

Meeting of South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership	Integration Joint Board	
Held on:	11th June 2025	
Agenda Item:	9	
Title:	Improvement and Innovation Projects Update	
Summary: To provide a progress update on the Improvement and Innovation Projects approved to date.		
Author:	Lisa Duncan, Chief Finance Officer	
Recommendations: It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Note the investment made to date with the Improvement and Innovation Fund, for ease of reference abbreviated highlights included in Appendix one ii. Note the investment in line with the IJB Strategic Priorities iii. Note the progress updates to projects included within the report. 		
Directions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No Directions Required <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Directions to NHS Ayrshire & Arran <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Directions to South Ayrshire Council <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Directions to both SAC & NHS <input type="checkbox"/> 		Implications: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial <input type="checkbox"/> HR <input type="checkbox"/> Legal <input type="checkbox"/> Equalities <input type="checkbox"/> Sustainability <input type="checkbox"/> Policy <input type="checkbox"/> ICT <input type="checkbox"/>

IMPROVEMENT AND INNOVATION PROJECTS UPDATE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a progress update on the Improvement and Innovation Projects approved to date.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Integration Joint Board

- i. **Note the investment made to date with the Improvement and Innovation Fund, for ease of reference abbreviated highlights included in Appendix one**
- ii. **Note the investment in line with the IJB Strategic Priorities.**
- iii. **Note the progress updates to projects included within the report.**

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 On the 14th of June 2023, the IJB approved investment of £4m from reserves to create an Improvement and Innovation Fund for services to invest in specific projects aimed at improving services to meet current demand pressures and / or reduce future demand pressure through innovation and changes to ways of working. From a financial perspective improvement in services should ensure future financial sustainability.
- 3.2 The IJB approved further investment of £2m into the fund on the 12th of June 2024. The £6m investment into the Improvement and Innovation fund represents 2.4% of the total IJB Budget for 2025-26 £248.422m.
- 3.3 Guidance was distributed to staff on the purpose and governance arrangements for the fund, including how to measure quality improvement from the Ayrshire and Arran Improvement Foundation Skills training.
- 3.4 At the end of 2024-25 financial year there was £4.730m (79%) of the fund committed to various projects. Leaving a balance of £1.270m for future investment.
- 3.5 [The Audit Scotland Finance Bulletin 2023-24](#) presented to Performance and Audit Committee on the 1st of April 2025, noted in their key messages that investment in prevention and early intervention is needed to help slow the ever-increasing demand for services, the cost of more complex care and improve the experience and outcomes for people.
- 3.6 The improvement and innovation fund provides an opportunity to invest in early intervention to improve outcomes for people in South Ayrshire.

