

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET– 4 APRIL 2017
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR (HOUSING AND COMMUNITY)

RELEASE OF CAPITAL FUNDS – DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT AND PRIVATE
SECTOR RENEWAL 2017/18

1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and Private Sector Renewal budget 2017/18 and seeks approval to release this budget throughout 2017/18 as grant/loan applications are approved

2 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 To approve the release of the capital budget of £471,000 for the payment of Disabled Facilities Grants/discretionary grants and loans.

Implications

3 Financial Implication(s)

- 3.1 The expenditure budget of £471,000 is made up of £441,000 set aside for mandatory Disabled Facility Grants and £30,000 for discretionary loans and grants. The government has traditionally grant funded this activity and this grant payment is now distributed via the Better Care Fund.
- 3.1 For any owner occupier who is eligible for a Disabled Facilities Grant, the council places a legal charge on their property for work which costs more than £5,000. This charge is up to a maximum of £10,000 and is placed against the property for ten years from completion of the work.

4 Legal Implication(s)

- 4.1 It is a statutory requirement for the council to administer and fund Disabled Facilities Grants.

5 Climate Change Implication(s)

- 5.1 A great deal of the improvement and private sector renewal grants and loans pay for work which improves the energy efficiency of homes within the Borough – for example replacement doors and windows.
- 5.2 The private sector decent homes budget is being used to fund work which aims to improve the energy efficiency within homes

6 Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 Failure to administer the Disabled Facilities Grant Programme is included in the risk register. Failure to administer the scheme may leave the council open to legal challenge, with financial penalty awarded against the third party. This may also increase the risk of the council facing negative publicity, thus having a detrimental impact on the reputation of the council.

7 Explanation

- 7.1 The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 places a statutory requirement for the council to provide a Disabled Facilities Grants scheme to eligible households. The scheme must operate within guidelines set by government.
- 7.2 The vast majority of applicants are elderly and subject to a statutory means test, before a grant is approved. The council determines the application and whether the works are reasonable and practicable before providing the funding.
- 7.3 People assisted with a grant for this purpose have a disability which makes ordinary living activities difficult and in many cases unsafe. The most common adaptations, paid for by the grant money, include level access showers, stair lifts and/or an external ramp to the property.
- 7.4 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance England & Wales) Order 2002 places an obligation on the council to have a Private Sector Renewal Policy and to make available some form of housing assistance for private sector residents.

8 Equality and Diversity

- 8.1 I confirm that an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is not required in relation to this report.

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Date	6 March 2017

Background papers to be listed (if applicable)