
REPORT TO:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 5
DATE OF MEETING:	20th APRIL 2021	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	ALLISON THOMAS - STRATEGIC DIRECTOR (SERVICE DELIVERY)	OPEN:
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SUBJECT:	CAPITAL AND REVENUE GRANTS AWARD - DFG	
WARDS AFFECTED:	ALL WARDS	TERMS OF REFERENCE:

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That the Committee endorses the award of grant funding, totalling £67,330, to the West Mercia Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) to deliver a digital inclusion service to disabled residents living in privately owned or rented housing.
- 1.2 That the Committee endorses the award of grant funding, totalling £94,943, to the South Derbyshire Community Voluntary Service (CVS) to deliver a handyperson help at home and holistic advice service to older, vulnerable, and disabled residents living in privately owned or rented housing.
- 1.3 That the Committee grants delegated authority to the Strategic Director - Service Delivery, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to use the remainder of the £350,000 funding to enhance the services in 1.1 and 1.2 on the same terms as agreed, if demand for these services outstrips the supply of equipment available.

2.0 Purpose of the Report

- 2.1 To update the Committee about the Disabled Facilities Capital and Revenue Grant Funding Programme (the Programme), as previously agreed by this Committee in November 2019, and inform the Committee about the process used to assess and score the tenders received, and the outcome of these assessments.
- 2.2 To seek approval to award the requested grant funding to the successful tenderers.
- 2.3 To update the Committee on the budget position of the Programme.
- 2.4 To seek approval to delegate authority to the Strategic Director - Service Delivery, in consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to utilise the remainder of the £350,000 budget allocation to expand the services that have been successfully

awarded funding, should this be required on the same basis as agreed. Any departure from these terms would be reported to Committee.

3.0 Executive Summary

- 3.1 The funding available to support the delivery of the Programme is allocated from the surplus Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) budget, otherwise known as the Better Care Fund (BCF). A total of £350,000 was allocated to the Programme by this Committee in November 2019.
- 3.2 A competitive tender process was opened for a period of ten weeks, from the 17 November 2020 to 29 January 2021. A total of two bids were received, one from the CAB to deliver digital inclusion services to disabled residents living in privately owned or rented housing, and one from the CVS to deliver a handyperson and holistic advice service to vulnerable, older, and disabled residents living in privately owned or rented housing.
- 3.3 The proposals were both comprehensively assessed and scored using the publicised mechanism for the assessment of tenders and both are considered by officers to meet the minimum thresholds required for funding to be awarded through the Programme.
- 3.4 There is adequate funding available to support both of the proposals in their entirety, with £11,610 of revenue funding and £117,320 capital funding remaining after allocating the requested amounts to the two proposals.
- 3.5 It is, therefore, recommended that the Committee awards the full amount of funding requested to both the proposals.
- 3.6 It is acknowledged that the delivery of both schemes may be restricted due to the level of demand exceeding the amount of equipment available. It is for this reason that the Committee is asked to approve the full allocation of the £350,000, in order to use any surplus funds to enhance the proposals approved within this report on the same terms, should officers confirm that additional funding is necessary, appropriate, reasonable, and practicable. Any departure from these proposals would be reported to Committee for approval.

4.0 Detail

- 4.1 The Council, under the DFG legislation and subsequent Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy (the Policy), is committed to enhancing the opportunities available for its disabled, vulnerable and older residents to live healthily and well at home, to remain living as independently as possible and to participate fully in society. The aims of the Policy are to:
 - Increase the number of people who are able to live independently and safely at home.
 - Contribute to the aims of the BCF to reduce delayed transfers of care, minimise avoidable hospital admissions and facilitate early discharge from hospital where possible (reduce bed-based care).

- Improve the health, wellbeing, and quality of life of people living within the District.
- Remove or reduce housing related defects that are detrimental to a person's health.
- Reduce the number of households living in fuel poverty by improving the energy efficiency of the District's private sector housing stock.
- Increase the number of empty properties brought back into use, particularly where this accommodation can be used to relieve homelessness.
- Support the coordination and integration of services to deliver person centred outcomes.