4. REPORT

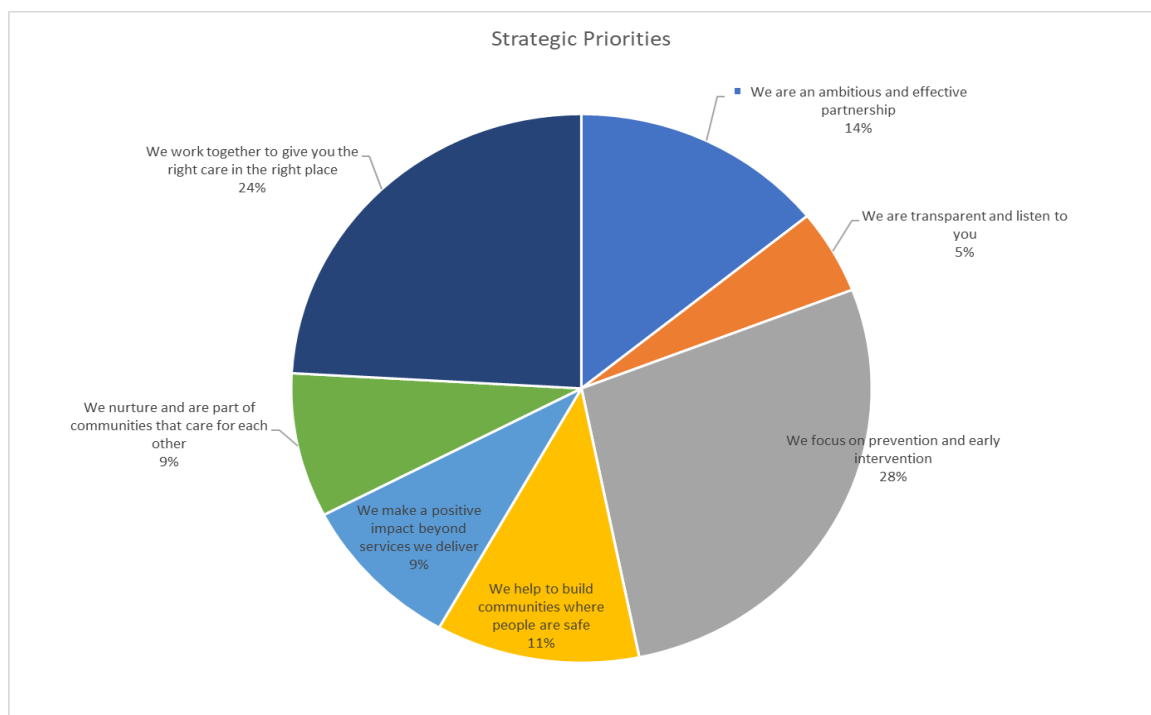
- 4.1 The report will provide an overview of projects and how they fit with IJB Strategic Priorities with progress updates provided at service level.

4.2 Prior to scrutiny and approval an improvement and innovation fund template is completed by the relevant service manager, this includes detail on what strategic objectives the investment aligns to and captures information on the expected outcome and key performance indicators to be achieved with the investment.

4.3 SAHSCP Strategic Plan 2021-31 sets out seven strategic priorities. These priorities will drive the services commissioned by the HSCP and are based on the engagement and conversations with partners and the community. Strategic Priorities are: -

- We make a positive impact beyond the services we deliver.
- We focus on prevention and early intervention.
- We nurture and are part of communities that care for each other.
- We work together to give you the right care in the right place.
- We are transparent and listen to you.
- We help build communities where people are safe.
- We are an ambitious and effective partnership.

4.4 Each project aligns to one of more of the above priorities. Analysis of the projects, shown in chart below, shows the most prominent priorities that the fund is supporting are “We focus on prevention and early intervention” at 28% and “We work together to give you the right care in the right place”.



4.5 Prevention and early intervention projects are embedding a culture of approaches to promote quality of life and wellbeing in the community to prevent or delay the need for more intensive and higher cost care. Main outcomes for individuals include increased independence, use of community services and self-management of care needs, improved quality of life and wellbeing for

people in receipt care including reduced social isolation and loneliness and delay or reduced need for care and support.

- 4.6 From a financial perspective, the benefits of prevention and early intervention will be realised through reduced demand and need for services in the medium to longer term. Investing in prevention and early intervention is essential to assisting financial sustainability when less financial resources are available at a time when population is ageing.
- 4.7 Providing the right care in the right place ensures people can access the most appropriate health and social care in the right place dependent on their needs.
- 4.8 Appendix one provides the quarterly highlight report including financial position, new projects approved, completed, cancelled.
- 4.9 The next section of the report will provide more detail of specific projects within services reviewing progress to date and any early improvements that have been identified.

