

# Executive Committee

No Direct Ward Relevance

7 October 2009

## FINANCIAL REPORT ON THE DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT AND THE LIFETIME GRANT

(Report of the Director of Housing, Leisure and Customer Services)

### 1. Summary of Proposals

- 1) To report on the actual expenditure and commitment for the Disabled Facilities Grant (2009/10) and the Lifetime Grant (2009/10) provided to enable elderly or disabled home owners in the Borough to live independently.
- 2) To request a re-allocation of £50,000 funding from the Lifetime Grant budget to the Disabled Facilities Grant budget.

### 2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that

- 1) **subject to any comments, the contents of the report relating to budget spend for the Disabled Facilities Grant and Lifetime Grant for 2009/10 be noted; and**

**RECOMMEND** that

- 2) **a re-allocation of funding in the sum of £50,000 from the existing Lifetime Grant capital funding for 2009/10, to the Disabled Facilities Grant funding be approved.**

### 3. Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Sustainability Implications

#### Financial

- 3.1 The Council has the authority to secure the repayment of a Lifetime Grant in full and without interest by making a charge on the property for which the grant has been allocated.
- 3.2 The Council has the authority to secure the repayment of the Disabled Facilities Grant without interest but only if the property is sold within 10 years of the adaptations being carried out and where the grant is in excess of £5000 and up to the value of £15,000 with the maximum amount repayable being £10,000.

### Legal

- 3.3 Under the Housing Grants, Construction and Registration Act 1996 the Disabled Facilities Grant is a mandatory grant for people with disabilities for essential adaptations to give better freedom of movement into and around their home and to access essential facilities within it.
- 3.4 Under the Regulatory Reform Order 2002, the Council has discretionary powers to provide grants to private homeowners for essential repairs to their property.

### Policy

- 3.5 The Council policy to secure the repayment of the Disabled Facilities Grant was agreed at Full Council on 19 January 2009.
- 3.6 Housing Assistance Policy for Lifetime Grants was agreed at Full Council on the 30 January 2006.
- 3.7 Housing Assistance Policy up-date for Lifetime Grants was agreed at Full Council on 12 March 2007

### Risk

- 3.8 The risk of not funding Disabled Facilities Grant may invite legal claims from customers not in receipt of a Disabled Facilities Grant within 6 months of application, in accordance with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
- 3.9 Any delays in approving Disabled Facilities Grant will have a detrimental affect on customers' health ,safety & well being and will increase the financial burden on both the Health Authorities & Social Care.
- 3.10 The risk of transferring £50,000 from Lifetime Grants to Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) may reduce the amount of money received back in repayments due to DGF repayments only applying to grants over £5000 and below £15,000 (up to a maximum of £10,000) being repayable within ten years of being granted.

### Sustainability / Environmental

- 3.11 By approving a Disabled Facilities Grant, we enable clients to remain in their own homes thereby reducing the pressure on the Council's housing waiting list and Hospital & Social Care Services.

#### **4. Background**

- 4.1 The Disabled Facilities Grant is a mandatory grant for people with disabilities for essential adaptations to give better freedom of movement into and around their home and to access essential facilities within it. Where necessary, it can also provide the essential facilities themselves. The grant works are based on an assessment of the client's needs carried out by the PCT's Occupational Therapist. The maximum grant is £30,000.
- 4.2 The Lifetime Grant is a discretionary grant for essential repairs, improvements and minor adaptations to a dwelling. It is given in the form of an interest free loan, that is repaid when the ownership of the property changes. The grant is limited up to a maximum of £10,000 per dwelling over a three year period and homeowners must be on a means tested benefit with less than £6,000 in savings to qualify.
- 4.3 The Government has carried out a national review of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) programme. Closely linked with the CLG's National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society the review sets out to improve programme delivery of DFGs, modernise the process, reduce the complexity of the system and reflect the continued pressure on funding.
- 4.4 The Council's current Disabled Facilities Grant programme receives £240,000 from the CLG and £241,380 of the Council's own capital resources.
- 4.5 The Council's own capital Lifetime Grant budget is £234,420.

#### **5. Key Issues**

- 5.1 The Care & Repair Agency administers the provision of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and Lifetime Grant (LTG) and promotes independent living by enabling home owners to live in their own home for as long as possible by arranging adaptations, repairs, safety and security.
- 5.2 There is a waiting list of clients for Disabled Facilities Grants, particularly from older people, and all monies for this year have already been committed.
- 5.3 The proportion of older people is growing rapidly in Redditch and it is anticipated that this will greatly increase the demand for Disabled Facilities Grant applications. Between 2006 and 2011, the proportion of people over the age of 65 will increase by 19.7%, represented in real terms by a figure of 2,150. The number of people

aged over 80 is expected to increase by 400, which is a significant figure on its own.

5.4 All requests for adaptations are received from Social Care following an assessment on customer's needs from the PCT's Occupational Therapist. The Occupational Therapist gives the request a priority rating, i.e. Category 1, 2 & 3.

5.5 The Disabled Facilities Grant budget spend at the end of August 2009 was as follows:

<b>DFG Budget</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
Budget	£481,380
Spent	£289,113
Committed approved DFG	£192,267
<b>Balance</b>	<b>£NIL</b>

5.6 The list of ongoing cases waiting for approval for Disabled Grant funding is as follows:

<b>Cases</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Value of Work</b>
Category One	12	£132,500
Category Two	15	£88,000
Category Three	20	£82,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>£302,500</b>

5.7 The Disabled Facilities Grant is fully committed and there is a waiting list of 12 Category One cases with an approximate value of £132,500.

5.8 The Lifetime Grant budget spend at the end of August 2009 was as follows:

<b>LTG Budget</b>	<b>2009/10</b>
Budget	£234,420
Spent	£45,331
Committed approved DFG	£64,261
<b>Balance</b>	<b>£124,828</b>

5.9 In order to reduce the waiting list for DFG applicants, it is recommended that £50,000 should be re-allocated from the Lifetime Grant budget to the Disabled Facilities Grant.

### 6. Other Implications

- Asset Management - None directly.
- Community Safety - More clients with disabilities will remain in their own homes with the provision of adaptations to improve their quality of life and independence.
- Human Resources - None directly.
- Social Exclusion - More clients with disabilities will be able to remain in their own homes, and live independently.

### 7. Lessons Learnt

None directly.

### 8. Background Papers

Housing Assistance Policy for Lifetime Grants was approved by Full Council on the 30 January 2006.

Housing Assistance Policy up-date for Lifetime grants was agreed at Full Council on 12 March 2007.

National Changes for Disabled Facilities was approved by Full Council on the 19 January 2009.

### 9. Consultation

This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers.

### 10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Pam Wilkins, Repairs, Capital and Care and Repair Manager who can be contacted on extension 3896 (e-mail:pam.wilkins@redditchbc.gov.uk ) for more information.

### 11. Appendices

None.