

South Somerset Families Project – Budget Approval

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Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update members on the progress and seek budget approval for the 2021/22 financial year to continue the delivery of the South Somerset Families' Project.

Forward Plan

2. This report appeared on the District Executive Forward Plan for October 2021

Public Interest

3. This priority project aims to support struggling families and help address child poverty and low rates of social mobility in the district over the 3 years 2020-23. The project is playing a key role in light of the additional pressures on families resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, and strong outcomes are being delivered.

Recommendations

4. That District Executive recommends that the Chief Executive agrees to:-
 - a) Note the continued growth in the delivery and initial outcomes of the South Somerset Families Project across the district.
 - b) Increase the revenue budget by £303,000 to fund the South Somerset Families Project for this financial year (2021/22).
 - c) To fund this expenditure by using earmarked revenue reserves using its delegation given in section 4 of the Constitution – as set out in Section 13 of this report.
 - d) Note that a decision to continue funding this project in the 2022/23 financial year will be considered later in the year by District Executive and Council as part of the overall MTFP and budget setting process.

Background

5. In the approved Council Plan 2020 – 2024 and Annual Action Plan 2021/22 one of the key areas of focus was to enable healthy & self-reliant communities, which are cohesive,



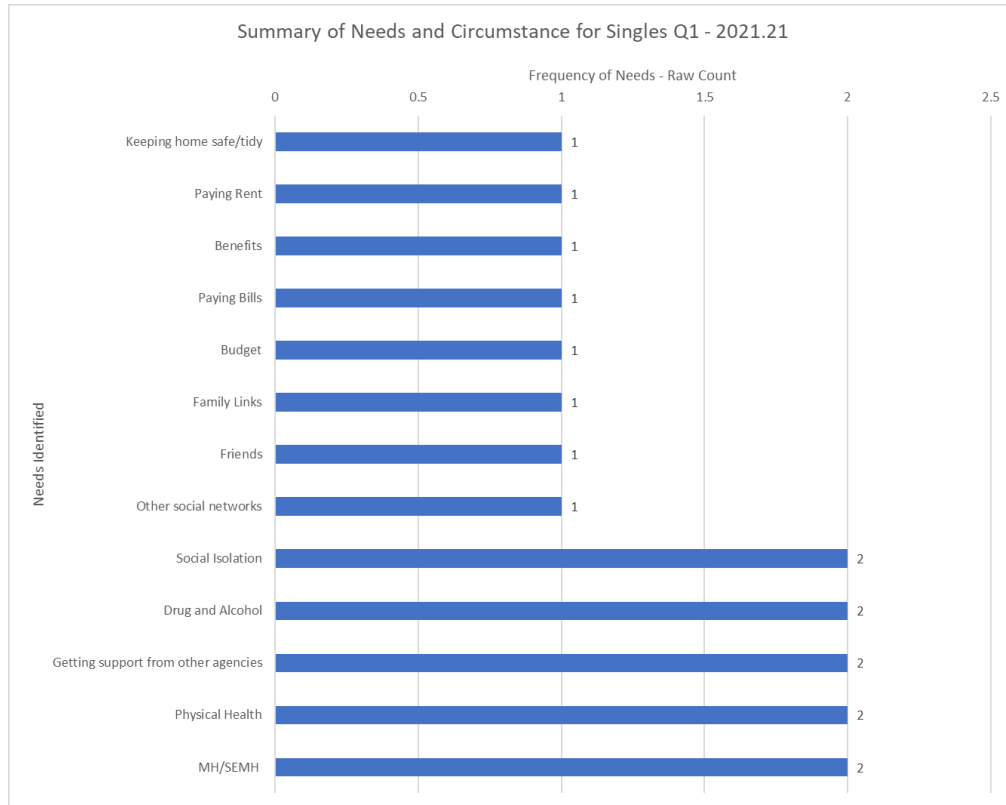
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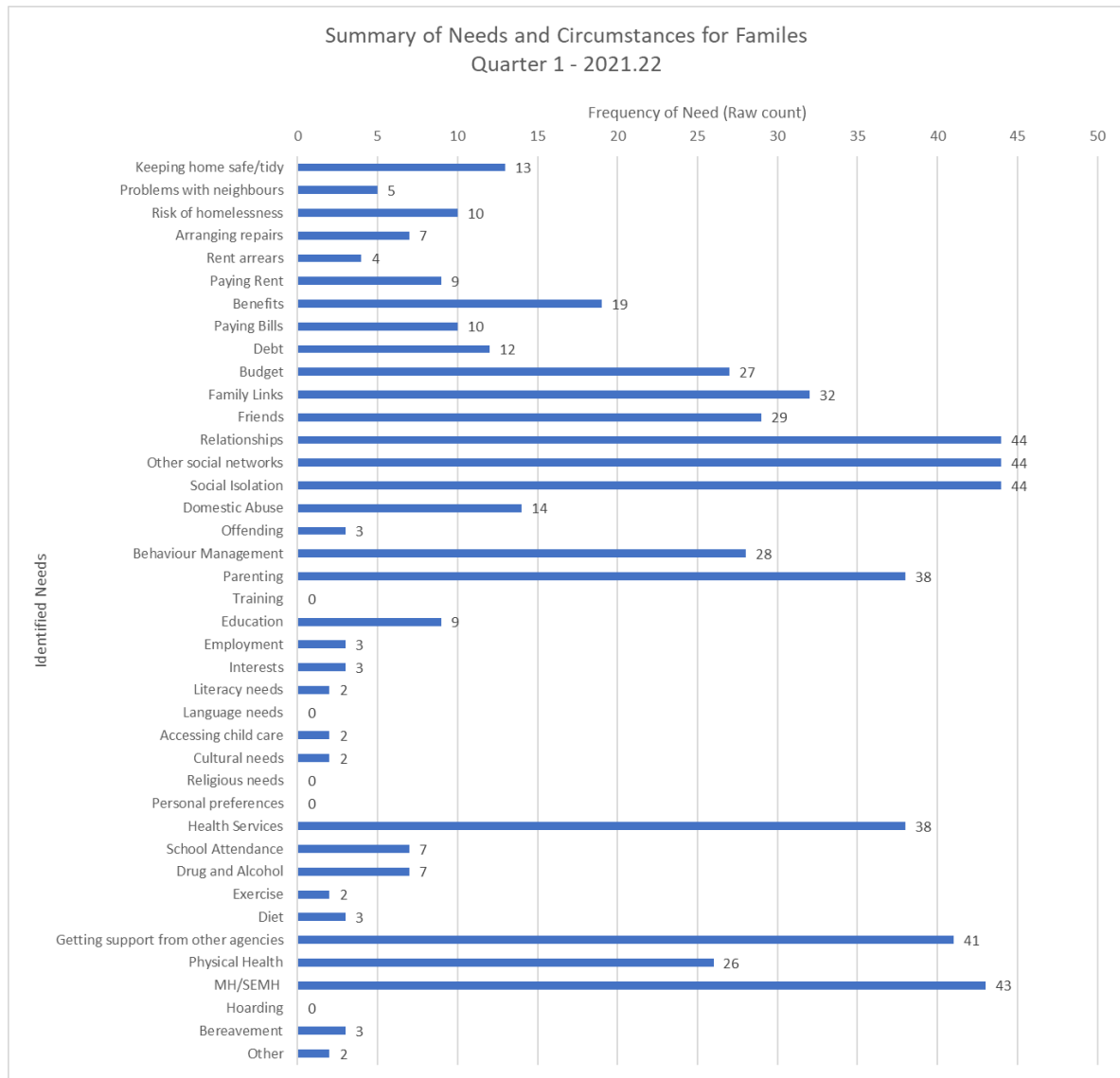
sustainable and enjoy a high quality of life. The key action identified was to “develop proposals to support struggling families and help address child poverty and low rates of social mobility in the district.” This priority project was seen in the Council Plan as central to addressing some of the long-standing barriers and challenges facing local families that affect attainment, social mobility and wellbeing

