

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND HOUSING COMMITTEE	9 JANUARY 2018	4
DISABLED FACILITY GRANT ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION 2017-18			

PUBLIC ITEM

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

SUMMARY

In the 2017 Autumn Budget, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced an additional £42 million of capital funding for the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) in 2017/18 for local authorities in England. Unlike the current 2017/18 DFG Grant Determination, in two-tier areas the additional funding will be issued directly to the lower tier authorities.

On the 1st December Fylde BC were allocated additional funding of £91,882.85. This amount may increase as we understand a number of local authorities will not be taking up the allocation and there is a strong likelihood that the initial allocation will increase.

DCLG wish the additional funding to be distributed quickly to enable the expenditure to take place by the end of the current financial year. The funding is not subject to the usual Better Care Fund (BCF) requirements although the formal grant determination letter setting out the terms of the grant has not yet been received.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is requested:

1. To recommend to the Finance and Democracy Committee approval of a fully-funded increase in the cost of the DFG scheme within the approved Capital Programme for 2017/18 in the sum of the initial grant allocation of £91,882, (and any additional monies that may be allocated if the grant is not taken by all local authorities in England), fully-funded by the Better Care Fund/DFG grant; and
2. To note the contents of the report, the on-going work to appraise available options and current guidance available on how the funding may be used.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

Information Item, Housing Services Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy, 20/06/2017

It was RESOLVED;

1. To approve the flexible use of its Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) budget during 2017-18 to facilitate the delivery of adaptations which will address Better Care Fund (BCF) priorities more effectively. This will include the removal of the 'test of resources' for adaptations under £6,000;
2. To approve the authorisation of a grant award of up to £10,000 in excess of the DFG mandatory maximum grant of £30,000, to carry out DFG eligible work as recommended by an Occupational Therapist;
3. To review the administration fee which the Council receives for management of DFG works in conjunction with finance officers;
4. To approve a targeted promotion of DFGs, to be undertaken through partner and third sector agencies

to increase referrals;

5. To explore the potential employment on a case-by-case basis of an Occupational Therapist to process the numbers of referrals received by the Council through a targeted promotion of DFGs by our partner, third sector agencies and potentially from county council, and report back to this Committee in due course;
6. To approve the commissioning of additional technical resources on a flexible basis to assist in the increased workload placed on the Housing Services Team to deliver Disabled Facility Grants, to be funded from additional administration fees receivable by the Council;
7. To explore the options to undertake capital projects with the approval of Registered Providers to improve the housing on offer within the boroughs supported housing schemes, and report back to this Committee in due course;
8. To recommend to Council the creation of a new scheme within the 2017/18 approved Capital Programme to be termed 'Housing Needs Grant' that will be funded from DFG grant repayments (those being in the event of the sale of a property for which a DFG was previously awarded) to be used to fund grants to Minutes – Environment, Health and Housing Committee – 20 June 2017 qualifying persons in respect of affordable warmth measures, boiler servicing and repairs to vulnerable clients;
9. To approve a review of the proposed changes and to report back to the Environment, Health and Housing committee in due course.

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)	✓

REPORT

1. In the Autumn Budget, the Chancellor announced an additional £42 million of capital funding for the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) in 2017-18 for local authorities in England. Unlike the current 2017-18 DFG Grant Determination, in two tier areas the additional funding will be issued directly to the lower tier authorities. On the 1st December Fylde BC were allocated additional funding of £91,882.85. This amount may increase as we understand a number of local authorities will not be taking up their allocation.
2. This additional funding will not be subject to the usual [Better Care Fund \(BCF\) requirements](#) such as the need for local authorities and clinical commissioning groups to jointly agree how to spend the funding as part of the local BCF plan.
3. This allocation allows for spend to be extended to “wider social care capital projects” as such initial discussions have taken place with other partner organisations (see point 5).
4. Guidance available as at the writing of the report is limited to the information provided in Appendix 1 – Autumn Budget announcement: Additional £42 million for DFG in 2017-18. An additional grant determination letter is due which will include a declaration of the additional grant usage to ensure that it has been spent in accordance with the conditions attached to the original grant.
5. Officers have been considering options for the funding, which include:
 - a. A scheme across Fylde and Wyre for emergency adaptations for Hospital leavers run by Care and Repair.
 - b. Adaptions to one of the homeless interim units in St Annes, owned and managed by Progress Housing.
 - c. Initial discussions with Progress Housing.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	The report proposed a recommendation to the Finance and Democracy Committee for approval of a fully-funded increase in the cost of the DFG scheme within the approved Capital Programme for 2017/18 in the sum of the initial grant allocation of £91,882, (and any additional monies that may be allocated if the grant is not taken by all local authorities in England). The increase would be fully-funded by the Better Care Fund/DFG grant.
Legal	None directly from this report
Community Safety	None directly from this report
Human Rights and Equalities	None directly from this report
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	None directly from this report
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None directly from this report

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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
EH&H Committee Minutes	20/6/17	Meeting Documents 20/6/17