



CABINET

Subject Heading:

Approval to enter into a s75 Agreement with the Havering Place-Based Partnership to govern the delivery of the Better Care Fund 2025-2026

Cabinet Member:

Cllr Gillian Ford, Cabinet Member for Adults and Health

ELT Lead:

Barbara Nicholls, Strategic Director of People

Report Author and contact details:

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Policy context:

The Better Care Fund (BCF) programme supports local systems to successfully deliver the integration of health and social care in a way that supports person-centred care, sustainability and better outcomes for people and carers.

Financial summary:

The Better Care Fund will provide £37,733,806 to be spent on Health and Social Care.

2025-2026	
DFG	£2,552,158
NHS Minimum Contribution	£28,177,595
Local Authority Better Care Grant	£8,419,703
Additional LA contribution	£873,730
Additional NHS contribution	£0
Total	£40,023,186

Is this a Key Decision?

(a) Expenditure or saving (including anticipated income) of £500,000 or more

(c) Significant effect on two or more Wards

When should this matter be reviewed? 12th March 2025

Reviewing OSC: People's Overview and Scrutiny Sub
Committee

The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives

People - Supporting our residents to stay safe and well **X**
Place - A great place to live, work and enjoy
Resources - Enabling a resident-focused and resilient Council

SUMMARY

This report seeks approval to enter into a s75 Agreement with the Havering Place-Based Partnership to govern the delivery of the Better Care Fund 2025-2026.

The oversight for this in Havering will be the Health and Wellbeing Board, with delegated authority to the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health and the Strategic Director of People, to undertake monitoring and scrutiny of the operation of the arrangements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet:

1. Agree to enter into a section 75 agreement with Havering Place-Based Partnership, on the terms and conditions outlined in this report, to govern the delivery of the approved Better Care Fund Plan for Havering for the period 2025/2026.
2. Delegate authority to approve the final terms of the proposed section 75 agreement to the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health, after consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Strategic Director of People.
3. Delegate the function of monitoring the implementation and operation of the Better Care Fund and s75 Agreement to the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health.
4. Delegate authority for all necessary decisions with respect to the implementation and operation of all matters relating to the Better Care Fund and section 75 agreement to the Strategic Director of People.

REPORT DETAIL

This report seeks approval to enter into a s75 Agreement with the Havering Place-Based Partnership to govern the delivery of the Better Care Fund 2025-2026.

Introduction

The Better Care Fund (BCF) is a program established by the UK government to promote the integration of health and social care services. It aims to provide better coordinated and more person-centered care by pooling resources from the National Health Service (NHS) and local government budgets. The initiative is designed to address the challenges posed by an aging population and increasing demand for health and social care services.

Goals of the Better Care Fund

The primary goals of the Better Care Fund are:

- **Improving Health and Wellbeing:** To enhance the overall health and wellbeing of individuals by providing more coordinated and seamless care services.
- **Reducing Hospital Admissions:** To reduce unnecessary hospital admissions and readmissions by offering better support and care in the community.
- **Enhancing Care Quality:** To improve the quality of care provided to patients by integrating health and social care services.
- **Promoting Independent Living:** To support individuals to live independently for as long as possible by providing the necessary care and support in their homes or communities.

Benefits for Residents

The Better Care Fund offers several benefits for residents, including:

- **Coordinated Care:** Residents receive more coordinated care, reducing the need for multiple assessments and ensuring that all their healthcare and social care needs are addressed holistically.
- **Improved Access:** Residents have better access to a range of services, including preventive care, community support, and rehabilitation services, leading to improved health outcomes.
- **Enhanced Resident Experience:** By providing more personalized and integrated care, patients experience a higher quality of service and greater satisfaction with their care.
- **Support for Independent Living:** Residents are supported to live independently in their homes, reducing the need for long-term institutional care.

Benefits for Healthcare Providers

Healthcare providers also benefit from the Better Care Fund in several ways:

- **Resource Optimization:** By pooling resources and working collaboratively, healthcare providers can optimize the use of available resources and reduce duplication of services.

Cabinet, 12 March 2025

- **Improved Communication:** Enhanced communication and information sharing between health and social care providers leads to better decision-making and more effective care planning.
- **Reduced Pressure on Hospitals:** By providing better support in the community, the pressure on hospitals is reduced, allowing them to focus on acute and specialist care.
- **Professional Development:** Health and social care professionals have the opportunity to develop new skills and knowledge through integrated working practices.

Delivering BCF Key Objectives for 2025-26

Objective 1: Shift from Sickness to Prevention

Havinging will implement plans to:

- Provide timely, proactive, and coordinated support for individuals with complex health and care needs.
- Enhance the use of home adaptations and technology to support independent living.
- Offer comprehensive support for unpaid carers.

Objective 2: Support Independent Living and Transition from Hospital to Home

Havinging will deliver plans to:

- Prevent avoidable hospital admissions through early intervention and community-based care.
- Ensure timely and effective discharge from hospitals, enabling individuals to recover at home.
- Reduce the need for long-term residential or nursing home care by promoting home-based care solutions.

How Havinging Will Meet These Objectives

- Implement agreed joint plan with ICB, signed off by the HWB, involving NHS trusts, social care providers, voluntary partners, and housing authorities.
- Implement BCF objectives to support the shift from sickness to prevention and independent living.
- Comply with funding conditions, including maintaining a minimum NHS contribution to adult social care and meeting specified spending expectations.
- Engage with oversight and support processes, including a regionally led oversight process and enhanced support where there are performance concerns.

