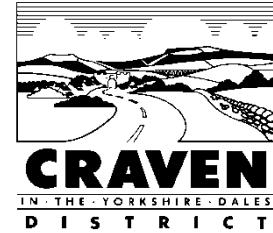


Policy Committee – 7th March 2017

END OF YEAR DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT BALANCE – TRANSFER OF FUNDS



Report of the Director of Services

Lead Member: Richard Foster

Ward(s) affected: ALL

1. Purpose of Report

To seek approval from Members to transfer the Council's uncommitted Disabled Facilities Grant allocation for 2016/17 to North Yorkshire County Council for it to undertake associated Disabled Facilities Grant work within the Craven District.

2. Recommendation

Members are recommended to:

- 2.1 Transfer the uncommitted amount of £20,307 from the Council's Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Allocation for 2016/17 to North Yorkshire County Council on condition that the County Council can demonstrate that the transfer amount will be spent on Disabled Facilities Grant associated works for residents within the District.
- 2.2 That delegated authority be given to the Environmental Services & Housing Manager to decide that the aforementioned condition is satisfied before the transfer amount is paid to North Yorkshire County Council.

3. Background

- 3.1 The Council each year receives a Grant allocation from Central Government for it to meet its statutory duties in relation to assisting those who may qualify to access a Disabled Facilities Grant that enables them to remain within their own home.
- 3.2 Since 2015/16 this allocation has been made via the Better Care Fund given to upper tier authorities – in Craven's case North Yorkshire County Council. For information the Better Care Fund is deployed locally on health and social care through pooled budget arrangements between local authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups.
- 3.3 Guidance on how the Better Care Fund works states that if this allocation is received by an upper tier authority then it must passport the central government DFG determined amount directly to the lower tier authority to enable it to deliver its statutory duties unless joint plans exist on how this funding should be spent. For example a joint plan might include capital expenditure on telecare services,

improved handyperson schemes; innovative ways on how lower tier authorities might assist the hospital discharge service in reducing bed blocking etc. all of which would complement the Council's statutory obligations in relation to DFGs.

- 3.4 In March 2016 the Government significantly increased its DFG allocations to local housing authorities for 2016/17. The Social Care Capital Grant allocation previously given to upper tier authorities was terminated and the funding directly transferred to future years local housing authorities DFG allocations. The Government further enhanced the DFG allocation by giving additional monies as well.
- 3.5 The Government's reasoning for such a transfer was that upper tier authorities had been unable to spend their previous Social Care Capital Grant allocations and thought it best to increase DFG allocations as greater outcomes and outputs would be achieved to the benefit of improving elderly care.
- 3.6 For Craven this has resulted in a significant increase in the 2016/17 DFG allocation from the previous £238,818 to £433,307.
- 3.7 However conversely this has had a negative impact on North Yorkshire County Council's (NYCC) Health and Adult Services budget for 2016/17 in relation to wider capital projects. In light of the aforementioned NYCC has for 2016/17 asked each of the sub-regional local housing authorities to assist them by transferring likely forecasted underspends to enable them to deliver these projects.
- 3.8 An officer understanding has been reached with North Yorkshire Officer colleagues that Craven would be prepared to transfer this forecasted underspend provided they could evidence that the transferred allocation would be spent on wider capital projects in Craven that were related to Disabled Facilities Grants expenditure before the transfer was made. Such an understanding would be subject to Member approval.
- 3.9 It is forecasted that Craven's DFG actual and committed expenditure for 2016/17 will be £413,000 with remaining £20,307 uncommitted.
- 3.10 Finally it is likely that the Council's DFG allocation for 2017/18 will again increase. Officers from all Districts within the sub-region are working with NYCC colleagues to develop a joint plan for 2017/18 for future DFG expenditure which will be brought to a future Policy Committee for consideration.

4. Implications

4.1 Financial Implications:

Financial forecasts suggest that the end of year balance on the Disabled Facilities Grant allocation of £433,307 received from Central Government will be £20,307. We are confident that by transferring this balance to NYCC will not have a detrimental impact on the Council delivering its Disabled Facilities Grant programme.

It should be noted that the Council is required each year to submit a Disabled Facilities Grant Claim Form to DCLG outlining capital expenditure. The entries completed on the form reflect the provisions as set out in the Disabled Facilities Grant Determination for the year - that is they should be expenditure incurred on grants paid out under Part 1 of the Housing Act 1996.

4.2 **Legal Implications:**

The Council has a statutory duty under Part I of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 to give Disabled Facilities Grants to those who meet the necessary criteria.

4.3 **Contribution to Corporate Priorities:**

Resilient Communities – Creating sustainable communities that allows our disabled residents to remain within their own homes

5. **Risk Management:**

Failure to deliver our statutory responsibilities in relation to Disabled Facilities Grant would lead to adverse reputational comment.

6. **Equality Impact Assessment:**

The Council's Equality Impact Assessment Procedure **has been** followed. An Equality Impact Assessment **has not** been completed on the proposals as completion of **Stage 1- Initial Screening** of the Procedure identified that the proposed policy, strategy, procedure or function **does not have** the potential to cause negative impact or discriminate against different groups in the community based on •age • disability •gender • race/ethnicity • religion or religious belief (faith) •sexual orientation, or • rural isolation.

7. **Consultation with Others:** Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Strategic Manager - Financial Services (s151 Officer), Director of Services

8. **Access to Information : Background Documents:** N/A

9. **Author of the Report:**

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Note: Members are invited to contact Wyn Ashton (washton@cravendc.gov.uk 01756 706338) in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or requests for supporting customer/officer procedural documentation.