Project Evaluation

6. Appendix A sets out the formative evaluation review for the 2020/21, which proved to be a challenging year. Despite substantial practical challenges (i.e. school closure and increased NHS demand) of the pandemic the project has scaled up and full delivery has been achieved.
7. 203 cases have been accepted since project commencement and 60 families have completed the programme (there is a 4% drop-out rate). There are currently 143 families (484 individuals) receiving support and a waiting list of 29 families.
8. There have been 56 referrals alone in the last quarter and the timing of the project and its scaling has been fortuitous as it is playing a crucial role in supporting local families facing acute challenges because of the Covid-19 pandemic.
9. The figures in appendix A clearly the value of the project and the positive impact it is having on families and singles in some of the most deprived areas of the district.
10. As at 30th June 2021, SSFP were supporting 153 cases, of which 136 were families and 17 were singles. 56 referrals have been received from April-June 2021. The summary of needs and circumstances at point of referral are shown in Table 1 and Table 2 below

Table 1





Financial Implications

11. On the 4th June 2020, District Executive agreed to fund the project £361k for 2020/21 from the Community Initiative Reserves. It also agreed that future budgets of £303k per annum for each of the following two years of the project would be sought from Members after consideration of the initial project outcomes.
12. It is proposed to increase the Council's overall revenue budget for this financial year by £303,000. This expenditure would be funded by using revenue earmarked reserves as follows: £213,000 from the Community Initiatives Reserve and £90,000 from the community resilience fund (established to assist communities with Covid recovery).
13. Under Section 4 of the Constitution, District Executive can utilise Council balances (capital and revenue) in responding to matters of urgency or to deliver the agreed policy framework provided that all uses of balances are reported to full Council in the Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan report and Audit Committee in the Annual Outturn



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report subject to a limit of 5% of useable reserves/balances. This expenditure, and the proposed means of funding it, meets the delegated authority as:

- The expenditure proposed will help meet one of the key areas of focus in the approved Council Plan 2020 – 2024 namely to enable healthy & self-reliant communities which are cohesive, sustainable and enjoy a high quality of life.
- The S151 Officer confirms that the expenditure sought is less than 5% of revenue reserves although she asks Members to note that the use of these reserves for this purpose would use all of the remaining balances in both reserves in this financial year.

