



Although a formal committee of the city council, the Health & Wellbeing Board has a remit which includes matters relating to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the Local Safeguarding Board for Children and Adults as well as Healthwatch. Papers come from a variety of sources. The format for Health & Wellbeing Board papers is consequently different from papers submitted to the city council for exclusive city council business.

1. Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Update Report

- 1.1. The contents of this paper can be shared with the general public.
- 1.2. This paper is for the Health & Wellbeing Board meeting on the 7 June 2016
- 1.3. Author of the Paper and contact details
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2. Summary

- 2.1. This report gives an overview of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG), how it contributes to Better Care work streams, capital pressures and financial recovery plan measures in place and proposals to cover overspends, a forecast overspend for 2015/16 previously shown within the Better Care Fund reporting.
- 2.2. It sets out the value for money case as research suggests the DFG can support people to remain independent in their own homes – reducing or delaying the need for care and support, and improving the quality of life of residents



3. Decisions, recommendations and any options

- 3.1 That the Board notes the contribution to Better Care work streams around prevention and Keeping People Well
- 3.2 That the Board notes the value for money case and approves an approach to budget setting which takes account of the Govt allocation via the DFG announced February, and projected spend

4. Relevant information

- 4.1 **Overview:** DFG is a mandatory housing grant (Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1996); the legislation sets out the type of work grant can be claimed for, the assessment process, the test of resource and maximum amount of grant payable.
- 4.2 In 2015/16 there were 130 grant completions of which 12 were Children's cases (£221,063) and 118 were Adults (£958,554) In B&H the DFG also pays for some equipment (e.g. lifts , hoists specialist bathing and toilet equipment) which in other local authorities is not funded via DFG. Equipment accounts for about 20% of our total DFG spend. This spend directly reduces pressure on other Health and Social Care equipment budgets
- 4.3 The DFG only funds major adaptations in the private sector. The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) funds adaptations and equipment in council homes. While Council households make up just 9.8% of all households in the City (2011 census) they account for around 50% of referrals for major adaptations and a comparable investment. In 2015/16 there were 258 major adaptations funded via the HRA, an investment of £1.067m
- 4.4 **Contribution to Better Care work streams:** DFG funded adaptations contribute to meeting a range of Public Health, NHS and Social Care outcomes, around prevention and Keeping People Well:
- the vast majority of disabled people live in general (not Specialist) housing and so home adaptations play a key role in enabling safe, healthy, independent living at home.
 - adaptations can reduce health and social care costs, help to reduce risk of injury [e.g. from falls], enable faster hospital discharge, delay onset of admission to residential care and reduce care costs
 - Studies in a range of disciplines confirm that the home environment is a quantifiable determinant of health, quality of



life and well-being. The quality and suitability of the home environment is particularly important for disabled people, older people, those living with a chronic disease or the consequences of a serious injury, and those who experience functional and cognitive difficulties.

- DFG provides the financial help with home adaptations where disability coincides with low income and health inequalities.

4.5 The cost benefit of timely adaptations is well documented. The Audit Commission (2009) 'Building Better Lives – getting the best from strategic housing' found that spending between £2,000 and £20,000 on adaptations that enable an elderly person to remain in their own home can save £6,000 per year in care costs.

4.6 **Capital pressures:** Reports to Housing Committee in 2014 and 2015, all with Finance comments, have flagged:

- capital pressures in context of rising demand and impact of the end of the private sector housing renewal capital programme and Housing 'top up' of the DFG allocation
- The work in Housing to proactively manage demand e.g. through its commissioning of new affordable housing including wheelchair accessible homes, over the Homes & Communities Agency 2011 – 15 Programme delivering 64 new affordable fully wheelchair accessible homes exceeding the target 10% , and making the best use of the Council's adapted and accessible housing stock
- all financial recovery measures in place to manage spend

Extracts from the Housing Committee meetings, minutes and recommendations have been shared with Health & Well Being Board.

