

Operational Decision Record

Publication Date 27/11/23	Decision Reference Number 5062
Decision Title	
Approval to spend Public Health grant contribution via a Healthy Communities Small Grants Scheme	
Decision Value	
£150,000	
Revenue or Capital Spend?	
Revenue	
Department	
People/Public Health	
Contact Officer (Name, job title, and contact details)	
Liz Pierce, Consultant in Public Health, Healthy Communities Liz.pierce@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Liam Searle, Public Health Manager, Healthy Communities Liam.searle@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Jessica Tomlinson, Public Health Lead Commissioning Officer, Health Improvement Jessica.tomlinson@nottinghamcity.gov.uk	
Decision Taken	
<p>To approve the spend of £150,000 of Public Health grant via a Healthy Communities Small Grants Scheme. £100,000 will be available over two financial years allocated from the Healthy Communities portfolio budget. £50,000 will be available until the end of the 2023/4 financial year allocated from the Health Improvement portfolio budget specifically for small grants which relate to healthy eating and nutrition.</p> <p>The funding will be made available to Nottingham City community organisations via small grants of up to £1000 to carry out health and wellbeing focused projects and initiatives in their community or local area.</p> <p>*Appendix A – Grants Process Flowchart *Appendix B – Community Public Health Function (Healthy Communities) *Appendix C – Nottingham Food Deprivation Data</p>	
Reasons for Decision and Background Information	
This Small Grants Scheme builds on our previous Public Health programme of work which was shown to have a positive impact on the health of our communities	

in Nottingham. In late December 2021, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) made £485k funding available to the Nottingham City Council to establish the 'Community Health Champions' programme.

From the funding made available, the project ring fenced £300,000 in small grants of up to £2,000 each to support local community organisations and community volunteers to facilitate health and wellbeing projects within their local communities. These small grants empowered communities to create accessible and inclusive health initiatives, reduce health inequalities and provide the tools and resources to drive positive, healthy change in our communities.

The funding also provided an opportunity for residents to present their own community insight to Public Health professionals and contribute directly to Public Health priority outcomes by increasing engagement, awareness and uptake of ongoing city-wide health and wellbeing projects and initiatives.

A social return on investment evaluation of the Health and Wellbeing Community Champions programme and Covid Vaccine related small grants project was carried out in 2023. The evaluation provided broad evidence of improvements across many health-related aspects. These findings were in line with the evaluation of the national programme.

The funding of £485k from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to establish the programme detailed above ran from January 2022 to August 2023 and is now ended. The £150k funding for the next phase of small grants is proposed from the ring-fenced Public Health grant, already aligned to the Healthy Communities and Health Improvement portfolios, to continue with a broader health and wellbeing programme. This proposal builds on previous agreement at Public Health Programme Board for continued support to the model for Community Public Health and the Community Health and Wellbeing Champions.

The £50k of funding allocated from the Health Improvement portfolio is to support the Healthy Communities Team to provide funding for grants which address the needs of our communities in relation to the cost of living crisis and the associated lack of access to healthy and nutritious food. The Priority Places for Food Index from the Consumer Data Research Centre identify at least seven wards in Nottingham which contain areas of highest deprivation regarding their lack of access to cheap, healthy and sustainable sources of food and 8 wards which contain areas which exhibit characteristics associated with food deserts. Appendix C provides this data in more detail.

The proposed funding program aligns to the current Health and Wellbeing Strategy and will support NCC Public Health to build stronger partnership working with local communities. The project team will work closely with applicants to understand the reach and impact of the activity and that the following short, medium, and long-term outcomes for volunteers, residents and communities will be supported.

- Improved health education and skills
- Increased presence of the communities' voice in local health and wellbeing service design
- Increased resilience in identified communities
- Increased access to healthcare via signposting
- Improved confidence and self-efficacy
- Improved physical health
- Improved sense of community belonging
- Change in amount of physical activity

The Small Grants Scheme will be managed by 1.0 FTE Public Health Manager in the Healthy Communities Team using their experience of the previous programme to build on that already established grants process. Support will be available from other colleagues in the Healthy Communities Team and Health Improvement Team as necessary.

Public Health agree that a grant of £150k for this purpose meets the conditions of the Public Health Grant as outlined in this paper and the aims of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and supports the principles and vision of the Healthy Communities portfolio (Appendix B) and Health Improvement portfolio.

