

<b>Body:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup> December 2016</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Disabled Facilities Grants: Enabling Disabled People to Live Independently</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Ian Fitzpatrick, Director of Service Delivery</b>
<b>Ward(s)</b>	All
<b>Purpose</b>	To introduce a discretionary grant within the Disabled Facilities Grant policy
<b>Recommendations:</b>	<p>1. To approve the following changes to the existing Private Housing Policy and use of Disabled Facilities Grant funding:</p> <p>Introduction of a discretionary grant element which will allow the introduction of a fast track adaptations approach in line with best practice from the National Audit Office, DCLG and Department of Health (DOH)</p> <p>Enhanced delivery of adaptations in the development of new housing, housing investment and care facilities in the town.</p> <p>2. To grant delegated authority to the Director of Service Delivery to take any and all steps necessary for, and incidental to, the implementation and management of the changes recommended above.</p>
<b>Contact:</b>	<p>Jessica Haines (Project Lead – Housing Delivery), Telephone 01323 410000 or internally on extension 6441. E-mail address <a href="mailto:jessica.haines@eastbourne.gov.uk">jessica.haines@eastbourne.gov.uk</a></p>

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## **1.0 Background/Introduction**

- 1.1 In 2013 the government made better cooperation between local services a main objective of the spending round. The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that in 2015-16, the government would for the first time pool £3.8 billion into a single budget for health and social care services to work more closely together – the Better Care Fund (BCF). The Fund consists of sums reallocated from existing budgets. The Autumn Statement in December 2013 confirmed the government's aim that the Fund would be an enduring part of the health and social care system.
- 1.2 Following the announcement of the BCF in 2013 there were a number of changes affecting Disabled Facilities Grants:

- In 2014 the funding of DFG's moved from DCLG ownership to become part of the BCF fund. This was a fundamental shift of policy removing the previous 'ring fencing' of how DFG's could be spent. The introduction of the BCF came at the same time as the Care Act 2014 with legislation encouraging local authorities to 'collaborate, cooperate and integrate'. DCLG, however, retained the responsibility for setting DFG policy.
- The Spending Review & Autumn Statement 2015 announced the funding for DFG's would rise by more than 100% by 2019-20.
- In 2016-17 the Department of Health provided an extra £394m towards DFG's (compared with £220m in 15-16), an increase of c.80%
- In Eastbourne this increased the DFG budget from £769,450 in 2015-16 to £1.2 million in 2016-17.
- DFG funding is going to increase nationally to £500m by 2020 so we project to receive the same amount of grant for the next 3 years at minimum.

1.3 For this reason it is requested that Cabinet consider a change to our private housing policy that reflects the need to consider how this increase in funding can be best spent and achieve better outcomes for the most vulnerable people in our town.

## **2.0 A Discretionary Fund in Partnership with East Sussex Better Together**

The Council over the past year have been developing a closer working partnership with East Sussex County Council and Clinical Commissioning Groups through East Sussex Better Together (ESBT). ESBT is a 150-week programme to transform health and social care services. The combined budget for health and social care across East Sussex is £850million and the programme is looking to see where joint commissioning could deliver the best possible services for local people. There is a strong recognition from ESBT that housing is a key partner and can deliver some of the efficiencies required.

Since the increase in DFG budget the demand for the existing service has not increased. With the removal of ring fencing there is a greater opportunity to make best use of surpluses within the fund by 'top-slicing' an amount to use at the Council's discretion, supporting innovative projects in the town to improve the lives of our disabled residents. Recommended changes include:

### **2.1 Fast Track Minor Adaptations Discretionary Grant**

In the financial year 2015/16, 1559 days of delayed hospital discharge at the Eastbourne District General Hospital were recorded due to 'housing' or 'waiting for adaptations to be undertaken'. The cost of this can be avoided by:

- Undertaking minor adaptations before someone ends up in acute care by providing more flexibility
- Enabling teams to expedite works should someone already be in an

acute care setting

In order to make this possible we need to consider removing some of the barriers to accessing adaptations particularly the over 65's who account for 80% of those delayed in hospital. This report proposes the introduction of a fast track adaptation fund to include stairlifts and specialist toilets. The installation work would be managed by the County Council. This arrangement should reduce the installation time by 60%.

