

DECISION MAKER:	Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care following consultation with the Joint Commissioning Board
SUBJECT:	The Disabled Facilities Grant Review and Recommendations
DATE OF DECISION:	15 April 2021
REPORT OF:	Interim Managing Director/Director of Quality and Integration

CONTACT DETAILS

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STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY

NOT APPLICABLE

BRIEF SUMMARY

In September 2019, the Integrated Commissioning Unit, working with Southampton City Council's Adult Social Care and adaptation services, commenced a review of the utilisation of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and opportunities for greater alignment with other services to improve client experience, promote independence and support the delivery of more efficient and effective services. This highlighted a number of areas of concern along with a substantial budget underspend (£3.7m) but also a number of opportunities.

In February 2020 the Joint Commissioning Board approved the appointment of a consultant with specialist knowledge in the DFG, associated service delivery and national good practice to undertake a more detailed review.

The outbreak of the COVID 19 Pandemic held up the review but it did go ahead in August 2020 when we commissioned Foundations to undertake the work completing in December 2020. The review presents 14 recommendations, which are detailed within the review report which can be found in the appendix.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

	(i)	To note the content of the Disabled Facilities Grant Review.
	(ii)	<p>To endorse the Disabled Facilities Grant Review recommendations and Next Steps which are:-</p> <p><u>Work Stream 1.</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To establish a cross agency/directorate project group with Senior Project Lead and designated Project Management. 2. To develop and agree Terms of Reference and detailed Project Plan that will deliver a DFG delivery model in line with the review recommendations to include timescales, resource implications, business and procurement expectations and activity and potential risks. 3. To implement the agreed DFG delivery model. <p><u>Work Stream 2.</u></p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To identify a commissioning manager to work with the BCF Finance Board to establish a methodology for identifying and prioritising schemes that funded through the DFG underspend. To ensure that expenditure is within national DFG guidance and recognises established national good practice. 2. To establish monitoring arrangements that ensure funded schemes achieve their aims. 3. To ensure that the agreed DFG expenditure forms part of the wider BCF monitoring arrangements including established local and national reporting. 4. To have these arrangements in place by the end of May 2021.
REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS	
1.	The review was undertaken by an organisation which is expert in this field and makes recommendation based upon local findings and national best practice.
ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED	
2.	The Executive Directors of Wellbeing (Health and Adults) and Communities, Culture & Homes endorsed the decision to undertake the review. Therefore options considered are referenced within the review and recommendations made based upon those options.
DETAIL (Including consultation carried out)	
	Background and Summary
3.	<p>The full review of the DFG undertaken by Foundations is made available in the appendix and provides the full context, description of process and recommendations. In summary -</p> <p>The review made 14 recommendations (listed on P.17 of the review). The majority of the recommendations (1-9) relate to Work stream 1 with the remainder 10-14 Work stream 2 activity.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Work stream 1. Substantial system change in relation to processes and practices that ensure effective provision of adaptations through the DFG. ii) Work stream 2 - A range of locally agreed schemes and initiatives dedicated to maintaining people's independence in a broader sense and that support Southampton's strategic aims. The initiatives primarily focus on the utilisation of the current underspend and are not part of the larger system change that is required. <p>The review recognised that there had been previous attempts to change processes and practices that did not achieve the required aims. The reviewers felt strongly that the realisation of Work stream 1 relies heavily on senior leadership and dedicated project management, as change is required across a number of directorates and agency boundaries.</p> <p>The key risks associated with this project are those associated with the breadth of change across the wider system The realisation of the benefits is reliant on the whole adaptation pathway being flexible and responsive. The recommendations within the report, if fully implemented, promote this approach.</p>
	Next Steps
4.	<p>The proposed next steps are as follows -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Executive Director Health and Adults has agreed to act as Senior Project Lead for Work Stream 1 and has identified dedicated Project Management to support the work. • The costs associated with Work stream 1 are unknown as this depends on the

