

# Decision Pathway – Report



**PURPOSE:** Key decision

**MEETING:** Cabinet

**DATE:** 04 July 2023

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| <b>TITLE</b>  | <b>Health Determinants Research Collaboration bid (National Institute of Health Research)</b> |  |  |
| <b>Ward(s)</b>  | Citywide  |  |  |
| <b>Author: Jo Williams</b>  | <b>Job title: Consultant in Public Health</b>   |  |  |
| <b>Cabinet lead: Cllr Ellie King Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities and Cllr Helen Holland Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and the Integrated Care System</b>  | <b>Executive Director lead: Hugh Evans – Executive Director Adults and Communities</b>        |  |  |
| <b>Proposal origin:</b> BCC Staff   |   |  |  |
| <b>Decision maker:</b> Cabinet Member<br><b>Decision forum:</b> Cabinet   |   |  |  |
| <b>Purpose of Report:</b>   |   |  |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To seek approval for submission of a funding bid to National Institute of Health Research, in collaboration with our city partners, University of Bristol and University of the West of England, for a Health Determinants Research Collaboration.</li> <li>2. To seek approval to spend the grant, should the bid be successful.</li> </ol>  |   |  |  |
| <b>Evidence Base:</b>   |   |  |  |
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The National Institute for Health Research (NIHR) wishes to fund a set of innovative research collaborations between local government and the academic sector that focus on improving the wider determinants, or drivers, of health. The proposed collaborations are called Health Determinants Research Collaborations (HDRCs). HDRCs are intended to be a UK-wide initiative led primarily by local government.</li> <li>2. Ten local authorities were successful in securing funding for a HDRC in 2022, including Plymouth City Council in the South-West Region, and Newcastle City Council from amongst the core cities. Bristol City Council (BCC) joined a collaborative bid across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire in 2022, led by South Gloucestershire Council, which was unsuccessful. Feedback indicated that each local authority should bid independently.</li> <li>3. A second round of funding was advertised in 2023. Bristol City Council submitted an expression of interest in April 2023 and has since been invited to submit a full bid by 26<sup>th</sup> July 2023.</li> <li>4. The value of each HDRC contract is up to £5 million over five years. This funding would primarily fund posts to provide a research function. Eligible costs include core staff (e.g., HDRC lead officer's time dedicated to the collaboration, an HDRC manager role, research practitioner posts, and administrative support); training and development; materials and consumables for core HDRC facilities; communication and dissemination activity costs. This funding cannot be used to fund interventions or council services. The costing will include full costs including support costs. No matched funding from BCC is required.</li> <li>5. The proposed Bristol HDRC will provide infrastructure to carry out research activities that address the wider</li> </ol> |   |  |  |

drivers of population health and health inequalities, taking a place-based approach. The proposed HDRC will deliver against the “Health, Care and Wellbeing” theme of the Corporate Strategy to “tackle health inequalities to help people stay healthier and happier throughout their lives”, by taking a Health in All policies approach, focusing on the wider determinants of health, ranging from education and skills, transport, planning, housing, and environment and sustainability.