COMMUNITY CARE AND HEALTH

- 4.10 Community Care and Health have 31 projects approved a total investment of £2.040m. Nine projects have now been completed, sixteen projects are on track to be delivered on time and three projects highlighting some concerns. Two of which are in relation to recruitment and one delayed due to a procurement issue that has now been resolved.
- 4.11 Of the nine completed projects, four were completed this period, as noted in highlight report.
- 4.12 The CAP tech post £0.025m approved for care at home was recruited internally and the vacant post not recruited therefore no additional capacity was provided to support with medication reviews. The funding will go back into the fund for redistribution.
- 4.13 VASA received investment of £0.035m for two projects one aimed at assisting people to claim for eligible benefits including attendance allowance and blue badge support and the other offering support in providing information at the hospital to support people being discharged. Following review of the performance of both these projects, the Attendance Allowance/Blue Badge support has been made recurring and added to the annual VASA contract. During the year of the project the no. of people in receipt of attendance allowance was 130, and the and no. of people less socially isolated due to the issue of a blue badge was 26.
- 4.14 The Health Walks Co-ordinator project investment of £0.014m was provided to Thriving Communities to match funding received from Paths for All for the post. Fifteen active health walks take place every week, with 173 walkers participating to get moving, stay healthy and connect with their community. Forty-nine new walk leaders have been trained. This project evaluation found

that 85% of participants reported improved mental wellbeing, 78% of attendees stated their physical fitness has improved. The majority of walkers 80% discovered the walks via Facebook and word of mouth, with 20% referred from GP or Health Care referral.

- 4.15 Mental Health Officer training funding of £0.095m was approved to backfill 2 FTE social workers to allow them to be released from their posts to take up mental health officer training to increase capacity. One post has been filled since August 24, with a further post expected to be filled in May.
- 4.16 Investment of £0.085m was approved to provide additional reablement supervisor capacity to improve team's performance. Since the post commenced in June 2024, this has had a positive impact on the services. This last quarter has seen a high absence level of 4 out of 8 posts on long term sick, the post has helped to manage this and lessen the impact on the service. Overtime spend has reduced, statutory and mandatory training levels are sitting at 94% (core) and 91% (role specific) and PDR's at 55%, this has been impacted by staff absence. Quality assurance visits have increased from 19 per month to 42 per month (121% increase).
- 4.17 Girvan Hospital investment of £0.062m was approved for one year to enhance clinical leadership and deliver training and development in the minor injury unit. The post focussed on minor injury patients only and allowed hospital staff to focus on in patients. Due to staff absences the post has been unable to develop the service as planned. In April the Director of HSCP approved £0.065m for an extension of this post for a further year to develop the service.
- 4.18 Investment in additional capacity within the care home review team, has reduced outstanding care home reviews from 170 to 20, providing additional capacity to social workers to focus on statutory work with no outstanding supervisory visits for guardianships, overall, the capacity has benefitted the team to meet demands, this will continue to be monitored.
- 4.19 The MAT Standards Pilot investment of £0.040m was due to commence in August 24, however due to recruitment challenges, this was delayed. Recruitment has now been completed and a member of the team has been appointed to run the test of change from January 2025, evaluation of improvements will be provided in due course.
- 4.20 The Ageing Well Strategy was launched on the 10th of September this included an Ageing Well Action Plan for 2024-25, to be monitored every two months, with a full update in October 2025 and a further action plan developed for year two building on achievements made. Investment of £0.080m was approved for a Programme Manager for two years to focus on Ageing Well and Frailty to lead on this work. The Ageing Well Strategy received a silver award in the Transformation in HSCP category at the iESE (Improvement and Efficiency Social Enterprise) public sector transformation awards ceremony in March 2025.

