

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS

PROFORMA

Cabinet Meeting12th July 2017

1. Title of Item/Report

Disabled Facilities Grant : proposal to introduce discretionary financial assistance schemes

2. Record of the Decision

Local Authorities had been under a statutory duty to provide help for major adaptations to disabled people's homes since 1990 and this was usually done through the provision of a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). A DFG was intended to give disabled people better freedom of movement into and round their homes, as well as providing essential facilities which aimed to increase independence, prevent falls, facilitate hospital discharge and/or delay care home admission.

Local Authority DFG funding allocations were 'ring-fenced' within the Better Care Fund and, as such, authorities were expected to consider how the provision of major adaptations could support broader health and social care agendas. This coupled with recent increases in Government funding, had enabled the Housing / Adult Social Care Teams to reflect on what services were provided, to whom, identify any gaps in provision and what opportunities were available to ensure adaptations effectively supported the Councils wider prevention and independence agendas. The report provided an overview of the major adaptations service provided by the Council and sought support to introduce a number of policy changes as detailed in paragraphs 8 – 14 of the report.

RESOLVED that:-

1. The proposed amendments to the Council's existing Equipment Loan Scheme Policy – as detailed in paragraphs 8 – 11 of the report be approved.
2. The introduction of a Homeowner DFG Top-Up Loan and a Homeowner DFG Loan - as detailed in paragraphs 12 – 13 of the report be approved.
3. The introduction of a Tenant DFG Loan - as detailed in paragraphs 14 – 16 of the report be approved.

4. Delegated authority be given to revise the Council's Housing Renewal Financial Assistance Policy (as detailed in paragraphs 5-6 of the report) and the existing Disabled Facilities Grant and Equipment Loan policies to the Director of Economic Growth and Development Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing and Housing.

5. The move away from agency fees being charged on individual DFG applications to an annual 'top-slice' of the Councils allocated DFG funding detailed in paragraphs 18-20 of the report be approved.

6. Following an annual review of all statutory and discretionary adaptations schemes and confirmation of the Councils annual DFG funding allocation, delegate authority be given to make any necessary changes to all discretionary adaptations schemes (including withdrawal) and the Housing Renewal Financial Assistance, Disabled Facilities and Equipment Loan policies to the Director of Economic Growth and Development and Director of Adults and Health in consultation with the Cabinet members for Regeneration and Housing and Adult Services and Health.

7. Consideration be given to an amendment be made to the housing renewal assistance policy to allow the introduction of financial assistance for vulnerable homeowners, tenants or landlords who do not have the financial means available meet the basic statutory requirements for fire safety measures. And for Cabinet to delegate approval to the Director of EDGS in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Housing and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health to make the necessary amendments to the housing renewal policy to enable loans to be granted in such circumstances.

3. Reasons for the Decision

Home adaptations play a key role in ensuring that people (of all ages) continue to live independently at home for as long as possible. Recent increases in funding has provided an opportunity to review existing service delivery to ensure that the Council can respond quickly and effectively to the bespoke needs of our residents.

4. Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

5. Declared (Cabinet Member) Conflicts of Interest

Councillor Steve Nelson declared a personal non prejudicial interest in respect of agenda item 16 - Disabled Facilities Grant: proposal to introduce discretionary financial assistance scheme as he was a Director of Thirteen.

6. Details of any Dispensations

N/A

7. Date and Time by which Call In must be executed

Midnight, 21 July 2017

Proper Officer
17 July 2017