

NORTH WEST LEICESTERSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET – 8 MARCH 2016

Title of report	DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS AND LIGHTBULB PROJECT
Key Decision	a) Financial Yes b) Community Yes
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Purpose of report	Cabinet to note the extension of service delivery of the Council's Disabled Facilities Grants via the Lightbulb project
Reason for Decision	To ensure Cabinet are aware of the ongoing service delivery of Disabled Facility Grants through the Lightbulb project
Council Priorities	Homes and Communities Value For Money
Implications:	
Financial/Staff	NWLDC will continue to fund the administration of NWL Disabled Facilities Grants within the Lightbulb project from within existing revenue budgets
Link to relevant CAT	None
Risk Management	Risk assessments have been completed by the Lightbulb project team
Equalities Impact Screening	None discernible
Human Rights	None discernible
Transformational Government	Working in partnership within the Public Sector to generate improved resident outcomes and efficiency savings for the Public Sector is considered good practice.

Comments of Head of Paid Service	The report is satisfactory.
Comments of Deputy Section 151 Officer	The report is satisfactory.
Comments of Deputy Monitoring Officer	The report is satisfactory.
Consultees	Corporate Leadership Team Blaby District Council
Background papers	Cabinet Report 21 July 2015 Disabled Facilities Grants and Lightbulb Project
Recommendations	<p>THAT CABINET AGREES –</p> <p>A) THE EXTENSION OF THE ADMINISTRATION OF DISABLED FACILITY GRANTS IN THE LIGHTBULB PROJECT WITH BLABY DISTRICT COUNCIL UNTIL 31 MARCH 2017</p> <p>B) ANY FURTHER CHANGES OR EXTENSIONS TO THE DELIVERY OF DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS ARE DELEGATED TO THE DIRECTOR OF SERVICES IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER</p>

1.0 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 As stated in the Cabinet report 21 July 2015 the Lightbulb project is a major transformational programme across the 7 District Councils and the County Council which will integrate a range of housing support services such as DFG's, minor adaptations, affordable warmth and handyperson services into a single service available to all. This new service will be easier to access, easier to use and will provide support around an individual's need not an organisations processes.
- 1.2 A governance structure has been created by the Lead Chief Executive from Blaby District Council Sandra Whiles and NWLDC has representation throughout the governance levels as follows;
- Project Board – Glyn Jones Director of Housing
 - Steering Group – Clare Proudfoot Environmental Protection Team Manager
 - Project Steering Group – Minna Scott Public Protection Team Leader
- 1.3 Updates are also regularly provided to Chief Executives meetings, Unified Prevention Board, Health Leads meetings and various other groups.

2.0 NWLDC CONTEXT

- 2.1 DFG's were introduced in 1989 and are provided in Leicestershire by the local Councils. They provide financial help for disabled people who need an adaptation to their home. This includes people who own their own home, tenants, and people living in houseboats and caravans.
- 2.2 NWLDC receives an annual government grant to deliver DFG's to residents in need. The grant which used to be paid to Districts direct is now paid to Upper Tier authorities. For 15/16 it was agreed that LCC would passport the grant in total back out to Districts. Some Districts such as NWLDC then add to the grant with their own General Fund monies to allow more grants to be administered.
- 2.3 DFG grants are generally classed into three categories:-

Category A - Equipment i.e. stairlifts, toilets, hand rails

Category B - Building Works up to £10,000 i.e. level access showers, ramps (minor grants)

Category C – Complex building works more than £10,000 i.e. Extensions (major grants)

3.0 CURRENT POSITION - PILOT PHASE

- 3.1 NWLDC formally entered into the pilot project on 19 August 2015 until 31 March 2016.
- 3.2 NWLDC fund the administration of DFG's within the Lightbulb project at an annual cost of £13,407 per annum; pro rata for 15/16 it will be approximately £8,279. This was based on an estimate of officer time.
- 3.3 The entering into the pilot phase was enshrined through a legal agreement which covered data protection, performance indicators, funding arrangements and also break clauses. The agreement includes a clause allowing the arrangement to be extended beyond 31 March 2016.
- 3.4 NWLDC have been satisfied with the performance of Blaby DC in delivering the DFG function for NWLDC which is monitored through a Service Level Agreement and monthly monitoring meetings.

4.0 CURRENT PERFORMANCE

- 4.1 The latest figures supplied by Blaby DC were as at 11 January:

DFG Expenditure £89,430.26 including 12 minor grants and 2 major grants
Approved Grants/Committed £155,227.59 including 23 minor grants and 3 major grants
DFG's Awaiting Approval £195,679.00 including 33 minor grants and 2 major grants

- 4.2 As at 11 January 2016 there is £117,773 left to be allocated out of ear marked reserves and 15/16 funding.
- 4.3 Average completion times for grants from referral have reduced since joining the pilot and are continuing to reduce from 36 weeks at the start of the pilot to now taking 25 weeks.

5.0 NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 It was intended that the Lightbulb Project would be in a position to make proposals to all Districts to join the project from 1 April 2016. However, the business case has not been completed and a revised date of June 2016 for a proposal to be circulated for Districts consideration is now being discussed.
- 5.2 As NWLDC performance through average completion times is improving meaning applicants are receiving home improvement grants quicker from referral than prior to entering the project it is proposed to extend the arrangements for a further 12 months until 31 March 2017.
- 5.3 The legal agreement allows for such an extension along with provision for termination if at any point NWLDC wish to withdraw from the project. Monthly monitoring meetings will continue to be held with a further review after 6 months.
- 5.4 It is recommended to give delegated authority to the Director of Services in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder to make any further changes or extensions to the delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants.