

## Appendix 2c: Grant Claims

### Objective

To confirm that grant allocations received have been spent in accordance with the relevant scheme's terms and conditions.

### Disabled Facilities Capital Grant Determination (DFG)

#### Purpose of funding

To support those in non-council properties with required adaptations to their homes based on their medical needs. Types of works undertaken include installations of:

- level access showers
- ramped access to properties
- stair lifts or through-floor lifts.

#### Conclusion

It was confirmed that spend was compliant in that:

- it fell within the definition of "capital" for accounting purposes
- grant monies had been transferred into the local Better Care Fund pooled budget, under Section 75 of the NHS Act 2006.

In addition, work was undertaken to verify that all cases were supported by:

- an assessment of need and recommendation of adaptation works required, undertaken by an Occupational Therapist
- suitable means testing to ensure eligibility to the DFG scheme, where required
- a signed agreement from surveyors and clients that works had been completed as per the plans, and to a suitable standard.

#### Opinion: Unqualified

### Highways Maintenance Challenge Fund

#### Purpose of funding

To assist with the borough wide LED street lighting upgrade.

#### Conclusion

It was confirmed that spend was compliant in that:

- it fell within the definition of "capital" for accounting purposes
- works undertaken related to the replacement of streetlights in the borough.

#### Opinion: Unqualified

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### Local Transport Capital Block Fund

#### Purpose of funding

To assist in delivering transport improvement schemes, which can include:

- road markings and re-surfacing
- upgrades to traffic signal junctions, zebra and puffin crossings
- underground utility detection, topographical, CCTV and HDS surveys in preparation for works contained in the 2017/18 programme
- upgrades to electronic bus information screens
- pothole repairs.

#### Conclusion

It was confirmed that spend was compliant in that it fell within the definition of "capital" for accounting purposes.

Some issues were identified that did not impact on the ability to sign the grant off, but required attention from the service area.

This included a failure to raise appropriate purchase orders for all transactions. Work is being undertaken to move further elements of the highways contract onto Symology<sup>1</sup>. System controls within Symology require work orders to be aligned with a purchase order number prior to the order being issued to contractors. This should minimise this issue going forward.

In addition, evidence that works have been completed, such as records of site visits or photos showing works done, were not always available. The team advised this was due to the responsible engineer leaving the Council and failing to transfer files to the team from his personal drive. Work was undertaken by engineers to re-visit works and verify that they have been completed in line with the invoices paid. Staff have been reminded of the need to keep all records on the shared drive.

#### Opinion: Unqualified

### Local Growth Fund

#### Purpose of funding

Three streams of funding were received in 2016/17 which covered:

- elements of the Airport Business Park Development
- heating upgrades and lift replacements within the Beecroft Art Gallery
- highways works to Victoria Avenue and Kent Elms.

#### Conclusion

It was confirmed that spend was compliant in that it fell within the definition of "capital" for accounting purposes.

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<sup>1</sup> Symology is the Council's Highways Asset Management system

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Works were generally undertaken in line with the agreed business cases. However, for the Airport Business Park, agreement to changes in what was being delivered through grant funding had not been agreed with Essex County Council before work had taken place, as required by the agreement's terms and conditions.

The change involved using grant monies on elements of the business case that was to be funded by the Council's capital programme, due to a delay in the grant funded elements being delivered. After being raised as a concern by Internal Audit, suitable agreement was obtained.

**Opinion: Unqualified**

### **Pothole Action Fund**

#### **Purpose of funding**

To assist in the repair of potholes across the borough.

#### **Conclusion**

It was confirmed that spend was compliant in that it fell within the definition of "capital" for accounting purposes

**Opinion: Unqualified**

### **Mentoring Fund**

#### **Purpose of funding**

To provide a mentoring programme to students at risk of disengagement from education and plan for their future employment opportunities in South Essex, delivered in partnership with a range of secondary schools.

#### **Conclusion**

It was confirmed that spend was compliant in that it related to start-up costs incurred to develop the mentoring programme.

**Opinion: Unqualified**

### **Troubled Families Programme, Payments by Results Scheme Grant**

#### **Purpose of funding**

To assess compliance with the terms and conditions of the Department for Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) Financial Framework for making Payment by Result (PBR) claims under the Expanded Troubled Families Programme (Phase 2).

## Appendix 2c: Grant Claims

### Background

The Financial Framework requires that Internal Audit verifies a 10% representative sample of PBR claims before they are made to ensure there is supporting evidence to confirm families:

- met the required criteria to be considered for entry to the expanded Troubled Families Programme
- have achieved either continuous employment or significant and sustained progress as defined by the Council's agreed Outcomes Plan.

Larger sample sizes may be required for smaller claims in order to ensure the audit is meaningful.

### Conclusion

The DCLG arrangements for making PBR claims changed from April 2017 enabling councils to make more frequent claims. Therefore, Internal Audit has worked with the Early Help and Family Support Team (EHFST) to ensure timely submission of these claims.

This coincided with changes in arrangements within the EHFST for reviewing PBR claims, in that three 'Outcome Experts' / PBR Champions were identified. Regular 'Outcome Surgeries' have been established where:

- staff attend for advice and support on cases
- cases assessed as meeting PBR criteria are independently reviewed and challenges made over the level of evidence required to meet the Outcome Plan
- every case must be agreed as meeting all entry and exit criteria by an 'Outcome Expert' before a claim can be made.

Additional cases have been checked each period reviewed to ensure that the new PBR surgeries process is operating properly.

As the Troubled Families Outcome Plan is rolled out across Social Care teams and more teams outside of the EHFST begin working towards the outcomes, these surgeries will be key to ensure all claims meet both the entry and exit criteria.

Between the May and October 2017 submissions, 127 cases have been claimed for within the following categories:

- Families supported by the EHFST (100 cases)
- Child in Need (CIN) cases supported by Social Care teams (25 cases)
- Youth Offending Service (2 cases).

Of the 17 EHFST cases checked by Internal Audit, two were withdrawn initially because there was insufficient evidence to support them. All were successfully submitted as part of a later claim. They all fell within the May and July 2017 submissions and related to the first two categories outlined above.

In May, a concern was highlighted with the CIN cases, as it was not possible to evidence families had met the minimum two eligibility criteria required for entry into the programme. So, all such cases were removed from this claim and reviewed before being resubmitted.

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Some additional testing was also undertaken in July, to confirm that the work of a newer PBR champion was in compliance with the scheme.

No issues were identified with the Youth Offending Services claims.

Overall, it was possible to conclude that:

- the new Outcome Surgeries are starting to work well
- reliance can generally be placed on the cases checked by the Team Manager, EH&S.

**May, July, September and October 2017 Opinions: Unqualified.**