- 4.1 The Council receives annual funding to deliver mandatory DFGs and other schemes that meet the requirements of the DFG legislation from the Government via Derbyshire County Council. In the financial year 2020/21, the Council received a DFG allocation of £792,375 which was added to the underspend from 2019/20 of £1,599,074 to give a total budget of £2,391,449 in 2020/21.
- 4.2 In the November 2020 Spending Review, the Government announced a 13.5% national increase in DFG funding, from £505M in 2020/21 to £573M in 2021/22. While the local allocation of DFG funding is yet to be announced, it is likely that the Council will see an increase in its funding allocation to add to any underspend from 2020/21. The DFG budget position will be subject to a further report to this Committee in May 2021.
- 4.3 In November 2019, a report was presented to this Committee seeking permission for £350,000 of the surplus DFG funding to be allocated between a capital grant fund of £150,000 and a revenue grant fund of £200,000. The premise of both these grant funding streams was to support opportunities to promote independence and improve the health and wellbeing of older, vulnerable and disabled residents living in privately owned or rented accommodation, as aligned with the DFG legislation and aims set out in the Policy.
- 4.4 It was envisaged that both the grant funds would be open to receive bids through a competitive exercise, which would allow for proposals to be assessed on their strategic fit and benchmarked against each other to ensure the Council supported the most impactful service for the funding available, therefore delivering value for money.
- 4.5 Proposals for the revenue grant fund, if successful, would deliver the service over a 12-month pilot period, reporting results quarterly to inform any decision on future investment and extension. Proposals solely for the capital grant fund would have no ongoing financial obligations.
- 4.6 In March 2020, the country went into a national lockdown in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Council's committees were postponed until further notice. It was imperative the Council had a mechanism to respond quickly to the rapidly increasing needs of our vulnerable residents, and permission for authorising services was devolved to the Council's Chief Executive Officer.
- 4.7 The Council had already received a proposal in principle from the CVS called Circles of Support in relation to a 12-month project they wished to pilot, utilising £58,797 of

the available revenue funds. The service, as originally proposed, would link vulnerable residents to other services and groups to improve their overall health and wellbeing. In light of the new needs of the community, the service was modified to utilise paid staff and volunteers to deliver food parcels, prescriptions, and other essential items to residents, who, due to the shielding measures put in place, were unable to leave their homes. This revised service was sanctioned for the full amount requested by the Chief Executive in March 2020.

- 4.8 In Quarter three of the 2020/21 financial year, the Strategic Housing Team, in collaboration with the Community Partnership Officer, devised guidance, assessment criteria and an application form for interested parties to tender competitively for the remaining available grant funds, full details of which can be found in appendix A.
- 4.9 The Programme sought to receive innovative proposals from not-for-profit organisations already operating within the District, specifically to assist disabled, older, or vulnerable people living in private sector accommodation in the District with opportunities to continue living safely and independently within their own homes and communities.
- 4.10 In November 2020, the application information was circulated widely among various voluntary and not-for-profit groups operating within the District via the Health and Wellbeing Board and the CVS. The Programme closed on 29 January 2021 with two proposals being received: one from the CAB and one from the CVS. Both of these proposals passed the first stage pre-assessment process and were passed to the officer panel, convened on the 24 February 2021 for scoring. Each of these proposals are outlined in more detail below.

4.11 **CAB Proposal – Digital Inclusion Service**

The CAB's proposal consists of the provision of practical support and mentoring to access digital technology and online services. The service targets support to people living in privately owned or rented accommodation in the District who have physical disabilities, learning disabilities and/or mental ill-health.

Support will be provided to access a wealth of online information, from being more energy efficient and reducing fuel poverty, to reducing health inequalities by accessing health services, digital health information and toolkits. Areas of support could include (list not exhaustive):

- Managing money online
- Online shopping
- Socialising online
- Using social media
- Watching and listening online
- Using online public services
- Using online health services and toolkits
- Using toolkits to reduce carbon footprint, reduce energy usage and save money on energy bills
- Looking for employment

- Staying safe online

The project would deliver at least two Policy aims by supporting improved health, wellbeing and quality of life outcomes and reducing fuel poverty for residents. It also supports the ambitions of the newly approved Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which, as part of its actions states that the Council will work with partners to raise awareness and support action around digital exclusion and signpost residents to digital support services.