## **2.2 A Discretionary Grant for New Developments & Home Relocation**

Using a discretionary grant for this type of assistance is intended to help with the cost of moving home where this is considered more appropriate to meet the needs of a disabled occupant and it is not reasonable or practicable to adapt the existing home to fully meet their needs. There are cases where significant investment of DFG grant has not delivered a long term housing solution. Financial assistance may be available towards the costs of either purchasing a new home where the applicant owns their existing home or for moving to alternative rented accommodation for an existing tenant. We anticipate offering a 'Do It Yourself Shared Ownership' model through our Housing Investment Company.

In the building of new homes, developers are not able to offer disabled adapted homes as part of the site due to the financial feasibility. Providing homes to Lifetime Homes standard plus or HAPPI standard often increases cost by 10%. We propose using our discretion to provide funds to ensure disabled homes are brought forward on sites. We'll invite grant applications to be assessed on the basis of need and demand. The programme will be reviewed at the end of year 1 to evaluate outcomes against cost.

## **2.3 A Discretionary Grant for Capital Improvements of Existing Care Facilities**

We have a limited and hard to access nursing market in Eastbourne. This often results in people having to relocate to access the level of care they require. Providers in the town are struggling to maintain 'business as usual' due to the challenges of delivering care and often are owners of mid Victorian properties that do not lend themselves to adaptation easily.

The effect of a decreased residential nursing provision in the town meaning that people are often living in 'micro living' situations or left in acute hospital settings for long periods of time. It also means that Social Care is left with no choice but to pay above their standard rate by over 100%.

We propose that we issue a discretionary grant in partnership with East Sussex County Council to support care home owners to convert a proportion of their homes into a space that can facilitate nursing care.

## **2.4 Project Management & Support**

There is a requirement for extra resource to manage the discretionary fund and focus solely on the development and integration of the proposals made. It is also envisaged that the Co-ordinator will play a key role in the creation

of service that brings together further opportunities of jointly commissioning the Integrated Community Equipment Service, telecare/health and DFG delivery in Eastbourne and Lewes achieving better outcomes for our residents.

- 2.5 We are seeking authority to release £600K of DFG budget for use in the Discretionary Fund. Listed below are the key initiatives and the estimated projected budgets for each. Should any project exceed or be below expected demand, funding will be reallocated in the programme up to the £600K limit.

Fast track minor adaptations - £100,000

Discretionary Grant for New Developments & Home Relocation - £250,000

Discretionary Grant for Capital Improvements of Existing Care Facilities - £200,000

Project Co-ordinator support - £50,000 incl. on costs.

### **3.0 Consultation**

- 3.1 East Sussex County Council has been consulted on the proposed use of DFG budget and fully support the initiative.
- 3.2 Although no public consultation has been conducted, the staff member recruited to manage the project will be expected to produce an evaluation after year 1 which will include feedback from customers and partners.

### **4.0 Resource Implications**

- 4.1 Financial – The amount needed to cover our requirement to deliver 'mandatory' DFG's has been forecast for 16/17 to be £600,000 based on previous years demand. It is felt that there is enough DFG funding left to cover the cost of this project in 16/17 and 17/18. However should there be a change in funding from central Government the project will be reviewed.
- 4.2 Staffing - None

### **5.0 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The changes recommended in this report represent a material variation of the Council's existing private housing policy and disabled grant facilities arrangements. Changes of this nature require the approval of Cabinet.

Lawyer consulted: Oliver Dixon

### **7.0 Conclusion**

- 7.1 By using DFG Grant Funding in a different way we are able to deliver pragmatic solutions to the challenges faced by those with care needs and/or a disability in Eastbourne. Moreover by developing a closer partnership with

health and social care we are facilitating the opportunity to best focus our resources to achieve better outcomes for the most vulnerable offering real housing and accommodation solutions.

**lead officer name: Jessica Haines**

**job title: Project Lead – Housing Delivery**

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**Background Papers:**

The Background Papers used in compiling this report were as follows:

*Planning for the Better Care Fund (National Audit Officer, 2014)*

*Innovation in Homes Adaptations: A Fresh Chance (Care & Repair England, 2016)*

To inspect or obtain copies of background papers please refer to the contact officer listed above.