



Executive Director/Director Non-Key Executive Decision Report

Author/Lead Officer of Report: Carina Kemp,
Operational and Development Manager

Tel: [07471021439](tel:07471021439)

Report to: Janet Sharpe, Director of Housing Services

Date of Decision: (24/03/2022

Subject: Protect and Vaccinate Fund

Which Executive Member Portfolio does this relate to? *Housing, Roads and Waste Management*

Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? *Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee*

Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken?

Yes

☒

No

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If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 1116

Does the report contain confidential or exempt information?

Yes

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No

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If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:-

*"The (**report/appendix**) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (**insert relevant paragraph number**) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."*

Purpose of Report:

The purpose of this report is to:

1. Inform the Director of Housing Services Place of the purpose of the Protect and Vaccinate Grant;
2. To seek approval to accept and spend the grant as detailed in this report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Director of Housing Services :

- 1. Approves the Protect and Vaccinate Grant of £266,159 from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities being accepted and authorises the spending of the grant as detailed in this report.*

Background Papers:

Lead Officer to complete:-		
1	I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required.	Finance: M.Wassell
		Legal: Gemma Day
		Equalities: Louise Nunn
	<i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i>	
2	Lead Officer Name: Carina Kemp	Job Title: Operations and Development Manager
	Date: (24/03/2022)	

1.	PROPOSAL								
	Purpose of report								
1.1	On 20 th December 2021, Eddie Hughes MP, Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing wrote to all Local Authorities to announce an additional funding allocation from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to help accommodate and increase vaccination uptake amongst the rough sleeping and single homeless population.								
1.2	The additional money complements the approach already in place by the Council under the ‘Rough Sleeper Winter Plan’ using the Winter Pressures funding awarded in December 2021. The funding covers the period of 20 th December 2021 to end of March 2022. All objectives can be met via current service work and plans in place as described in this report. The service continues to receive regular advice from the DLUHC.								
1.3	The purpose of the report is to outline the plans to continue and build on these plans to deliver the objectives of the funding. This will take into account the ongoing ‘Rough Sleeper Winter Plan’ and building upon the Council’s current approach to vaccination that has so far been successful in promoting vaccination uptake amongst the homeless population.								
1.4	Approval is sought to accept this funding and continue with arrangements promptly to ensure those sleeping rough, at risk of rough sleeping or single homeless are able to be kept safe during the winter months and that we maximise the vaccination uptake within this community.								
	Summary of Protect and Vaccinate Funding Allocation:								
1.5	The Government is aware of low vaccination rates amongst the rough sleeping population, and that the Omicron variant presents a severe risk to these individuals. A range of actions has been requested for local authorities to take to make sure the right support is in place for this vulnerable group of people.								
1.6	The funding that has been allocated to Sheffield City Council is:								
	<table><tr><td>Local Authority</td><td>Accommodation (2021-22)</td><td>Vaccination (2021-22)</td><td>Total Allocation</td></tr><tr><td>Sheffield</td><td>235,671</td><td>30,488</td><td>266,159</td></tr></table>	Local Authority	Accommodation (2021-22)	Vaccination (2021-22)	Total Allocation	Sheffield	235,671	30,488	266,159
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Sheffield	235,671	30,488	266,159						

1.7	<p>The funding is ring-fenced, and further guidance has been provided to the local authority. All authorities have been asked to put in place a range of actions to support the objectives of the funding, including the below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodating people sleeping rough • Increasing vaccination uptake amongst people sleeping rough • Supporting non-UK nationals with restricted eligibility
1.8	<p>Actions Required for the Protect and Vaccinate Funding The range of actions that have been requested Local Authorities put into place are as follows:</p>
1.9	<p>Accommodating people sleeping rough: Self-contained accommodation is the more immediate way to prevent transmission of Covid-19 amongst those sleeping rough. The Council has been asked to make safe and appropriate offers of accommodation to people who are rough sleeping now. This includes people who have previously been offered accommodation but rejected it or left accommodation. The Council should focus on those most vulnerable, particularly clinically vulnerable.</p>
1.10	<p>The Council is well placed to respond to this request due to our ongoing 'Rough Sleeper Winter Plan' arrangements. The funding allows increased spending, if necessary, on accommodation options.</p>
1.11	<p>The service would suggest we continue with all current plans to accommodate rough sleepers. This consists of using existing hotel accommodation and supported housing options to provide each person placed with a key worker, meals and basic essentials and multi-agency wrap around support. At present there are 23 individuals placed under these plans, and we have seen a reduction in rough sleeping as we continue to support, engage and place people sleeping rough.</p>
1.12	<p>Increasing Vaccine uptake amongst people sleeping rough: The Council has been asked to support this objective by way of the following measures.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To respond with information about the areas with higher concentrations of people sleeping rough that may benefit from increase mobile vaccination units. The Service responded to this in December 2021 with the top 5 locations that would target the greatest number of people who rough sleep or who are at risk of rough sleeping. - To use the £30,488 funding to incentivise vaccination uptake. The funding can be used flexibly to encourage vaccination uptake, with examples of activities that could be supported as being travel

