

APPENDIX

SUPPORTING INFORMATION:

1. COMMUNITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT DFG BUDGET ALLOCATIONS

	National Budget	Craven Budget	% Increase
2014/15		£197,526	
2015/16	£220m	£238,818	
2016/17		£433,307	
2017/18		£474,664	
Projected Budget			
2018/19		£ 508,365	
2019/20	£500m	£ 542,117	127%

2. NUMBER OF GRANTS RECEIVED AND COMPLETED

	Number of Enquiries received	Number of Applications received	Number of Grants Completed	Average Value of Grant
2014/15	42	41	38	£6,878
2015/16	36	31	33	£7,246
2016/17	41	36	40	£7,445
Q1 2017/18	5	9	7	£4,779

3. TYPES OF WORKS UNDERTAKEN:

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	
Large Extension			1	1%
Bathroom extension/Downstairs WC	3	4	4	7%
Level Access Shower/low level tray/wet floor showers	23	18	21	41%
Lifts: Stair lifts, Through Floor and Step	17	12	7	24%
Internal alterations to doors/walls	2	2	2	4%
Access in/out property including ramps	12	2	3	11%
Other: Fencing, outdoor play area, door entry systems and safety measures, Bath installations	7	4	7	12%

4. GEOGRAPHICAL SPLIT OF DFG WORKS 2016/17

AREA	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
NORTH CRAVEN	20	24%
CENTRAL	43	52%
SOUTH CRAVEN	20	24%

5. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT ROLES

1.1 Decision Making (Currently delivered by Craven District Council)

1.1.1 As the local authority with the statutory duty to deliver Disabled Facilities Grant this aspect is the responsibility of Craven District Council. Upon receipt of a request for an adaptation from North Yorkshire County Council's (NYCC) Health & Adult Services Occupational Therapist – we have a duty to consider whether this request is reasonable and practicable. Once this decision is made we then arrange for the applicant to be contacted, a means test carried out to see if they are required to make a contribution to the work and then the application is processed.

1.1.2 This function is currently carried out by Environmental Services and Housing with administrative support from Business Support.

1.2 Case working & Administration (Delivered by Craven Home Improvement Agency until 31 March 2018):

1.2.1 The caseworker will contact the applicant, carry out home visits and support them through the process – helping them to complete necessary forms and collate supporting evidence. They also provide a general administration role for the process including obtaining Land Registry Titles and Landlord approvals. On average the caseworker would receive 1 new referral per week.

1.3 Technical Support: (Delivered by Craven Home Improvement Agency until 31 March 2018):

1.3.1 The Technical Officer will work with the applicant and the Occupational Therapist to design a scheme of works that meets the applicants assessed need. This may include drawings and obtaining the necessary building regulation approval and in the case of major adaptations (i.e. extensions) – planning approval. They will draw up a specification of work and issue a request for tender to selected contractors on the Yorkshire Housing Approved Contractors List. Once received, these are assessed, contracts drawn, works undertaken, inspected and requests for payment submitted to Craven District Council.

1.4 Caseload

As at 22/8/2017 the current caseload for the Caseworker/Admin and Technical Officer is as follows:

STAGE	Caseworker/Admin Role	Technical Officer Role	Caseload
1. Occupational Therapist Referrals	To carry out 1 st Visit to complete explain process and complete Provisional Test of Resources forms	To carry out visit to pre-design scheme	2
2. Pre-Application cases	To carry out 2 nd visit to complete Full Application forms and collate information and permissions	To carry out visit to agree design; draw up specification of works, tender.	21
3. Approved cases	Obtain invoices and collate for submission to CDC for payment	Draw up contract of works; oversee works and sign off	14
TOTAL CASELOAD			36

As at 22/08/2017 12 cases had completed through this process

6. DELIVERY OPTIONS

Option 1: IN-HOUSE BASIC GRANT SERVICE

Proposal: To deliver statutory duty DFGs without additional assistance:

Craven District Council to provide web-based documentation and advice for applicants to access. Completed applications to be determined upon receipt of satisfactory and complete documentation. Applicants are responsible for all aspects of arranging and carrying out the work. A site visit will be made by CDC when works are to complete to check that works are satisfactory before the final payment is made to the applicant.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Maximise DFG Budget: No Service Fee added to grant so 100% of DFG funding for physical works</p> <p>Limited additional staffing requirements¹: 0.5fte Administrator/Caseworker</p> <p>Value for Money: Presents best value for money</p> <p>Team integration: Both CDC and NYCC Occupational Therapists located at Belle Vue Square</p> <p>Cost: £26,600</p> <p>NOTE: Would require additional workspace requirement at BVS – hot-desking within Environmental Services & Housing</p>	<p>Contractor Disputes CDC embroiled into disputes between applicant and contractor – especially if works are not satisfactory.</p> <p>Public funds – unsatisfactory works Non-approved contractors exploiting vulnerable applicants with inflated prices and unsatisfactory works</p> <p>Lack of Support No support for vulnerable applicant through complex process</p> <p>TUPE Costs: Would be liable for Redundancy costs</p>

Comment:

Consultation with Northern Adaptations Group members has evidenced that this approach results in disputes between contractors/applicants and none-payment of grant due to unsatisfactory works. They spend more time negotiation/mediating with cases that they are not being paid to manage.

