

REPORT TO CABINET

Open		Would any decisions proposed :		
Any especially affected Wards	Mandatory/ Yes	(a) Be entirely within cabinet's powers to decide YES (b) Need to be recommendations to Council NO		
	Discretionary / Yes	(c) Is it a Key Decision NO		
No				
Lead Member: Councillor Adrian Lawrence E-mail: Adrian.lawrence@west-norfolk.gov.uk		Other Cabinet Members consulted:		
		Other Members consulted: Corporate Performance Panel		
Lead Officer: Jo Russell E-mail: jo.russell@west-norfolk.gov.uk Direct Dial: 01553 616685		Other Officers consulted: Gordon Jackson Hopps Duncan Hall Emma Boore John Greenhalgh		
Financial Implications	Policy/Personnel Implications	Statutory Implications	Equal Impact Assessment YES/NO If YES: Pre-screening/ Full Assessment	Risk Management Implications
Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No

Date of meeting: 21st August 2018

REVIEW OF THE PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING POLICY (Housing Assistance Policy – Mandatory and Discretionary)

Summary

The purpose of this paper is to recommend changes proposed for the Private Sector Housing Investment Policy. This Policy has not been updated since 2012 and there is a need to reflect the requirements within the Better Care Fund (BCF) and the DFG Locality plan within the policy.

Recommendation

To approve the revised Private Sector Housing Investment Policy, to be re-named the policy to Housing Assistance Policy – Mandatory and Discretionary which is attached as Appendix 1

Reason for Decision

The intended changes made within the Private Sector Housing Investment Policy reflect the requirements of the BCF and the DFG Locality Plan. This will ensure the council works collaboratively to improve outcomes across health, social care and

housing particularly focusing on reducing hospital and care admissions and supporting early discharge from hospital.

The changes will not only meet these national and local plans but will also increase the speed of processing the adaptations to meet the increase in demand.

It will create a fast-track pathway for the most vulnerable people that require discharge from hospital and residential care to a home environment where they can remain living safely and independently with a reduced care package

1 Background

The Council administers Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs) on behalf of the Government. The funding for the DFG is paid via the Better Care Fund initially to NCC and then paid to this Council.

The Better Care Fund (BCF)/Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) allocation award has been increased in West Norfolk from £759,000 in 2015/16 to £1,352,170 in 2017/18 and there is an expectation that this allocation will either be maintained or will increase marginally year on year until 2020 to meet with the demand on the service. The allocation for 18/19 is £1,456,115

The council make a contribution to the BCF/DFG allocation dependent on the financial resources available.

The conditions attached to all capital grant funding pooled through the BCF states that it will need to be allocated on the basis that local plans are jointly developed and agreed with relevant local authorities.

As a result of this colleagues from the Borough Council have met with representatives from the Norfolk County Council/Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to discuss and agree a plan for the West. In addition to the statutory duty to provide adaptations to the homes of disabled people the following areas have formed part of the planned activity and delivery for 2017/18 and forthcoming years:

- Hospital Discharge – support patients to be discharged from hospital in a timely manner, reducing delays
- Target approaches – proactive use of funding for identified cohorts of people, to ensure they continue to be able to live independently in their home
- Staffing capacity and resources – consider how staffing capacity can be aligned and optimised to ensure timely and effective adaptations.

There are four required outcomes/benefits that form part of the BCF metrics which have to be reported on at a local CCG level:

1. Support people to remain independent
2. Reduce permanent care home admissions
3. Reduce hospital admissions
4. Support discharge from acute services

KEY ISSUES:

A summary of the intended changes are:-

1. Re-Name the policy to Housing Assistance Policy – Mandatory and Discretionary.
2. The policy will cover key areas of assistance provided by the council. The assistance has been detailed into eight separate appendices. The policy provides authority for minor amendments to be made to the specific appendices by delegated power given to the relevant Director.
3. Adapt Grant:
 - To increase the maximum grant limit to £12,000 and to add a condition of this grant that the council will demand the repayment by the recipient of part of the grant to mirror the same charge conditions within the Disabled Facility Grant legislation.
 - To Include fast tracking all hospital discharge/hospital admission/referrals received from a health professional relating to amputee or end of life cases requiring a modular ramp – exclude the means test process for those cases that would normally require the financial assessment and passport them through the application process to assist with an early hospital discharge
 - Provide all minor adaptations where the works cost £1,000 and under without a financial assessment.
4. To create a separate Relocation Grant to a maximum of £6,000. This will offer assistance with removal costs and other associated costs.
5. To introduce a Low Level Preventative Grant for works under £300. This will include minor adaptations and equipment provision and will target those with a health condition that would benefit from an early intervention, to prevent the need for further adaptation services in the future.
6. To amend existing grants and loans within the policy:
 - Discretionary Adaptation Assistance – reduce loan maximum to £10,000
 - Emergency Repair Grant – increase the grant to £500
 - Safe & Secure Grant – amend eligibility in line with the Prevention grant
 - Careline Grant – amend qualifying criteria to include anyone with dementia or memory loss
7. The formation of Housing Review Panel to make some decisions regarding policy administration - The aim of the panel is to provide a formalised system for unusual cases to be discussed and considered on their individual merits, thus promoting consistent decision making.
8. Small projects or Initiatives – to add appendices covering any small project or initiatives that may be funded internally or externally.

2 Policy Implications

These are amendments to the existing Private Sector Housing Investment Policy

3 Financial Implications

There has been an increase in the Better Care Funding since 2015/16
The council has topped up the DFG capital budget each year.

In 17/18 the BCF contribution was £1,352,000
The authority topped this up with £798,000
Total Mandatory and discretionary capital Budget = £2,150,000

The authority received an additional £122,000 from the BCF to be spent in 17/18

Total year end spend for 17/18 was £1,950,099 with a further commitment of £301,537 into 18/19 for cases already approved but not yet completed.

Budget for 18/19

BCF Contribution is £1,456,115
The Authority top up is £811,885
Total Mandatory and Discretionary Capital Budget = £2,268,000

The current estimated spend for 18/19 (including the committed amount above) is £1,341,560 – these are live cases within Care & Repair

The Waiting list is 166 cases awaiting an assessment for a DFG

New Enquiries for DFG per year:

15/16 811

16/17 874

17/18 933

18/19 230 as of June

4 Staffing Implications

Existing staffing resources will need to marginally increase to meet the requirements of the policy going forward.

5 Statutory Considerations

The council has a statutory duty to administer the DFG provision.

6 Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

This amendment to an existing policy has no adverse equality impact.

7 Risk Management-

There are no identified risks to the implementation of the revised policy.

Background Papers

Copy of new Policy – Appendix 1