



WEST NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNCIL

ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

17TH JANUARY 2024

CLLR MATT GOLBY – CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT CARE, WELLBEING AND HEALTH INTEGRATION

Report Title	Public Health Grant
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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 West Northants Council has a duty to improve the health and wellbeing of the population. To support these responsibilities a level of ‘public health grant’ is allocated annually by the Treasury and is ringfenced for specific uses. This report provides the committee with an overview of the use of the Public Health Grant in West Northamptonshire.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 In 2023/24, West Northamptonshire Council was allocated **£19,730,445** for public health services. The ring-fenced grant is provided on the condition that the **‘main and primary purpose of all the spending from the grant is to secure public health improvement’**. A review of the use of the grant is ongoing in line with the health and wellbeing needs and requirements of our

residents and a framework to support the allocation of funding and process was agreed by Cabinet in January 2023.

2.2 Within the core grant there are significant contractual commitments which are currently undergoing review and recommissioning through to 2026. In total 74.7% of the core grant is currently spent within contractual arrangements.

2.3 A three-year plan is underway to reduce the level of reserve and reinvestment to an acceptable level. Key areas of investment are:-

- Anti-poverty Strategy projects - £1.9m
- Wellbeing West Northants (Adults Prevention) – £1.4m in 2023/24
- Funding of WNC (West Northants Council) Business Intelligence - £1.18m
- Local Area Partnership coordination - £1.04m
- Social Prescribing - £1.53m

3. Recommendations

3.1 It is recommended that Committee notes the contents of the report for information.

4. Report Background

4.1 The Local Authority has a duty to improve the health and wellbeing of its residents and to carry out any additional responsibilities including:-

- Any of the Secretary of State's public health protection or health improvement functions that s/he delegates to local authorities.
- Exercising their local authority's functions in planning for, and responding to, emergencies that present a risk to the public's health.
- Their local authority's role in co-operating with the police, the probation service and the prison service to assess the risks posed by violent or sexual offenders.
- Such other public health functions as the Secretary of State specify in regulations and under dental public health powers.

4.2 To support these responsibilities the level of the Public Health Grant is set by the Treasury and is ring-fenced for specific uses. In 2023/24, West Northamptonshire Council was allocated **£19,730,445** for public health services.

4.3 The ring-fenced grant is provided on the condition that the **'main and primary purpose of all spend from the grant is to secure public health improvement'**. The Director of Public Health and Chief Executive/s151 officer must confirm that expenditure of the grant is in line with the grant determination criteria as set out by the Department of Health & Social Care. An annual assurance statement is required to confirm correct use of the grant.

4.4 **Review and Public Health Framework** - Following the disaggregation of the Countywide Public Health Team in October 2022, a review of the budget was commenced and a Public Health Framework document brought to Cabinet in January 2023. The framework sets out the priorities for expenditure and draws attention to the circular, governance processes and review of outcomes achieved.

4.5 **Core Grant** - In taking the approach for the use of the main grant, the Council must pay regard to the evidence of need and identify services, approaches or interventions to improve health outcomes and address inequalities. The circular also clearly sets out descriptors in lists of prescribed and non-prescribed services. The main overview for the core West Northamptonshire Public Health Budget allocations is set out below.

Budget Area	23/24 Budget
Health Protection and Healthcare Public Health	2,809,202
Wider Determinants	3,480,384
Health Improvement & Communities	1,072,866
People & Wellbeing	9,383,688
Management & Admin	2,984,303
Total Public Health Budget	19,730,445

Within each budget area there are significant contractual commitments which are currently undergoing review and recommissioning through to 2026. Examples are as follows: -

- Health Protection and Health Care Public Health – Sexual Health and Health Checks approximately £2.75m
- Wider Determinants of Health – Substance Misuse approximately £3.48m. It should also be noted that in order to receive the supplementary substance misuse and treatment grants mentioned in section 4.7 below, expenditure must be maintained at this level.
- Health Improvement and Communities – Wellbeing and Community Services £773k
- People and Wellbeing - 0-19 Contracts approximately £7.74m

In total £14.73m of the Public Health Core Budget is fastened into contracts so this is 74.7% of the core grant.

