



STAFFORDSHIRE POLICE, FIRE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

Safer Streets Funding Grant

Internal audit report 11.21/22

FINAL

30 March 2022

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

A review of Safer Streets Funding Grant was undertaken as part of the approved internal audit periodic plan for 2021/22.

The Safer Streets Grant is a fund available to Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) in England Wales. PCCs are asked to work with partners, to design and deliver local crime prevention plans with the intended outcome of reducing acquisitive crimes through situational prevention.

The key objectives of the fund are to:

- Reduce acquisitive crime in areas that receive funding – making residents safer and removing demand from the system to enable police to focus on more complex crimes.
- Build evidence about the impact of targeted investment in situational prevention in high crime areas to strengthen the case for future investment, both at a local and national level.
- Grow local capability to undertake data driven problem solving and capture evidence and practical learning about how best to implement situational interventions to prevent crime.

PCCs are able to submit up to three prioritised bids, each for a defined local area within their PCC geography that is persistently and disproportionately affected by acquisitive crime, with up to £550k grant funding being available per bid.

The Fund launched in January 2021 and there has been three funding Rounds to date, with the fourth Round due to commence imminently. This review has considered Rounds one and two only as Round three was still in progress at the time of audit.

Funding available for the Rounds has been as follows:

- Round One - £25m;
- Round Two - £20m; and
- Round Three - £23.5m

The following two successful bids were placed for Round One in the 2020/21 financial year:

- £547k (Fenton) – This was increased to £583k following an additional bid for street lighting funding; and
- £463k (Northwood) – This was increased to £484k following an additional bid for street lighting funding.

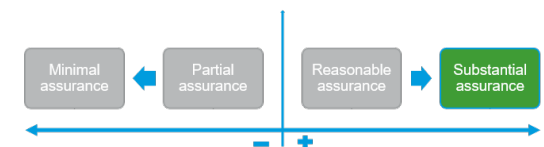
A successful bid resulting in £432k of funding was placed in Round Two at the start of the 2021/22 financial year (Hanley).

A dedicated Project Board and Project Lead was implemented for all funding Rounds to oversee the administration and management of awarded funds.

Conclusion

Internal audit opinion:

Taking account of the issues identified, the Commissioner can take substantial assurance that the controls upon which the organisation relies to manage the identified area are suitably designed, consistently applied and operating effectively.



Key findings

The findings from this review are as follows:



The Home Office has a Safer Streets Fund Prospectus document in place. The document sets out the key criteria for funding such as the application processes and eligible funding etc. Additionally, a Home Office Safer Streets Fund Welcome Pack was provided to all PCCs with a successful bid which set out information regarding grant mobilisation, in year monitoring, the fund's evaluation and the support they can expect to receive.



To be eligible for Safer Streets Funding Grants, the PCC must submit a bid for funding with supporting documentation. Each bid is evaluated by the Home Office and must meet a defined pass mark of 60, which relates to providing satisfactory information against pre-set questions. Bidding guidance documents have been produced by the Home Office for each Round. Supporting documentation for successful bids were found to have been maintained on file for both Rounds.



Signed Grant Agreements are in place between the PCC and Home Office for Round One and Round Two funding which clearly set out the terms and conditions of the funding agreements.



A Project Board was set up for Rounds One and Two to oversee the management and administration of grant funding. A Terms of Reference document was produced for each Board which set out key details such as membership, attendees, and frequency of meetings etc. Weekly Highlight Reports were also produced by the Project Lead which were reviewed by the Project Team. Additionally, update papers were also presented at Project Board meetings.



A supplementary bid was placed in Round 1 for additional funding relating to lighting columns. Following approval, a Grant Variation Agreement is entered into by the PCC and Home Office. An additional bid of £72k was placed for Fenton and an additional bid of £39k was placed for Northwood. Grant Variation Forms were found to be in place and maintained on file for both bids which had been signed by the PCC and Home Office.



A Maintenance Agreement is in place between the PCC and Stoke on Trent City Council for the upkeep of installed infrastructure as a result of the Safer Streets Funding Grant. The Maintenance Agreement is valid from 2021 to 2026 and had been signed by the PCC and City Council.



