

# Disabled Facility Grant

## Summary

To consider a discretionary top up to a Disabled Facility Grant award.

## Portfolio: Support & Safeguarding

Date Portfolio Holder signed off report: 6 August 2021

## Recommendation

The Executive is advised to RESOLVE that the Housing Services Manger be authorised to provide a discretionary top up to a Disabled Facilities Grant to enable the adaption of a disabled resident's home up to the value of £15,000.

### 1. Key Issues

- 1.1 The Council provides Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to disabled residents to provide essential adaptations to their homes.
- 1.2 The maximum DFG award is set at £30,000 although local authorities can, with a Policy in place, add additional discretionary funding.
- 1.3 The Council has a Home Assistance Policy that allows the Housing Services Manger discretion to award additional funding where there are no other avenues of funding available (e.g. client contribution, landlord contribution, social services top up or charitable funding). This is capped at £15,000.
- 1.4 The Council's Home Improvement Agency has a case where a full DFG has been awarded along with the discretionary £15,000 and a top up from Social services. The cost of the works is still not covered by up to c.£15,000 (including contingency).

### 2. Resource Implications

- 2.1 The Council is allocated funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. These are paid into the Better Care Fund and, currently, then paid to the Council in full.
- 2.2 The Council has an underspend from 2020/21 as works were delayed in the first lock down while safe working practices were established. This underspend is £755,000 and has been carried forward as external funding.
- 2.3 The Council's DFG allocation for 2021/22 is £881,000.

- 2.4 The proposal can be met from the Council's allocated DFG budget without prejudicing works to the homes of other residents.

### **3. Options**

- 3.1 Option 1: The Council could reduce the scope of work at the home of the resident to reduce the costs. This would not fully meet the needs of the resident.
- 3.2 Option 2: The Council could complete a percentage of the work and the resident make a further application at a later date. This again would not fully meet the needs of the resident at this time and in the current building market the costs of the works at a later date are likely to be a lot higher, representing poor value for money.
- 3.3 Option 3: authority could be given for the additional cost to be met from the current DFG budget.

### **4. Proposal**

- 4.1 The Executive authorises the Housing Services Manager to commission the works as currently proposed with the additional c.£15,000 of funding.

### **5. Supporting Information**

- 5.1 There have been delays in bringing forward works for this resident both in terms of the assessment of needs and necessary works which sits with Surrey County Council and in trying to put together a funding package. The resident needs timely response to meet their needs after this uncertainty.
- 5.2 Works have been through a competitive tender process.

### **6. Corporate Objectives and Key Priorities**

- 6.1 The Council has a priority to: 'Support older and more vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes and remain active in their local community'.

### **7. Policy Framework**

- 7.1 The Council has a duty to deliver the DFG programme under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, which sets the DFG award at a maximum of £30,000.
- 7.2 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 allows Councils to have a Policy for the discretionary use of DFG funding.

7.3 The Council has a Home Assistance Policy which sets out how it will use its discretion in order to assist disabled and vulnerable residents in a proactive way.

## **8. Legal Issues**

8.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002 allows top up assistance to a mandatory DFG where the local authority takes the view that the amount of assistance available is insufficient to meet the needs of a disabled person'

## **9. Governance**

9.1 N/a

## **10. Risk Management**

10.1 None identified

## **11. Equalities Impact**

11.1 The proposal seeks to secure a benefit for one disabled resident however this is not at the detriment of other disabled and older residents making application for assistance.

## **12. Officer Comments**

12.1 Members may feel that the need for an item in respect of assisting a disabled resident is disproportionate to both the imperative to provide that assistant and the small sum of money involved. This, however, is the first time that it has not been possible to secure alternative funding where the Council's contribution has not been sufficient.

12.2 As such, rather than represent a failure of policy, it has highlighted an area of possible future concern that will be considered when the Home Assistance Policy is reviewed to ensure a more appropriate avenue to secure funding is available to officers.

<b>Annexes</b>	Annex A – Schedule of proposed works to be covered by the funding (to follow)
<b>Background Papers</b>	None
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