4.7 In 2014/15 the total DFG budget was £1.075m (made up of £0.751m Govt DFG allocation, £0.138m grant carried forward against existing commitments and £0.186m private sector housing 'top up') The total spend against the mandatory grant was £1.441m. This resulted in an overspend of £0.368m.

4.8 An action plan was put in place to address the capital pressures in 2015/16 and to manage the spend within an indicative budget £0.911m over a three year period, measures included:

- conditions on all DFG grant approvals in 2015/16 to defer payment until April 2016



- 65% of grant assisted work in the private sector going through the Council's Adaptations Framework – saving an estimated 17% on price
- stopping paying for extended warranties on equipment
- reducing fees
- seeking a greater contribution from Registered Providers (RPs) for up to 40% of the overall cost of works to their homes.

The cost of equipment continued to be funded through the DFG route

- 4.9 The measures above helped manage the spend in year however deferring the payment of grants approved after 1 April 2015 until April 2016 did result in delayed starts on site. The Housing Adaptations team worked with the Council's Framework contractors to mitigate the impact as far as possible, e.g. continuing to prioritise Critical cases, however 51 grants were deferred and start dates were delayed in some cases
- 4.10 In 2015/16 the DFG spend was £1.179m. This results in an overspend of £0.268m.
- 4.11 It is proposed to treat the overspend of £0.368m for 2014/15 separately to the £0.268m overspend in 2015/16. The 2014/15 overspend has now been reduced to £0.305m and continuation of the financial recovery plan by Housing should reduce this overspend to zero during 2018/19. The £0.268m overspend for 2015/16 has been funded from the reallocation of underspends elsewhere within Better Care and Adults.
- 4.12 For 2016/17, the estimated spend is £1.570m which is higher than 2015/16 due to grants being deferred. The DFG grant for 2016/17 is £1.597m which is to be allocated by this Board
- 4.13 The Dept. of Health recognises the importance of the DFG in its announcement in February about the increase in funding nationwide, the duty of Housing authorities to administer the grant and flexibility to use specific DFG funding for wider purposes, which may be more appropriate for individuals, such as moving home, where this is a more appropriate solution.

5. Important considerations and implications

Legal:



- 5.1 Part 1 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 deals with the administration of Disabled Facilities Grants. The measures outlined in paragraph 4.8 to address capital pressures are permitted within the statutory framework.
Lawyer consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 13/05/16

Finance:

- 5.2 The current overspend carried forward from 2014/15 is £0.305m. Continuation of the financial recovery plan within Housing should reduce this overspend to zero during 2018 as long as spending plans for DFG are fully funded going forward. The forecast spend for 2016/17 is £1.57m which is higher than 2015/16 due to payments being deferred. The DFG grant for 2016/17 is £1.597m, which is to be allocated by this board. If the amount of grant allocated does not cover costs, further efficiencies or reductions to this service will be necessary to ensure costs are within budget.

Finance Officer consulted: Monica Brooks Date: 19/05/2016

Equalities:

- 5.3 The Department of Health recognises the value for money of concentrating its social care capital grant funding into the Disabled Facilities Grant as research suggests it can support people to remain independent in their own homes – reducing or delaying the need for care and support and improving the quality of life of residents. Adequate funding of the DFG is critical to meet the statutory duty and to ensure we can deliver timely adaptations supporting people to remain as independent for as long as possible, to remain healthy and well and to manage their physical and mental health condition.

Sustainability:

- 5.4 The delivery of major housing adaptations enabling people to live as independently as possible for as long as possible is an investment in the existing housing stock, increasing the supply and quality of accessible and adapted homes for current and future occupiers.
- 5.5 Using the council's Adaptations Framework for DFG funded work ensures private sector housing adaptations are carried out by



contractors who scored highly on sustainability including energy use, recycling, procurement of sustainable products and accreditations such as ISO 14001. In addition the Framework Agreement requires use of sustainable timber in line with FLEGT, the standard for all relevant BHCC contracts

Health, social care, children's services and public health:

5.6 These are covered within the paper.

6. Supporting documents and information

6.1 none