



CABINET 6 JUNE 2002

PORTFOLIO : HOUSING

Amendment to Disabled Facilities Grant Budget and Grant Policy

1. Background

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to gain approval to accept partnership funding for Disabled Facilities Grants and to vary the current grant policy to enable the money to be spent.
- 1.2 Currently the Housing Improvements team have a budget of £460,000 to fund Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) in the private sector. As a result of this limited pot the current DFG policy allows only for works that are deemed mandatory to be carried out.
- 1.3 Social Services have offered £20,000 to be spent on discretionary works. If we accept this funding we can attract a further £30,000 from the DTLR giving a total additional budget of £50,000.

2. Proposal

- 2.1 DFGs are mandatory for certain works to a dwelling to enable disabled people to remain in their own home with a degree of independence. They are funded at 40% from the capital programme and 60% from the Government through Supplementary Credit Approvals (SCAs). For the current year the budget is £460,000 which will be spent on mandatory works such as ground floor bedrooms and WCs, ramps, stairlifts, bathroom and kitchen adaptations.
- 2.2 Discretionary DFGs are to help with the accommodation, welfare and employment of a disabled person. Such works could include additional space in a bedroom to allow for treatment or specialist play equipment. Currently the mandatory only policy does not allow for all the needs of a disabled person to be resolved. Therefore applicants are often left frustrated because their aspirations are not being met.
- 2.3 As partners in this process Social Services have offered an additional £20,000 to be spent on discretionary works. When the SCA of £30,000 is added it will give the team an additional £50,000 to spend on adaptations.
- 2.4 It is proposed that discretionary DFG work will only be carried out in conjunction with a mandatory grant application. This would enable works to be carried out beyond the mandatory level and hopefully give a more complete and holistic solution to the applicants who would benefit from the extra funding.

3. Key Issues

- 3.1 The only issue is that accepting this funding will allow additional works to be carried out for grant applicants at no additional cost to the authority.

4. Financial implications

- 4.1 There will be no financial implications for the authority. Social Services will fund £20,000 and the DTLR, through Supplementary Credit Approvals (which have already been offered), will fund £30,000.

5. Environmental implications

5.1 There are no environmental implications.

6. Crime and disorder implications

6.1 Discretionary DFG could be awarded to carry out security measures specific to a disabled person.

7 Portfolio Holder Comments

7.1 The Portfolio Holder has confirmed his support for this report and has added the following comment 'This proposal will give us the opportunity to increase our grant facilities to assist more people in the district, in a very cost effective manner therefore it must be right for us to pursue this scheme at present and it has my support'.

8. Recommendations

8.1 It is recommended that the New Forest District Council accept the £20,000 funding from Social Services.

8.2 It is recommended that the DFG policy be varied to allow up to £50,000 to be spent or committed for discretionary works during the financial year.

Further Information:

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6 June 2002

Background Papers
Improvement Grant Policy