	<p>model that the project team agree and seek to deliver to meet the review recommendations. This is likely to include procurement activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appendix 8 describes a timeline that seeks to deliver change by October 2021 however, this did not take account of the hold on progressing the work due to the COVID pandemic. • The DFG forms part of the Better Care Fund with expenditure managed through the BCF Finance Board. The expectation is that the short term bespoke activity in Work stream 2 would be agreed and managed through this forum. This would utilise established processes in line with all other schemes managed as part of the Better Care Fund (BCF). • The BCF Finance Board will develop the methodology for prioritising which schemes to take forward.
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RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- Work stream 1 is the priority as this ensures that the processes and practices associated with the provision of DFG adaptations are fit for purpose.
- A project Manager needs to be identified to support this piece of work.
- The costs associated with Work stream 1 are unknown at this stage as they depend on the model that the project team agree going forward and seek to deliver to meet the review recommendations.
- The recommendations include the bringing together of functions currently undertaken separately (e.g. single manager for adaptations process) which might require HR support, realignment of roles, integration of budgets etc.
- There is a recommendation that casework support be offered to clients during the DFG process particularly those who are vulnerable. Currently this is not offered so would need to be commissioned in some way thus requiring a business process that supports which might include tendering.
- There are issues related to the provision of adaptations once assessment has taken place particularly related to in-house contracting. The review recommends that this provision may need to be enhanced or supported through other means to ensure that work is carried out in a timely fashion. From a resource perspective this could be costly and time consuming as potentially could include some outsourcing to manage the current waiting list.
- The review indicates that the frontline teams associated with the assessment and provision of adaptations are struggling both with the current system but also in ensuring that the work is managed in a timely manner with appropriate levels of client support and oversight. To this end although the changes in the system and pathway will support some of these issues there is a likelihood that the operational teams will also require further staffing to meet the recommendations of the report.
- The BCF Finance system associated with Work stream 2 has been set up to manage any underspend that occurs whilst Work stream 1 is under development and has become operational. BCF Finance Board will need to develop systems that prioritise schemes where DFG funds could be utilised however the level of spend would need to be determined by any available underspend once work stream 1 is delivered.

Capital/Revenue

5.	The DFG Budget, including carry forward, is increasing annually so unless we are actively utilising processes such as those recommended within the review and overseen by the BCF Finance and Performance Group the underspend is likely to continue to increase.
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Property/Other

6.	None
LEGAL IMPLICATIONS	
<u>Statutory power to undertake proposals in the report:</u>	
7.	Section 75 of the National Health Service Act 2006 contains powers enabling NHS bodies and local authorities to pool funding into a pooled fund. The Southampton City Better Care Fund Section 75 Partnership Agreement, which encompasses the DFG, is such an arrangement which enables the management of BCF schemes in accordance with the national conditions.
RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS	
8.	<p>The application of the DFG is important in ensuring that people are supported to be independent as possible in their own homes. The risks associated with not managing the grant effectively are that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People's general quality of life is enhanced if they are independent and the current long waiting lists and difficulties in realising the outcome of the DFG assessments reduces this quality leaving people reliant on others for their care unnecessarily. • People are more likely to require higher levels of home based care or residential care to compensate for the adaptations not being made which is not cost effective. • People's environments are less likely to be safe and therefore increasing the risk of accidents e.g. falls and therefore the likelihood of hospital admission. • The DFG budget is substantially underspent which means that care that could be provided that would enhance people's lives and support the system is not being provided. • In recent years the use of the DFG has been extended which would support other operational areas e.g. social work, equipment provision healthy homes. These opportunities are not currently being realised for the benefit of the whole system. • The underspend in the budget has led to increased scrutiny and there is a risk in the future that if we don't utilise the funds effectively it will not be given to us. • All of the above risks can be mitigated against by following the recommendations of the review which focusses on person centred system change."
CONFLICT OF INTEREST IMPLICATIONS	
9.	None
POLICY FRAMEWORK IMPLICATIONS	
10.	The recommendations in this paper reflect the requirements which are expected to be included within the national policy framework.

KEY DECISION?	No
WARDS/COMMUNITIES AFFECTED:	N/A
<u>SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION</u>	
Appendices	
1.	City of Southampton: A Review of the Disabled Facilities Grant Programme January 2021.
Documents In Members' Rooms	
1.	None

Equality Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require an Equality and Safety Impact Assessment (ESIA) to be carried out.		No
Privacy Impact Assessment		
Do the implications/subject of the report require a Privacy Impact Assessment (PIA) to be carried out.		No
Other Background Documents		
Other Background documents available for inspection at: CCG		
Title of Background Paper(s)		
1.	None	