



AGENDA ITEM: 5(d)

**EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW &
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE:
2 October 2014**

**CABINET:
11 November 2014**

Report of: Assistant Director Community Services

Relevant Managing Director: Managing Director (People and Places)

Relevant Portfolio Holder: Councillor David Sudworth

**Contact for further information: Mrs Laura Lea (Extn. 5196)
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SUBJECT: REVIEW OF THE DISABLED ADAPTATIONS POLICY

Borough wide interest

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To review the current Disabled Adaptations Policy to ensure that it remains compatible with legislative and economic changes.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2.1 That the content of this report be considered and that agreed comments be referred to Cabinet.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS TO CABINET

3.1 That the Disabled Adaptations Policy 2015 attached as an Appendix to the report be approved.

3.2 That the Assistant Director Community Services, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, be given delegated authority to review and make future changes to the policy in light of any legislative or economic changes.

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 The Council has a statutory duty under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, to provide disabled facilities grants (DFGs) to eligible disabled residents to help them pay for major adaptations to their home. Grants are available to private tenants, homeowners and housing association tenants. Adaptations for disabled WLBC tenants are funded entirely by the Housing and Regeneration Department out of the Housing Revenue Account.
- 4.2 The main source of funding for DFGs comes from a government grant which is capital in nature. In addition to this, the Council has also elected to provide additional funding from capital receipts in order to meet demand. In 2014/15 the government grant allocation for the Council has been set at £454,299. The Council will contribute £100,000. In 2015/16 the government grant will be £543,000 with the Council's contribution being £100,000.
- 4.3 The Council receives approximately 170 DFG applications per year with on average 110 going through to completion.

5.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 5.1 The current Disabled Adaptations Policy was introduced in 2006 therefore a review at this time is needed to ensure the provision of DFGs remains efficient and cost effective.

6.0 FUTURE FOR DFG FUNDING

- 6.1 In April 2013, the Government announced that it would be introducing a £3.8 billion pooled budget for health and social care services called the Better Care Fund. The aim of the fund is to deliver better outcomes and greater efficiencies through more integrated services for older and disabled people. Within the pooled budget, £200 million was set aside for local authorities.
- 6.2 Lancashire County Council (LCC) is responsible for the fund and had to agree a plan between all the districts and the NHS to be signed off by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 6.3 The Department for Communities and Local Government, has transferred responsibility for the Disabled Facilities Grant allocation to the Department for Health. From April 2016, this allocation will be paid to upper tier authorities as part of the Better Care Fund. Individual Council allocations have been set for 2014/15 and 2015/16 and these will be paid directly to the Council.
- 6.4 LCC has advised that each district will be allocated a minimum DFG allocation each year using the same formula that calculates the current amounts. This should mean that each district is awarded an amount similar to current levels. Through the Better Care Fund, LCC will have the ability to top up this allocation. It has not yet been decided if or how this will happen.

- 6.5 As a result of this change, LCC are currently working with districts to understand the DFG process at district level in order to see if the process can be made more efficient.

7.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 7.1 The draft Disabled Adaptations Policy 2015 was listed on the Consultation page of the Council's website. Stakeholders including Lancashire County Council, Citizens Advice Bureau, Help Direct, Disability West Lancs, West Lancs CVS, Access Matters along with colleagues in neighbouring local authorities, were informed of the consultation and encouraged to comment.

- 7.2 The closing date for comments was 5th September 2014. The Citizens Advice Bureau, Disability West Lancs, Lancashire County Council and one member of the public provided comments. A summary of the responses can be found at Appendix 3 to this report.

8.0 PROPOSALS

- 8.1 The proposed revised policy is outlined at Appendix 1 to this report.
- 8.2 A summary of the recommended changes can be found at Appendix 2 to this report.

9.0 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS/COMMUNITY STRATEGY

- 9.1 The proposal will help minimise isolation for vulnerable disabled people by enabling them to remain in their homes for longer. The proposal links to the Improved Health for All and Young and Older People Key Objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy. It also links to the cross cutting themes of Sustainability, Social Inclusion, Equality and Diversity.

10.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no significant adverse financial or resource implications arising from the report.
- 10.2 Adopting the new increased Agency Fee charge will have a positive impact as this will increase the amount of revenue income generated by the service.

11.0 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 11.1 The actions referred to in this report are covered by the scheme of delegation to officers and any necessary changes have been made in the relevant operational risk registers.
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Background Documents

There are no background documents (as defined in Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) to this Report.

Equality Impact Assessment

There is a direct impact on members of the public, employees, elected members and / or stakeholders. Therefore an Equality Impact Assessment is required. A formal equality impact assessment is attached at Appendix 4 to this report, the results of which have been taken into account in the Recommendations contained within this report.

Appendices

1. Disabled Adaptations Policy 2015
2. Summary of Changes
3. Consultation Responses
4. Equality Impact Assessment
5. Minute of Executive Overview & Scrutiny Committee – 2 October 2014 (Cabinet only)