

APPENDIX 1

PROGRESS UPDATE: Review of Disabled Facilities Grants

SCRUTINY MONITORING – PROGRESS UPDATE	
Review:	Disabled Facilities Grants
Link Officer/s:	Sam Dixon
Action Plan Agreed:	November 2025

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.

Recommendation 1:	In relation to the recent announcement from the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government regarding extra funding for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG), officers be requested to monitor the impact of this extra funding on the Council's waiting list; updates to be provided to the Select Committee as part of the monitoring of the review recommendations.
Responsibility:	Sam Dixon
Date:	April 2025 / Ongoing
Agreed Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Waiting List Numbers - Waiting List Numbers are recorded every month in our Business Unit Plan, will be reported back to Committee • Increase capacity in Team – Two new Adaptation Housing Surveyors have been recruited to increase capacity in delivery of DFG's – Expected start dates are mid April 2025
Agreed Success Measure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction of waiting list • New staff in post
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of Sept 2025, 121 people are currently on the DFG Current Waiting List New staff are now in post
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully Achieved •
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The DFG waiting List has reduced by over 200 cases compared to the figures from June 2023.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Waiting List is monitored monthly within the Housing and a Fair Stockton-on-Tees Service Plan Two new staff in post who commenced in April 2025 Waiting Times reduced from 24-30 months to 12-18 months at the end of Sept 25
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Recommendation 2:	Officers explore the potential to engage with Teesside University to produce a study on the impact of DFG's on people lives in the Borough and how long this potentially allows them to remain living in their own home
Responsibility:	Sam Dixon
Date:	Initial feedback April 2025
Agreed Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with University's – Awaiting date from Teesside University to discuss whether this would be something that they would be able to assist with, originally in diary for 25th February however this was cancelled by the uni. Would like feedback from Committee to ensure I have scope of work correct.
Agreed Success Measure:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interest from Universities and the appetite for one to undertake this Report produced
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engagement with Foundations (National Body for DFG's) advised work was ongoing with regards to this subject. Separate report attached
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On track / Fully Achieved
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate report attached Is the attached report sufficient for the People Committee or do they want me to continue to progress via the university study route?

Recommendation 3:	Housing Investment & Migration Support team work with Planning to explore building upon the requirements for accessibility/adaptability in new build properties when the Local Plan is next updated and, prior to this, lobby government to make the relevant Building Regulations mandatory.
Responsibility:	Sam Dixon & Simon Grundy
Date:	July 2025
Agreed Action:	Internal Meeting with Planning

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Agreed Measure: Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of current policies and whether any changes can be implemented Letter to be sent to central government
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discussions ongoing in line with updating Local Plan however this may be a number of years before this may come into effect
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On Track
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meetings ongoing

Recommendation 4:	The Leader and Chief Executive support officers in their ongoing discussions with Registered Provider's to explore their current and future plans for adaptations and also explore joint working to support Registered Providers to take up their responsibility, to ease pressure on the waiting list.
Responsibility:	Jane Edmends
Date:	June for Thirteen
Agreed Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with Thirteen – Initial meetings with Thirteen (as the main RP in Stockton) have taken place at an Assistant Director level and are progressing positively. Future meetings scheduled with Thirteen to ensure discussions continue to move forward positively. Meet with all other RP's
Agreed Measure: Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding of each of the RP's adaptation policy Understanding of which adaptations each RP will undertake themselves
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thirteen meetings drawing to a close Meetings with other RP's to follow
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On Track
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Separate report attached

Recommendation 5:	Officers explore with Registered Providers a register of adapted properties within the Borough which details the type of adaptations, to assist the Nomination and Lettings Team in advertising and matching individuals with appropriate properties.
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Responsibility:	Jane Edmonds
Date:	June 2025 for Thirteen October 2025 for other RP's
Agreed Action:	Meet with RP's – tied into 4 above, this discussion will take place with all RPs to see if they would share this information with the Council we can explore the potential of a setting up a register.
Agreed Measure:	Success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings with all RP's • Interest from RP's
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relates to recommendation 4 above • Thirteen conversation's progressing first as they are the largest RP in Stockton • Other RP discussion will follow
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Track
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meetings held with Thirteen and are progressing well

