

REPORT TO:	FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 10
DATE OF MEETING:	10th OCTOBER 2019	CATEGORY:
REPORT FROM:	STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (SERVICE DELIVERY)	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	PAUL WHITTINGHAM (01283 595984) paul.whittingham@southderbyshire.gov.uk	DOC:
SUBJECT:	DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS AND ADAPTATIONS TO COUNCIL HOMES UPDATE.	
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the current position regarding expenditure and timescales for the provision of adaptations is noted.
- 1.2 That the extension of the contract for the Technical Officer funded through the Better Care Fund (BCF) is approved.
- 1.3 That the Committee agree to providing the public with further information regarding the availability of Disabled Facilities Grants.
- 1.4 That the possibility of creating an in house "Occupational Therapist " role is explored further as part of the Better Care Fund project.

2.0 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 To inform the Committee of the current position regarding expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants and Council House adaptations.
- 2.2 To inform the Committee of the current position regarding timescales for the completion of adaptations work.
- 2.3 To seek retrospective approval to the extension of the temporary contract for the additional Technical Officer for a further 18 months from July 2019 until February 2021 to support the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) (funded through BCF).

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 The Council is obliged to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) for residents in order to make their homes more accessible. These grants are means tested and paid to cover the costs of adaptations in all tenures except Council tenancies. Adaptations

to Council properties are carried out under the Council's own adaptations policy, which was agreed by Housing and Community Services Committee on 6th June 2019.

3.2 Funding for DFGs is received by the Council as part of the Better Care Fund (BCF), which supports a range of services and functions designed to help people with a disability remain in their own home. Adaptations paid for through the BCF are delivered in partnership with Derbyshire County Council (DCC) and subject to a formal referral from the Occupational Therapy Service. A more detailed report regarding the BCF was received by the Housing and Community Services Committee on 3 October 2019.

3.3 Adaptations to Council properties are funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

3.4 The budget for DFGs for the current year is £1,358,860. This is as a result of accumulated underspends from the previous two financial years.

4.0 A summary of the current position regarding adaptations is set out below:

4.1 Approvals

26 DFG jobs approved 01/04/19–31/08/19 –	Total Cost	£137,300.85
31 Council Adaptations approved Year to date (YTD)		
–	Total Cost	£167,699.10

4.2 Payments

38 DFG jobs paid 01/04/19 to 31/08/19 –	Total Cost	£174,234.09
(This includes £130,851.58 paid for approvals from the previous financial year)		
25 Council Adaptations paid YTD –	Total Cost	£107,854.10

4.3 Pipelines

The Council has already received applications and referrals for a further 29 DFGs at a total value of £180,300 and a further 20 adaptations to Council homes at a total value of £92,000. This “pipeline” along with existing works in progress is unlikely to spend the available budget in this financial year.

4.4 Performance (2019/20)

Whilst performance is generally within targets the adaptations process is complex and involves the Council, DCC and contractors. This can create delays although sometimes changes in the applicant's own circumstances can delay the completion of works. There is the opportunity to fund the recruitment of an Occupational Therapist in order to enhance the current process both in terms of speed and also liaison between customers and their families, the Council and contractors. A summary of performance against timescales is below:

26 standard DFG works completed at an average of 25.9 weeks. The current target is 31 weeks.

1 Major extensive DFG completed within 44 weeks the current target is 55 weeks.

22 standard Council jobs completed at an average of 26.2 weeks, the current target is 33 weeks.

1 Major extensive Council job completed which took a total of 233 weeks due to exceptional circumstances around this application.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The current demand for this service is unlikely to lead to the current financial year's budget for DFGs being spent. The following table lists the funding received and allocated to DFG under BCF and the expenditure incurred over the past three financial years.

	2016.17	2017.18	2018.19
	£	£	£
B/fwd Balance	85,112	468,957	792,552
BCF Grant	615,337	674,829	440,000
DCC 2nd Homes Funding	124,000	0	0
DCLG Funding	0	71,885	88,434
			-
Balance transfer to other BCF projects	0	0	245,680
	-	-	-
Expenditure	355,492	423,119	416,446
Balance c/fwd	468,957	792,552	658,860

- 5.2 The allocation of funding through BCF for 2019/20 is set at £440,000 and an additional sum is likely to be received from DCLG to top up funding of approximately £80,000. Year to date expenditure for 2019/20 is only £42,308 but this is likely to be in excess of £250,000 based on the current pipeline. The Council has no control over demand for this service. Consequently there is always the possibility of an unforeseen increase in applications towards the end of the financial year. Even after taking this into consideration, an underspend of around £90,000 is anticipated against this year's allocation of funding. This will leave a balance of around £1 million in the DFG allocation overall.
- 5.3 As the funding for DFGs has now been amalgamated into a single BCF allocation from DCC it is understood that there is more flexibility as to what this grant can fund provided it is used to support to enable residents to stay in their own homes. A report to the next Committee will, therefore, set out a range of projects and programmes to address this underspend.

