

**Date:** Monday 7 October 2024 at 4.00 pm

**Venue:** Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library, Church Road,  
Stockton-on-Tees, TS18 1TU

**Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair)**  
**Cllr Paul Weston (Vice-Chair)**

Cllr Ian Dalgarno  
Cllr Niall Innes  
Cllr David Reynard  
Cllr Barry Woodhouse

Cllr John Gardner  
Cllr Eileen Johnson  
Cllr Hugo Stratton

## **AGENDA**

- 1 Evacuation Procedure** (Pages 7 - 8)
- 2 Apologies for Absence**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**
- 4 Minutes**  
To approve the minutes of the last meeting held on 2 September 2024 (Pages 9 - 12)
- 5 Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant**  
To receive evidence as part of the Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant (Pages 13 - 26)
- 6 Progress Update - Scrutiny Review of Disability Inclusive Borough**  
To receive a progress update on the Scrutiny Review of Disability Inclusive Borough (Pages 27 - 32)
- 7 Chairs Update and Select Committee Work Programme 2024 - 2025** (Pages 33 - 34)

**Members of the Public - Rights to Attend Meeting**

With the exception of any item identified above as containing exempt or confidential information under the Local Government Act 1972 Section 100A(4), members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting and/or have access to the agenda papers.

Persons wishing to obtain any further information on this meeting, including the opportunities available for any member of the public to speak at the meeting; or for details of access to the meeting for disabled people, please

Contact: Scrutiny Support Officer Rachel Harrison on email [rachel.harrison@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:rachel.harrison@stockton.gov.uk)

**KEY - Declarable interests are:-**

- Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI's)
- Other Registerable Interests (ORI's)
- Non Registerable Interests (NRI's)

**Members – Declaration of Interest Guidance**



**Table 1 - Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

| <b>Subject</b>   | <b>Description</b>   |
|--|--|
| <b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b> | Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain  |
| <b>Sponsorship</b>                                       | Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses.<br>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.  |
| <b>Contracts</b>   | Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council —<br>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and<br>(b) which has not been fully discharged.   |
| <b>Land and property</b>                                 | Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.<br>'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.   |
| <b>Licences</b>  | Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer.  |
| <b>Corporate tenancies</b>                               | Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)—<br>(a) the landlord is the council; and<br>(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/ civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.  |
| <b>Securities</b>  | Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—<br>(a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and<br>(b) either—<br>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or<br>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/ her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners have a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class. |

\* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

\* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

## Table 2 – Other Registerable Interest

You must register as an Other Registrable Interest:

- a) any unpaid directorships
- b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- c) any body
  - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
  - (ii) directed to charitable purposes or
  - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

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## **Jim Cooke Conference Suite, Stockton Central Library** **Evacuation Procedure & Housekeeping**

If the fire or bomb alarm should sound please exit by the nearest emergency exit. The Fire alarm is a continuous ring and the Bomb alarm is the same as the fire alarm however it is an intermittent ring.

If the Fire Alarm rings exit through the nearest available emergency exit and form up in Municipal Buildings Car Park.

The assembly point for everyone if the Bomb alarm is sounded is the car park at the rear of Splash on Church Road.

The emergency exits are located via the doors between the 2 projector screens. The key coded emergency exit door will automatically disengage when the alarm sounds.

The Toilets are located on the Ground floor corridor of Municipal Buildings next to the emergency exit. Both the ladies and gents toilets are located on the right hand side.

### **Microphones**

During the meeting, members of the Committee, and officers in attendance, will have access to a microphone. Please use the microphones, when directed to speak by the Chair, to ensure you are heard by the Committee.

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## PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday 2 September 2024.

**Present:** Cllr Marilyn Surtees (Chair), Cllr Paul Weston (Vice-Chair), Cllr Carol Clark (sub Cllr Eileen Johnson), Cllr Ian Dalgarno, Cllr Niall Innes, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Tony Riordan (sub Cllr John Gardner), Cllr Hugo Stratton and Cllr Barry Woodhouse.

**Officers:** Sam Dixon, Krisan Saltikov (AHW), Chris Donnison (CSEC), and Michelle Gunn (CS).

**Also in attendance:**

**Apologies:** Cllr John Gardner and Cllr Eileen Johnson.

### PEO/23/24 Evacuation Procedure

The Committee noted the evacuation and housekeeping procedure.

### PEO/24/24 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

### PEO/25/24 Minutes

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### PEO/26/24 Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant

The Committee received a presentation from the Occupational Therapy (OT) Team Manager. The presentation covered:

- SBC OT Service overview and missions statement
- Legal Duties
- OT provisions and process
- The impact on health and wellbeing and measuring success
- Effects of long waiting lists and non-provision, including the financial impact
- Demand on service

Key issues discussed included:

- The OT assessments mainly took place in a person's home, although they could take place in residential care setting, day care settings and local prison too.
- Comparisons from before and after the person came to the OT service were made to measure the impact of OT interventions on their personalised outcomes.
- Reduction in the cost of the care package was being achieved by in-depth review of such care packages by the OT assessor. However, the main objective of undertaking a review of the care package was to make this personalised and less intrusive e.g. tailored to the individual.

