
TITLE: DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT REVIEW IMPLEMENTATION

Committee: Regulatory Services Committee

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[S165]

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 To update Members on the implementation of the countywide review of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and advise Members of the progress made by Care and Repair services on the implementation of their improvement plan

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 Members to note the progress on the implementation of the county wide review of DFG's and East Cambridgeshire District Council's Improvement Plan.

2.2 Members are requested to agree the increase of fees to 20% for Care and Repair services.

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

3.1 At Regulatory and Support Services Committee January 2017, Members were informed of the outcome of the countywide Disabled Facilities Grant review. The review highlighted three key findings;

- New services are needed that consider people's needs, including early conversations and planning for the longer term: services need to engage with people before they need an adaptation, and should encourage people to think about whether the accommodation they are living in is suitable for the longer term
- Existing services will need to support a growing population: performance relating to the delivery of adaptations is too slow. It is recommended that a "fast track" process for commonly requested small works be introduced and that a full review of existing processes and procedures is needed to speed up the delivery of DFG's.
- Funding arrangements across the system will need to change to support a shift in focus: significant increase in capital funding offers new opportunities for Care and Repair services to generate more fees and become financially self-sustaining. It is recommended that a proportion of existing revenue funding should be diverted to prevention and early intervention services in order to ensure that adaptation work is only carried out where it is the best course of action for the individual.

- 3.2 As a result of the findings the Council signed up to a funding agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This resulted in the Council receiving a reduced level of revenue funding from both CCC and CCG for a period of 12 months from April 2017. To cover the revenue funding gap Members agreed to increase fees from 12% to 15% from April 2017.
- 3.3 The diverted revenue funding has been used to develop new services to enable early conversations and help people to plan for longer term housing needs The following services are being trialled by CCC during 2017/18
- Older People Pathway – South Cambridgeshire DC have been working in partnership with FirstStop, and developing their housing options for older people (HOOP) tool. This is to be rolled out during 2018/19 to the rest of Cambridgeshire.
 - Children’s Pathway- The Children’s Panel is to end and a more child and family focused approach introduced, giving more proactive options to families. In April 2018 funds will be available to fund a full time post to look at complex cases.
 - The Early Help Team at CCC has identified a team member to work one day a week on the trial with SCDC and FirstStop, linking closely with the housing options team.
- 3.4 Each of the Care and Repair services in Cambridgeshire has developed an Improvement plan. The plans reflect the findings of the review and identify how they will be implemented at a local level. The plan for East Cambridgeshire is attached at appendix 1. Progress against the implementation of the improvement plan is going well. To date the following action has been taken;
- The Council have introduced a “fast track” grant for adaptations under £8,000
 - A significant improvement in waiting times time’s from referral to grant approval has been seen. (Works under £10,000 reduced from 46 wks to average of 33 wks, works over £10,000 reduced from 63 wks to 44 wks)
 - Care and Repair are working with the combined Home Improvement Agency on a framework agreement for level access showers.
 - Care and Repair are working with Hetty Thornton, Performance Manger on identifying waste in their processes through Lean6 Sigma.
 - Officers are working with all Cambridgeshire authorities to develop a countywide Housing Adaptations Policy.
- 3.5 It was anticipated that due to the significant uplift in capital allocation through the Better Care Fund (BCF) along with the introduction of new prevention pathways, that his would provide sufficient income, along with reduced demand for the service therefore reducing the need for continued revenue support from CCC form March 2018.
- 3.6 To date there has been no decrease in demand for DFG’s or for the services delivered by Care and Repair. The role out of the new prevention services will

not commence until April 2018. This has been acknowledged by CCC, who has agreed to re-visit the funding agreement.

- 3.7 Care and Repair services will continue to receive revenue funding from CCC at a reduced sum of £45,500 for a 12 month period from April 2018. The CCG are not able to continue to contribute to the running of the service.
- 3.8 The increased capital allocation through BCF has brought in additional revenue for Care and Repair services through fee income over the last two years. However this will not be sufficient even with the funding from CCC to cover the running cost of the service. Therefore it will be necessary to increase fees to 20% to bridge the funding gap.
- 3.9 CCC has indicated that this funding will only be available for 18/19. Therefore it will be necessary to consider options available to the council during 18/19 for future service delivery.

4.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Work by CCC and the Council to implement the key findings of the countywide review of the delivery of Disabled Facilities grants has progressed well throughout this financial year.
- 4.2 CCC is rolling out prevention services, which could result in future, demand for DFG's reducing. CCC has been accepted that 18/19 will continue to be a transition period and has agreed to continue to provide revenue funding to the Care and Repair service for a 12 month period at a reduced level.
- 4.3 The increased capital allocation through the BCF has brought in additional revenue for Care and Repair services through fee income over the last two years. However this will not be sufficient even with the funding from CCC to cover the running cost of the service. To ensure that this valued and vital service will continue to be available to those residents that need adaptations to remain in their own homes, it will be necessary to increase fees to 20% to bridge the funding gap created by the reduced revenue funding levels from CCC and CCG.
- 4.4 The Council will continue to implement the improvement plan and work with District/City and CCC to look at options for future service delivery of Care and Repair services in Cambridgeshire.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 The increased capital allocation for DFG's through the BCF has brought increase revenue funding through fee income, however this is not sufficient on its own to sustain the running cost of the provision of Care and Repair services.

5.2 The reduced level of revenue funding from CCC and CCG will require fee's to increase to 20% to bridge the funding gap. Appendix 2

5.3 Equality Impact Assessment (INRA) not required/completed*

6.0 APPENDICES

6.1 East Cambridgeshire Care and Repair Improvement Plan

6.2 Financial spreadsheet

Background Documents

Location

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