

**Forward Plan reference number:** FP/087/06/21

<b>Report title:</b> Allocation of Funding to Support the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable	
<b>Report to:</b> Councillor John Spence, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health	
<b>Report author:</b> Kirsty O'Callaghan, Head of Strengthening Communities	
<b>Date:</b> 30 July 2021	<b>For:</b> Decision
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<b>County Divisions affected:</b> All Essex	

## **1. Purpose of report**

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government have allocated an additional £2.88m to Essex County Council (ECC) to support Clinically Extremely Vulnerable individuals (CEV) during the Coronavirus pandemic. Funding has been allocated to ECC on a monthly basis and the payment of £2.888m comprises the final 2 months received. This report seeks approval on how to use the funding to support CEV residents in Essex during the next stage of the pandemic.

## **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. Agree that £1.9m will be distributed to the district, city and borough councils in Essex based on the numbers of Clinically Extremely Vulnerable individuals living in their administrative area. Council allocations will be based on £10 per CEV individual for each of the final two monthly instalments the Council received.
- 2.2. Agree that the Executive Director, Place and Public Health is authorised to agree the terms of, and enter into, agreements with the district and borough councils for the funding referred to in paragraph 2.1 above setting out the purpose for which the funding should be used and the criteria which should be met.
- 2.3. Agree that £175,000 of the funding will be used by ECC to increase the capacity of the Essex Wellbeing Service which is run by Provide CIC to enable them to continue to collect prescriptions for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents in Essex and coordinate welfare checks.
- 2.4. Agree that £400,000 of the funding will be distributed by Active Essex to support the development and delivery of reconditioning programmes. This funding will be granted to local delivery partners who will be required to use such funding to deliver programmes to improve strength and balance in Clinically Extremely Vulnerable Individuals that have been shielding.
- 2.5. Agree that the Head of Active Essex, in consultation with the Director of Wellbeing, Public Health & Communities, is authorised to agree the terms of, and

enter into, agreements with the recipients of the grants referred to in paragraph 2.4 setting out the purpose for which the funding should be used and the criteria which should be met.

- 2.6. Agree that £100,000 will be used by ECC to fund an employment coaching offer for Clinically Extremely Vulnerable residents in Essex. This coaching programme will be developed and managed by the Sustainable Growth Team at ECC.
- 2.7. Agree that £300,000 will be used by ECC to deliver a grant funding programme which will support external organisations based in Essex who provide bereavement services to those that have been bereaved as a result of the pandemic.
- 2.8. Agree that the Head of Strategic Commissioning and Policy, in consultation with the Director of Strategic Commissioning and Policy, is authorised to agree the criteria for the grant application process and the terms of the grants referred to in paragraph 2.7 setting out the purpose for which the funding should be used and the criteria which should be met.

### **3. Summary of Issue**

- 3.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have issued Essex County Council (ECC) additional funding of £2.88m. This funding is to be spent to help vulnerable and CEV individuals who do not have a support network to access food and meet other emotional and physical needs to ensure compliance with COVID-19 guidance. The MHCLG guidance sets out how the funding is to be used to support CEV residents, including: covering the overheads of setting up and managing the local system, contacting CEV individuals and providing welfare checks within the relevant area, assessing the food and basic support needs of CEV individuals where required, and facilitating the delivery of that support where necessary, as well as reporting on key outcome measures. This report details how the funding will be spent to support those individuals.
- 3.2 It is proposed that £1.9m of this funding is distributed to the District, City and Borough councils in Essex based on the numbers of CEV individuals living in their administrative area. The council allocations will be on the basis of £10 per CEV individual per month for each of the final two monthly instalments the Council received. The funding terms will require that such councils ringfence the funding to deliver the type of activities set out in paragraph 3.1 above such as delivery of food parcels and prescription collection services. District, City and Borough Councils will be expected to confirm with ECC through spend plans how they will spend their allocations by 31 March 2022 (or an earlier date if MHCLG issue revised dates) and to report monthly to ECC on spend.
- 3.3 It is proposed that £175,000 of funding will be used to increase the capacity of the Essex Wellbeing Service which is delivered by an external organisation, Provide CIC, to increase capacity for the remainder of the 21/22 financial year – helping to manage additional call volumes for daily living tasks such as prescription collections and welfare checks and enabling the redeployment of more experienced staff to support those waiting for elective treatment across Essex and deliver activities to address vaccine hesitancy. Funding will cover

staffing, any additional training and tech resources. Existing service level agreements will be amended to reflect this additional funding. Funding is to be spent by 31 March 2022.