- The OT service worked with Tees Valley Home Finder and Registered Housing Providers to ensure those on the housing register were applying for housing that met their needs. A long term implication of non or delay in provision of DFG's included the need for re-housing and the shortage of housing and difficulty in finding suitable properties for a persons need was noted.
- Members questioned whether, following an extension built via DFG, a person could apply again for another DFG if their family expanded, or they moved properties. Officers explained that the design of extensions and/or adaptations had to meet the need of the person and they could apply again if their needs changed.
- It was questioned whether arrangements were in place to return small items people may require on short term basis such as crutches, and while this was not the responsibility of officers at the meeting they were aware that there was a system in place for returning these.
- Discussion took place regarding the design of new housing and ensuring that these are built to meet the needs of older people, which would ensure they did not require as many adaptations in future. It was noted that this would be a planning issue and changes would have to be made with the planning process. However, there were regulations regarding the placing of plug sockets and door widths.
- It was noted that the OT would put short term measures in place immediately to assist the person while there were awaiting a DFG.
- Members questioned the reason for the increase in demand for OT services and informed that the team had improved how they promoted their services and became more accessible. Additionally, they had built good working relationships with Tees Valley Homefinder, Thirteen, and care services therefore received more referrals.
- The financial impact for waiting for adaptation was noted, and Officers explained that the cost for a day in hospital was approximate. It was questioned why someone would spend one day in hospital and explained that this would be an extra day stay in hospital which may be caused by a delay in discharge due to the adaptations needed not being in place.

The Committee also received a presentation from the Building Service Manager. The presentation covered:

- Team overview
- Number of DFGs completed and cost from 2020-2021 – to date
- Process overview
- Average timeline
- Customer journey and communication with the customer
- Impact of fast track applications
- Feedback and aftercare
- Appointing contractors and supply/purchasing of adaptations/stock
- Challenges

Key issues discussed included:

- The team installed three wet rooms a week, which took five days each. Between April - September 2024 they had carried out 63 wet rooms. The client was given plenty of notice so that they could arrange alternative washing facilities or accommodation while the work was being carried out. No works were carried out for a three week period over Christmas, as they found that clients did not want them in their homes over the Christmas period and this

gave staff the opportunity for a break. The team were operating with less staff than previously, and this had an affect on how many wet rooms they could install due to staff holidays and sickness. It was explained that it was a very skilled team and therefore the manager could not task operatives from other areas to assist. This then impacted on the waiting list. It was questioned what the multi-skilled operatives base trade was, and officers informed that the base trade was plumbing, however they were trained in several other trades but not electrics.

- Members questioned how often bulk buy suppliers were reviewed and where informed that this was carried out every three months. This allowed for officers to create good professional relationships with suppliers which also helped to drive down costs. Storage for bulk purchasing was also discussed, and the impact of fast track applications on this, with members questioning if more storage could be found if needed. There was storage for 4 weeks' worth of stock and the service only bulk purchased items that did not deteriorate quickly. Certain items also changed dependent on the need of the client therefore these were purchased in smaller numbers.
- Registered Housing Providers were raised, and it was explained that their tenants had the same rights to access the funding as non-RP tenants. It was noted that Thirteen used to have their own inhouse service but no longer operated this and refer to their tenants SBC's DFG service. Officers suggested the reasons for this included the good quality SBC provided along with claiming they did not have the funding. Approximately 50% of the properties the team carried out works on were private properties and 50% Registered Housing Provider properties. Officers also noted that Thirteen made contributions toward some adaptations needed in their properties, but not all.
- Asbestos surveys, which delayed when the works could be carried out, were raised with members questioning if they checked every home for this. The officer informed that if they were carrying out intrusive work on a home built prior to 1999 they would check it for asbestos. They would carry out scrapes as part of the pre-work, which included checking where wiring and pipes were needed, ready for the asbestos report. Thirteen carried out their own asbestos reports but there were no issues with the waiting time for those surveys.

In addition, the link officer noted that the current wait for a DFG was 135 days, and it was taking 143 days to complete on a DFG, which was under the government target of 150 days.

AGREED that the information be noted.

#### **PEO/27/24 Chair's Update and Select Committee work Programme 2024-2025**

Consideration was given to the Work Programme.

The next meeting would be held on Monday 7 October 2024.

AGREED that the Work Programme be noted.

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## SCRUTINY REVIEW OF DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT

### Summary

The fourth evidence-gathering session for the Committee’s review of Disabled Facilities Grant will focus on customer experience.

### Detail

1. As part of the scoping process for this review the Committee requested the experience of individuals and groups that may have experience of accessing a DFG. The Parent/Carer Forum were therefore approached, and they carried out a survey of their members the results of which are attached.
2. In addition, the service customer survey results from July – September 2024 are attached for consideration.
3. The Committee also requested information from the Stockton & District Advice and Information Service as part of the review, and the subsequently they were contacted to question the number of people and type of advice they advise in relations to adaptations and DFG’s. The below response was received:

“Our data recording system does not specifically identify DFG but has the category Housing Q AIC (Adaptations for Disabled People), broken down by housing type. We do get some enquiries from people asking us to fill in a DFG application form and the supervisors here are not aware of any issues/problems with them.

| HOUSING TYPE                      | 21/22     | 22/23    | 23/24     | TOTAL     |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|-----------|
| 06 Local Authority housing        | 6         | 1        | 2         | 9         |
| 07 Housing association property   | 2         | 2        | 5         | 9         |
| 08 Private sector rented property | 5         | 1        | 1         | 7         |
| 09 Owner occupier property        | 9         | 3        | 2         | 14        |
| <b>GRAND TOTAL</b>                | <b>22</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>10</b> | <b>39</b> |

Usually, we will advise the clients of their ability to request a Care Act Assessment and / or Occupational Therapy Assessment to address any aids and adaptations that they may require. We would give them advice on the eligibility criteria and an overview of the process involved. This will involve advice on DFG's where applicable.

