

Use Of Contain Outbreak Management Funding (Finance) (Paul French – Corporate Head of Finance)

Synopsis of report:

To provide an update on the use of the Council's Contain Outbreak Management Fund allocation

Recommendation(s):

None

For Information only.

1. Context of report

- 1.1 In June 2020, the government distributed £300 million of Contain Outbreak Management Funding (COMF) to English upper tier authorities to assist with implementing measures to identify and contain outbreaks of the Covid19 virus and break the viral chain of transmission.
- 1.2 In 2-tier authority areas, this funding was provided on the expectation that Upper Tier Local Authorities work closely with their lower tier partners and ensure those partners are given opportunities to deliver the outcomes this funding is meant to support where delivery by those partners would be the most efficient and cost-effective means of delivery. In those cases, it is essential that Upper Tier Local Authorities provide sufficient resources to Lower Tier Local Authorities within the former's allocated funding so that the latter can carry out any responsibilities that they are asked to undertake.

2. Report and, where applicable, options considered

- 2.1 Surrey County Council received the payments from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund and passported a proportion of the payments onto the Surrey districts and boroughs to be used for public health purposes to tackle COVID-19. The specific public health activities that could be funded were subject to the judgement of authorities in coordination with the Director of Public Health. The activities below are not exhaustive, but form the basis of what the funding must be aimed at:
 - a) Targeted testing for hard-to-reach groups out of scope of other testing programmes.
 - b) Additional contact tracing.
 - c) Enhanced communication and marketing, for example 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 communications).

- 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/lockdown guidance.
- o) Support for rough sleepers

2.2 The money passported on to Runnymede for use in the borough was as follows:

Tranche		£	Received
1	3 Nov – 1 Dec 20	268,272	05/01/21
2	2 – 29 Dec 20	91,645	16/03/21
3	30 Dec – 26 Jan 21	134,136	20/05/21
4	27 Jan – 23 Feb 21	134,136	20/05/21
5	24 Feb – 31 Mar 21	172,460	20/05/21
		800,650	

2.3 At the time of the first two tranches, the Council was unaware of the additional payments coming our way. As a result officers restricted what the 2 tranches could be spent on to focus on the essential areas to keep the Council running Covid-free and focusing on empowering local communities. The last 3 payments were not paid to Runnymede until after SCC received the Director of Public Health’s permission to redistribute it to districts and boroughs in mid April 2021. In order to spend this new money, several new schemes were investigated but were not pursued. Having sought and failed to identify new schemes, officers agreed to set the balance aside in case of a fresh wave of lockdowns over the winter of 2022 which thankfully never materialised.

2.4 A list of where the funding has been spent to date and where it is still earmarked for, is set out in Appendix A. Not all of the money has been earmarked for schemes as it is anticipated that additional money may be required for events associated with the Queen’s Platinum Jubilee celebrations and also for potential requirements over the winter period.

2.5 A second wave of COMF funding for 2021-22 totalling £107,000 with some modified criteria was paid direct to Runnymede. This has been used to offset the lost income from the use of the Council’s Public Halls as vaccination centres.

3. Resource implications

3.1 The COMF funding has been an additional resource to the Council to help it provide facilities and funding to certain sections of the local community throughout the pandemic.

4. **Equality implications**

- 4.1 The criteria set out in paragraph 2.1 for spending the COMF money was set by Central Government and was aimed at providing help and assistance for those most at risk of the coronavirus and to help control and contain the spread of the virus. Regular monitoring reports have been sent to Surrey County Council to ensure that the money has been spent appropriately.

5. **Conclusions**

- 5.1 The money received by the Council has been spent in accordance with the grant conditions focusing on keeping both the local community and the Council operating throughout the pandemic.

(For information)

Background papers

None