4.6 **Investment in Wellbeing in Communities and Place** - The West Northamptonshire Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, approved in September 2023, sets out five key approaches to shape our health and wellbeing ambitions. As part of our review and realignment of the grant we are embedding this further. The approaches are as follows:-

- Prevention as a priority
- Tackling health inequalities

- The importance of developing place and local assets
- Evidence based and community insight
- Co production

4.7 **Public Health Reserve and Reinvestment** - Public Health in Northamptonshire has, over time, built up a substantial reserve and on disaggregation in 2022, this was £11.23m for West Northamptonshire. This reserve had built up for several reasons: -

- Firstly, after Northamptonshire County Council was found to have spent Public Health funding outside of the terms of the grant, they had to pay money from the general fund back into a Public Health reserve for use on services that met Public Health outcomes;
- Additionally, the covid-19 pandemic saw an increase in temporary central government funding for Public Health. This, combined with a reduction in activity in business-as-usual Public Health services during the lockdowns, meant significant underspends against the Core Grant in 2020/21 and 2021/22. As per the terms of the grant, these underspends were put into a ringfenced reserve.

There are risks identified by holding this level of reserve therefore key themes of investment were identified and endorsed in the framework document and so supporting further investment in the following: -

- Adults and Early Years - Wellbeing and Prevention
- Wider Determinants - Housing/Homelessness/Anti-Poverty/Environment
- Communities and Health Improvement

A three-year plan has been agreed which will bring about the focus on priorities at a place level and reduce the reserve to a more acceptable operating level. The current most significant levels of investment in the reserve are as follows: -

- Anti-poverty Strategy projects - £1.9m
- Wellbeing West Northants (Adults Prevention) – £1.4m in 2023/24
- Funding of WNC Business Intelligence - £1.18m
- Local Area Partnership coordination - £1.04m
- Social Prescribing - £1.53m

4.8 **Additional Grant Funding** - The Public Health Team also manage additional grants as highlighted below.

Ringfenced central government grants:-

- Household Support Fund 4 - £5.2m in 2023/24
- Supplementary Substance Misuse and Treatment Grants - £1.88m 23-24 rising to at least 2.24m in 2024-25
- New Stop smoking additional grant £0.5m from 24-25

Funding from outside bodies for use in specific areas:-

- Health Inequalities Funding from the ICB - £800k in 2023/24
- Dental Health Grants from NHS England
- Suicide Prevention Funding from the ICB – allocation TBC

5. Issues and Choices

This report is for scrutiny to be informed about the Public Health Grant and therefore there are no specific choices to highlight.

6. Implications (including financial implications)

6.1 Resources and Financial

Public Health Services are funded by the ringfenced Public Health Grant, and the key financial implications are outlined in the report.

6.2 Legal

The Council receives the Public Health Grant on the condition that the 'main and primary purpose of all spend from the grant is to secure public health improvement'. The Director of Public Health and Chief Executive/s151 officer must confirm that expenditure of the grant is in line with the grant determination criteria as set out by the Department of Health & Social Care. An annual assurance statement is required to confirm correct use of the grant.

6.3 Risk

Failure to adhere to the grant conditions, could lead to Government scrutiny and result in West Northants Council having to pay back any spend that was deemed inappropriate.

6.4 Consultation

There is no direct consultation in relation to this paper but in assessing the health and wellbeing needs of the population of West Northamptonshire, wider consultation takes place.

6.5 Consideration by Overview and Scrutiny

a. Climate Impact

Not applicable.

b. Community Impact

Many of the areas of spend impact certain communities or cohorts affected by health inequalities.

c. Communications

Not applicable.

7. Background Papers

- West Northamptonshire Public Health Framework 2022-2024
- Public Health Circular