

TONBRIDGE & MALLING BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITIES and HOUSING ADVISORY BOARD

23 July 2019

Report of the Director of Planning, Housing and Environmental Health

Part 1- Public

Matters for Recommendation to Cabinet - Council Decision

1 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT BUDGET 2019/20

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are a mandatory grant awarded by the local housing authority to provide adaptations in the home e.g. stair lift, level access shower, ramping to enable people to remain independent in their own home. They are available for both children and adults and across all tenures – owner occupied, housing association or private rented. The mandatory element is a means tested grant with a maximum award of £30,000. In Kent all Disabled Facilities Grant referrals will have had an assessment of need carried out by an Occupational Therapist (OT) to determine the work required to meet the needs of the resident.

1.1.2 The funding for DFGs has, over the last three years, been awarded through the Better Care Fund. The Better Care Fund was established to bring health and social care funding together to encourage better integration and ways of working. The Better Care Fund grant goes to Kent County Council (KCC) who in turn are required to pass onto districts the DFG funding element and the amounts are specified.

1.1.3 For 2019/20 Tonbridge & Malling BC's Better Care Fund allocation is £1,184,711. Of this sum KCC are to top-slice £159,020 (for funding of equipment and minor adaptations, which is done county wide to benefit from economies of scale). This gives overall funding including slippage of £144,000 of circa £1,170,000. This position was confirmed in June 2019 and the budgets agreed as part of the 2019/20 budget setting process need to be updated accordingly.

1.1.4 Members should note that DFGs are the subject of a forthcoming O&S review.

1.2 Proposed Allocation of the Funding available in 2019/20

1.2.1 The table below details the proposed allocation of the funding available in 2019/20:

| Scheme | Proposed allocation of funding 2019/20 | Notes |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Mandatory DFG | £959,000 | REMAINING AS 19/20 AGREED ALLOCATION Spend is anticipated to be similar to 2018/19 with some small additional leeway for increased demand. The DFG spend is the main focus of the BCF allocation and, as such, TMBC needs to make a reasonable allocation to ensure requests for DFGs can be met. |
| Discretionary DFG | £41,000 | ADDITIONAL BUDGET LINE In 18/19 TMBC operated a discretionary budget to allow 'top up' above the £30k mandatory grant limit in cases where an additional amount would make a scheme viable. However, no initial provision was made in the 19/20 budget because of a lack of information on likely allocation levels. NB in all cases where a discretionary DFG is awarded for an owner-occupier the amount will be placed as a local land charge against the property and recovered at sale/transfer thus enabling the funding to be recycled for future use. |
| West Kent Hospital Discharge Scheme | £74,000 | REVENUE COMMITTED 19/20 The costs of this scheme have increased since its inception due to increased coverage to Maidstone Hospital as well as Pembury Hospital. |
| Handyperson Scheme | £17,000 | REVENUE COMMITTED 19/20 This allows the continuation of subsidised handyperson services across the Borough. |
| OT secondment | £52,000 | REVENUE COMMITTED 19/20 This allows the continuation of the streamlined DFG process for residents and support for the wider housing service. |
| One You Your Home | £40,000 | REVENUE COMMITTED UNTIL AUGUST 2019 (Budget provision to March 2020) Previously information reports to CHAB discussed this scheme and referenced funding via Better Care Fund allocation, although no formal Member decision has previously been sought. |
| Less Grant Repayments | £13,000 | |
| Total | £1,170,000 | |

1.2.2 Due to the nature of the Hospital Discharge Scheme agreement, whereby the share of the cost between the three local authorities is being reviewed on an annual basis based on actual usage by residents, the costs of this scheme fluctuate from year to year. In addition, the requisite financial approval was not sought previously for the One You, Your Home scheme. These items account for a requested increase in the revenue budget for 2019/20 from £112,000 to £183,000, which will be funded from the Better Care Fund allocation now known, rather than TMBC reserves as was proposed for the £112,000 during the budget setting process (on a one year only basis).

1.3 Legal Implications

1.3.1 DFGs are a mandatory grant scheme, which local authorities are required to administer.

1.4 Financial and Value for Money Considerations

1.4.1 In year budget management is often required on grant schemes of this nature. In 2018/19, an allocation provisionally set aside for 2019/20 spend, was pulled forward to meet demand on DFG budget. Due to some additional grant funding and projected spend not eventually being as high as predicted, this funding was still available for 2019/20. However in light of the 2019/20 allocation, it is considered prudent to operate a similar system whereby this money is retained until the outcome of the O&S review is known

1.5 Risk Assessment

1.5.1 Risk assessment on DFG allocations will be carried out as part of the planned O&S review.

1.6 Equality Impact Assessment

1.7 The decisions recommended through this paper have a remote or low relevance to the substance of the Equality Act. There is no perceived impact on end users.

1.8 Recommendations

1.8.1 Members are asked to **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that the proposed allocation of the Funding available in 2019/20 as set out in the table at paragraph 1.2.1 be approved and the appropriate capital and revenue budgets be adjusted accordingly.

Background papers:

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Nil

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