6. The purpose of the proposed HDRC will be to help enable the local authority to become more research-active, using evidence to inform decision making by undertaking research and evaluation relating to council activities, including synthesising and mobilising existing evidence. This will contribute to the council’s corporate strategy aim to “Improve our ethical and inclusive use of research, data, insights and information to become more data-driven and evidence-led when making decisions”.
7. A collaborative approach will include working with our City Partners, University of Bristol and University of West of England, our services (across the whole system, e.g., education, transport, and housing), and with communities, building on our collective strengths. This builds on existing collaborative approaches such as the Bristol City Fellows Programme.
8. This proposal would build on the council’s existing NIHR funded research infrastructure. The Public Health division currently hosts a small, fixed term NIHR-funded research function, comprising 0.1 WTE Consultant in Public Health time and 0.4 WTE University of Bristol embedded researcher post. These two roles lead the research governance process for the Adults and Communities, and Children and Education Directorates, in collaboration with the Integrated Care Board research team. These roles have also enabled the submission of research bids and proposals, have carried out evidence-synthesis activities, and supported the use of evidence in decision making processes. In addition, the council currently also hosts a NIHR-funded embedded researcher in Adult Social Care, and a UK Prevention Research Partnership (UKPRP) funded embedded researcher in Growth and Regeneration.
9. The HDRC funding would enable the expansion and sustainability of the existing council research infrastructure, through longer term funding, additional research roles, and strengthened collaboration with the University of Bristol and University of West of England with a proportion of the funding planned for university employed research roles. The grant will fund research time in existing council posts, in university roles, and a small number of new council roles. As the grant is fixed term for 5 years (with potential for renewal), redundancy costs will be costed into the bid.
10. The Communities and Public Health Division will host the proposed HDRC, within the existing research and evidence function. The Director of Communities and Public Health will be the nominated lead for the grant, with day-to-day leadership by the Consultant of Public Health with lead academic responsibility.
11. The proposed HDRC will create a team within the Communities and Public Health division, that will work across the council to:
  - develop a culture of identifying and using research evidence on wider determinants to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequalities
  - enable training in research activities for the BCC workforce, leaders and community members, through funding staff time, bringing in expertise and communicating external research funding opportunities
  - undertake research activities, including evidence synthesis, evaluation, preparing external research project funding bids
  - support research partnerships and collaborative research projects and help BCC to connect more fully with the local research system in Bristol, e.g., enabling the council research governance process.
  - enable evidence-based decisions, bringing research evidence into policy and practice, through the role of embedded researchers, practice researchers, tools and training that supports this approach
  - enable dissemination of research to support BCC policy and practice, through briefings, research outputs and sharing learning with communities and other local authorities

12. The HDRC will follow the Bristol Equalities Charter to support equality, diversity and inclusion, and will develop the role of communities and the public in shaping research priorities, research activities, and sharing learning.

**Cabinet Member / Officer Recommendations:**

That Cabinet:

1. Approve the submission of a HDRC bid to NIHR from Bristol City Council, in collaboration with University of Bristol and University of West of England as outlined in this report.
2. Authorise the Director of Communities and Public Health in consultation with the Cabinet member Public Health and Communities to take all steps required to submit the bid and, if successful, to spend the funding including entering into any necessary agreements with the University of Bristol and University of West of England as set out in this report.
3. Note that the funding bid will include a commitment to work with the University of Bristol and University of West of England and will include costing that covers their roles in the collaboration.

**Corporate Strategy alignment:**

This bid will seek funding for research infrastructure to tackle health inequalities (Theme 4 of Corporate Strategy), through developing the research capacity and capability in the council (Theme 7 Effective Development Organisation) with City Partners, University of Bristol and University of the West of England. The bid will support the council’s aim to “Improve our ethical and inclusive use of research, data, insights and information to become more data-driven and evidence-led when making decisions” (ED04 – Data Driven).

**City Benefits:**

1. HDRCs aim to focus on what can be done to address the wider drivers of population health and health inequalities, explicitly addressing the needs of disadvantaged groups and areas within the City.
2. The HDRC bid will be in line with the city commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
3. Building involvement for communities in research and setting the research agenda.

**Consultation Details:**

The bid itself does not require consultation, as its aim is to provide research infrastructure. The proposed HDRC team’s activities will include engagement with policy makers, council officers and community leaders to shape research priorities.