Set eligible expenditure requirements are set for both funding Rounds. Key Performance Indicators including bid outputs (set deliverables) and bid outcomes (higher level achievements) have been outlined in each Grant Agreement which must be delivered from the allocated funding. The PCC has a Deliverables Tracker in place to ensure timely delivery.

Key eligible expenditure includes the following: Infrastructure and other physical interventions, other situational crime prevention interventions, community building and engagement, administration costs. The exact expenditure is submitted as part of the bidding process, and this is evaluated by the Home Office. Once agreed, this is transposed into KPIs within the respective Grant Agreements.

Through review of the Deliverables Tracker, we confirmed that deliverables for both Rounds, as outlined in each Grant Agreement, had been completed in a timely manner. For Round One, the recorded delivery was substantiated to an SLA in place with the PCC and City Council confirming all installs and ongoing maintenance for the next five years. This covered CCTV, lighting and gating. For residential home security delivery, an End of Project Report produced by the Contractors was on file for Fenton and Northwood. Therefore, we were able to confirm satisfactory delivery of all agreed deliverables. For Round Two, the PCC was drafting an SLA at the time of audit.

A Financial Tracker was implemented for each Round to ensure both projects within budget. Final costings were found to have been in line with original budgets based on the awarded amounts:



- Round One (Fenton): £583,870
- Round One (Northwood): £484,263; and
- Round Two: £432k.

These amounts were also confirmed to the relevant cost codes set up on the Finance System for each Round.



Quarterly Grant Returns are submitted to the Home Office for each round. Timely submissions were confirmed for all quarters for Round One (Fenton and Northwood) Grants. Timely submissions were also confirmed for up to quarter four for Round Two (Hanley) Grants. Q4 returns for Rounds Two and Three (which run till the end of the 21/22 financial year) were due on 14 April 2022 and had therefore not been submitted at the time of review.

APPENDIX A: CATEGORISATION OF FINDINGS

Categorisation of internal audit findings

Priority	Definition
Low	There is scope for enhancing control or improving efficiency and quality.
Medium	Timely management attention is necessary. This is an internal control risk management issue that could lead to: Financial losses which could affect the effective function of a department, loss of controls or process being audited or possible reputational damage, negative publicity in local or regional media.
High	Immediate management attention is necessary. This is a serious internal control or risk management issue that may lead to: Substantial losses, violation of corporate strategies, policies or values, reputational damage, negative publicity in national or international media or adverse regulatory impact, such as loss of operating licences or material fines.

The following table highlights the number and categories of management actions made as a result of this audit.

Area	Control design not effective*		Non Compliance with controls*		Agreed management actions		
					Low	Medium	High
Safer Streets Funding Grant	0	(9)	0	(9)	0	0	0
Total					0	0	0

* Shows the number of controls not adequately designed or not complied with. The number in brackets represents the total number of controls reviewed in this area.

APPENDIX B: SCOPE

The scope below is a copy of the original document issued.

Scope of the review

The scope was planned to provide assurance on the controls and mitigations in place relating to the following area:

Objective of the area under review

This review will focus on the management of Safer Streets Funding Grants awarded to the OPFCC. We will review the internal governance, tracking and oversight processes implemented to ensure awarded funds are being administrated in line with the requirements and set criteria within the relevant Grant Agreements.

When planning the audit, the following areas for consideration and limitations were agreed:

- Bids and proposals for funding Rounds One and Two.
- Home Office Grant Agreements for successful bids;
- Expenditure review of awarded funds;
- Quarterly expenditure returns;
- Project Board oversight and governance; and
- Tracking and monitoring of timeframes and budgets.

Limitations to the scope of the audit assignment:

- This review will not provide absolute assurance that funding awarded has been managed and administered in line with Grant Agreements;
- Testing will be completed on a sample basis;
- The results of our work are reliant on the quality and completeness of the information provided to us; and
- Our work does not provide absolute assurance that material errors, loss or fraud do not exist.

Debrief held 14 March 2022
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We have no responsibility to update this report for events and circumstances occurring after the date of this report.

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