Opportunities:

Deliver of NYCC & Better Care Plan objective:

High risk of underspend of budget (due to no Agency Fees or very low additional administration/support charges) – possibility for more money to be utilised to meet other NYCC priorities - potential to use underspend for other Better Care Fund Projects or other e.g. Extra Care in Craven (in discussion with NYCC)

Not Recommended:

This is not an appropriate option for Craven District Council - whilst the cheapest option as only limited additional staffing resources are required – there is no capacity to support the vulnerable applicant and ultimately CDC will be spending more time dealing with contractor/client disputes. This option puts the Council at risk of criticism from the public and partners.

¹ Current staffing requirements: Environmental Services & Housing – 0.4fte Senior Officer and Business Support Admin - 0.4fte

Option 2: CONTRACTING OUT

Proposal: To contract out the Casework and Technical Officer functions

Craven District Council to procure the services of a home improvement agency to provide the Caseworker/Admin and Technical Support roles as is currently provided by Yorkshire Housing

Advantages

No additional staffing requirements

Continuation of existing procedures

No additional workspace requirements at BVS

TUPE Costs

None – transferred implication to new provider.

NOTE: Local contractor arrangements would be included within the Contract benefiting local economy and employment

Disadvantages

Geography:

Service reliant on “home visits” therefore most effective and customer focussed if located within district otherwise delays in time taken to complete adaptation

Viability:

Unlikely to be an “attractive” contract and this would be reflected in the cost of providing this service in isolation. A small contract for very little gain.

Cost: £85,980

Lack of flexibility:

Role defined by partnership agreement – not responsive to change or ability to add resilience to Environmental Services & Housing team

Integration and Streamlining:

Communication challenges (especially if “joint” services based out of district), reduced opportunities to remove duplication of files, computer systems etc. No team integration.

Procurement:

Will have to go through the procurement process

Comment:

There are no “DFG only” contracted services that I could find. Research concluded that 80% of services are in-house and contracted services are part of a wider Home Improvement Agency – carrying out a range of services for the local authority. This is supported by NYCC’s market testing for Minor Adaptations delivery where only one organisation responded.

Yorkshire Housing has been contacted and have indicated that they would only be interested in tendering to deliver just the DFG element if it is sustainable and viable.

Opportunities

Delivery of NYCC & Better Care Plan objectives:

DFGs and discretionary grants/loans only with lower risk of underspend of budget (additional administration/support charges) – possibility for reduced amount of funding to transfer to NYCC

Minor Adaptations Contract:

Would be no incentive for CDC to bid for this contract unless other than to re-contract out delivery.

Delivery of CDC emerging Health & Wellbeing Action Plan:

Additional partner to assist/contribute towards this emerging plan.

Recommendation:

This is a *possible* option for Craven District Council – but limiting in terms of opportunities to flex the service to meet arising needs and shape the service as the NYCC/LA debate regarding allocations and pay-back develops. Cost is also an important factor as only reasonable costs can be funded from DFG allocation.

This option is potentially the most expensive and with a limited market interest.

Option 3: PARTNERSHIP WORKING WITH ANOTHER LOCAL AUTHORITY

Proposal: To enter into Partnership – Harrogate Borough Council

For Craven District Council to continue to administer the DFGs and to take on the “hand holding” role of visiting clients in their own homes and completing/collating all necessary paperwork. The Technical Officer role would be carried out by Harrogate Borough Council – who would be responsible for the works element – from design to completion for a fixed fee of “open book” plus 8%.

Advantages

Additional staffing requirements

0.8fte Administrator and visiting Caseworker

Resilience:

CDC would benefit from Harrogate Borough Council’s expertise in relation to delivery of Adaptations and “piggy back” contractor procurement arrangements thus reducing administrative burden.

Approved Contractor List:

NOTE: Partnership arrangement would NOT include capacity to engage with local contractors to carry out works – resulting in a loss to the local economy and employment.

NOTE: Would require additional workspace requirement at BVS – hot-desking within Environmental Services & Housing

Disadvantages

Geography:

Service reliant on “home visits” therefore most effective and customer focussed if located within district otherwise delays in time taken to complete adaptation.
Caseworker to be located within Craven.

Cost: £86,750

Lack of flexibility:

Technical Support Role defined by partnership agreement – not responsive to change or ability to recharge services to Property Services or undertake private works to minimise funding gap.

Integration and Streamlining:

Communication challenges and reduced opportunities to remove duplication of files, computer systems etc

Lack of control/influence?:

As one of a partnership with the smallest number of DFGs delivered – potential for our concerns/area to be overlooked.

TUPE Costs

Although Technical Support role TUPEd to Harrogate – full cost recovery + 8% would be re-charged to Craven

Team integration:

Only CDC, Caseworker/Admin and NYCC Occupational Therapists located at Belle Vue Square. Technical support based in Harrogate.