14. Members are also asked to note that because of the commitments and to ensure the project continues without any gaps a payment of £50k was made in advance of this report. The decision was taken in agreement with the Leader, Portfolio Holder, Section 151 Officer and Director of Service Delivery and use delegations to the Director set out in Financial Procedure Rules section 2.3 (i).

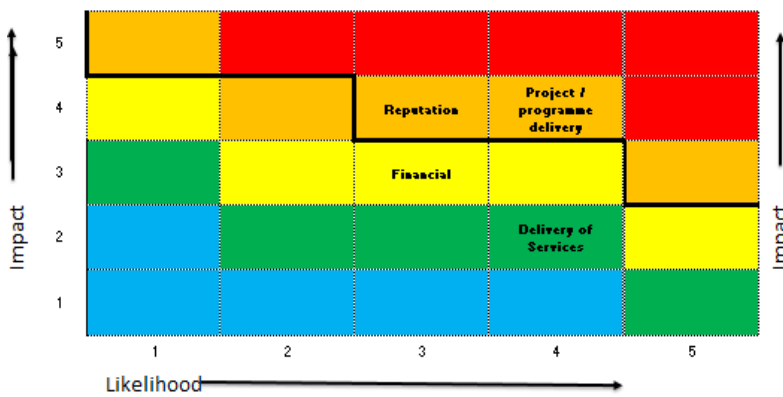
15. A decision as to whether to fund this project for the financial year 2022/23 will be dealt with as part of the normal MTFP and budget setting process with the request for funding being part of the budget growth proposals.

Legal implications (if any) and details of Statutory Powers

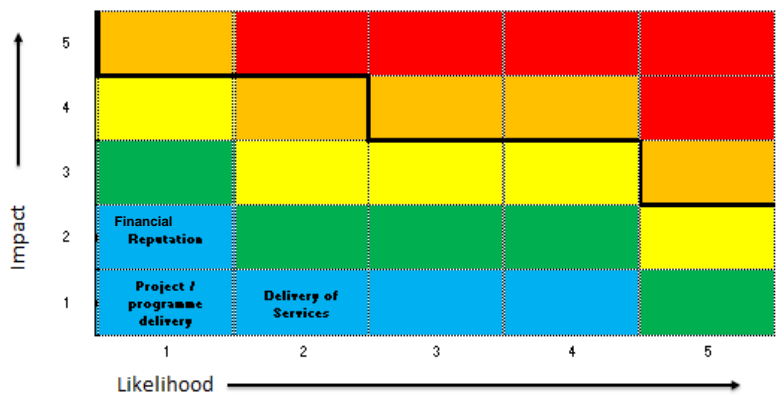
16. None at the current time.

Risk Matrix

INHERENT RISK RATING (Before application of Report Recommendations)



RESIDUAL RISK RATING (After application of Report Recommendations)



Risk Ref	Risk Category	Inherent Risk Rating	Residual Risk Rating
1	Project / programme delivery	20	1
2	Financial	14	1
3	Delivery of Services	10	3
4	Staffing & Capacity	0	0
5	Reputation	19	2
6	Health & Safety	0	0
7	Governance & Legal	0	0

Risk Description	Mediation / Controls
project will cease if funding stops	allocation of funding is confirmed
risk of project not being delivered successfully	robust project monitoring by SSDC to ensure funds used appropriately
increase demand on SSDC services without the project	partnership looking to ensure customer receives support required
0	0
high profile priority project fails	SSDC committing full support to the project
0	0
0	0

This project falls under the Healthy, Self-Reliant Communities area in the Council Plan. Specifically it meets the earlier Priority Project 7: Develop proposals to support struggling families and help address child poverty and low rates of social mobility in the district and is now part of the revised Priority Project 4 in the 2021/22 annual action plan.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

Few implications – but a localised delivery of services reduces the need to travel to access services.

Equality and Diversity Implications

The project has increased the support available for the most vulnerable in our community, providing them with support workers and mentors to improve their quality of life and that of their family.

Privacy Impact Assessment

Privacy considerations are covered in the Service Level Agreement.

Background Papers

- I. Formative Evaluation Overview
- II. Y4F Annual Impact Report