- 4.21 The Gadget Match Cards investment of £0.010m, this will enable staff to have good conversations with service users on use of technology (gadgets), cards have now been published and training scheduled with staff, the use of the cards will be monitored over the next 6 months.
- 4.22 Learning Disabilities Senior Nurse investment of £0.060m was approved to fund a Pan Ayrshire nurse to improve services within learning disabilities by increasing leadership to the same level as Mental Health nursing team. The post was filled in September 2024, improvements to service delivery to be evaluated in due course.
- 4.23 Within the hospital social work team investment of £0.044m to increase community care assistant capacity to improve performance. Hospital Discharges to care homes are now receiving an initial review, reduction in number of cases awaiting completion of assessment. Currently a test of change at Biggart Hospital to assess reduction in length of stay where referrals are processed on the day of admission.
- 4.24 Microenterprise project continues with regular monthly meetings with AILN, SAHSCP and Council's economic development team. Funding from economic development has created a new post providing advice and support on setting up businesses. As at December 2024 nineteen micro-enterprises are included on the directory providing care and support to service users with assessed needs funded through a direct payment and services provided to privately funded clients.
- 4.25 Getting It Right For Ayr North (GIRFAN) have just recruited two nurses in March, they will work to support the integrated neighbourhood team for a 12 month period.
- 4.26 Project Implementation Officer to work alongside South Ayrshire Council Occupational Health Team to document and streamline existing processes and identify areas for improvement, issues with recruitment have meant this post was filled temporarily and then paused. It is anticipated the post will be filled in April and the work can progress.
- 4.27 The fund invested in a Project Officer to implement the Team Around the Locality model this role has led on the launch and implementation of Connect South Ayrshire on the 1st of November. Connect South Ayrshire is a collaboration between South Ayrshire Health and Social Care Partnership (HSCP) and Voluntary Action South Ayrshire (VASA) providing communities with easier access to information, advice, and support.
- 4.28 Ageing Well Development Fund £0.050m has been approved to support innovative approaches in the community to enable healthy and active ageing in line with the Ageing Well Strategy. Guidance has now been established and published with applications received to be scrutinised and signed off by the Ageing Well Oversight Group.

- 4.29 To support hospital, discharge an increase in reablement supervisory capacity at Ayr Hospital was approved to support ongoing demand and ensure timely assessments and appropriate discharge planning to improve patient flow and timely intervention aimed at reducing length of stay. One post was filled in March, with other post anticipated to be filled in May, improvements will be monitored and reported in due course.
- 4.30 As part of the budget process several projects were approved namely, power of attorney fund £0.010m, south locality initial response team community care assistant resource £0.088m, double handled care £0.150m investment in moving and handling advisors and GIRFAN – Health Inclusion - £0.016m.

ALLIED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

- 4.31 The Allied Health Professionals (AHP) team have eight projects with a total investment of £1.196m. The Budget for 2025-26 approved on the 12th of March allocated a further £0.226m to the AHP Front Door project to extend for one year, to allow for further evaluation and assessment of KPI's. All other projects are on track with anticipated delivery and outcomes.
- 4.32 Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) team have implemented an adult singing intervention aimed at providing supportive singing for people with acquired neuro communication difficulties. This early intervention approach has proved so successful that the choir in Prestwick had to move location due to high numbers, and the service has been expanded to Maybole and Girvan and is running 3 times per week. Choral singing group therapy is now offered to 100% of identified patients with acquired neurogenic communication difficulties within the South Ayrshire Adult SLT service. Quality of life (QOL) measurements continue to be captured pre and post group on a weekly basis to identify impact on patient's wellbeing.
- 4.33 Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) creation of children and young people communication friendly environments. Work is currently progressing at a great pace. The initial target of having 20 establishments on the CFE journey was met 17 months early and there are now 27 establishments on board with many others expressing interest and due to begin the journey. The impact of this work is really beginning to be seen and experienced by all.
- 4.34 Speech and Language Therapy (SLT) additional capacity to reduce children and young people's waiting list. The waiting time has now reduced from 28 weeks to 14 weeks, a further reduction of 2 weeks from 16 weeks in December 24. Additional staff have been appointed and due to start in April 25 this will reduce the waiting time to targeted 6 weeks and waiting list to nil. Waiting list was 115 now 45 children waiting, a decrease of 61%.
- 4.35 AHP Front Door Team consists of a Dietician, Occupational Therapist and Speech and Language Therapist based at combined assessment unit (CAU) at Ayr Hospital. The principle of the team is to assess and intervene in patient care as soon as they enter the emergency department and/or CAU to get them home as quickly as possible either negating an admission to hospital or

reducing their hospital stay and lowering risk of repeated admissions. Early evaluation of the team has shown on average AHP input is responsible for 22 hospital discharges per week, with 87% discharged on day one. The overall length of stay (excluding delayed discharges) at UHA has fallen from average 6.3 days to 6.1 days.