Clients are referred onto the OT team and the majority are happy to progress this themselves by contacting First Contact.”

4. A copy of the agreed scope and plan for this review is also included for information.

**Name of Contact Officer:** Michelle Gunn

**Post Title:** Scrutiny Officer

**Telephone No:** 01642 524987

**Email Address:** [michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk)

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# STOCKTON PARENT CARER FORUM

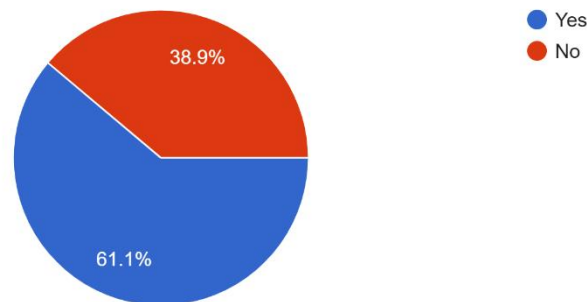
## DFG Disabled facilities grant parent feedback from SPCF September 2024

Parent/carers were asked for feedback on their experiences through a survey. Please note that SPCF only covers a percentage of parent carers and widespread consultation with those who have accessed or tried to access the grant would be a recommendation.

*Stockton on Tees borough council are undergoing a review of the Disability facilities grant DFG. Members of the council are keen to look at the process to make it a better system. SPCF want to hear from parent/carers who have applied for the grant for their views, feedback and suggestions.*

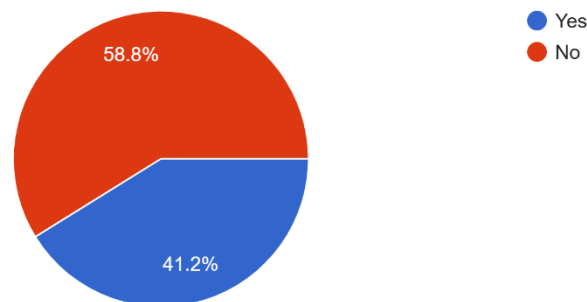
Have you applied for a Disabled facilities Grant?

18 responses



Was your application successful?

17 responses



**If it was successful how was your experience from starting the application to the finished works?**

**8 responses**

Stressful

Easy

6 months till it went to panel lots of them messing around and given false hope. They wanted to turn the dining room into a bedroom even though we said it wouldn't work as that was our only space to be as a family away from my son who struggles with us all together. So my 18 year old daughter has moved out as there no room and they were dragging their heels so we said don't bother. The had also agreed to knock my bathroom and toilet into one and been told there no time scale other than it will take about 18months again very helpful. Not. You are made to feel guilty for asking for help and we were told by the man who came out to look at the footprint that we as a family have to make losses and to try our mp or ask my husband's work to help. Which were all stupid responses. It's a terrible service that doesn't want to help those in desperate need.

The application is fine and much better now it can all be done online

It was a positive experience.

To long and shoddy workmanship

Very simple and easy, quick from start to finish

Horrific

**If you were unsuccessful, were you given advice and information as to other options?**

**7 responses**

No, council wouldn't even apply for the grant so I was never given the opportunity to appeal the decision. No advice or information given or any options that could be available.

No

We couldn't get an extension that they suggested for a bedroom extra room as they said there was no guarantee my son would use it. Even though right from the start we said he wouldn't sleep downstairs on his own. He is ten with complex needs.

No, I wasn't

No

No, our application was closed. As apparently my daughter's reluctance to go in the bathroom, it wasn't as at a family apartment in Spain. She stands at the bathroom door and says bathtime I think. The issue is proprioception and her inability to go up and down stairs (she's carried downstairs each morning) and the OT failed to tell us. We are currently trying to apply again, but have the same OT who doesn't do her job particularly well. Just my personal experience of the 4 occasions I've asked for help.

Yes to avoid making same mistake in future



**Are you happy with the work that was completed?**

**10 responses**

Yes

Happy with the rock but not options we were offered

N/a non complete

No

N/A

No

Yes

Very much so and very grateful.

No, we had a major flood and leak due to the workmanship

**What could be done to improve the DFG based on your personal experience?9 responses**

Listen to the needs of families as it's them who have to manage day to day and know what they need

Actually, listen to a family who are struggling and need home adaptations. Felt completely dismissed and proposals but forward were a huge safety factor for the child and would have lead to injury if we implemented them.

Nothing

Don't give false hope, make it quicker, don't make familys feel bad for asking for help. They do this hoping people will give up life raising a child with autism and complex needs is stressful enough without the added stress they make you go through.

I think it's fantastic, however I did think having 3 children with asd and other dignoses that some of the choices were limited as I wouldn't send them to camp or use specialist equipment however I would have preferred to use the full amount on things suitable for my child not part of it because they don't need specialist help but are still sen children.

Used better builders and not the one with the cheapest quote

Communication

I applied for help for a new bed for my daughter she has bad austism

Increase the DFG

**If you are interested in providing a detailed case study regarding your experience of the DFG, please leave your name and email below.4 responses**

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# People Select Committee

## DFG Customer Feedback

27<sup>th</sup> September 2024

The information below is from feedback from customers who have had an adaptation installed between July to Sept 2024. 24 Completed, 9 did not return the survey.

| Month  | Address | Standard of information & communication prior to works commencing | Standard of communication & updates received throughout the works | Appearance and conduct of staff | Standard of workmanship | Quality of works on completion | Service overall | Did staff present identification | Comments  |
|--------|---------|---|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Jul-24 | 72 BC   | 10  | 10  | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              | Very professional, very approachable. Couldn't ask for a better service. Thank you so much for improving my family's quality of life!   |
| Jul-24 | 3 CR    | 10  | 10  | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              | Staff worked well and easy to talk to. They've done a great job.  |
| Jul-24 | 19 MC   | 10  | 10  | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              | There have done a great job. I am over the moon about it.   |
| Jul-24 | 1 SC    | 10  | 10  | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              | Workmen were excellent, respectful, kind, always cleaned up after themselves too. Lovely bunch of workmen you would want to do work in your home anytime.   |
| Jul-24 | 103 DR  | 10  | 10  | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              | The lads were absolutely excellent in every aspect.   |
| Jul-24 | 37 CR   | -   | -   | -                               | -                       | -                              | -               | -                                | survey not returned   |
| Jul-24 | 45 WR   | -   | -   | -                               | -                       | -                              | -               | -                                | survey not returned   |
| Jul-24 | 12 BC   | -   | -   | -                               | -                       | -                              | -               | -                                | survey not returned   |
| Jul-24 | 82 VW   | -   | -   | -                               | -                       | -                              | -               | -                                | survey not returned   |
| Jul-24 | 43 MS   | 8   | 9   | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              |   |
| Jul-24 | 22 SC   | 10  | 10  | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              |   |
| Aug-24 | 38 AW   | -   | -   | -                               | -                       | -                              | -               | -                                | survey not returned   |
| Aug-24 | 22 CR   | -   | -   | -                               | -                       | -                              | -               | -                                | survey not returned   |
| Aug-24 | 155 DL  | 10  | 10  | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              | I found the two employees you sent here were very professional, well mannered and a great asset to your company. Many thanks.   |
| Aug-24 | 74 SR   | 10  | 10  | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              |   |
| Aug-24 | 9 SW    | -   | -   | -                               | -                       | -                              | -               | -                                | survey not returned   |
| Aug-24 | 3 NR    | 10  | 10  | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              | Fantastic people, brilliant workmen. Thank you so very much.  |
| Aug-24 | 11 WA   | 10  | 10  | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              | Liam explained what he was going to do each day, all the lads were brilliant, nothing was too much trouble for them, asking if there was anything else.   |
| Sep-24 | 58 SS   | 10  | 10  | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              | Polite, respectful, tidy.   |
| Sep-24 | 60 NS   | -   | -   | -                               | -                       | -                              | -               | -                                | survey not returned   |
| Sep-24 | 27 RR   | 10  | 10  | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              |   |
| Sep-24 | 9 OR    | -   | -   | -                               | -                       | -                              | -               | -                                | survey not returned   |
| Sep-24 | 5 SC    | 10  | 10  | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              | Excellent workmanship, very polite and job done to excellent standard.  |
| Sep-24 | 47 LG   | 10  | 10  | 10                              | 10                      | 10                             | 10              | Yes                              | The bathroom looks gorgeous. The lads were very professional, lovely to speak to, listened to what you wanted. An excellent job by all involved.  |
|        |         |   |   |                                 |                         |                                |                 |                                  |   |
|        |         |   |   |                                 |                         |                                |                 |                                  | <b>Comments received via other methods:</b>   |
|        |         |   |   |                                 |                         |                                |                 | Sep-24                           | 23 QA<br>Could not clean myself before I now shower up to 7 times a day   |
|        |         |   |   |                                 |                         |                                |                 | Sep-24                           | 12GC<br>My husband has bone cancer and is terminally ill, he was really struggling with pain, the equipment has helped him so much, we are very grateful, he no longer is panting to get his breath |

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| <b>People Select Committee</b>             |
| <b>Review of Disabled Facilities Grant</b> |
| <b>Outline Scope</b>                       |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Scrutiny Chair (Project Director):</b><br>Cllr Marilyn Surtees  | <b>Contact details:</b><br><a href="mailto:M.Surtees@stockton.gov.uk">M.Surtees@stockton.gov.uk</a>                         |
| <b>Scrutiny Officer (Project Manager):</b><br>Michelle Gunn  | <b>Contact details:</b><br><a href="mailto:michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk">michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk</a><br>01642 524987 |
| <b>Departmental Link Officer:</b><br>Sam Dixon<br>(SBC Housing Regeneration & Investment Manager)  | <b>Contact details:</b><br><a href="mailto:Sam.Dixon@stockton.gov.uk">Sam.Dixon@stockton.gov.uk</a>                         |
| <b>Which of our strategic corporate objectives does this topic address?</b>  |   |
| <p>Disabled Facilities Grant directly supports the following Council plan priority: “To support people to remain safely and independently in their homes for as long as possible” (Council Plan Objective - <i>‘A place where people are healthy, safe and protected from harm’</i>).</p>  |   |
| <b>What are the main issues and overall aim of this review?</b>  |   |
| <p>A Disabled Facilities Grant is a means tested grant provided by the Council to make an individual’s home suitable to their needs. Works may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• widening doors and installing ramps or grab rails</li> <li>• improve access to room and facilities via stairlifts or level access showers</li> <li>• building extensions to accommodate a downstairs bedroom/bathing facilities</li> <li>• adapt heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use</li> </ul> <p>Monies to fund DFG’s is provided to Councils via the Better Care Fund.</p> <p>An individual must occupy the property the grant is applied for as their main residence and intend to occupy the property for the full grant period of 5 years. An individual can also apply if they are a landlord and have a disabled tenant. The Local Authority needs to be satisfied that the work is necessary and appropriate to meet the disabled person’s needs and that the work is reasonable and can be done, depending on the age and condition of the property.</p> <p>Demand for DFGs continue to rise at a time when building costs have significantly increased. The result of this is an increasing number of DFG applications costed above the maximum grant threshold (£30k) and a growing waiting list (in terms of numbers of those waiting for a DFG and time taken from the point of application to DFG works commencing). This impacts on the health and wellbeing of individuals and potentially their ability to remain living independently in their home</p> <p>The significant rise in building costs has resulted in an increasing number of residents needing to make greater financial contribution to the cost of their DFG, specifically in instances where the value of DFG works is above the maximum £30,000 threshold. SBC has adopted measures</p> |   |

to support individuals who do not have the financial means available to contribute to a DFG in the form of discretionary loans with the aim of preventing residents 'falling out' of the system.

This review will explore both current and potential alternative options to ensure the service is delivered in an efficient, effective and customer focused way.

**The Committee will undertake the following key lines of enquiry:**

- What is the customer journey when applying for DFG?
  - How do residents find out about DFG?
  - How is the Occupational Therapist (OT) assessment carried out and how long does this take?
  - What is the process once a referral is made by an OT and passed to the Housing Investment (HI) team?
  - What is current the current waiting list with HI?
  - How long does it take from application to receiving DFG?
  - What is the current waiting list with HVE and external contractors?
  - How are residents kept informed throughout the process?
  - What checks take place to ensure quality of the work once DFG has been received?
  
- Is Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council's current approach to delivering DFG providing enough support to vulnerable residents?
  
- How does SBC's approach compare with other Local Authorities?
  
- Should SBC implement any of the Good Practice Guidance issued by Central Government in 2018.
  
- How many residents are needing to access discretionary funding (financial loan assistance) to make financial contribution to the cost of their DFG?
  
- Are there any other measures that can be taken to assist residents who do not have the financial means available to contribute to their DFG?
  
- How many residents applying don't meet the criteria and what advice/support is provided to those not eligible for any funding for DFG?
  - Are there any Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) organization that provide assistance that is/can be signposted to?

**Who will the Committee be trying to influence as part of its work?**

Council, Cabinet

**Expected duration of review and key milestones:**

10 months (report to Cabinet in March 2025)  
Approve scope and project plan – May 2024  
Receive evidence – May – December 2024  
Draft recommendations – January 2025  
Final Report – February 2025  
Report to Cabinet – March 2025

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| <p><b>What information do we need?</b></p> <p>Existing information (background information, existing reports, legislation, central government documents, etc.):</p> <p>Good practice guidance issued by Central Government (produced on their behalf by produced by 'Foundations'). <a href="https://www-foundations-uk-com-guides/">https://www-foundations-uk-com-guides/</a></p>  |  |
| <p>Who can provide us with further relevant evidence? (Cabinet Member, officer, service user, general public, expert witness, etc.)</p>  | <p>What specific areas do we want them to cover when they give evidence?</p>   |
| <p>Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council Officers</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Background information and evidence relating to key lines of enquiries from:</li> <li>• Housing</li> <li>• Integrated Early Intervention &amp; Prevention</li> <li>• Building Services</li> </ul> |
| <p>Representative from other Councils</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do they provide DFG/Is there anything we could learn?</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Representatives from VCSE - for example Five Lamps, disability support groups?</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Five Lamps experience as service provider</li> <li>• Disability Groups experience with access/using service</li> <li>• Age Concern UK</li> </ul>  |
| <p>Stockton &amp; District Information &amp; Advice Service</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What other support are residents being signposted to</li> </ul>   |
| <p><b>How will this information be gathered? (eg. financial baselining and analysis, benchmarking, site visits, face-to-face questioning, telephone survey, survey)</b></p> <p>Committee meetings, reports, desktop research, benchmarking, consultation with VCSE</p>   |  |
| <p><b>Communities powering our futures: How will key partners and the public be involved in the review?</b></p> <p>Engagement with groups that may have or may in the future access disabled facilities grant including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Previous applicants</li> <li>• Making it Real Board</li> <li>• Community Partnerships</li> <li>• Viewpoint</li> <li>• Parent/Carer Forum</li> <li>• Teesside &amp; District Society for the Blind</li> <li>• BMBF</li> </ul> |  |

Engagement will include not only asking for their experience but also for solutions and, dependent on feedback received, may result in focus group sessions.

