently to update the MOU. Following this ECC are requesting that local authorities sign the new MOU and will not release the 2024/25 funding until this has been signed and returned.

The new MOU maintains the collaborative approach to address health inequalities and improve outcomes across the wider determinants of health and also seeks to deliver the Public Health Business Plan and the Essex Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy and also the priorities of any local health and wellbeing strategies.

The MOU now also references specific work on public health advice in spatial planning, health behaviour change and reducing inequality across the priority domains.

Also highlighted in the MOU is the importance of community driven approaches including both place based work and an asset based community development approach to enhance and strengthen assets within the locality. It is proposed that this is done via a multiple priority way of working to deliver on several key objectives at the same time.

As with the previous MOU there is a matrix management approach for the post with direct line management undertaken locally by the district manager (the Head of Health and Community) and the annual objectives and work plan set by the local district manager and the ECC heads of service and public health consultants aligned to the local Alliance based approach.

The proposed funding under the new MOU will include £22,000 contribution to the post and the health and wellbeing grant is being significantly increased to £43,946 although £10,000 is then top sliced to fund learning and development.

The MOU identifies the governance arrangements for spending the grant including that it adheres to Tendring District Council governance procedures.

The governance section identifies who can receive a grant including for example voluntary and community organisations and through to statutory bodies. It also identifies the importance of meeting health and wellbeing priorities locally and in addition how any work may deliver on multiple outcomes or through organisational/workforce development.

Any changes to the MOU will not change the Council's delivery at all as there will be continued focus on the wider determinants of health.

PROPOSAL

To highlight the updated MOU provided for the Public Health Practitioner Post and associated funding prior to seeking an Executive Decision from the Portfolio Holder for Partnerships to sign the MOU and accept the post and project funding.

Please note that any steer given at Management Team must be followed with the appropriate governance process for the matter being presented.

DELIVERING CORPORATE PRIORITIES

CORPORATE VISION – Working with partners to improve quality of life

The Public Health Practitioner Post continues to deliver work to promote safer, healthier and well connected and inclusive communities and the grant funding supports this. For example

work includes developing the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, undertaking work to deliver an older persons outdoor gym, working with the ECC public health team around their developing healthy weight strategy or in respect of Alliance work to address health inequalities. The continued funding of the post and the grant will allow this work to continue.

It also supports in terms of the Championing our Environment priority for example in how it assists with delivering wellbeing and healthier lifestyles.

RELEVANT STRATEGY – The work will be in line with Essex County Council’s Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

ANY PREVIOUS DECISIONS – none

KEY GOVERNANCE ISSUES AND/OR DIRECT LINKS TO OTHER MATTERS

There is a specific governance section within the MOU which highlights that work must meet Tendring District Council’s governance requirements and also identifies who can receive grant funding and how it must meet health and wellbeing priorities and how it may deliver on multiple outcomes or workforce development.

OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

No specific consultation has taken place as this is a continuation of an existing programme

FINANCE, RESOURCES & CAPACITY IMPLICATIONS

The provision of funding for the post and the associated grant has been consistent over the last 10 years and there is currently an officer in the Public Health Practitioner role who oversees the grant and has the capacity to allocate it where required.

£20,000 is provided from ECC towards salary costs for this role and the post is on the establishment for three days per week and so has capacity to deliver the public health work. The current officer in the role works 22.5 hours per week.

There is a close working relationship between Tendring District Council and Essex County Council with the Public Health Practitioner attending regular meetings with the ECC Public Health Team. There are periodic reviews undertaken by the Head of Health and Community, a consultant in public health at ECC and the officer in post to ensure the correct focus is being maintained and work achieved.

LEGAL DUTIES, POWERS & RESTRICTIONS (EXISTING, NEW RESPONSIBILITIES OR EMERGING)

In terms of the legal power to undertake public health work this is within the General Power of Competence that was introduced under the Localism Act 2011 and gives local councils the ability and flexibility to make decisions to do anything that an individual can do (provided it is not unlawful).

The function undertaken must also be in accordance with the conditions set out in the MOU from ECC (Appendix A)

ASSOCIATED RISKS AND MITIGATION

Financial

As the Council has allocated three days on the establishment to the Public Health Practitioner post there is limited financial risk and there is sufficient capacity to undertake the work associated with the MOU. There is also an additional £20,000 a year to employ an officer in the post from ECC. The current post holder is part time and works three days per week.

Service Delivery (including any existing projects at risk)?

As there is already three days on the establishment this provides capacity to undertake public health work along with the extra funding provided by ECC for the post and also project work.

Service delivery will also be in alignment with the MOU and there are periodic meetings with the public health team to help identify any issues which may arise.

Safety

Work undertaken is in accordance with the public health aspirations of the Council and also in accordance with the MOU and is overseen by the Head of Health and Community in conjunction with one of the consultants in public health.

Reputation

Periodic meetings take place between the Head of Health and Community, a consultant in public health from ECC and the Public Health Practitioner to ensure appropriate work is being undertaken. The public health work will align with the Council's priorities and also will be mindful of the local Health and Wellbeing Alliance priorities as highlighted in the MOU

NEXT STEPS & MILESTONES

The MOU and discussions with the consultants in public health at ECC help to determine future work activities and this is undertaken with the consultation with the Council

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Memorandum of Understanding

REPORT CONTACT OFFICER(S)

Name

John Fox

Job Title

Head of Health and Community