	costs, meal vouchers, funding for staff to facilitate vaccination appointments amongst the rough sleeper cohort.
1.13	<p>The service has in response restarted the Rough Sleeper Cell Health Sub Group, including regular weekly meetings with colleagues responsible for mobile vaccinations, and colleagues in the NHS to consider options to increase uptake. The service had already successfully worked to ensure good vaccination uptake in this cohort, but there is still work to be done to promote full vaccinations, and it is noted that there is a lack of uptake for booster vaccinations amongst the homeless population. As a result we have earmarked locations to be targeted through a range of measures, such as a more personalised approach with our street outreach nurse for the most entrenched rough sleepers, mobile vaccination events or targeted GP contact being planned at temporary accommodation, supported accommodation and hotel accommodation sites, and a small range of considered incentives to support this. For example, trialling a vaccine and health information day at Brightmore Drive, where vaccine take up is estimated to be particularly low, with incentives such as self-care goody bags and warm food options.</p>
1.14	<p>Supporting non-UK nationals with restricted eligibility: All individuals, regardless of immigration status, are eligible to receive a vaccine. The authority is asked that all non-UK nationals are included in all plans to support and encourage vaccination uptake. This includes doing a full assessment for each individual, considering on a case-by-case basis how they can be supported and that any powers to accommodate on a time-limited emergency basis are considered.</p>
1.15	<p>The service is already meeting this objective through the ongoing 'Rough Sleeper Winter Plan' which is making offers of accommodation to this group of individuals. Plans to vaccinate the rough sleeper cohort also include this group, and by offering accommodation to individuals this ensures they are better able to be contacted, supported and offered vaccinations.</p>
1.16	<p>Further Advice and Impact for use of the Protect and Vaccinate Funding The Council has also received the following advice and information in relation to the new funding.</p>
1.17	<p>Testing: The service has been advised that the workforce and people experiencing homelessness continue to test in line with guidance for the general population. The service is advised to build a supply of lateral flow tests to account for more individuals who may be</p>

	<p>accommodated as a result of this funding. The Council already has an easily accessible route for testing via the Covid Response Hub and has arranged for test kits to be supplied to staff and the hotel used to accommodate rough sleepers on a regular basis.</p>
1.18	<p>Operation of communal night shelters to accommodate people sleeping rough:</p> <p>The service has been reminded of the principles previously circulated for operating any communal night shelters, which have been updated with a new requirement that settings should not be opened without written agreement from the local authority and the local Director of Public Health.</p>
1.19	<p>The service is already in progress with exploring options for individuals who refuse to engage or who have risks that are so high that finding a placement may take some time. One option has been to explore a limited 'sit-up' provision during times of colder weather, which in effect is a small communal night shelter, however in light of the new Omicron variant alternative options and solutions have continued to be sought.</p>
1.20	<p>The Salvation Army is bringing a small trial of two 'rough sleeping pods' to Sheffield over February and March, which would be a covid-safe alternative to a sit up service. This would provide an alternative safe option for these individuals whilst we continue to work with them for more permanent housing options.</p>
1.21	<p>The pods are small self-sufficient insulated structures that can be moved around depending on the most appropriate locations. They meet a small but vital need to provide a humanitarian response to avoid deaths due to rough sleeping during the winter weather and are more accessible to individuals who are hardest to reach as a 'stepping stone' to further engagement.</p>
1.22	<p>The service would suggest we support this trial by working with the Salvation Army to ensure safe and most appropriate use of the pods and using the protect and vaccinate monies to spot purchase placements for these complex individuals.</p>
1.23	<p>Impact on Rough Sleeping Initiative funding</p> <p>The service was already in advanced planning for the Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI) RSI 2022-2025 funding and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has extended the deadline for submission of these applications in recognition of the additional work and challenges posed by the Omicron variant. A minimum level of funding will be assured whilst the RSI costs are agreed for 2022-</p>