- 4.36 Within the Budget for 2025-26 approval to extend the AHP Front Door project for another year was granted with investment of £0.226m, further evaluation of the team and KPIs will be provided during the year.
- 4.37 Investment in Primary Care Occupational Therapists mean all GP practices in South Ayrshire now have Occupational Therapists (OT) as part of their Multi-Disciplinary Team, offering easier and earlier access to OT, improving people's health and wellbeing regardless of age and diagnosis. Occupational Therapist's aim to improve an individual's ability to carry out everyday tasks and promote independence. For example, supporting people at work or those who require adjustments to return to work or promoting positive self-management advice when experiencing early indicators of frailty.
- 4.38 All GP surgeries now have OT in place using various models of face-to-face clinics, telephone clinics and home visits. Functional fitness MOT's took place in March to support the Ageing Well Agenda.
- 4.39 Number of referrals per month – Dec - 45, Jan - 42 and Feb - 31. EuroQuol Quality of Life Measure demonstrates a 22% improvement pre and post OT intervention. During the period there was 28 vocational rehab interventions with 81% of these interventions resulting in a positive outcome as reported by the patient. One hundred "Up and About" leaflets distributed at the Functional Fitness MOT sessions and 18 falls interventions were recorded, in the form of falls education, and health ageing advice.
- 4.40 AHP Front Doors – technical instructors £0.080m was invested to support the AHP's at the front doors, to provide cover and ensure patients are seen timeously, with the main aim to reduce length of stay and support admission avoidance. Full evaluation of the improvements to service will be provided in due course.
- 4.41 Investment of £0.054m was made in Pulmonary Rehabilitation Physiotherapy to reduce the waiting list. At the time of investment there were 143 patients waiting for assessment, with the average wait of 24 weeks. Additional capacity is expected to reduce the waiting list to 8 weeks and number of patients to 20. The post has been recruited to and a start date is imminent.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH CARE AND JUSTICE

- 4.42 Children's Health Care and Justice services have seven projects with a total investment of £0.605m, all projects are on track with anticipated delivery and outcomes.

- 4.43 Investment of £0.100m has been approved to provide funding for locality children's groups where multidisciplinary partners work together to support families. The funding has been allocated £12,500 to each of the 8 school locality clusters to support whole family wellbeing. The money is being well used by multi agency locality forums who think of creative ways to support Children, Young People and Families to live well together.
- 4.44 Investment of £0.020m was allocated to provide free Stagecoach travel for care experienced young people aged 23 – 30 years old. This was in response to young people telling us that the cost of transport was prohibitive to them after the national free travel card ends at age 22. Sixteen annual bus travel passes were issued, this project is now complete.
- 4.45 A recent survey was conducted by South Ayrshire Champions for Change, ten of the 16 young people were able to be contacted, and seven responded to a questionnaire. The average age of persons using the travel card is 25 years old, 86% of people found out about the free travel card from champions for Change, the cards are used to see friends & family, work, shopping and attend health appointments. Young people have told us that the free bus pass has contributed to improving their mental health and has helped to reduce anxiety around having to pay for bus fare.
- 4.46 The Pilot for Neurodiversity has made good progress and is working well and consistently with a contract in place with external provider. There are now 102 referrals have been received by the provider, and 100 progressed to a diagnostic service. This will take 100 out of the CAMHS waiting list and enable those children with more complex Neuro conditions to be seen quicker by Neuro CAMHS. This will also prevent a two-tier system, those in the new pathway and those on the CAMHS waiting list.
- 4.47 Youth Justice Diversion investment of £0.050m is a targeted resource for working with young men in particular who are school non-attenders and engaged in anti-social behaviour and offending. The work is delivered through Thriving Communities, and money enables access to diversionary activities and positive experiences, which promote desistance from offending and improved community connection and responsibility. There is a Youth Justice Oversight group being established which will report to the Children Services Planning Partnership which is a multi-agency group, which will provide some governance and oversight of the strategic approach to youth justice.
- 4.48 To date 19 out of the 21 identified young people remain actively engaged, young people collectively engaged in 265 hours of positive diversionary activity at targeted weekend times. 1,875 hours of school-based programme engagement. 43 Detached Youth Work sessions delivered on Friday nights. All young people reported that they had gained new experiences and that they had built positive relationships with peers and youth work staff.
- 4.49 Youth Council – addressing impact of the cost-of-living crisis £0.020m allocated. The Youth Council has now been democratically elected by their peers with the First Youth Council held on the 12th of March. There was a

