

Committee: **Executive Committee**

Date of meeting: **13th January 2021**

Report Subject: **Integrated Care Fund (ICF) Update 2019/20**

Portfolio Holder: **Cllr John Mason, Executive Member Social Services**

Report Submitted by: **Alyson Hoskins – Head of Adult Services**

Reporting Pathway (Dates to be Entered)								
Directorate Management Team	Corporate Leadership Team	Portfolio Holder / Chair	Audit Committee	Democratic Services Committee	Scrutiny Committee	Executive Committee	Council	Other (please state)
17/11/20		17.12.20			10/12/20	13.01.21		

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an overview for Executive Members on the current allocation of funding for projects monitored by the Social Services Department and funded via the Welsh Government Integrated Care Fund (ICF) as at November 2020.
- 1.2 It also highlights the current position in relation to the announcement that there will be a further extension of the fund for a further 12 months' transition year (2021/22) and demonstrates how we are addressing the risks associated with the potential ceasing of the funding from April 2022.

2. Scope and Background

- 2.1 Previous annual reports have identified the history of the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) - (formerly known as the Intermediate Care Fund) and members will be aware that ICF funding has been available to health and social care organisations since 2014/2015.
- 2.2 Whilst initially only being available for funding projects in Adult Services, in the past 2 years' eligibility for funding has been expanded and now includes funding to support key preventative projects across both Adult and Children social care.
- 2.3 The Integrated Care Fund is currently governed via the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) structures and the grant funding is administered through the ICF performance monitoring unit within Aneurin Bevan University Health Board (ABUHB). The fund can be accessed by sectors that support the priorities of the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and the overarching population needs assessment for Gwent. The grant supports the delivery of the key priorities in the areas of:

- Older people with complex needs and long term conditions including dementia
- People with Learning Disabilities
- Children with Complex Needs due to disability or illness
- Carers, including young carers

- 2.4 The allocation and bidding process can be complex as there are both revenue and capital funding streams within the investment plan of ICF. The current Blaenau Gwent allocation for revenue is £950,275 (Adult Services) and £372,909 (Children Services). The allocation of capital ICF for BG is currently £544,979 - (£375,829 – Adult Services and £169,150 – Children Services).
- 2.5 Within Blaenau Gwent we have been successful and proportionate in accessing this fund since its inception. Projects we have developed have been aligned to our strategic priorities including both the 'Living Independently in Blaenau Gwent in the 21st Century' Strategy and the Reduction in Children Looked After Strategy alongside the wider cultural changes required following the implementation of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and Welsh Government's new long term plan for health and social care 'A Healthier Wales' including alignment to the 'Gwent transformational offer'. A full summary of current ICF revenue projects in Blaenau Gwent are attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 2.6 During 2019/20 partners were notified that the current ICF funding stream would cease at the end of the 2020/21 financial year and significant concerns were raised by all partners including this Local Authority, on our ability to continue to fund the existing initiatives from within their core budget allocation.
- 2.7 However, on 24th August 2020, Welsh Government officials confirmed the current allocation of ICF (revenue of £89 million and capital of £40 million across Wales) would continue for 2021/22, although at the time of writing this update no formal allocation has been confirmed for the Gwent region, although the Gwent Regional Partnership Board has been told verbally by Welsh Government that our current Integrated Care Fund allocation should continue for a further 12 months 'transition' year in its current format until March 2022.
- 2.8 Following confirmation of this verbal decision and as part of the planning for the transition period, the Regional Partnership Board has supported the development of robust impact assessments to enable the partners to have a proactive approach to the planned closure of any initiatives.
- 2.9 There has also been concerns raised as to the additional cost pressures we would face due to the impact of potential redundancy costs across our service budgets as currently across Adult and Children Services in Blaenau Gwent, we have 24.66 whole time equivalent (wte) posts funded by this grant equating to 29 staff contracts; with 11 staff members with permanent employment/ secondments arrangements and 18 staff with fixed term contracts.

2.10 As a response to the situation, and to ensure that partners are able to measure the impact of the closure of these services on our day to day operations and strategic priorities, we have agreed a number of actions which will be undertaken during the next 6 months and beyond into the transition period year 2021/22, these include:

- a) The 5 LA's in Gwent, along with ABUHB and Third Sector groups are undertaking a series of specific project evaluations. These are being led by the ICF project officers employed by the ABUHB and focus on the delivery of the project outcomes, performance information and overall value for money. Some projects are subject to a full 'deep dive' whilst others have a lighter desk top audit approach. The outcomes of these evaluations are being reported to the relevant partnership boards within the RPB governance structure.
- b) Each LA has been asked to risk rate their ICF projects and to identify the impact of the withdrawal of the funding and cessation of the services. The evaluation for Blaenau Gwent – undertaken in August 2020 has reported that 13 of the 14 projects are ranked as a high/ critical priority should they not be funded after March 2022 with 5 of the 13 being identified as service critical. These 5 services were all part of the Children Service portfolio.
- c) An indicative scoping exercise has been completed across Gwent partners in relation to the projected redundancy costs that are to be incurred should the grant cease. In addition to this we have highlighted to Welsh Government how there are restrictions within the grant conditions to enable the funding to be used to cover cost pressures for redundancies. The estimated indicative costs across Gwent which were submitted to Welsh Government were £1,353,588 (432 wte posts) for Gwent partners and a redundancy cost pressure identified of £28,232 specifically for BG staff – although this will increase with the additional year's extension of the funding and the figures will need to be revisited during Summer 2021 as part of a planned exit strategy.
- d) Internal service reviews are being undertaken for specific teams for example, we have an ongoing evidence based review of the referral pathways in our Adults IAA team and part of this review includes a focus on how some of the functions of the existing ICF posts can be incorporated into the wider functions of the team.
- e) There is a Corporate review being undertaken across the Local Authority of the current grant allocations, governance arrangements and how they link to Council priorities. The ICF funding streams are currently being evaluated as part of this review and will be subject to a future report to CLT and scrutiny committees in early 2021.

