



Council name	COTSWOLD DISTRICT COUNCIL
Name and date of Committee	CABINET – 2ND SEPTEMBER 2019
Report Number	AGENDA ITEM 7
Subject	DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT POLICY
Wards affected	ALL
Accountable member	Councillor Jenny Forde, Cabinet Member for Health, Well-being and Public Safety Email: jenny.forde@cotswold.gov.uk
Accountable officer	Jon Dearing Group Manager for Resident Services Tel: 01285 623304 Email: jon.dearing@publicagroup.uk
Summary/Purpose	To seek Cabinet approval for the implementation of the Disabled Facilities Grant Policy.
Annexes	Annex 'A' - The Updated Policy Annex 'B' - Equality Impact Assessment
Recommendation/s	<p>(a) <i>That Cabinet adopts the updated Policy, including the provision of discretionary grants (subject to the availability of funding and under the Regulatory Reform Order 2002) in relation to:-</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) <i>Top-up to Mandatory Scheme;</i>(ii) <i>Dual Residency of a Disabled Child;</i>(iii) <i>Relocation Grant;</i>(iv) <i>Excessive Contribution;</i>(v) <i>Safe, Warm and Well;</i>(vi) <i>Making Homes Dementia Friendly;</i> <p>(b) <i>that the Group Manager for Resident services be given delegated authority to approve such discretionary grants.</i></p>
Corporate priorities	The Corporate Plan is in preparation.
Key Decision	YES

Exempt	NO
Consultees/ Consultation	The Council has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) for the adaptations of properties to enable disabled people to remain living as independently as possible in their own homes, irrespective of tender.
- 1.2 The legislative framework for DFGs is provided by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. The Act explicitly covers mandatory DFGs, offering assistance to older and disabled people once the recommendation have fulfilled the criteria of an adaption being 'necessary and appropriate' and 'reasonable and practical'. All applicants have to satisfy a 'Test of Resources; which is a financial assessment that determines whether they will have to contribute towards a grant.
- 1.3 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) gave local housing authorities the power to adopt discretionary policies with regard to housing interventions to promote independent living and wellbeing and give greater flexibility. In 2008 a number of changes were made to the way the DFG were administered and could be used which included the relation and removal of the ring-fence allowing DFG monies to be used more flexibly to help keep people safe and well at home and to reduce the bureaucracy in the grant's administration.
- 1.4 Since the introduction of the Better Care Fund (BCF) in 2016, capital funding for DFG is now paid directly to the upper tier authorities, but the statutory duty continues to sit with the local housing authority. Currently the upper tier authorities have to allocate funding to their respective housing authorities as directed by Government.
- 1.5 The Care Act reforms introduced in April 2018 focus on wellbeing, prevention and delaying the need for social care. In support of these principles, the 2018 Spending Review included over £500 million for 2019/20 for DFGs, encouraging Councils to adopt policies that embrace the BCF.
- 1.6 The DFG Policy needs to evolve if it is to remain relevant. The DFG should no longer be a stand-alone service but part of a package of provisions to help people remain independent.

1.7 The aims of Part 2 of this Policy, Discretionary DFGs, are:-

- To improve the lives of people with disabilities to meet their care and mobility needs by enabling them to live independently with privacy and dignity.
- To allow more effective use of the BCF, cutting out bureaucracy and increasing flexibility, contributing to the aims of the fund.
- To reduce the domiciliary and residential care by allowing people with disabilities to live more independently in their homes.

1.8 To provide advice, information and support regarding the adaption of properties to meet accessibility needs and provide a framework of assistance to vulnerable groups.

2. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

2.1 Funding is provided by way of the Better Care Fund and is ring-fenced for Disabled Facilities Grants and therefore must be spent on disabled or other similar adaptations such as dementia friendly environments.

2.2 For 2018/19 the total funding allocation for the Council was £1,084,547 (if required for the stated purposes). The County Council released £668,920 to Cotswold District Council, leaving £415,627 available if the need arose within the District. Any balance from across the Districts is used on County-wide initiatives. As at the beginning of March 2019, the Council had awarded £526,261 of its grant funding

2.3 The Council's total allocation for 2019/20 is £1,170,291 of which the County has released £750,000.

3. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 the Council has a duty to administer the Disabled Facilities Grant. Under the Regulatory Reform Order 2002, the Council is given discretionary powers on the utilisation of the Grant.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

What risks do the data and decisions in this report pose to the business/Council? How big are they? What proportionate actions are you taking to manage them?

5. EQUALITIES IMPACT (IF REQUIRED)

EIA completed

6. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS (IF REQUIRED)

None.

7. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

The Council has a statutory duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs).

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None