unique session to focus on the funding and how young people believed it could be used to address the cost-of-living crisis. There were some 584 young people who participated in a survey and the Young Council discussed and debated how it was going to be used, including suggestions around school meals. Further update on how the funding has been used will be provided in due course when Youth Council has decided.

- 4.50 School nurses and health visitors training, two school nurses have commenced their training in September 2024, upon completion in August 25, this will provide them with the knowledge and skills to meet the improvement outcomes to support early identification of risk and prevention, to lower the number of children and young people who are in need of protection.
- 4.51 Investment of £0.098m was approved to create a Pre 5 Young Carers Support Worker to raise awareness, train staff, create and develop teeny carers assessments suitable for age and stage. Early identification enables a supported transition to primary school and access to young carer support at the earliest point, avoiding children and families reaching crisis point before seeking help. The Job Description is being developed and once post in place progress against the KPI's will be measured.

POLICY AND PERFORMANCE

- 4.52 Policy and Performance team have six projects with a total investment of £0.772m, of this £0.500m has been invested in Digital Strategy with projects and investment scrutinised and approved by the Digital Board.
- 4.53 A Policy Officer was employed to provide additional capacity to respond to the development of new strategies including engagement with the public. To date the officer has been involved in the development of the Mental Health and Dementia Strategy, the Ageing Well Strategy and Team around the Locality engagement.
- 4.54 A Digital Assistant started in June 24, to update the content within the SAHSCP website, this work is progressing with a number of key areas of the website fully updated and new areas being progressed, KPI's expected to be achieved upon completion.
- 4.55 Quality Improvement assistant commenced in Jan 25, Work is being progressed to improve gathering of outcome and impact data on improvement activity. Work is also being progressed to create a knowledge sharing hub to allow learning from improvement activity to be shared across the Partnership; along with information on how to access training and support for quality improvement.
- 4.56 Digital Strategy funding of £0.500m has been approved to meet actions included in the Digital Strategy aimed to enhance accessibility and efficiency through use of digital tools to make health and care services more accessible and improve health and care outcomes. Services can assess this fund through applications to the Digital Project Board.

- 4.57 To date 4 projects have been approved and £0.205m committed, projects are in early stages of development, with outcomes anticipated in improving informed choice over options for telecare and establishing demonstration hubs across community locations to showcase technology solutions. Educate the public and staff on use of tech and benefits in various settings, enhancing accessibility and understanding of digital health and care tools.
- 4.58 Near Me systems support officer £0.040m was approved to extend the post previously funded by Scottish Government Near Me funding. The officer will continue to roll out near me in health and social care teams, increase awareness in teams and access to service users.
- 4.59 A workforce recognition fund of £0.025m was approved as part of the budget for 2025-26, this fund will be used over the years to promote HSCP employee roles in delivering health and social care services. This will include attendance at award ceremonies, delivery of events to celebrate professions.

