

Decision Number: 36 (2015/16)

Portfolio Holder Executive Decision Statement

The Local Authority (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

Subject:

The continuation of the Housing Advice and Standards Team delivering the planning, tendering, construction supervision and advice work connected with delivering Disabled Facility Grants in-house after a successful pilot.

Details of Decision taken:

To approve the continuation of the Housing Advice and Standards Team delivering in-house the planning, tendering, construction supervision and advice work connected with delivering DFGs (as well as the Councils statutory duty to approve DFG applications) following the evaluation of a pilot to bring this work back in-house from the Home Improvement Agency (HIA).

Reason for Decision

For a number of years the Council's DFG service was delivered by the HIA.

Initially, there were many benefits of this method of delivery but over time the HIA had difficulties spending the budget allocated for DFGs. There were also issues identified with the level of technical staff at the HIA, with surveyors being stretched across several areas. This meant that surveyors struggled to meet the requirements of all partner Council's effectively.

In 2013 it was agreed by SDC members that a pilot project could commence to bring the DFG service back in house in order to determine whether staff at the Council could improve service delivery to residents.

Report detailing the evaluation of the pilot project and that reports supporting documents.

Financial implications

Demand is likely to increase going forward and KCC OT's have identified drivers for demand for DFGs as:

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- People are increasingly keen to remain in their own homes;
- More community services such as Telecare and Telehealth technology and Community Rehabilitation teams prevent/reduce admissions and drive towards keeping people at home rather than in institutions;
- The District has an ageing population;
- Medical treatments have advanced meaning people live longer, or are able to live fuller lives within the community rather than in an inpatient/residential setting.

There is also an element of hidden demand in the system as delays in obtaining an OT assessment can mean that it can take up to 12 months to obtain an assessment in some cases.

Should grant funding reduce, or SDC be unable to contribute capital funding, it is likely that policies would need to be changed to target available resources by introducing a system which directs grant aid to those most in need. Such action would put the Council at greater risk of legal challenge and the implications of this need to be properly considered at that time. Deferred payments could be considered to contractors which could result in contractors refusing to undertake DFG works. The possible affect of these factors is noted but is considered to be outside the scope of this report on the performance of the in house pilot.

The Better Care Fund was introduced in June 2013 to support the transformation and integration of health and social care services to ensure local people receive better care. The Better Care Fund is a pooled budget that moves resources into social care and community services in order to better meet the increasingly complex needs of an aging population. Grant funding for DFGs has been included in the Fund so that the provision of adaptions can be incorporated into the strategic consideration and planning of investment. It is paid to KCC and passed on to District Councils, who have a statutory duty to provide DFGs. While our DFG funding is currently ring-fenced and KCC must pass it to Districts, it is a risk that this may not always be the case. This situation will continue to be closely monitored as the Better Care plans become more established and a further risk assessment and options appraisal would be needed to evaluate the impact of this factor at the time.

Legal Implications and Risk Assessment Statement

The Council has a statutory duty to deliver DFGs.

Equality Impacts (Consideration of impacts under the Public Sector Equality Duty)

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups, and (iii) foster good relations between people from different groups. The

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decisions recommended through this paper directly impact on end users. The impact has been analysed and varies between groups of people. The results of this analysis are set out immediately below.

When awarding DFG funding there is an impact on individuals who have a protected characteristic as awarding funding will mean treating some individuals more favourably than others. This is justified however; as this funding will advance the disabled individuals circumstances so that they can have a good quality of life, live at home and receive safe care, the same as any other person would who does not have a disability.

Local Member (s), other Portfolio Holders and/or Directors/Heads of Service Consulted

Cllr Michelle Lowe, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health
Pat Smith, Chief Housing Officer

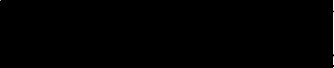
Details of any conflicts of interest

a) declared by any executive member who is consulted by the Decision Taker

None

b) and any details of dispensations granted by the Chief Executive in respect of any declared conflict

n/a

Decision taken by:	Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health
Signed by Portfolio Holder	
Date of Decision	11/9/15
Record made by:	V Etheridge
Date of record:	3 May 2016

