
TITLE: DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT REVIEW

Committee: Regulatory and Support Services Committee

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[R179]

1.0 ISSUE

1.1 To inform Members of the outcome of the Countywide Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) review and its implications on service delivery for the Council.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION(S)

2.1 Members are requested to note the outcome of the DFG review and agree that the fees for Care and Repair services are increased to 15% in 17/18 to cover the reduction in revenue funding from both Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group.

2.2 Members agree the adoption of the Cambridgeshire Housing Adaptations Agreement.

2.3 Members agree that delegated authority be given to the Environmental Services Manager to sign off the amended housing adaptations policy, which will reflect the Cambridgeshire Housing adaptations Agreement.

3.0 BACKGROUND/OPTIONS

3.1 The Cambridgeshire DFG Review was established in February 2016 as a work stream for the Older Peoples accommodations Board. The aim of the review was to take a more strategic approach to housing adaptations, encompassing both a review of the current service model as well as considering the capital and revenue funds contributed to the DFG process by a range of partners. The review group comprises representatives from each District Council, the County Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and Foundations (the national body for Home Improvement Agencies).

3.2 The District/City Councils receive a capital allocation from Government to spend on adaptations. This has been received via the Better Care Fund (BCF) since 2015/16. In 20 16/17, there was a significant uplift in the Disabled Facilities Grant in Cambridgeshire this rose from £1.9 million to £3.5 million. The table below shows the Capital Budget for East Cambridgeshire District Council.

Organisation	15/16	16/17
County Council	259,739	472,949
East Cambridgeshire DC	186,000	186,000
Sanctuary	100,000	100,000
Total	545,739	758,949

- 3.3 The County Council and CCG also contribute revenue funding to each District for the operation of the three Home Improvement agencies (HIA).
- 3.4 The DFG Review draft report is attached at Appendix 1. The report 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 in many parts of the county is too slow in the delivery of DFG’s. It is recommended that a “fast track” for commonly requested small works be introduced and that a full review of existing processes and procedures is needed to speed up the DFG process
 - Funding arrangements across the system will need to change to support a shift in focus: significant increase in capital funding offers new opportunities for the HIA’s to generate more fees and become financially self-sustaining. HIAs are able to charge fees for the adaptation work that they undertake. 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 where it is the best course of action for the individual.
- 3.5 The review findings have been accepted in principle and discussions on how to take the findings and service recommendations forward are in progress. These include the development and funding of new prevention pathways, whilst continuing to support the HIAs to improve their performance. It is anticipated that this will be achieved through the tapering of County Council/CCG revenue funding and more effective use of the DFG capital allocation. However the detail of the tapering for 18/19 onwards still needs to be agreed and is subject to ongoing negotiations.

- 3.6 It has been agreed that District Councils will receive a reduced level of revenue funding from both Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for a period of 12 months from April 2017, along with a one off capital repayment of £24,120. These savings will be used to provide transitional support and contribute to the development of prevention pathways.
- 3.7 This reduction in revenue funding will require fees to be increased to 15% by care and Repair to fill the funding gap created. This charge is in line with other HIA's.

ORGANISATION	16/17 12% fees	17/18 15% fees reduced funding
CCC	£66,807	£50,105 (75%)
CCG	£15,760	£6,304 (40%)
FEES	£50,000	£93,323
TOTAL	£132,567	£149,732

- 3.8 Discussion regarding a more flexible approach to using the DFG capital allocation was also covered within the review. The regulatory framework (Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002) provides considerable scope to use capital to deliver improved outcomes through the development of a Housing Adaptations Policy.
- 3.9 A Cambridgeshire Housing Adaptations Agreement has been drafted (see appendix 2) containing principles that the partners can sign up to, including flexible use of the DFG Capital allocation for other grants, relocation expenses and “fast track” adaptations. It also includes provision for the District Councils to use an element of the DFG Capital Allocation to provide Top-up grants or loans that are currently the responsibility of the County Council. This will remove a significant amount of duplication of officer time and confusion for vulnerable households who currently apply to both the district and County Councils.
- 3.10 In light of the Cambridgeshire Housing adaptations Agreement, a review of the councils Housing Adaptations policy 2015 will be undertaken and amended to reflect the more flexible approach required ensuring that there are improved outcomes for residents.

4.0 ARGUMENTS/CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Cambridgeshire DFG review has provided the opportunity to work collaboratively with our partners to take a more strategic approach to housing adaptations.

- 4.2 Three Home Improvement Agencies assist residents throughout Cambridgeshire to access funding for adaptations, which enable them to remain in their own home. The agencies are revenue funded by Cambridgeshire County Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group and fee income.
- 4.3 The District/City Councils receive a capital allocation from Government to spend on adaptations. This has been received via the Better Care Fund (BCF) since 2015/16. In 2016/17, there was a significant uplift in the Disabled Facilities Grant in Cambridgeshire this rose from £1.9 million to £3.5 million.
- 4.4 The review has highlighted 3 key findings, further work is being undertaken to consider the best way to implement these findings without compromising the sustainability of the Home Improvement Agencies/Care and Repair.
- 4.5 It has been agreed that District Councils will receive a reduced level of revenue and pay make a capital repayment to provide transitional support. The reduced level of funding from both the County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group will require an increase in fees to cover the funding gap. Therefore Fees will need to be increased to 15%. The change is levied against the overall grant, not attributable to the individual service user. The increase in the capital allocation through the BCF will help towards this.
- 4.6 The review has identified the need to amend District/City Housing Adaptation policies to enable a more flexible approach to using the DFG allocation. Officers have developed a draft Housing Adaptations Agreement, which reflects the changes that will lead to better outcomes, including relocation assistance, fast track and “top up” policies.
- 5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS/EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT
- 5.1 The reduction in revenue funding from both Cambridgeshire County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group will require Fees associated with the work undertaken by Care and Repair to increase to 15% in 2017/18.
- 5.2 Equality Impact Assessment (INRA) completed and attached at Appendix 3
- 6.0 APPENDICES
- 6.1 DFG review Appendix 1
- 6.2 Cambridgeshire Housing Adaptations Agreement Appendix 2
- 6.3 INRA Appendix 3

Background Documents

Included as Appendix

Location

Room

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