Conditions of the Public Health Grant are detailed here [Public health ring-fenced grant 2023 to 2024: local authority circular - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/circular-economy/public-health-ring-fenced-grant-2023-to-2024-local-authority-circular). This allows Local Authorities to make a contribution from the Public Health Grant to a private sector or civil society organisation where there is potential for significant public health gain and this represents value for money. The focus of the activity is targeted within communities with high levels of health need with a focus on reducing health inequalities.

In making a grant as contribution for these projects it is understood that this does not constitute a contractual obligation and a grant agreement will be drawn up to be signed by both parties that will include how steps would be taken to suspend, withdraw or claw back grant which has not been spent or used incorrectly i.e.

- Misuse of the grant.
- Failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the grant agreement.
- Acts negligently in delivering the project.
- Obtains duplicate funding from a third party.
- Provides the funder with misleading or inaccurate information.
- Commits fraud or bribery.
- Ceases to operate, is wound up, dissolved or becomes insolvent.

Public Health agree that the grant program of £150k delivered via the small grants of up to £1000 individual grants for this purpose meets the conditions of the Public Health Grant as outlined in this paper and the aims of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. These grants will strengthen local partnership working with our communities and, by working to support community action for health represent economic and efficient use of the public health grant.

Other Options Considered and why these were rejected

To have no small grants funding.

This option would lead to a reduction in support for the Health and Wellbeing Community Champions, a reduction in ongoing engagement with communities around current health and wellbeing priorities and a reverse of positive communication built with communities since the launch of the Community Champions project and small grants programme. This would also fail to learn from the evidence of how small grants can have a large impact in supporting community groups take on health initiatives at local level.

To offer larger grants to support and fund large scale projects and initiatives.

Previous experience of the small grants scheme have provided reassurance that large scale grants of up to £2,000 have not necessarily provided additional value to the community or offered more input into positive health priority outcomes. Offering a smaller grant of up to £1000 also provides opportunity to offer the scheme to more community organisations and improves opportunity of access.

Re-structure the scheme and process

Absorbing future small grant funding into the existing Healthy Communities Small Grants Scheme will reduce impact on officer capacity across Public Health and ensure financial guidelines and processes are adhered to and policy such as Best Value are considered across the board.

Reasons why this decision is classified as operational

Decision is classed as operational as it's under £300,000 and is within existing policy.

Additional Information

Legal Comments

The proposals in this report seek approval to spend grant funding of £150,000 of Public Health grant via a Healthy Communities Small Grants Scheme, which will be available over two financial years with funds of £100,000 allocation from the Healthy Community team. I understand that an allocation of £50,000 would be from the Health Improvement Team, to be available until the end of the 2023/4, specifically for small grants which relate to healthy eating and nutrition. The grant funding will be made available to Nottingham City community organisations via small grants of up to £1000 to carry out health and wellbeing focused projects and initiatives in their community or local area.

The Council must ensure that it complies with the terms and conditions imposed on such grant funding from each applicable funding source and that the funds are awarded in a manner that is consistent with a grant. It is incumbent on the council that the use of the funding with third party, should be done in accordance with the Council's Constitution and Contract Procedure Rules. In delivering the projects as detailed under [Public health ring-fenced grant 2023 to 2024: local authority circular - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#), the grant funding should comply with the criteria having regards to Appendix A – Grants Process Flowchart, *Appendix B – Community Public Health Function (Healthy Communities) and *Appendix C – Nottingham Food Deprivation Data as applicable, when delivering the grant.

The Council will not be able to sue or make a claim for breach of contract if the grant funding is not spent as intended, but the funds may be clawed back if not spent for the purpose for which it was intended.

Legal services will continue to support the report author as required to complete the necessary formalities required by government in terms of necessary grant agreements.

In consideration of the above and provided grant funding terms are complied with and onward spend of the money is made in accordance with the Council's Constitutional requirements, there are no legal issues with the recommendations.

Vendie Charles, Solicitor Contracts & Commercial, 25 October 2023

Financial Comments

The **maximum cost of this decision is £150,000** and is incorporated within the expenditure of Public Health Grant and in line with Public Health priorities.

The service will need to ensure they consider the best value framework when awarding the grants. The actual costs associated with this decision will require regular monitoring to form appropriate financial accounting and an audit trail to support robust forecasting. Any decisions taken will need to be captured against this decision value to ensure it is not exceeded.

Tracey Moore, Commercial Business Partner – Public Health, 22/11/23

Decision Maker (Name and Job Title)

Lucy Hubber, Director of Public Health

Scheme of Delegation Reference Number

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Date Decision Taken

31/10/23