PUBLIC HEALTH

- 4.60 Two projects have been approved aimed at improving public health, these are being led by the HSCP's Clinical Director.
- 4.61 Spirometry is used for the diagnosis and management of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD), asthma, and other respiratory conditions. Spirometry testing is recognised as the gold standard for the diagnosis, assessment, and monitoring of COPD. The number of people hospitalised with COPD in Ayrshire and Arran is above the National average, with higher admission rates recorded within areas of greater socio-economic deprivation.
- 4.62 The Spirometry pilot project is going to focus on people with COPD and will aim to deliver 1000 high quality spirometry investigations over an 18-month period. Spirometry clinics are now up and running in Girvan Community Hospital, Arrol Park in Ayr and Fullarton Practice Ayr. The final clinic to commence will be in Troon at Templehill Surgery, accommodation has been identified and there has been interest from the nurse bank and training will commence soon to allow the clinics to run in Troon.
- 4.63 Diabetes in primary care is investment in training for nurses within GP practices to allow them to initiate long-acting insulin to those in need of this treatment. In Ayrshire and Arran at present there exists an inequitable service between GP surgeries. Only one GP Surgery in South Ayrshire works with the full portfolio of diabetic medications and can initiate long-acting insulin.
- 4.64 A nurse consultant will deliver the training, to Practice Nurses and GPs within Protected Learning Time. The nurse would also provide mentorship and support to practice nurses as they began this work in their practices. Training session took place on Insulin Initiation on 25th February for GPs and nurses and was very well attended, this will link in with the new injectable therapies, with access to 4 group sessions.

5. STRATEGIC CONTEXT

- 5.1 The Improvement and Innovation projects align to the strategy objectives of the IJB as noted within each project's submission. The overall creation of the fund aligns with IJB objective "We are an ambitious and effective partnership".

6. IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Financial Implications

- 6.1.1 Financial investment is noted in the project, any recurring financial commitments will be factored into the annual budget planning process for the IJB.

6.2 Human Resource Implications

- 6.2.1 Investment in human resources is included within the improvement and innovation fund, where employment has been on a permanent basis Team Managers are managing the risk through workforce planning.

6.3 Legal Implications

- 6.3.1 There are no legal implications.

6.4 Equalities implications

- 6.4.1 There are any equality implications arising from the contents or recommendations from this report.

6.5 Sustainability implications

- 6.5.1 There are no environmental sustainability implications arising from the contents and recommendations of the report.

6.6 Clinical/professional assessment

- 6.6.1 The report has been prepared by the Chief Finance Officer.

7. CONSULTATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING

- 7.1 This report has been collated with information provided by the various leads for each project.

8. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 8.1 The purpose of the innovation and improvement projects is to reshape services to minimise risk in terms of financial sustainability and meeting increase in demand. All funding for the projects has been identified in the short term, there is risk that where a project is successful, and targets are being achieved that recurring funding may not be available for full implementation. This will be monitored through budget and performance monitoring reports during the duration of the project and where appropriate prioritisation to resource allocation brought forward to the IJB for future approval.

- 8.2 Non-recurring funding also has implications in ability to recruit where specific resource is required to meet projects aims. In some instances, this may be managed through workforce planning and ability to offer permanent posts based on reduction to staffing establishment in the medium term through natural staff turnover. Budget holders are responsible for ensuring they manage within their service budgets this includes managing the staffing establishment in line with budget availability and making necessary changes to staffing establishment when non-recurring funding ends.

REPORT AUTHOR AND PERSON TO CONTACT

Name: Lisa Duncan

Phone number:

Email address: Lisa.Duncan2@south-ayrshire.gov.uk

APPENDICES

Appendix One – Improvement and Innovation Highlight Report

BACKGROUND PAPERS

28th April 2025