

Chichester District Council

THE CABINET

3 July 2018

Disabled Facilities Grants – Appointment of County Adaptations Manager

1. Contacts

Report Author

Louise Rudziak – Director of Housing & Communities

Telephone: 01243 521064 E-mail: lrudziak@chichester.gov.uk

Cabinet Member

Jane Kilby - Cabinet Member for Housing Services

Telephone: 01243 773494 E-mail: jkilby@chichester.gov.uk

2. Recommendation

2.1 That a County Adaptations Manager be appointed funded equally by all district and borough councils in West Sussex from their Disabled Facilities Grant funding.

3. Background

- 3.1 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) provide funding to older and disabled people in owner-occupied, privately rented and registered provider properties, to make changes to their home environment, such as the installation of showers, stair lifts and ramps, to help them live as independently and safely as possible.
- 3.2 Since the introduction of the Better Care Fund (BCF) in 2015, capital funding for DFGs is paid directly to upper tier authorities (ie WSCC), while the statutory responsibility continues to sit with the Local Housing Authority (LHA) (ie CDC). Currently, however, upper tier authorities must allocate funding to their respective housing authorities based on perceived need and in line with the “Integration and BCF planning requirements 2017-19”.
- 3.3 The government’s expectation around BCF policy is that public services are expected to integrate health and social care to deliver better outcomes for the service users. In response to this in 2016 West Sussex County Council, all of the West Sussex District and Borough councils and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) within West Sussex, agreed to investigate how to improve the DFG process so that people could remain independent in their own homes for longer.
- 3.4 A more flexible policy on DFGs was adopted by the Council in September 2017 to allow more innovative use of discretionary funds and to cut down on bureaucracy for customers.

- 3.5 The steering group of the project has seen improvements in delivery times and flexibility, however, in order to fully embed a county wide service and ensure the most efficient use of a pooled budget, it has been agreed that a dedicated resource is necessary.
- 3.6 The report to the County Chief Executive's Board in the appendix to this report gives more details.

4. Outcomes to be achieved

- 4.1 Working together with partners to deliver a flexible and efficient service to customers across the county, to allow people to stay in their homes for longer.
- 4.2 Speed up delivery of adaptations to help and improve the health and well-being of disabled people.
- 4.3 A single pooled budget and common policies across the county.

5 Proposal

- 5.1 The proposal is to appoint a dedicated County Adaptations Manager to oversee the county-wide service and manage the pooled budget.

6 Alternatives that have been considered

- 6.1 Keep the status quo. Outcomes of the project to date have identified that this would not be in the best interests of the customer. There is an expectation from the government that health and social care should become more integrated.
- 6.2 Another alternative could be to proceed with the project without a dedicated resource. However, it is recommended by the steering group and Chief Executives that in order to create a more efficient and consistent approach a single point of contact is desirable.

7 Resource and legal implications

- 7.1 The cost of appointing a County Adaptations Manager, with on costs, expenses and some administrative support, is estimated to be £100k per annum. This would be top sliced from the DFG budget. The Council's share of this would in effect, therefore, be £14,000 taken from our annual DFG funding from the BCF.
- 7.2 All authorities in the partnership will be equally liable for any redundancy costs.
- 7.3 A funding agreement will be drawn up for each partner to sign.

8 Consultation

- 8.1 All Chief Executives and Leaders in West Sussex have been consulted (see appendix) along with the steering group for the project and the West Sussex

adaptations group and they support this proposal.

9 Community impact and corporate risks

- 9.1 Partners not agreeing on policy approach to delivering the DFG service. This project already has the support of the Chief Executives and Leaders of the District & Borough councils in West Sussex, the CCGs and the Strategic Commissioning Board.
- 9.2 The statutory responsibilities for DFGs rest with the LHAs (District and Borough councils). A Service Level Agreement / Partnership Agreement and any county wide policy on DFGs will need to be signed by all partners to protect the financial and legal position of the local housing authority. For Chichester, the SLA will need to be approved by Council.
- 9.3 The impact on the community is intended to be positive as the process for applying for a DFG will be less onerous and delivery will be speeded up.
- 9.4 In order to ensure there is adequate funding within the BCF for mandatory grants they must take priority for funding and any discretionary grant will, therefore, be subject to budgetary checks and constraints.

10 Other Implications

	Yes	No
Crime & Disorder:		x
Climate Change and Biodiversity:		x
Human Rights and Equality Impact: Positive impact on disabled people	x	
Safeguarding and Early Help: Positive impact on disabled people	x	
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR):		x

11 Appendices

- 11.1 Report to Chief Executives Board

12 Background Papers

None.