

DECISION ITEM



REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	COUNCIL	4 JULY 2016	9
REQUEST FOR A FULLY FUNDED CAPITAL BUDGET INCREASE IN 2016/17 TO DELIVER DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

Environmental, Health and Housing Committee on the 5th January 2016 agreed a review of the delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grant to improve effectiveness and members were appointed to the DFG Working Group. The purpose of the DFG Working Group was to review the practices and procedures of the administration of the Disabled Facilities Grant.

The Environmental, Health and Housing Committee on 7th June 2016 agreed the conclusions and recommendations of the review. Two of those recommendations were to request that Council approve a fully funded capital budget increase to deliver additional disabled facilities grants in 2016/17 and a fully funded revenue budget increase for additional staffing resources.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To approve:

1. a fully funded capital budget increase of £380,621 for the DFG Capital Scheme in 2016/17 due to an increased DFG allocation via the Better Care Fund.
2. a fully funded revenue budget increase of £15,000 in 2016/17 for additional staffing resources to be met from the additional DFG revenue fee income that will result from the additional capital funding estimated to be the same amount.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Minutes of Environmental, Health and Housing Committee 5th January 2016

It was therefore RESOLVED

1. To note the report and to endorse a review of the delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grant to improve effectiveness;
2. To appoint the following members to the Disabled Facilities Grant Working Group – Councillors Ben Aitken, Viv Willder, Richard Taylor, Maxine Chew, and Heather Speak, with a recommendation to the Finance and Democracy committee that Councillor Karen Buckley be appointed to the Working Group; and
3. That the report and recommendations of that Working Group be reported back to the both the Environment, Health and Housing committee and the Finance and Democracy Committee upon its

conclusion for due consideration.

Minutes of Environmental, Health and Housing Committee 7th June 2016

Following detailed consideration of this matter it was RESOLVED:

1. To note the contents of the report and conclusions and recommendations from the DFG Working Group as set out in section 15 of the report.
2. That annual monitoring of the outcomes of the review is undertaken by the committee to ensure the service is operating effectively
3. To recommend to full Council a fully funded Capital Budget Increase of £380,621 for the DFG Capital Scheme in 2016/17 due to an increased DFG allocation via the Better Care Fund.
4. To recommend to full Council a fully funded revenue budget increase of £15,000 in 2016/17 for additional staffing resources to be met from the additional DFG revenue fee income that will result from the additional capital funding estimated to be the same amount.
5. That in light of the comments of the working group, the targets relating to PM97a and PM97b be removed and presented as a situation/monitoring report in the future.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	√
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	√
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	√
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	

BACKGROUND

1. A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is made available to help meet the costs of necessary adaptations to the homes of disabled people. The provision of a DFG is a statutory requirement and a disabled person has a right to make an application for assistance. The council has a statutory duty to approve, subject to a means test of the applicant, all valid applications.
2. The Environment, Health and Housing Committee undertook a complete review of how the council discharges its duty in the provision of DFGs and considered a report at its meeting on 7th June 2016.
3. The committee made a number of recommendations which are available within the report/minutes which is available on the [council's website](#).
4. Funding for DFG's is via the 'The Better Care Fund'. The fund was announced in June 2013 to drive the transformation of local services to ensure that people receive better and more integrated care and support. The fund will consist of at least £3.8 billion to be deployed locally on health and social care through pooled budget arrangements between local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups.
5. Lancashire's Better Care Fund (BCF) plan includes improvements that will reduce unnecessary hospital admissions, provide better care for people in their community when they are discharged from hospital, improve end of life care and cut down the amount of paperwork people need to fill in when accessing health and social services.

6. For 2016/17 the BCF will provide £848,621 for the delivery of DFG's in Fylde. Previous funding for 2015/16 was £468,000.
7. The key recommendations made by the Environmental, Health and Housing Committee on the 7th June were:
 - I. to formally express concerns to Lancashire County Council as to the unacceptable delays in the assessment of applicants by the occupational therapist service and that plans to reinvest in additional staffing resources are introduced as soon as possible. Councillor representatives on the Fylde and Wyre Health and Wellbeing Board and the Lancashire Health and Wellbeing Board to also raise these concerns at the earliest opportunity
 - II. that Lancashire County Council consider the urgent introduction of a self-assessment tool to enable anyone enquiring of a disabled facilities grant to be able to self assess themselves financially so they decide at the earliest stage whether they may qualify for assistance for a DFG
 - III. that early consideration is given to the DFG function being audited again soon so as to provide assurance that the service is operating as efficiently as possible to maximise the resources allocated
 - IV. that all key processes within the DFG function are examined and assessed by the council's Time Lean team so as to ensure the service is operating as efficiently as possible to maximise the resources allocated
 - V. that further work is undertaken to establish how Fylde compares with average prices for adaptations across Lancashire and in doing so understand where any commissioning efficiencies can be achieved
 - VI. an annual monitoring report is produced and considered by the Environment, Health and Housing Committee.
8. The working group and committee were pleased that the council's DFG allocation via the Better Care Fund had increased significantly from £468,000 to £848,621. The council's budget for 2016/17 contains provision for the original figure of £468,000 as the final grant settlement was not known at the time the budget was set. Accordingly the committee recommended to Council a fully funded capital budget increase of £380,621 for the DFG Capital Scheme in 2016/17 due to an increased DFG allocation via the Better Care Fund. To cover the Council's costs in the management of the DFG works the Council retains a 10% management fee in respect of each scheme. The approved income budget for these services in 2016/17 is £35,000.
9. As additional applications are processed by the Occupational Therapist Service it will increase the workload for the housing team to process and manage additional adaptations, beyond the current resource allocated. As a result it will be necessary to employ an additional resource on a flexible basis from within the agreed 10% management fee charged. For this a fully funded revenue budget increase of £15,000 in 2016/17 for additional staffing resources is proposed to be met from the additional DFG revenue fee income that will result from the additional capital funding estimated. If approved this would result in a revised income budget for 2016/17 for the administration of DFGs of £50,000.
10. Given the size of the grant increase the working group looked forward to the length of time applicants waiting for a grant to reduce significantly, although noted this will be influenced by the capacity of the Occupational Therapist Service in swiftly processing and assessing cases. Until the Occupational Therapist Service can increase the throughput of applicants and the housing service can process and award these additional grants there is a possibility that some of the additional capital budget of £380,621 for 2016/17 may remain unspent by the end of the financial year. Regular monitoring of budgets will monitor this and report through reviews of the MTFS.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	<p>This report sets out the key recommendations of the DFG Working Group and presents two financial recommendations made by Environment, Health and Housing Committee to Council:</p> <p>3. To recommend to full Council a fully funded Capital Budget Increase of £380,621 for the DFG Capital Scheme in 2016/17 due to an increased DFG allocation via the Better Care Fund.</p> <p>4. To recommend to full Council a fully funded revenue budget increase of £15,000 in 2016/17 for additional staffing resources to be met from the additional DFG revenue fee income that will result from the additional capital funding estimated to be the same amount.</p>
Legal	The legal implications are set out at the start of the report
Community Safety	None
Human Rights and Equalities	None
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None

LEAD AUTHOR	TEL	DATE	DOC ID
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LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Report and minutes – Environment, Health and Housing Committee - Disabled Facilities Grant Task and Finish Group	7 th June 2016	https://fylde.cmis.uk.com/fylde/MeetingsCalendar/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/901/Committee/19/Default.aspx