6.0 Corporate Implications

Employment Implications

- 6.1 In April 2019 The BCF Board approved the funding for the extension of the Technical Officer post for a further 18 months from July 2019 at its current salary. This post will be reviewed again towards the end of the fixed term.
- 6.2 At the end of the extended fixed-term contract the employee having over two years continuous service will be entitled to a redundancy payment should the contract not be renewed and if they are current members of the Local Government Pension Scheme and are aged 55 or over that they are entitled to immediate access to their pension. If they are able to access their pension, then the Council will have to pay an additional cost for the impact on the pension fund.

- 6.3 The Fixed-Term (Prevention of Less Favourable Treatment) Regulations 2002 ensure that fixed-term employees are not treated less favourably than comparable permanent employees. The terms and conditions provided are in line with the NJC for Local Government Services and therefore the same as comparable permanent employees.
- 6.4 These Regulations also provide that the continued renewal of fixed-term contracts that result in four years continuous service for an employee should be on a permanent contract unless it can be objectively justified to remain on a fixed-term basis. It is noted that this extension is directly linked to funding arrangements in place and this is the justification provided for continuing a fixed-term contract basis. As noted above, the Council does employ them on comparable employment terms and will provide redundancy payments at the end of the fixed-term contract for an employee with two years continuous service.

Legal Implications

- 6.5 There are no direct legal implications of this report.

Corporate Plan Implications

- 6.6 This report directly addresses Corporate Plan reference; PE1. "Provide an efficient and well targeted adaptation service (including Disabled Facilities Grants) and make better use of previously adapted dwellings"

Risk Impact

- 6.7 The delivery of services covered by this report directly impact on the Service Delivery Risk : SD7 - Insufficient supply of affordable homes to meet Council needs relating to allocations and homelessness.
- 6.8 The Council is required to provide assurances to Derbyshire County Council (DCC) though the approval of quarterly assurance plans at BCF Board. There is a risk that the significant amount of accrued underspend may be revoked and redistributed under s75 if the Council failed to spend the allocation or provided the required assurances that the funding will be spent.
- 6.9 In mitigation the Council meets regularly with DCC to update it on progress on the delivery of projects and programmes funded by the BCF and there has been no indication given, to date, to officers that DCC intends to request a return of this fund given the outcomes that the Council is delivering.
- 6.10

7.0 Community Impact

Consultation

- 7.1 18 private customer questionnaires returned which have rated the service as either good or excellent.
- 7.2 15 Council customer questionnaires returned which have all rated the service as good or excellent.

Equality and Diversity Impact

- 7.3 The delivery of services discussed in this report contribute directly to the delivery of the Council's commitment to equality as set out in its Equality Statement.

Social Value Impact

- 7.4 The delivery of services covered by this report directly assist in delivering the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy;" Older people, people with dementia and other long-term conditions and their carers have good quality of life, retain their independence for as long as possible, and receive the support they need at the end of their lives"

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.5 There are no direct environmental sustainability implications of this report.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 Current performance is generally within the Council's targets
- 8.2 The current budget for DFGs may exceed overall demand for Disabled Facilities Grants.
- 8.3 There may be a lack of awareness about DFGs amongst the general public and partner agencies.
- 8.4 There is scope for further improvement to the service through the recruitment of an in-house Occupational Therapist Post. This would be the subject of a future report.

9.0 Background Papers

Notes:

- * Category – Please see the Committee Terms Of Reference in [Responsibility for Functions - Committees](#). This shows which committee is responsible for each function and whether it has delegated authority to make a decision, or needs to refer it elsewhere with a recommendation.
- ** Open/Exempt - All reports should be considered in the open section of the meeting, unless it is likely that exempt information would be disclosed. Please see the [Access to Information Procedure Rules](#) for more guidance.
- *** Committee Terms Of Reference in [Responsibility for Functions - Committees](#).