The grant funding requested by the CAB totals £67,330, comprised of £59,650 of revenue grant funding to pay for two full-time posts to assess customer need and recruit volunteers to deliver the mentoring programme, and £7,680 of capital grant funding in order to purchase tablets to loan out to customers in the service and deliver a grant fund to ensure that customers who have gained these new skills can continue to access services online.

At assessment, the CAB proposal scored 39 out of a possible 60, or 65%, with the panel observing that the level of detail contained within the proposal which gave strong assurances on both the deliverability and value for money. The panel support the proposal and recommended that the full amount of funding be awarded.

CVS Proposal – Handyperson Help at Home (HHH) and HHH Plus

The CVS proposal encompasses the delivery of a handyperson service with holistic support and signposting. The handyperson service includes the installation of a range of physical adaptations and low-level improvements in the home to increase the safety and independence of vulnerable, older, and disabled residents living in privately owned or rented properties. The adaptations and improvements could include the following (list not exhaustive):

- Installation of grab rails and other aids
- Installation of key safes
- Minor home repairs
- Eliminating fall risks (carpet trips, changing light bulbs, fixing curtain poles/tracks, putting up shelves and pictures etc.)

The service will also provide a wraparound holistic support offer to those accessing the service, Handyperson Help at Home (HHH) Plus, ensuring that beneficiaries of the service are aware of a range of support services provided by the CVS and other partners agencies, e.g., befriending scheme, income maximisation and benefit entitlement, mandatory DFGs, energy performance advice etc.

The project will deliver multiple Policy aims by increasing the number of people able to live independently and safely at home, reducing bed-based care, improving the health, wellbeing, and quality of life of residents, reducing housing related defects, and delivering person centred outcomes.

The grant funding requested by the CVS totals £94,943, comprised of £69,943 of revenue grant funding to pay for two full-time posts to deliver and instal the measures

outlined above, and £25,000 of capital grant funding in order to purchase equipment such as grab rails and key safes etc.

At assessment, the CVS proposal scored 37 out of a possible 60, or 62%, with the panel observing the level of detail contained within the proposal demonstrated significant alignment with the aims and objectives of both the Policy and DFG legislation and gave assurances on both deliverability and value for money. The panel support the proposal and recommended that the full amount of funding be awarded.

4.9 Budget Position

Revenue Budget Approved	£200,000.00
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Organisation	Approval Date	Amount Committed
Circles (CVS)	24/03/2020	£58,797.00
Digital Inclusion (CAB)	TBC	£59,650.00
Handyperson Scheme (CVS)	TBC	£69,943.00
TOTAL		£188,390.00
Remainder		£11,610.00

Capital Budget Approved	£150,000.00
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Organisation	Approval Date	Amount Committed
Digital Inclusion (CAB)	TBC	£7,680.00
Handyperson Scheme (CVS)	TBC	£25,000.00
TOTAL		£32,680.00
Remainder		£117,320.00

Table 1.

4.10 The guidance document, found in appendix A, capped the amount of grant available through the tender process to a maximum of £75,000 for revenue grants and £25,000 for capital grants. This was to ensure that the Council could provide its support to the majority of the proposals submitted should there have been a significant interest in the Programme. In hindsight, this was not the reality with only three organisations enquiring about the funding and two subsequently submitting proposals.

4.11 These caps were, therefore, unnecessary and it is acknowledged by officers that the delivery of both of these services may be curtailed due to the level of demand exceeding the amount of equipment available within the original grant levels set.

4.12 In light of the low take up of the competitive tender process, it is proposed that the remainder of the funding, £11,610 revenue and £117,320 capital, should be utilised to support service expansion of the two approved services, on the same terms where officers can confirm this is necessary, appropriate, reasonable, and practicable. Any change to the proposals would be reported to Committee for approval.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The funding has been allocated to the Programme in a previous report to this Committee, dated November 2019.
- 5.2 Funding is available through the significant surplus of available DFG funding, the budget position for this has been partly outlined in 4.1 and 4.2 of this report.
- 5.3 Both the capital and revenue funding streams as part of the Programme are able to support both proposals in their entirety, without requiring additional funding from elsewhere, see Table 1 in 4.9.
- 5.4 The proposals have no financial implications on the Council's general fund or housing revenue account.

6.0 Corporate Implications

Employment Implications

- 6.1 The funding will be provided in the form of a grant to the successful tenderers, any employment implications will solely lie with these organisations.
- 6.2 Any ongoing employment liability and Transfer of Undertakings (TUPE) requirements would be explored should the pilot projects be extended past the original 12-month term. This will be the subject of future Committee approval.

Legal Implications

- 6.3 The funding will be provided in the form of a grant, limiting the Council's exposure to any legal implications.
- 6.4 Grant conditions will be attached to the payments, including performance reporting, and the ability to audit the service.

Corporate Plan Implications

- 6.5 The services will support the Council in delivering the Corporate Plan aims under the theme 'Our People' by:
 - Engaging with our communities - supporting and celebrating volunteering, community groups and the voluntary sector; and
 - Supporting and safeguarding the most vulnerable, encouraging independent living and keeping residents healthy and happy in their homes and promoting health and wellbeing.

Risk Impact

- 6.6 Any risks are covered (and reviewed) within the tenderer's risk assessments, submitted as part of the assessment process.
- 6.7 Each individual organisation will hold the required level of insurance(s) during the 12-month pilot term of the service.

- 6.8 The Council will seek to add relevant grant conditions to the provision of the funding to lessen the Council's exposure to any associated risk.

7.0 Community Impact

Consultation

- 7.1 As part of the competitive tender exercise, the tenderers had to show that the proposed services were required. This included gap analysis and consultation with the likely recipients of the services.

Equality and Diversity Impact

- 7.2 The Council has an obligation to demonstrate that it has due regard to the potential impact of discrimination, harassment, victimisation, and any other conduct prohibited within the Equality Act 2010 (the Act) in the delivery of the services it provides directly, and similarly service it decides to fund utilising public money. Under the Act, the Council also has a duty to promote equality and to foster good relations between people with protected characteristics and those that do not.
- 7.3 Any equality issues, and the impact of these, is covered within the tenderer's Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) submitted as part of the assessment process.
- 7.4 The services recommended for funding will specifically support two groups that have protected characteristics within the Act, age, and disability. By supporting these services, the Council is delivering in its duties under the Act.
- 7.5 The CAB service also supports the ambitions of the newly approved Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, which, as part of its actions states that the Council will work with partners to raise awareness and support action around digital exclusion and signpost residents to digital support services.

Social Value Impact

- 7.6 The services will create local employment opportunities for a minimum of four people, alongside this, both proposals indicate the use of volunteers to deliver the services and both organisations are committed to providing training and support to volunteers as part of the services delivered.
- 7.7 The services are likely to have a positive impact in reducing direct and indirect costs to health and social care budgets. The organisations will report on the impact of this activity, and any other relevant outcomes in quarterly performance reports to the Council.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.8 The CAB proposal will allow residents to access online services, thus reducing the need to travel and their reliance on requiring documents in a paper format.

8.0 Conclusions

- 8.1 The services outlined within this report support the aims of the Policy and most importantly are aligned with the legislative requirements of the DFG, which the Council must adhere to when developing services utilising DFG funding.
- 8.2 Both services will benefit disabled, older, and vulnerable private sector residents of South Derbyshire, and will provide skills, knowledge and equipment that will last well beyond the length of the 12-month pilot term.
- 8.3 The bid assessment process has proven that the services supported are deliverable, offer the Council value for money, positively impact on identified, unmet needs, and are strategically aligned with the Council's Corporate Plan outcomes.
- 8.4 The Council has a significant underspend on the DFG budget (a separate report on DFG budget position will be brought before this Committee in May 2021). These services provide a way of utilising a proportion of the budget whilst benefitting the needs of the District's private sector residents.

7.0 Background Papers

BCF Report November 2019: [REPORT TO: \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

BCF Report November 2020: [REPORT TO: \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

BCF Action Plan 2020: [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)

Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy: [Document.ashx \(cmis.uk.com\)](#)