- 3.4 It is proposed that £400,000 of funding is distributed by Active Essex to be used to deliver reconditioning work and, in particular, to improve the strength and balance of CEV residents in Essex whose physical wellbeing has been negatively impacted by having to shield. This funding will improve capacity for this work, embedding community-led physical activity as part of an integrated care pathway. Active Essex will work with local Active Networks to identify need, appropriate activity, and appropriate providers to deliver activities to increase activity and improve strength and balance. Outcomes from this particular funding will be measured (using current physical activity levels and activity levels after a three month period) through participation in formal organised activities and informal activity through partner engagement, for example with Community Agents supporting confidence-building for those CEV residents who are feeling anxious about leaving their homes. CEV residents will be reached through targeted interventions, including printed resources, digital, face-to-face strength-and-balance activity and partner engagement and upskilling. Grant agreements will be entered into with delivery partners to fund this provision. These grant agreements will comply with the funding terms set out by the MHCLG. Funding is to be spent by 31 March 2022.
- 3.5 £300,000 of funding will be used to support organisations in Essex providing bereavement services to Essex residents as a result of COVID deaths in Essex. This will include hospices, faith groups and other community providers. Funding will be allocated via an open grants process with organisations able to apply for grants of no more than £75,000 to meet demand for their services by increasing capacity and resources to support the bereaved in Essex in a COVID safe way. The Head of Strategic Commissioning and Policy, in consultation with the Director of Strategic Commissioning and Policy, is authorised to agree the criteria for the grant application process and the terms of the grants. The grant application process will be administered internally by ECC and will consist of Commissioners from Adult Social Care and Children and Families with all recommendations being approved by the Director of Strategic Commissioning and Policy. Funding is to be spent by 31 March 2022.
- 3.6 £100,000 of funding will be used by ECC's Sustainable Growth Team to develop a mentoring scheme to support CEV residents in Essex with skills development to improve their employability and develop routes into employment through a digital/online offer. CEV residents will be identified and referred into the scheme by Provide CIC. Funding is to be spent by 31 March 2022.

#### **4. Options**

- 4.1 **Option 1 - Allocate the funding to District partners and bereavement services and retain a portion of funding to build the capacity of EWS, support reconditioning work for CEV residents and develop an economic mentoring scheme (Recommended option)**

This approach has already been agreed in principle with District partners as part of Operation Shield. There is an established network in place across Essex to aid the Coronavirus response and support CEV residents so ECC can be confident that funds will be used effectively.

EWS, throughout the pandemic, have provided a valuable source of support for CEV residents via the coordination of welfare checks and the recruitment, training and provision of a volunteer workforce to support CEV residents' needs. This support offer will continue to meet the needs of CEV residents still choosing to shield and take extra caution at this time.

Active Essex have a proven track record of delivering successful reconditioning programmes with partners and this proposal will help build strength and physical resilience in individuals that have been required to shield.

The establishment of an online/digital offer to support routes into employment for CEV residents will provide a platform to safely engage in mentoring and skills development opportunities and help to support CEV residents into employment.

A grant funding programme to support Essex based organisations delivering bereavement support/services will help organisations to meet a growing demand for support as a result of the pandemic.

#### **4.2 Option 2 – Retain the Funding – not recommended**

This option would not comply with the funding terms laid down by MHCLG which requires ECC to work with tier 2 authorities to distribute to them appropriate amounts of funding in order to provide a local offer of support to meet the needs of their CEV populations. This approach could result in the funding being withdrawn. This option is not recommended. The funding could be used to support those CEV residents in Essex who do not have a support network in place and require help and assistance.

### **5. Implications**

#### **5.1 Financial Implications**

- 5.1.1 The proposed allocation is shown in the table below. £975,000 is retained by ECC to increase capacity within the Essex Wellbeing Service (EWS) (£175,000), support CEV individuals with reconditioning services (£400,000), develop a grants programme for bereavement support (£300,000) and develop an economic mentoring scheme (£100,000) with the remaining £1.9m allocated to districts based on CEV volumes on the basis of £10 per CEV individual for each month funding was received for.