Comment:

Richmondshire and Hambleton (possibly Selby) are looking into procuring a DFG service and potentially we could “join” the proposed contract. None of these LAs have their own stock and therefore have not experience of delivering the Technical Officer and contractor management roles.

It is currently unknown how this model will look – the “group” may decide to procure the service or set up an “in-house” delivery arm.

Harrogate has already indicated that they are interested in providing the Technical Support and works management role for us at a cost of “Open Book” (i.e. actual costs) + 8%.

Harrogate is a stock holding authority and already has an established Adaptions team delivering adaptation works to vulnerable tenants within their own properties. It is their intention to “expand” the scope of the team to include carrying out DFG Funded adaptations for social and private tenants and homeowners. They are revising their Procurement Framework and intend to combine Harrogate and Craven’s works/budget and tender for invite contractors as well as larger contractors operating within the Harrogate area to tender for specific packages of works (i.e. Installation of Level Access Showers, Installation of Stair Lifts) under a Fixed Term Competitive Contract **and** also to register on an Standing List (Approved contractor list).

Opportunities

Deliver of NYCC & Better Care Plan objectives:

DFGs and discretionary grants/loans only with risk of underspend of budget (additional administration/support charges) – possibility for reduced amount of funding to transfer to NYCC

Minor Adaptations Contract:

CDC could include delivery of Minor Adaptations – requiring additional administrative resources and “handyman” service to supply/fix handrails and other minor adaptations) – however would have to be independent of the DFG Major works delivered by Harrogate who have already indicated their preferred option **not** to provide Minor Adaptations on behalf of NYCC.

Delivery of CDC emerging Health & Wellbeing Action Plan:

DFGs and discretionary grants/loans contributing to H&W Action Plan.

Improved Housing Options Services:

Opportunity to extend the scope of the Caseworker to provide specialist housing options advice (funded by Homelessness Grant or other), include Energy Efficiency advice and promotion of CDC/Better Homes Yorkshire grants/loans and an Accessible Housing Register and improved “matching” of adapted social housing.

RECOMMENDATION:

This was an option for Craven District Council – with retention of local presence of Caseworker carrying out Home Visits but has been discounted due to a) inability to utilise the spare capacity of the Technical Officer post to obtain funding (through private works, work for Property Services etc) and b) their procurement will not include small local contractors within the tendering for packages of work

Option 4: IN-HOUSE OPTION -

Proposal: To deliver statutory duty DFGs with additional assistance

To employ/utilise existing staffing resources to deliver the service in house. Craven District Council to provide web-based documentation, a visiting Caseworker and Technical Officer support

Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Additional staffing requirements²:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.5fte Technical Officer • 1.0fte Administrator & Caseworker <p>Value for Money:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presents value for money – limited on-costs (management fee/accommodation costs etc) <p>Integration and Streamlining:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parties to the DFG process within an integrated team – based within Environmental Services & Housing aiding communication, opportunities to reduce duplication of files, reduced monitoring requirements, effective use of IDOX-Uniform computer system. <p>Team integration:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both CDC and NYCC Occupational Therapists located at Belle Vue Square 	<p>Steep learning curve!</p> <p>Required to develop own specification packages, procure local Contractors for Standing List (approved contractor list) and Fixed priced tendering for work packages – limited support available from Scarborough.</p> <p>TUPE Costs:</p> <p>Risk of TUPE cost liability HIGH due to 100% of Element 4 of NYCC Contract brought in-house</p> <p>Cost: £78,790</p>

Comment:

This option would require the allocation of office resources within the Environmental Services and Housing area, but it also affords the opportunity for the surplus staff time to be utilised on other projects.

Opportunities:

Delivery of NYCC & Better Care Plan objective:

Medium risk of underspend of budget – possibility for money to be “repaid” to NYCC. Potential to use underspend for other Better Care Fund Projects or other e.g. Extra Care in Craven (in discussion with NYCC)

Minor Adaptations Contract:

CDC could tender to deliver Minor Adaptations – requiring additional administrative resources (housing) and in partnership with Property Services.

Delivery of CDC emerging Health & Wellbeing Action Plan:

DFGs and discretionary grants/loans contributing to H&W Action Plan.

Improved Housing Options Services:

Opportunity to extend the scope of the Caseworker to provide specialist housing options advice (funded by Homelessness Grant or other), include Energy Efficiency advice and promotion of CDC/Better Homes Yorkshire grants/loans and develop an Accessible Housing Register and improved “matching” of adapted social housing.

Recommendation:

This is a recommended option for Craven District Council - we will potentially be liable for TUPE anyway for the Caseworker and Technical Officer – although TUPE may be for full-time posts and there isn't the work for full-time employees – there are other ways their skills could be used – i.e. CAD drawing in Property Services; Advice and Support to assist Housing Options and Private Sector Housing (Energy Efficiency)

² Current staffing requirements: Environmental Services & Housing – 0.4fte Senior Officer and Business Support Admin - 0.4fte