A detailed engagement plan will be developed to plan this work

**How will the review help the Council meet the Public Sector Equality Duty?**

The Equality Act 2010 protects everyone from discrimination on grounds of nine Protected Characteristics (including – but not limited to – age, gender, disability, ethnicity), and advance equality of opportunity for those with Protected Characteristics. Public bodies must have due regard to the need to encourage people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

**How will the review contribute towards the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, or the implementation of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy?**

Stockton Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA):

Vulnerable Groups - the review outcomes will support the JSNA key issue that people with physical disabilities should be supported to enable them to live as independently as possible and achieve their full potential.

Stockton-on-Tees Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2019-2023:

All people in Stockton-on-Tees live well and live longer.

All people in Stockton-on-Tees live in healthy places and sustainable communities.

**Provide an initial view as to how this review could lead to efficiencies, improvements and/or transformation:**

DFG's helps the most vulnerable residents with disabilities in the Borough live independently in their own homes for longer, preventing pressures on other council and health services and supporting hospital discharge. The review will consider how SBC can deliver this crucial service in the most effective and efficient way whilst still meeting vulnerable resident's needs. It will also explore whether SBC is offering sufficient support to enable residents secure a DFG in the face of rising building costs.



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| <b>Project Plan</b> |
|---------------------|

| <b>Key Task</b>  | <b>Details/Activities</b>                                       | <b>Date</b>             | <b>Responsibility</b>   |
|--|---|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Scoping of Review</b>                                       | Information gathering   | <b>March/April 2024</b> | Scrutiny Officer<br>Link Officer  |
| <b>Tri-Partite Meeting</b>                                     | Meeting to discuss aims and objectives of review                | <b>10.04.24</b>         | Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer |
| <b>Agree Project Plan</b>                                      | Scope and Project Plan agreed by Committee                      | <b>13.05.24</b>         | Select Committee  |
| <b>Publicity of Review</b>                                     | Determine whether Communications Plan needed                    | <b>TBC</b>              | Link Officer, Scrutiny Officer  |
| <b>Obtaining Evidence</b>                                      | Integrated Early Intervention & Prevention Building Services    | <b>03.06.24</b>         | Select Committee  |
|  | Foundations   | <b>08.07.24</b>         | Select Committee  |
|  | Customer Feedback   | <b>02.09.24</b>         | Select Committee  |
|  |   | <b>07.10.24</b>         | Select Committee  |
|  |   | <b>04.11.24</b>         | Select Committee  |
|  |   | <b>02.12.24</b>         | Select Committee  |
| <b>Members decide recommendations and findings</b>             | Review summary of findings and formulate draft recommendations  | <b>06.01.25</b>         | Select Committee  |
| <b>Circulate Draft Report to Stakeholders</b>                  | Circulation of Report   | <b>TBC</b>              | Scrutiny Officer  |
| <b>Tri-Partite Meeting</b>                                     | Meeting to discuss findings of review and draft recommendations | <b>TBC</b>              | Select Committee Chair and Vice Chair, Cabinet Member(s), Director(s), Scrutiny Officer, Link Officer |
| <b>Final Agreement of Report</b>                               | Approval of final report by Committee                           | <b>03.02.25</b>         | Select Committee, Cabinet Member, Director  |
| <b>Consideration of Report by Executive Scrutiny Committee</b> | Consideration of report   | <b>04.03.25</b>         | Executive Scrutiny Committee  |

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| <b>Report to Cabinet / Approving Body</b> | Presentation of final report with recommendations for approval to Cabinet | <b>13.03.25</b> | Cabinet / Approving Body |
|---|---|-----------------|--------------------------|

## People Select Committee

7 October 2024

### **PROGRESS UPDATE ON PREVIOUSLY AGREED RECOMMENDATIONS – REVIEW OF DISABILITY INCLUSIVE BOROUGH**

#### **Summary**

Members are asked to consider the evidence and assessments of progress contained within the attached Progress Update on the implementation of previously agreed recommendations in relation to the review Disability Inclusive Borough (the Committee's final report can be accessed via the following link: [https://moderngov.stockton.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet/202201201630/Agenda/\\$att41988.doc.pdf](https://moderngov.stockton.gov.uk/Data/Cabinet/202201201630/Agenda/$att41988.doc.pdf))

#### **Detail**

1. Following the Cabinet consideration of scrutiny reports, accepted recommendations are then subject to a monitoring process to track their implementation.
2. Two main types of report are used. Initially this is by means of Action Plans detailing how services will be taking forward agreed recommendations. This is then followed by a Progress Update report approximately 12 months after the relevant Select Committee has agreed the Action Plan (unless requested earlier). Evidence is submitted by the relevant department together with an assessment of progress against all recommendations. Should members of the Select Committee agree, those recommendations which have reached an assessment of '1' are then signed-off as having been completed.
3. If any recommendations remain incomplete, or if the Select Committee does not agree with the view on progress, the Select Committee may ask for a further update.
4. The assessment of progress for each recommendation should be categorised as follows:

|    |   |   |  |
|----|---|---|--|
| 5. | 1 | Achieved (Fully)                          | The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has been fully implemented within the timescale specified.   |
|    | 2 | On Track (but not yet due for completion) | The evidence provided shows that implementation of the recommendation is on track but the timescale specified has not expired.   |
|    | 3 | Slipped                                   | The evidence shows that progress on implementation has slipped.<br><br>An anticipated date by which the recommendation is expected to become achieved should be advised and the reasons for the delay. |
|    | 4 | Not Achieved                              | The evidence provided shows that the recommendation has not been fully achieved.<br><br>An explanation for non achievement of the recommendation would be provided.                                    |

To further strengthen the monitoring process, from August 2020, the Progress Update report will also include references on the evidence of impact for each recommendation.