Recommendation 6:	<p>Communication to residents and applicants be improved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reviewing and updating information on SBC website and explore whether the Foundations template and link to adaptmyhome.com will give residents sufficient information to decide whether to apply for an assessment/DFG. - exploring introducing a system to ensure clear and consistent communications to keep applicants informed of their position in the process at regular intervals to reduce misunderstandings and manage expectations. - sharing key information of DFG scheme available with external stakeholders to ensure potential applicants are aware of support available. - ensuring an appropriate route for residents to communicate with the Housing Investment & Migration Support team is in place. - a singular customer feedback survey covering all processes and services involved in a DFG is developed, to ensure this is only collected once.
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Responsibility:	Sam Dixon
Date:	April – June 2025
Agreed Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak to SBC Digital Team • Review current letters and look to see how these can be improved – Leaflets for customers produced to show where they are in within the DFG process and updated letters drafted so they can be informed every 3-6 months. These leaflets have been provided to the Parents and Carers Forum and initial feedback has been received. • Engage with External Agencies – engage initially with Parent and Carers forum to get an initial steer on where to start • Review current resident contact information and pathway • Produce Single Customer Feedback form – New feedback form current under construction and can be shared with Committee
Agreed Measure:	<p>Success</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFG Form available online • Letters updated • Information sent to customers 3-6 monthly • Wider public knowledge of DFG • New pathway established for residents • New form so residents only have to complete one form for the whole DFG process
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion still ongoing to enable DFG to be complete online • Letters updated April 2025 • Customers updated every 3 months from April 2025 • Pathway established for residents which shows where they are in the process and the time they are expected to wait in each stage • DFG Application forms simplified in April 2025
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Track
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customers aware at the very start of the process and are updated every 3 months • Reduction in complaints
Recommendation 7:	Officers explore streamlining processes to understand their impact and benefit of implementing:

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – referral form used by the Occupational Therapy Team be reviewed to ensure it captures all relevant information to enabled to make a decision on eligible works. – removing the requirement for Occupational Therapist to approve the scheme of works for straightforward cases – allowing electronic forms to be uploaded – requiring only two quotes rather than three for the application
Responsibility:	Sam Dixon
Date:	April – June 2025
Agreed Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral form to be reviewed – Referral form has been reviewed and updated and share with OT colleagues for comment • Investigate whether this would be possible • Engage with SBC internal Digital Team • Review with Procurement team
Agreed Measure: Success	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated Referral Form • Removal or review of current process • Introduction of new Digital form • Acceptance that 2 quotes is acceptable
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Referral Form Updated April 2025 • Current DFG software package due to expire, currently exploring with the Digital team a new software package which has been specifically built for DFG's via Foundations • Looking at an 'away day' with the OT Team and Housing Investment to share understand and confirm the DFG process – potentially Jan 2026 • Procurement
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Track
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New software potentially to go live Jan 2026 whereby OT's will be able to input referral's directly into this system

Recommendation 8:	Further examination of if/how the Home Improvement Agency can be utilised to provide early help and prevention, to ease budgetary pressure for DFG
Responsibility:	Sam Dixon
Date:	August 2025

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Agreed Action:	Engage with HIA team to explore options available
Agreed Measure: Success	HIA able to complement DFG
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OT now sits in First Contact so is actively reviewing and distributing resident requests therefore quickening up the referral process, providing DFG / HIA advice and waiting times right at the beginning of the process to ensure expectations are handled right from the start.
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On Track
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OT Team Managers do not have to filter referrals themselves, and this is being done by the OT in First Contact

Recommendation 9:	Use of flat pack extensions is explored in more detail to see if they would provide a viable and cost-effective option.
Responsibility:	Sam Dixon
Date:	July 2025
Agreed Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage with flat pack providers Engage with Planning and Building Control
Agreed Measure: Success	Whether viable or not
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is being discussed on the back of the Local Plan update however planning and building control need specific construction and material information to advise whether this would be acceptable Foundations have recently covered this subject during at one of their seminars in Birmingham
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Slipped
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	

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Recommendation 10:	Following correspondence from the Royal British Legion to the Council, officers review whether it is possible for military compensation to be exempt from the means test for DFG's and report back
Responsibility:	Sam Dixon
Date:	June 2025
Agreed Action:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feed into overall arching request of Council - Jonanthan Nertney is leading on a council wide request for this to be exempt from all SBC means tests • Review previous Data- currently looking at previous years data to see how many residents
Agreed Success Measure:	Review of current and council wide policies
Evidence of Progress (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information showed that over the past 3 years we did not have anybody that this affected DFG wise • Therefore, changing this would have a minimal impact on DFG delivery. • OT referral form updated to include whether a client is a current serviceperson or a veterans so this can be picked up early in the process • Council wide change so waiting for final sign off
Assessment of Progress (November 2025): (include explanation if required)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On Track
Evidence of Impact (November 2025):	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring in place from DFG aspect • Council wide change so awaiting final sign off

Assessment of Progress Gradings:	1	2	3	4
	Fully Achieved	On-Track	Slipped	Not Achieved