Metrics for 2025-2026

Havinging will set goals against three headline metrics:

- Emergency hospital admissions for people over 65 per 100,000 populations.
- Average length of discharge delay for all adult patients.
- Long-term admissions to residential or nursing homes for people over 65 per 100,000 populations.

Havinging will prepare plans showing projected demand and planned capacity for intermediate care services to support independence and avoid unnecessary hospital admissions.

Delivery via Section 75 Agreement with Havinging Place Based Partnerships

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The Better Care Fund is delivered through various mechanisms, including Section 75 agreements, which allow NHS bodies and local authorities to pool budgets and integrate services. In Havering, the BCF is implemented via a Section 75 agreement with Havering Place Based Partnership.

Key Features of the Section 75 Agreement:

- **Pooled Budgets:** Resources from the NHS and local authority are combined to create a single budget for health and social care services.
- **Joint Commissioning:** Health and social care services are jointly commissioned to ensure that they meet the needs of the local population effectively.
- **Integrated Service Delivery:** Services are delivered in a more coordinated and integrated manner, providing a seamless experience for patients.
- **Shared Governance:** Governance structures are established to oversee the implementation and management of the integrated services, ensuring accountability and transparency.

Impact of the Section 75 Agreement:

- **Enhanced Collaboration:** Health and social care organizations work more closely together, fostering a culture of collaboration and shared responsibility.
- **Improved Outcomes:** The integrated approach leads to better health and social care outcomes for the local population.
- **Efficient Service Delivery:** Services are delivered more efficiently, reducing costs and improving value for money.
- **Community Engagement:** The partnership engages with the local community to ensure that services are responsive to their needs and preferences.

The Care Act 2014

The BCF underpins the implementation of the Care Act 2014, from a health integration perspective. A BCF national condition is the protection of social care services. The schemes will help support Care Act principles, as services are developed to be more personalised and person centred across the whole system.

Section 121 of the Care Act 2014 (Integration of care and support with health services: integration fund) provides for section 75 agreement with regard to expenditure on integration.

Funding Overview

BCF funding consists of mandatory contributions from integrated care boards (ICBs) and local authorities. Local areas can also voluntarily pool additional funding if it represents value for money.

Minimum Contributions

The minimum contributions to the BCF nationally for 2025 to 2026 are as follows:

- **Minimum NHS Contribution:** £5,614 million
- **Local Authority Better Care Fund Grant:** £2,640 million
- **Disabled Facilities Grant:** £711 million

Discharge Funding

The previously ring-fenced discharge fund is now consolidated within the BCF, with a focus on reducing discharge delays. The ICB discharge funding is part of the NHS minimum contribution, while local authority discharge funding is included in the Local Authority Better Care Grant.

NHS Minimum Contribution

The NHS minimum contributions to adult social care from the total national amount will increase by 3.9% compared to 2024 to 2025.

Local Authority Better Care Grant

The Local Authority Better Care Grant must be pooled into a section 75 arrangement under the NHS Act 2006 and used according to BCF plans, without offsetting the NHS minimum contribution to adult social care.

Disabled Facilities Grant

The Disabled Facilities Grant supports housing adaptations to help people stay well and independent. The government plans to review and update the allocations formula and the grant maximum per application, currently £30,000.

Havering Allocation

The 2025 to 2026 Local Authority Better Care Grant, NHS minimum contribution and Discharge Funding for Havering are as follows:

2025-2026	
DFG	£2,552,158
NHS Minimum Contribution	£28,177,595
Local Authority Better Care Grant	£8,419,703
Additional LA contribution	£873,730
Additional NHS contribution	£0
Total	£40,023,186

Conclusion

The Better Care Fund is a pivotal initiative aimed at transforming health and social care services in the UK. By promoting integration and collaboration, it enhances the quality of care, improves patient outcomes, and supports independent living. The implementation of the BCF through a Section 75 agreement exemplifies how local authorities and NHS bodies can work together to create a more effective and efficient care system for the benefit of all.

REASONS AND OPTIONS

Reasons for the decision:

There is a statutory requirement for the BCF funds to be managed via pooled funding arrangements.

Other options considered:

The option of not entering into an agreement would only be feasible if we were not signing up to BCF principles and delivery, which is not a desirable option.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial implications and risks:

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable Financial implications or risks.

Legal implications and risks:

The Better Care Fund grant regime requires the Council to work jointly with the Havering Place Based Partnership. The section 75 National Health Service Act 2006 Agreement is the vehicle by which the services that are to be delivered; the mechanism for expenditure; and delivery of outcomes are clarified to ensure each party knows exactly how it will operate and to reduce the risk of disputes. There is no alternative but to enter into the agreement in order to prudently use and retain the grant funding. The terms of the agreement will need to be carefully considered to ensure the Council's interests are not prejudiced in any way and that the risk of disputes are minimised. Legal advice will be provided throughout this process.

The Local Government Act 2000 allows Cabinet to delegate its decision making powers to an individual Cabinet Member or officer of the Council.

Human Resources implications and risks:

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable Human Resources implications or risks.

Equalities implications and risks:

This decision is to ensure that the Council has a section 75 agreement in place to deliver the Better Care Fund.

All identified opportunities for integrated delivery of care and effective integrated commissioning in Havering will be informed by the local population needs identified in the needs assessments and the priorities for health improvement and wellbeing set out in the Health and Well-Being Strategy.

The programme of integration initiatives will enable partner organisations to identify more effective ways of meeting future demographic challenges in the delivery of health and social care services across Havering, such as the significant and growing proportion of older people in the borough and increasing ethnic minority population.

Health and Wellbeing implications and Risks

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable Health and Wellbeing risks.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable environmental implications or risks.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None