District	TOTAL CEV	District allocation (£)*
Basildon	13,295	£ 265,900
Braintree	9,472	£ 189,440
Brentwood	4,099	£ 81,980
Castle Point	6,083	£ 121,660
Chelmsford	9,863	£ 197,260
Colchester	10,557	£ 211,140
Epping Forest	8,414	£ 168,280
Harlow	6,973	£ 139,460
Maldon	4,287	£ 85,740
Rochford	6,153	£ 123,060
Tendring	11,595	£ 231,900
Uttlesford	4,655	£ 93,100
<b>Total District</b>	<b>95,446</b>	<b>£ 1,908,920</b>
<b>ECC retained amounts:</b>		
EWS funding		£ 174,962
Reconditioning work		£ 400,000
Bereavement Services		£ 300,000
Digital/online employment coaching		£ 100,000
<b>Total ECC retained</b>		<b>£ 974,962</b>
<b>Total CEV funding envelope</b>		<b>£ 2,883,882</b>

5.1.2 The funding is provided by the MHCLG as an un-ringfenced grant to allow maximum flexibility to deliver support outlined in the Shielding Framework. Allocations are made to upper-tier authorities, with the expectation that where lower tier authorities provide support to CEV individuals, the funding is passed on accordingly. Therefore, ECC are proposing the allocations to lower tier authorities in the above table and will be made as a single payment to each District, Borough and City Council, with a Service Level Agreement in place for each. Any spend made over and above the allocation will be the liability of the District, Borough or City Council.

5.1.3 Funding has been provided to support CEV individuals during the second lockdown period and with ongoing advice and support. A report of spend will be due to the MHCLG, which will include detail of how District Authorities will use the funding.

5.1.4 Any unspent funds will be returned to ECC by the end of March 2022 (or before if MHCLG issue revised dates).

#### Essex Welfare Service

5.1.5 £175,000 is proposed to be allocated to the Essex Welfare Service to provide additional capacity, with the existing service level agreement being amended to reflect this. Funding is to be spent by 31 March 2022.

#### Reconditioning work

- 5.1.6 £400,000 is proposed to be used to support CEV individuals with reconditioning work via Active Essex, who will enter into grant agreements with deliver partners. Funding is to be spent by 31 March 2022.

#### **Bereavement Services**

- 5.1.7 £300,000 is proposed to be used to fund bereavement services within Essex, via an open grants process administered by ECC with grant agreements being put in place with partners once grants are agreed. Funding is to be spent by 31 March 2022.

#### **Economic Mentoring Scheme**

£100,000 is proposed to fund an economic mentoring scheme to support CEV individuals to improve their employability and improve routes to employment. The scheme will be developed by the Sustainable Growth team and will be a blend of online/digital provision and face to face services depending on the needs of the individuals. Funding is to be spent by 31 March 2022.

## **5.2 Legal Implications**

- 5.2.1 ECC should comply with the terms of the funding allocated by MHCLG when distributing this funding. The Council should be specific with the recipients about the purpose for which the funding should be used and have the ability to claw back funding that is not used or is not used for the correct purpose. Proper internal controls are required to make sure that the money is spent on the intended purposes.
- 5.2.2 There should be a clear and transparent process and criteria for all grant applications.
- 5.2.3 All grants must be monitored to ensure that they do not constitute a prohibited subsidy and are in compliance with the subsidy control rules. In particular money paid to businesses must be spent to remedy harm caused by the pandemic.
- 5.2.4 The funding is paid to ECC on strict terms and conditions and it will be necessary to ensure that all funding paid complies with those terms and conditions and is subject to legal agreements requiring spend on the activities.

## **6. Equality and Diversity implications**

- 6.1 The Public Sector Equality Duty applies to the Council when it makes decisions. The duty requires us to have regard to the need to:
- (a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other behaviour prohibited by the Act. In summary, the Act makes discrimination etc on the grounds of a protected characteristic unlawful
  - (b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- (c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not including tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.
- 6.2 The protected characteristics are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, gender, and sexual orientation. The Act states that 'marriage and civil partnership' is not a relevant protected characteristic for (b) or (c) although it is relevant for (a).
- 6.3 The equality impact assessment indicates that the proposals in this report will not have a disproportionately adverse impact on any people with a particular characteristic. Funding is designed to support the identified Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV) population across Essex providing positive support to ensure their welfare and enable access to services they may require. These activities do not have a negative impact on the wider Essex population.

## **7. Appendices**

- 7.1. Appendix 1 – CEV Funding MHCLG Guidance document
- 7.2. Appendix 2 – CEV Funding Equality Impact Assessment

## **8. Background Papers**

None declared.

<b>I approve the above recommendations set out above for the reasons set out in the report.</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Cllr John Spence, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health</b>	<b>30.07.21</b>

**In consultation with:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Mark Carroll Executive Director Place &amp; Public Health</b>	<b>30.06.2021</b>

*Allocation of Funding to Support the Clinically Extremely Vulnerable*

<b>Executive Director for Finance and Technology (S151 Officer)</b> <b>Stephanie Mitchener on behalf of Nicole Wood</b>	08.07.2021
<b>Director, Legal and Assurance (Monitoring Officer)</b> <b>Katie Bray on behalf of Paul Turner</b>	15.7.2021