

## REPORT TO THE EXECUTIVE



<b>DATE</b>	<b>18/06/2019</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>Housing and Leisure</b>
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### **DISCRETIONARY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (DFG)**

#### **PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of this report is to seek approval for amendments to the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2012. To implement discretionary DFG assistance to ensure the Council continue to offer adaptations that improve the health and well-being of disabled people.

#### **RECOMMENDATION**

2. To amend the Housing Renewal Policy 2012 and approve the discretionary disabled facilities assistance of £10,000, giving a maximum assistance of £40,000 (Appendix 1). The discretionary assistance will be funded through Burnley's allocation of the Better Care Fund.

#### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

3. To continue to fully assist disabled people in Burnley to live independent and safe lives within their home.
4. To effectively use the increase in funding, provided by the Better Care Fund to local housing authorities for home adaptations.
5. The existing upper limit for major disabled adaptations has not increased since 2008. Since then there has been an increase in the complexity of needs for disabled applicants, particularly for children, which are accommodated by property extensions. In addition, there have been significant building cost increases over the last 11 years, which cannot be met by the current grant threshold.

#### **SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS**

6. DFGs are the only mandatory grants available to disabled people when works to adapt their home are judged necessary and appropriate to meet their needs and when it is reasonable and practicable to carry them out having regard to

the age and condition of the dwelling. With the exception of child cases, DFGs are generally subject to a test of resources which means that the applicant's income and savings have to be assessed. The maximum amount of DFG is currently set by statute at £30,000 and has been at this level since 2008.

7. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) gave local housing authorities the power to adopt discretionary policies with regard to housing interventions to promote independent living and wellbeing.
8. The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy was updated in 2012 and sets out Burnley's policies in relation to the forms of assistance it is able to offer, based on local priorities and the level of resources available. At this time there was no provision for discretionary disabled facilities assistance as historically there was insufficient government funding to meet the demand for mandatory DFGs and local housing authorities had to operate a waiting list.
9. Since the introduction of the Better Care Fund (BCF) in 2015, capital funding for DFGs is now paid directly to upper tier authorities (LCC), but the statutory duty continues to sit with the local housing authority. Currently the upper tier authorities have to allocate funding to their respective housing authorities as directed by Government. Since the introduction of the BCF, budgets for DFGs have significantly increased in Burnley to the point where there is role forwards of funds to the next financial year.
10. Today adaptations are much more complex, with specialist equipment being required. In addition building costs have increased over the last 11 years. Applying inflation or the retail price index supports the proposal of introducing discretionary disabled facilities assistance at £10,000 giving a maximum assistance of £40,000.
11. Examples of required assistance that exceed the current £30,000 limit are those where the extensions are required to be larger to accommodate a disabled person who in the main is refined to a bed or wheel chair. Ramped access is required to both level access sleeping and bathing facilities on the ground floor with specialist toilets, rise and fall baths and ceiling track hoists.
12. Paragraph 5.6.8 of appendix 1 to this report contains the amendment.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND BUDGET PROVISION**

13. The cost of the discretionary disabled facilities assistance will be funded through the Burnley's allocation of the Better Care Fund.

#### **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

14. As detailed in the report.

#### **DETAILS OF CONSULTATION**

15. Executive member for Housing and Leisure and the Executive Member for Resources

and Performance Management.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

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**ALSO:** Paul Gatrell