

Chichester District Council

Cabinet

6 April 2021

Covid-19 Ambassador Funding

1. Contacts

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2. Recommendation

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve funding of £43,695 from the COVID Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), for an extension of the existing Ambassador Service to support the Council's Covid 19 business recovery in Chichester District until 21 June 2021.
- 2.2 That authority is delegated to the Strategic Leadership Team following consultation with the Leader and relevant Cabinet Member to allocate COMF funding to appropriate projects in accordance with the grant conditions.

3. Background

- 3.1 Covid Ambassadors have been operating in the District since November 2020 when Government (MHCLG) funding for them was made available. This funding ended on 8 March 2021.
- 3.2 The ambassador service supports businesses/high street recovery from the effects of the pandemic by increasing public confidence in visiting our high streets. They also assist with the control of transmission of COVID-19 in our towns and villages and other high footfall areas such as tourist hotspots, through encouraging compliance with non-pharmaceutical interventions such as “hands, face, space” and covid restrictions that apply to different businesses and settings. The Ambassador service is also an important link between the public and the Council's and police enforcement measures.
- 3.3 The role of the ambassadors is not enforcement but to engage, explain and encourage best practice and compliance with Covid 19 restrictions. This is particularly important as restrictions start to lift through the Government's 4 step roadmap and the vaccination programme, as securing compliance will likely become increasingly difficult. Our coastal towns and villages also attract significant numbers

of people and the ambassadors form a key link with other stakeholders and enforcement agencies in managing issues that may arise.

3.4 The ambassador service supports a suite of approaches to stop Covid transmission, namely:

- Providing intelligence to the Council's Health Protection team and Sussex Police to enable rapid enforcement action
- Supporting the Covid Information Recovery Officers and monitoring compliance of businesses
- Responding to and monitoring compliance for covid complaints from the public.

3.5 The Government's Covid Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) provides financial support to local authorities in their efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to support local economies and public health activities. The grant is allocated to County Councils in two tier areas with the expectation that the relevant County Council will pass some of the fund on to District and Borough councils. West Sussex County Council has advised that they have received £20m from the government's COMF allocation for 2020-21. Following an application by the Council to WSCC for funding from this fund, WSCC have advised that they intend to allocate approximately £4m of the fund to the West Sussex Districts and Boroughs. £1m of this towards a Strategic Housing proposal and the remaining £3m distributed amongst the District and Borough Councils, with this Council's share amounting to £411,000.

4 Outcomes to be Achieved

4.1 To provide an ambassador service to support enforcement and compliance such as;

- facilitating to help prevent mixing between groups in night-time economy areas,
- encouraging social distancing in busy night-life areas,
- reminding members of the public to wear a face covering where required in relation to business premises,
- encouraging dispersal of gatherings and working with local businesses on queue management,
- supporting the councils' compliance and enforcement function through visiting businesses to check compliance with COVID-19 measures through observation and engagement and escalating to local authority compliance and enforcement officers as appropriate.

5 Proposal

5.1 The proposal is to fund an extension of the ambassador service until 21 June 2021 when the Government aims to lift all Covid-19 restrictions. 6 ambassadors would be provided 7 days a week for 10 weeks to cover the district across a range of days and times as required at a cost of £43,695. Since WSCC have confirmed that COMF will be passed to the Council, this funding can be used to pay for the Covid ambassadors.

5.2 It is proposed to reappoint Blayde Security to deliver the ambassador service as they are the existing contractor who have provided a very successful service to date and have been very flexible in terms of reacting to levels of deployment depending on need. The service could continue seamlessly as their staff have all received security

training including conflict management, covid awareness training and have been DBS checked. They also have procedures in place for recording and reporting actions and intelligence gathered, which is reported to the Council on a daily basis.

- 5.3 It is also proposed to fund appropriate projects with the remainder of the COMF that has been allocated to the Council. To enable such decisions to be taken efficiently, it is proposed that authority is delegated to SLT following consultation with the Leader and relevant portfolio holder.

6 Alternatives Considered

- 6.1 The option of redeploying CDC staff was considered, however there is no capacity within the current workforce to deliver the required level of service.
- 6.2 Recruit a small number of additional staff to fulfil this role, however the recruitment process would result in a significant delay in the delivery of the service on our high streets.

7 Resource and Legal Implications

- 7.1 The contract will be managed by existing staff.
- 7.2 The extension of the ambassador service for the period proposed can be fully funded from the COMF.

8 Consultation

- 8.1 None

9 Community Impact and Corporate Risks

- 9.1 The Government's dates in the proposed road map may alter should infection rates increase, although a further lockdown appears unlikely at this stage. Blayde are able to react immediately both in terms of standing down the ambassador service or increasing it at the Council's request when circumstances have altered.

10 Other Implications

Are there any implications for the following?	Yes	No
Crime and Disorder – positive impact through encouragement of compliance with Covid restrictions. Ambassadors may gather evidence of non-compliance which might be used to support enforcement action subsequently witnessed by Council officers.	x	
Biodiversity and Climate Change Mitigation		x
Human Rights and Equality Impact		x
Safeguarding and Early Help		x
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)		x
Health and Wellbeing		x

11 Appendices

None.

12 Background Papers

None.