3. **Options for Recommendation**

3.1 The options for consideration are:

3.2 **Option 1** – to agree the report and the actions currently underway to evaluate the future impact of the cessation of the ICF funded posts and services.

- 3.3 **Option 2** – to note the report and propose an alternative approach in relation to the options for mitigating the risks face by the cessation of the ICF funding from April 2022.

Option 1 is the recommended option.

4. **Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan**

- 4.1 Evidence of how does this topic supports the achievement of the Corporate Plan / Statutory Responsibilities / Blaenau Gwent Well-being Plan
The report is fulfilling our statutory functions under the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and accompanying regulations.

- 4.2 The report is also fulfilling a number of the Social Services aims within the Corporate Plan:

- To improve accessibility, provision of information and advice to enable people to support their own wellbeing;
- To intervene early to prevent problems from becoming greater;
- To work with our partners including Aneurin Bevan Health Board and neighbouring authorities to deliver integrated responsive care and support;
- To promote and facilitate new ways of delivering health and social care involving key partners and our communities.

- 4.3 A number of the areas being progressed by the ICF projects will support us to achieve two of the Wellbeing Plan objectives:

- The best start in life for everyone;
- To encourage and enable people to make healthy lifestyle choices in the place that they live, learn, work and play.

5. **Implications Against Each Option**

Option 1 – The governance of the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) is overseen by the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and a partnership approach across health and social care partners has been developed to consider the wider implications of the cessation of the partnership funding.

Option 2 – If Executive were to recommend alternative approaches to those outlined in this report, then it will be appropriate to consider these alongside our neighbouring authorities and the health board to maintain a consensus in approach.

5.1 ***Impact on Budget (short and long term impact)***

The Integrated Care Capital and Revenue Fund has historically provided significant investment enabling both Adult and Children Services to develop a number of projects across Blaenau Gwent and Gwent as a whole, and should this funding be removed at the end of the proposed transition period

we will have significant financial consequences going forward. This includes potential loss of preventative services across Children Services, in particular those services which are specifically aimed at reducing the numbers of children and young people who may otherwise require admission to our care system. These services have not only improved outcomes for young people but also have reduced the numbers of costly residential placements required.

Whilst there are no immediate impacts on the budget, there are clearly concerns in relation to the impact of the closure of the schemes should all funding cease from April 2022. The introduction of an additional 12 months' transition funding enables the department to fully evaluate the schemes based on their impact and seek alternative funding options. During this time the impact of the potential redundancy costs will also be evaluated.

5.2 ***Risk including Mitigating Actions***

5.3 ***Legal***

The Legal department will become involved in considering and advising on any legal agreements associated with the future closure of ICF funded projects.

5.4 ***Human Resources***

Colleagues from across our Organisational Development and Finance Teams have supported in the collation of potential redundancy cost pressures during the Summer 2020 and will become involved in considering and advising on any human resource issues associated with the future closure of ICF funded projects.

6. **Supporting Evidence:**

6.1 ***Performance Information and Data***

Not applicable.

6.2 ***Expected outcome for the public***

In line with our local and national priorities, our ICF projects promote seamless provision of health and social care services across Gwent.

6.3 ***Involvement (consultation, engagement, participation)***

The Regional Partnership Board has facilitated partnership working from across our Health, Social Care and Third sector partners in developing and evaluating ICF projects. This work has included representation from the Citizens Panel to ensure engagement and involvement in its direction.

6.4 ***Thinking for the Long term (forward planning)***

Both ICF and transformation grant funded projects provides the opportunity to test innovative practices and work collectively to progress integration and partnership working across the Gwent region.

6.5 ***Preventative focus***

All ICF projects focus as much as possible on how Health and Social Services can work together in a more preventative way to minimise dependency on statutory provisions.

6.6 ***Collaboration / partnership working***

The role the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) is to work collaboratively across boundaries to benefit citizens requiring health and social care services across Gwent. The Governance and future developments of the ICF programme are being closely scrutinised by the RPB.

6.7 ***Integration (across service areas)***

All ICF projects focus as much as possible on how Health and Social Services can integrate to provide a seamless service model for recipients of health and social care provision.

6.8 ***EqIA (screening and identifying if full impact assessment is needed)***

7. **Monitoring Arrangements**

7.1 The monitoring arrangements for the Regional Partnership Board are through the Social Services Scrutiny Committee and the Executive Committee on a quarterly basis and include regular reports relating to ICF and wider Gwent grant funding streams.

Background Documents / Electronic Links

Appendix 1 – ICF funded projects in Blaenau Gwent.