**Background Documents:**

Full details of the National Institute of Health Research Health Determinants Research Collaborations can be found at:

[Call for proposals: NIHR Health Determinants Research Collaborations \(HDRC\) specification document | NIHR \(https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/specification-document-call-for-proposals-nihr-health-determinants-research-collaborations-hdrc/32383\)](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/specification-document-call-for-proposals-nihr-health-determinants-research-collaborations-hdrc/32383)

Information about previously awarded HDRCs can be found at: [£50 million awarded to local government to tackle interventions for health inequalities through research | NIHR \(https://www.nihr.ac.uk/news/50-million-awarded-to-local-government-to-tackle-interventions-for-health-inequalities-through-research/31654\)](https://www.nihr.ac.uk/news/50-million-awarded-to-local-government-to-tackle-interventions-for-health-inequalities-through-research/31654)

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| <b>Revenue Cost</b>                                     | £5,000,000                                   | <b>Source of Revenue Funding</b>                | Grant Funding  |
| <b>Capital Cost</b>                                     | N/A  | <b>Source of Capital Funding</b>                | N/A  |
| <b>One off cost</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <b>Ongoing cost</b> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Saving Proposal</b> <input type="checkbox"/> | <b>Income generation proposal</b> <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Required information to be completed by Financial/Legal/ICT/ HR partners:**

**1. Finance Advice:** This report seeks approval to submit a funding bid of up to £5m, to the National Institute of

Health Research (NIHR), for a Health Determinants Research collaboration. The report also seeks permission to spend the grant, if successful. The programme will be led by Public Health and will be jointly delivered with a network of Academic and Health Partners.

As set out in the report, the bid will be fully costed including a contribution to support council overhead costs and any partner costs of collaboration. No council match funding is required. As the grant is fixed term for 5 years, redundancy costs (which are expected to be minimal) will be costed into the bid, with a clear expectation of an exit strategy for the council, to ensure no ongoing liability when the grant ends.

Funding and delivery agreements will be put in place with partner organisations to mitigate any risks to the Council, including any assumptions in relation to inflation or pay awards, which can only be met subject to funding being made available from the NIHR.

**Finance Business Partner:** Denise Hunt 19 June 2023

**2. Legal Advice:** The submission of the bid for funding does not raise any specific legal implications. Legal advice will be provided in relation to the grant funding agreement and any agreements entered into with the Universities.

**Legal Team Leader:** Husinara Jones, Team Manager/Solicitor 8 June 2023

**3. Implications on IT:** I can see no implications on IT in regard to this activity.

**IT Team Leader:** Alex Simpson – Lead Enterprise Architect. 16 June 2023

**4. HR Advice:** The report is seeking approval for submission of a bid to the National Institute of Health Research and to spend the grant should it be successful. There are no significant HR implications arising from this report for Bristol City Council employees. If the bid for the grant is successful then there will need to be a process to establish the team in collaboration with our city partners. Any selection process will follow Bristol City council’s Recruitment and Selection policy and guidelines.

**HR Partner:** Lorna Laing 19 June 2023

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| <b>EDM Sign-off</b>                                | Hugh Evans Executive Director Adults and Communities   | 14 June 2023 |
| <b>Cabinet Member sign-off</b>                     | Cllr Holland Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and the Integrated Care System<br>Cllr King Cabinet Member for Public Health and Communities | 15 June 2023 |
| <b>For Key Decisions - Mayor’s Office sign-off</b> | Mayor’s Office   | 16 June 2023 |

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| <b>Appendix A – Further essential background / detail on the proposal</b>       | <b>NO</b> |
| <b>Appendix B – Details of consultation carried out - internal and external</b> | <b>NO</b> |
| <b>Appendix C – Summary of any engagement with scrutiny</b>                     | <b>NO</b> |
| <b>Appendix D – Risk assessment</b>   | <b>NO</b> |
| <b>Appendix E – Equalities screening / impact assessment of proposal</b>        | <b>NO</b> |
| <b>Appendix F – Eco-impact screening/ impact assessment of proposal</b>         | <b>NO</b> |
| <b>Appendix G – Financial Advice</b>  | <b>NO</b> |
| <b>Appendix H – Legal Advice</b>  | <b>NO</b> |

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| <b>Appendix I – Exempt Information</b> | <b>NO</b> |
| <b>Appendix J – HR advice</b>          | <b>NO</b> |
| <b>Appendix K – ICT</b>                | <b>NO</b> |
| <b>Appendix L – Procurement</b>        | <b>NO</b> |