

## **Title Home Improvement Agency and Disabled Facility Grants**

### **Summary**

**To authorise the spending of additional Disabled Facility Grant Funding (DFG) and agree funding for the Case Officer within the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) following the withdrawal of Surrey County Council Revenue Funding**

### **Portfolio: Community**

**Date Portfolio Holder signed off report: 15<sup>th</sup> September 2016**

**Wards Affected: All**

### **Recommendation**

The Executive is advised to resolve

- (i) Authority is given to spend the additional Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) allocation received from the Department of Communities and Local Government; and,
- (ii) The Case Officer within the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) be funded from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 from additional fees generated from the increased DFG spend.

### **1. Resource Implications**

- 1.1 The proposal will reduce capital contribution by approximately £200,000 in 2016/17.
- 1.2 The proposal will increase revenue funding by £15,000 in 2016/17 however this will be funded by increased fee income of approximately £26,000.

### **2. Key Issues**

- 2.1 The Council has received an increased capital allocation to deliver Disabled Facilities Grants in 2016/17 and authority is required to spend this additional allocation.
- 2.2 The Council has received a 50% cut in revenue funding in 2016/17 from Surrey County Council. This funding was previously Supporting People funding and is used to fund a Case Officer within the Council's internal Home Improvement Agency.

- 2.3 The Case Officer role is essential to support older and disabled people in a holistic way to maintain their independence in the home and help them through the application process for a DFG.
- 2.4 As the capital spend on DFGs will increase with the additional funding there will also be a corresponding increase in fee income. It is proposed that this additional income could be used to fund the Case Officer for the second half of 2016/17, replacing the lost Surrey County Council grant.
- 2.5 While there is a clearly stated Government policy that DFG allocations be passported to the Local Housing Authority for this work it is unringfenced within the Better Care Fund and an underspend or redirection of funding is likely to weaken arguments to maintain the full allocation coming to the Council in future years.

### **3. Options**

- 3.1 Executive can give authority to spend the additional allocation of Disabled Facility Grants and fund the Case Officer from the increased fee income, or suggest an alternative use for the funding.

### **4. Proposals**

- 4.1 To authorise the spending of the additional Disabled Facility Grant allocation;  
and,
- 4.2 To fund the Case Officer from additional fee income during the period 1<sup>st</sup> October 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017.

### **5. Supporting Information**

- 5.1 The Council has been allocated additional funding for Disabled Facility Grants. Expectations were for an allocation of approximately £300,000 and £600,832 has been allocated.
  - 5.1.1 The Council, to meet mandatory obligations in providing DFGs, will use capital receipts in 2016/17 and internal or external borrowing in subsequent years. The borrowing will be repaid in full in the year following the spend by a charge to the General Fund of the full amount of the borrowing and any interest incurred in securing it. The additional allocation will alleviate this requirement.
- 5.2 For a number of years the Council has received revenue funding of £30,000 p.a. from Surrey County Council to pay for a Case Officer within the Home Improvement Agency. Due to pressures on Surrey County Council budgets this grant has been cut by 50% in 2016/17 and will not be available in 2017/18.
- 5.3 The current and proposed budget positions can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1

2016/17	DFG Allocation	SHBC capital contribution	SCC revenue funding	Anticipated fee income	Revenue cost for Case Officer
Current budget position	£315,000	£205,000	£15,000	£56,000	£0
Proposed budget position	£600,832	£0	£0	£82,000	£15,000

## 6. Corporate Objectives And Key Priorities

- 6.1 As part of the Five Year Strategy the Council is committed to *'build and encourage communities where people can live happily and healthily'*.
- 6.2 A priority within this objective is to *'Support old and vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes'*.

## 7. Policy Framework

- 7.1 Adapting the homes of older and disabled people so they are safe and independent has a positive cost benefit on health and adult social care budgets, as well as providing a better outcomes for individual residents.
- 7.2 In recognition of this proactive and preventative approach Government increased the DFG allocations to local authorities in 2016/17.

## 8. Legal Issues

- 8.1 The legislative framework governing DFGs is provided by The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the Regulatory Reform Order 2002.

## 9. Sustainability

- 9.1 The withdrawal of revenue funding for the Case Worker by Surrey County Council means that the HIA cannot be delivered in the established way.
- 9.2 As this is a countywide issue the 11 Boroughs and Districts and Surrey County Council have commissioned a report into delivering sustainable HIA services across the county looking at models that work locally to meet local need. The report will provide recommendations for putting these services on a sound financial footing from April 2017.

## 10. Risk Management

- 10.1 Delivery of DFGs is mandatory on the Local Housing Authority and any loss of allocation may impact on Council budgets as funding would have to be found from an internal source.

## 11. Equalities Impact

- 11.1 Authority to spend the additional DFG funding and retaining the Case Officer will have a positive impact for older and disabled people as it will provide capacity for additional works to homes of residents with a knock on benefit of increasing independence for these groups, reducing hospital admissions and stays and extending the time that vulnerable people are able to remain within the community.

## 12. Officer Comments

- 12.1 In order to support vulnerable residents, attract maximum funding and to be able to use funding in a flexible way officers will be consulting colleagues in Adult Social Care and Surrey Heath Clinical Commissioning Group to develop and adopt a Home Assistance Policy that supports local priorities.

<b>Annexes</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Background Papers</b>	<b>None</b>
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## Consultations, Implications and Issues Addressed

<b>Resources</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Consulted</b>
Revenue	✓	
Capital	✓	
Human Resources	✓	
Asset Management		
IT		
<b>Other Issues</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Consulted</b>
Corporate Objectives & Key Priorities	✓	
Policy Framework	✓	
Legal		
Governance		
Sustainability	✓	
Risk Management	✓	
Equalities Impact Assessment	✓	

<b>Resources</b>	<b>Required</b>	<b>Consulted</b>
Community Safety		
Human Rights		
Consultation		
P R & Marketing		