	2025. This will be equal to 75% of our current RSI costs pro-rated for 3 months.
2	HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?
2.1	The proposal will meet the aim in the one-year plan to 'Support people with routes out of homelessness and rough sleeping with emergency and temporary accommodation in Sheffield.'
3.	HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?
3.1	We have consulted with our partners via the Rough Sleeper Cell-Health Group. We have continually met with them throughout the process to discuss the additional requirements to encourage vaccination uptake amongst the rough sleeping population.
3.2	The service continues to regularly meet and receive advice from the DLUHC on this.
4.	RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION
4.1	<u>Equality of Opportunity Implications</u>
4.1.1	There is no impact on any specific groups, the decision will be made through the process. There is no impact on the Public Sector Duty as there is no specific protected characteristic that would be negatively impacted.
4.2	<u>Financial and Commercial Implications</u>
4.2.1	<p><u>DLUHC: Protect and Vaccinate Grant (£266,159)</u></p> <p>Key features (not exclusive) of the grant terms and conditions are summarised below. The Grant Manager will need to read, understand and comply with all of the grant terms and conditions and ensure that there are no ongoing unfunded costs once the project has ended.</p> <p>Grant to be spent in adherence with the following principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -One-off ring fenced grant to be spent by 31/3/22 -Subject to individual assessments, make offers of safe/appropriate accommodation -Support rough sleepers to facilitate vaccinations

4.2.2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Increase vaccine take up amongst rough sleepers etc by providing appropriate incentives (as per Annex C) - Spend to be broken down for both categories: accommodation and associated costs (£236k) and spend on increasing vaccine up-take (£30k). - The Chief Executive/Chief Internal Auditor to sign/return to the team leader of the Homelessness/ Rough Sleeping Directorate (DLUHC) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - An estimate of expected total spend (by 11/3/22) - A final spend declaration, including a breakdown of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) accommodation and associated costs b) spend on increasing vaccine up-take (by 14/4/22) <p><i>“To the best of our knowledge and belief, and having carried out appropriate investigations and checks, in our opinion, in all significant respects, the conditions attached to [Protect and Vaccinate] No 31/5912 have been complied with”.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SCC must complete information returns by the dates specified and data must include analysis of accommodation/vaccination elements. - Discuss/engage in communications on the Protect &Vaccinate programme where requested. - Grant subject to clawback if terms/conditions not complied with. <p><u>Commercial Implications</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - All public sector procurement is governed by and must be compliant with the Grant Agreement and UK National Law. In addition, all procurement in SCC must comply with its own Procurement Policy, and internal regulations known as ‘Contracts Standing Orders’ (CSOs) - CSO requirements will apply in full to the procurement of services, goods or works utilising grants. All grant monies must be treated in the same way as any other Council monies and any requirement to purchase / acquire services, goods or works must go via a competitive process.
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4.3	<u>Legal Implications</u>
4.3.1	The grant funding will be paid to the Council from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) via Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. The grant is provided to the Council for the purposes of protecting and vaccinating rough sleepers in response to the COVID-19 Omicron variant.
4.3.2	The Council has a general power under Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 to do anything that an individual may generally do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation and the power is exercised in accordance with the limitations specified in the Act, this gives the Council the ability to accept the funding from the DLUHC.
4.3.3	Under the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Local Housing Authorities have a number of duties to both prevent homelessness occurring and provide advice and assistance to people who are homeless. Local Housing Authorities must take reasonable steps to help those who are, or who become homeless to secure accommodation.
4.3.4	By accepting the protect and vaccinate grant from the DLUHC it will also support the Council to continue to satisfy its duties under the above legislation.
4.3.5	<p>If a decision is made to accept the £266,159 of funding from the DLUHC, then the Council must ensure that they comply with the grant determination and grant conditions. Key points to note are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The grant must be spent by 31 March 2022. • Funding must be used in adherence with the principles outlined. • The grant can be reduced, suspended, or withheld and the DLUHC can require repayment of the whole or part of the grant if the Council fails to comply with the grant conditions.
4.3.6	The Council must comply at all times with the Data Protection Act 2018, GDPR, the Freedom of Information Act 2000, the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, Subsidy Control all as amended from time to time.
4.3.7	The grant to the Council is not deemed to be a subsidy.
4.4	<u>Other Implications</u>

4.4.1	The funding needs to be spent over a very short timeframe which presents some challenges. There is a risk that there will be an underspend as the funding provides for high accommodation costs, however accommodation for the rough sleeper community within the city is limited. DLUHC has advised that they will work with the Council to understand any spend or costs that may fall into the next financial year.
4.4.2	Any underspend would be deducted from the following years RSI 2022-2025 funding allocation.
5.	ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED
5.2	The main alternative option is to not accept and spend the funding. This would prevent us from providing the above support.
5.3	Other options for spending have not been considered due to the short timescales attached to this grant.
6.	REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS
6.1	The recommendations described in this report will enable Sheffield City Council to expend the Protect and Vaccinate grant.