

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL

STRATEGIC HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

6 October 2008

Report of the Director of Health and Housing

Part 1- Public

Matters for Information

1 UPDATE ON DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT FUNDING 2008-09

Summary

This report updates Members on the expenditure against the Disabled Facilities Grant budget for 2008/09. It highlights concern that the budget will again be under severe pressure.

1.1 Background

- 1.1.1 Members will recall at the May 2008 meeting of this Board, Cabinet was recommended to approve a Capital Plan allocation for 2008/09 for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) of £598,000. This is made up of £360,000 Government allocation, £201,000 for the Council and £37,000 slippage from the previous year.
- 1.1.2 DFGs are a mandatory grant. Recent changes to the legislation including removal of means testing in children's cases, increased passporting through of those on benefit and increase in the grant limit to £30,000 have all increased pressure on the budget as indeed was anticipated.
- 1.1.3 The £360,000 allocation from Government is 100 per cent of what the Council 'bid' for. "Bidding" for funds is undertaken in July of the previous year and the figure is based on what we can afford to spend, under guidance from the Director of Finance, to meet our 40 per cent contribution to the total DFG budget.

1.2 Spend in 2008/09

- 1.2.1 As at 11 September 2008, £386,000 had been spent (65 per cent) against the £598,000 budget. A further £299,000 has been committed i.e. approved works that can go ahead. If all this committed funding was to be fully spent, this would take us £87,000 over the budget. These figures do not allow for new approvals being made over the next few months and works completing.
- 1.2.2 Members should be aware that as at 11 September 2008, 73 per cent of the DFG budget spent was on RSL properties, the majority of which will be Russet Homes. This is a reflection of the improved procedures in place at Russet including use of

schedule of rates and dedicated contractors. The improvements are speeding up the DFG process for Russet tenants thus adding pressure on the budget.

1.3 Action Taken

- 1.3.1 A letter has been sent to GOSE to explain the current DFG spend position at Tonbridge & Malling. The letter seeks an increased allocation for this year. I will update Members at the meeting on the response received. As the requirement for the Council to match fund the contribution on a 60:40 split has now been removed this action will not require additional funding from the Council.
- 1.3.2 Your officers will continue to monitor carefully the DFG budget and a further update will be provided at the next meeting of this Board.

Background papers:

contact: Linda Hibbs

Nil

John Batty
Director of Health and Housing