6. For Progress Update reports following the completion of a review, the relevant Link Officer(s) will be in attendance.
7. **Appendix 1** (Review of Disability Inclusive Borough) sets out the outstanding recommendations for this Committee. Members are asked to review the update and indicate whether they agree with the assessments of progress.

**Name of Contact Officer:** Michelle Gunn  
**Post Title:** Scrutiny Officer  
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**Email Address:** [michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:michelle.gunn@stockton.gov.uk)

## APPENDIX 1

### PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Disability Inclusive Borough

| SCRUTINY MONITORING – PROGRESS UPDATE |                                     |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <b>Review:</b>                        | <b>Disability Inclusive Borough</b> |
| <b>Link Officer/s:</b>                | <b>Margie Stewart-Piercy</b>        |
| <b>Action Plan Agreed:</b>            | <b>November 2021</b>                |

Updates on the progress of actions in relation to agreed recommendations from previous scrutiny reviews are required approximately 12 months after the relevant Select Committee has agreed the Action Plan. Progress updates must be detailed, evidencing what has taken place regarding each recommendation – a grade assessing progress should then be given (see end of document for grading explanation). Any evidence on the impact of the actions undertaken should also be recorded for each recommendation.

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| <b>Recommendation 11:</b>            | <b>That lessons learnt from the upcoming refurbishment of the junior/toddlers play area at Preston Park be used to inform future play provision designs with respect to inclusion and accessibility.</b>   |
| Responsibility:                      | Keith Mathews  |
| Date:                                | 2023   |
| Agreed Action:                       | Meetings held with members of the SEND group, both on site at Preston Park and site visit to Stewarts Park.<br>Design brief to be rewritten based on information gathered.   |
| Agreed Measure:                      | Success<br>All future play provision will consider the learning from Preston Park  |
| Evidence of Progress (January 2023): | <p>A design brief has been prepared for the refurbishment of the junior/toddlers play area at Preston Park which highlights the need to create a space, and provide a range of play equipment, which is accessible to a wide range of users.</p> <p>However, the Preston Park scheme will not be delivered until 2023, so while it will help to inform the future development of other play areas in the Borough, there are a number of other schemes where the Council can ensure that inclusion and accessibility are key considerations in the design process of other play areas.</p> <p>Key actions to date include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A requirement that play area designers / suppliers provide an inclusivity and accessibility statement in relation to all items of play equipment (not that the Council would require all equipment to be accessible to all, but that on a given site there is an appropriate range of equipment and spaces to meet the needs of a wide range of users)</li> </ul> |

## APPENDIX 1

### PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Disability Inclusive Borough

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactively involving members of the Stockton Parent Carer Forum (SPCF) at the early stages in the development of a number of play areas projects, e.g. in November/December 2022 they have been invited to comment on proposals for a scheme at Victoria Recreation Ground, Thornaby, and members of SPCF will also be invited to comment on the design brief for improvements to the play area at Harold Wilson Recreation Ground, Thornaby.</li> <li>• Exploring ways in which the Council can maintain an on-going dialogue with the SPCP with the suggested aim of:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ developing some broad design principles which we might apply to all schemes going forward</li> <li>○ learning lessons from a range of schemes and using that learning to inform future projects</li> <li>○ ensuring parents, carers and their children have opportunities to input the design of future schemes</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| Assessment of Progress (January 2023):<br>(include explanation if required) | <b>2 – On Track</b>   |
| Evidence of Impact (January 2023):  | <p>It is too early to assess the success of the above actions, but there has been a very positive response from the Stockton Parent Carer Forum to date and a willingness to input to this work in the future.</p> <p>The Town Centres Team are working with colleagues and appointed professional consultants in designing new play equipment in Preston Park and Stockton Waterfront to be accessible and inclusive where possible.</p>   |
| Evidence of Progress (December 2023):                                       | <p>A number of schemes have now been assessed by the Parent Carers Forum (PCF) as part of the design and implementation journey. These include the proposed play areas for Elmwood Community Centre, Hardwick Green, the extension of Redbrook Park and the extension of Harold Wilson Play Area.</p> <p>Each design brief sent to potential contractors now includes a requirement to demonstrate how accessibility and inclusion has been factored into a design, is afforded weighting, and is considered by the PCF.</p> <p>On-site construction has not commenced at any of these sites yet, Hardwick and Elmwood are still subject to planning approval, and orders have been placed with contractors for both Harold Wilson and Redbrook play areas.</p>   |
| Assessment of Progress (December 2023):                                     | <b>2- On Track</b>  |

