



Wyre Forest District Council

Record of a Council Decision delegated to be made by an Officer

This includes a record of an Executive Decision made by an officer under Regulation 13, Part 4 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

Item decided: Allocation of Disabled Facilities Grant across schemes / projects	
Officer who has taken the decision	Mike Parker, Corporate Director; Economic Prosperity and Place, in consultation with the Corporate Director; Resources and Cabinet Member for Housing, Health and Wellbeing
Date of the decision	21/03/2019
Reason for the decision/alternatives considered	To allocate Regional Housing Pot and Disabled Facilities Grant funding across various schemes and projects.
Date and source of Delegated Decision (if appropriate)	This decision follows the report to Cabinet (agreed on 13/11/2018) for the new Housing Assistance Policy which allocates grant across a range of projects.
Council/Cabinet member consulted – if applicable	Ian Hardiman
Any interest declared by the Consultee or officer	N/A

Appendix One: Regional Initiatives Capital Funding / Disabled Fund Grant (Better Care Fund) Proposals

The Government Regional Initiatives Capital fund for private sector initiatives towards decent homes has been delegated to the relevant Cabinet Member and Director for determination of which projects are to be allocated the funds. There is no new national funding; however some of this funding has been carried forward from previous years existing and ongoing projects.

We also have the benefit of money recycled into the fund for further financial assistance for repairs and improvements to properties from loans issued in previous years that have been repaid. As of March 2018 the remaining fund is approximately £130k and we propose to fund £80k in 2019/20 and the remainder in 2020/21.

In addition the Council receives funding from the Better Care Fund for works in relation to Disabled Facilities Grants (in 2018/19 this was £1.19m - funding for 2019/2020 hasn't yet been announced). This funding is for the purposes of DFGs and other schemes as outlined by the Council's Housing Assistance Policy 2018.

This memo seeks agreement on allocation of those budgets. A percentage of this budget can be used to help cover associated officer costs, in consultation with the Finance Team.

This fund to be approximately £80k for 2019/20. This will be used to fund the following elements:

1. Private Sector Measures scheme. A broad range of health improving housing work on private rented properties. To improve the living conditions and affordability for tenants on benefits by works that could not be achieved through formal requirements under the Housing Act 2004.
2. Security improvements such as the gating schemes to provide gates to entries, sanctuary schemes for vulnerable persons identified to the Council by partner agencies.
3. Empty properties. Loans to assist bringing appropriate properties back into use when tied into nomination rights and at affordable rents.
4. Energy Efficiency measures. To cover the top up costs of insulation and heating measures for persons on low income where existing national and county schemes do not meet the whole costs.

This DFG grant is anticipated to be at least £1.19m for 2019/2020. The hierarchy of spend will be on DFGs to fulfil the statutory requirements but funding (if available) can be considered for the following

1. Funding towards the cost of Occupational Health assessment to enable faster processing of cases than currently achieved – a dedicated officer for Wyre Forest and a contribution to a countywide officer who will spend a proportion of their time in WF.
2. Approximately £40k for funding the staffing costs of an officer to work on projects to achieve more DFGs, delivered in a more time efficient manner and also support these associated projects and issues and a contribution to the running costs of the Home Improvement Agency (equivalent to up to 15% fees).
3. Up to £30k for a dementia dwelling grant
4. Funding (if required) investigation work on a possible Independent Living Centre in the County
5. Top up of mandatory DFGs when works costs are above the £30k limit for a DFG. Up to £10k additional grant where required for cases that meet eligibility criteria for the work and remaining at the property is still the best option.
6. Up to £50k to supplement adaptation work already being undertaken in house by The Community Housing Group to prevent the need for relatively minor cases that go above their £2k threshold to go through the complete DFG process.
7. Funding to support prevention to admission or early discharge from hospital
8. Up to £10k for housing options advice and support work where people need to consider moving home as their best long term option.
9. Up to £50k towards the provision of disabled adapted flats within any new Temporary Accommodation provision to ensure the property has accessible facilities.
10. Funding towards financial assistance for adapting and improving properties: to offer financial assistance for costs associated with moving to a more suitable home and/or purchasing / building / improving properties (in conjunction with a Registered Provider).
11. Funding for minor adaptations delivered for County Council via the agency (commitment of £57k for 2019/2020)
12. £150k funding for non-means tested DFGs up to the value of £5k for level access showers and stairlifts

Mechanisms for processing any grants and loans are to be in accordance with the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2018. Individual approvals are to be carried out by the Head of Strategic Growth, Principal EHO (Housing) or Principal Strategic Housing Officer.