## APPENDIX 1

### PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Disability Inclusive Borough

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| (include explanation if required)  | <p>The PCF have undertaken an assessment of each play area scheme and have provided feedback to Council officers. This feedback is considered along with other factors and a decision made accordingly.</p> <p>The PCF are delighted to be involved and their feedback is very constructive and helpful. As things stand, they are happy with the process and there is no requirement for modification.</p>   |
| Evidence of Impact (December 2023):                                      | It is only when the play areas have been established or extended that we will be able to undertake any assessment of how successful they have been with regards to accessibility and inclusivity. Again, Council officers will work with the PCF to establish criteria for measuring success.   |
| Evidence of Progress (April 2024):                                       | <p>Two recent schemes that were assessed for inclusivity and accessibility by the Parent Carers Forum (PCF) have now been implemented: Harold Wilson play area and Redbrook Park play area. In addition the PCF commented on the draft designs for the refurbishment of the Ropner Park play area. in in respect to.</p> <p>The PCF also accepted an invitation to put forward their inclusivity and accessibility as part of a Scrutiny Review of Outdoor Play Provision, currently being undertaken by the Crime &amp; Disorder Select Committee.</p> |
| Assessment of Progress (April 2024): (include explanation if required)   | <p><b>2 – On Track</b></p> <p>On the basis that lessons are being learnt through the development of play areas other than Preston Park. The scheme for that particular site will now not be delivered until 2024/25.</p>  |
| Evidence of Impact (April 2024):   | Further work needs to be done to review completed projects for inclusivity and accessibility, but feedback suggests these play areas have been very well-received by users and have delivered an uplift in play value.  |
| Evidence of Progress (October 2024):                                     | In the summer of 2024 several specialist play companies were invited to submit designs for the refurbishment of the play area at Preston Park. The brief stated the need for improved accessibility, whilst acknowledging that the limited budget available may mean that there would be a requirement for compromise.  |
| Assessment of Progress (October 2024): (include explanation if required) | <p><b>1 – Fully Achieved</b> Several designs were submitted by the various play area providers and evaluated by officers. Whilst the equipment itself was generally assessed as being accessible and inclusive, there are limitations since the current budget will not allow for the necessary access infrastructure works.</p>  |
| Evidence of Impact (October 2024):                                       | The process that the Council has undertaken in reviewing accessibility and inclusivity has been a positive and successful one. All new play areas are being evaluated on this basis amongst a range of criteria.  |

**APPENDIX 1**  
**PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Disability Inclusive Borough**

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|  | As stated above, the Preston Park scheme will deliver a more inclusive play environment but not achieve the levels of accessibility originally envisaged. However, the Council has been seeking input from the Stockton Parent Carer Forum to ensure the planned play area at Stockton Waterfront is highly inclusive and accessible. |
|--|---|

|   |                            |                      |                     |                          |
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| <b>Assessment of Progress Gradings:</b> | <b>1</b><br>Fully Achieved | <b>2</b><br>On-Track | <b>3</b><br>Slipped | <b>4</b><br>Not Achieved |
|---|----------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|



## People Select Committee – Work Programme 2024- 2025

| Date ( <u>4pm unless stated</u> ) | Topic   | Attendance  |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Monday 8 April 2024</b>        | <p>Monitoring: Initial Progress Update - Scrutiny Review of Home Energy Efficiency and Green Jobs for the Future</p> <p>Monitoring: Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Disability Inclusive Borough</p>   | <p>Neil Mitchell/Julie Marsden</p> <p>Jane Webb / Margie Stewart-Piercy</p> |
| <b>Monday 13 May 2024</b>         | <p>Monitoring: Action Plan Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living Response</p> <p>Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Draft) Scope and Project Plan</li> <li>• Background Presentation</li> </ul> | <p>Haleem Ghafoor/Margie Stewart-Piercy</p> <p>Sam Dixon</p>                |
| <b>Monday 3 June 2024</b>         | <p>Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence Gathering – SBC Policy and Government guidance for Local Authorities</li> </ul>   | Sam Dixon   |
| <b>Monday 8 July 2024</b>         | <p>Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence Gathering – regional and national comparisons</li> </ul>  | Sam Dixon / Rachel Russell, Foundations                                     |
| <b>Monday 2 September 2024</b>    | <p>Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence Gathering – SBC Occupational Therapy and Buildings Services Processes</li> </ul>  | Sam Dixon / Kris Saltikov / Chris Donnison                                  |
| <b>Monday 7 October 2024</b>      | <p>Monitoring: Progress Update – Scrutiny Review of Disability Inclusive Borough</p> <p>Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities Grant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence Gathering – Customer Feedback</li> </ul>                 | <p>Haleem Ghafoor</p> <p>Sam Dixon / Parent &amp; Carer Forum</p>           |

## People Select Committee – Work Programme 2024- 2025

| <b>Date (4pm unless stated)</b>                 | <b>Topic</b>  | <b>Attendance</b>   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>Monday 4<br/>November 2024</b>               | Monitoring: Progress Update –<br>Scrutiny Review of Cost of Living<br>Response<br><br>Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities<br>Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence Gathering – update<br/>                             from Foundations visit</li> </ul> | Haleem Ghafoor<br><br><br>Sam Dixon                                     |
| <b>Tuesday 2<br/>December 2024</b>              | Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities<br>Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evidence Gathering</li> </ul>  | Sam Dixon   |
| <b>Monday 6 January<br/>2025<br/>(Informal)</b> | Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities<br>Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summary of Evidence / Draft<br/>                             Recommendations</li> </ul>  | Sam Dixon   |
| <b>Monday 3<br/>February 2025</b>               | Scrutiny Review of Disabled Facilities<br>Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Draft) Final Report</li> </ul>  | Pauline Beall/ Nigel Cooke/<br>Carolyn Nice/ Sam Dixon/<br>Jane Edmends |
| <b>Monday 3 March<br/>2025</b>                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>   |   |