

## Report of the Cabinet Member – Next Generation Services

Cabinet – 21 April 2016

### DISABLED FACILITIES & IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAMME 2016/17

<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide details of the Disabled Facilities & Improvement Grant Programme and to seek approval to include schemes in the 2016/17 Capital Programme.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Local Housing Strategy.</li><li>2. Private Sector Housing Renewal and Disabled Adaptations: Policy to Provide Assistance 2012-2017.</li><li>3. Statutory declaration of the Sandfields Renewal Area approved by Cabinet on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2014.</li></ol>
<b>Reason for Decision:</b>	To comply with Financial Procedure Rule No.7 (Capital Programming and Appraisals) - to commit and authorise schemes as per the Capital Programme.
<b>Consultation:</b>	Legal, Finance, Access to Services.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The Disabled Facilities and Improvement Grant Programme as detailed, including its financial implications, are approved and included in the 2016/17 Capital Budget.</li></ol>
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## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The current Private Sector Housing Renewal and Disabled Adaptations Policy was approved by Council on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2011.

## **2.0 Capital Programme Process**

- 2.1 The Disabled Facilities Grants and Improvement Grant Budget for 2016/17 of £5.2m was agreed by Council on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016.

## **3.0 The Scheme**

- 3.1 The current Policy for Private Sector Housing Renewal and Disabled Adaptations sets out the detail of various types of assistance aimed at helping home owners and tenants to carry out essential adaptations and repairs. Assistance is provided on the basis of helping residents, who are often on low incomes and/or vulnerable, carry out essential repairs and maintain independence at home. The Policy also describes the Council's approach to area based housing renewal, bringing empty homes back into use and offering loans for home repairs. In summary, types of assistance include:

- Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) – Mandatory large scale adaptations for private home owners and tenants of private rented accommodation. For example, level access showers.
- Council House Adaptations – small and large scale adaptations for Council tenants
- Homefix Loans – Recyclable loans for homeowners needing large repairs. For example, roof repairs and damp proofing.
- Emergency Repair Fund – Small repairs of an emergency nature. For example, dangerous electrics.
- Grants for Nominations – For works to bring long term empty properties back into use. Grant is provided in exchange for nomination rights.
- Swansea Care & Repair – Small, rapid adaptations and repairs provided for elderly and disabled residents.
- Houses to Homes Loan Scheme – interest free loans to tackle empty homes. To renovate and improve properties or convert empty properties into a number of units suitable for residential accommodation. Loans to be repaid and recycled as further loans.
- National Home Improvement Loan Scheme – interest free loans for the repair or conversion of properties to make them safe, warm and/or secure. Loans to be repaid and recycled as further loans.

- Renewal Areas – Renewal Area funding to deliver an agreed programme of property repair and environmental improvement works in designated Renewal Areas.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The programme for 2016/17 is shown at table 1 below and is fully funded by the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) with the exception of the Sandfields Renewal Area which is funded by Welsh Government Grant, Utility Company funding and the General Fund. The Houses to Homes and National Home Improvement Loan schemes are funded by WG and have been reported separately. An additional amount of £49,979.40 was received from WG for the Houses to Homes and National Home Improvement Loan schemes in 2015/16 following one Local Authority's decision not to take part.
- 4.2 The Swansea Care and Repair handyperson scheme budget has been increased to £0.4m for 2016/17 to reflect increase in demand for minor adaptations. This will be funded by a reduction of £0.2m in the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Budget. Minor adaptations carried out by Swansea Care and Repair are used to delay the need for larger works funded by DFG. The schemes complement each other and as a result there is expected to be no significant customer impact by making this budget amendment. Swansea Care and Repair will become Western Bay Care and Repair during 2016/17 following completion of a merger with Neath Port Talbot Care and Repair. There are no budgetary implications arising from this. Funding provided to Western Bay Care and Repair will only be used for Swansea residents.
- 4.3 The Homefix loans budget was reduced in 2015/16 to fund the estimated level of future loan defaults as per Cabinet Report 18<sup>th</sup> November 2014 regarding the Houses to Homes and National Home Improvement Loan schemes. No further loan default provision is required so the Homefix loan budget will be £0.415m for 2016/17.
- 4.4 Ring fenced Welsh Government funding for Renewal Areas in Wales comes to an end after the 2016/17 financial year. Funding for the Sandfields Renewal Area for 2017/18 and beyond will be the subject of a future report.

**Table 1 details proposed 2016/17 programme and draft programme for 2017/18.**

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>SCHEMES</b>	<b>2015/16</b>	<b>Proposed 2016/17</b>	<b>Draft 2017/18</b>
DFG, mini and fast track adaptations	£4,500,000	£4,300,000	£4,300,000
Tenant adaptations (HRA funded)	£2,750,000	£2,750,000	£2,750,000
Homefix Loans	£377,024	£415,000	£415,000
Emergency Repair fund	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
Grants for nominations	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000
Swansea Care and Repair Handyperson	£200,000	£400,000	£400,000
Houses to Homes/ National Home Improvement	£1,189,088*		
Sandfields Renewal Area**	£730,000	£729,760	£0
Loan default provision	£37,976	£0	£0
<b>TOTAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>£9,869,088</b>	<b>£8,679,760</b>	<b>£7,950,000</b>
<b>Funded as follows:</b>			
Total general funded	£5,200,000	£5,200,000	£5,200,000
Total HRA funded	£2,750,000	£2,750,000	£2,750,000
Total Grant funded	£1,919,088	£729,760	£0
* amended amount to reflect additional funding award (see para 4.1)			
** Renewal Area budgets are ring fenced to Sandfields.			
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>£9,869,088</b>	<b>£8,679,760</b>	<b>£7,950,000</b>

4.5 Revenue running costs for 2016/17 are estimated at £1,104,100 and are met from fees of £1,085,400 generated from administering grants. The balance is met from a contribution of £18,700 from the General fund. There are no asset rent charges.

## **5.0 Equality and Engagement Implications**

5.1 The Access to Services Team has advised that an equality impact assessment (EIA) is not required.

## **6.0 Staffing Implications**

None

## **7.0 IT/Systems Implications**

None

## **8.0 Legal Implications**

8.1 The schemes detailed are in line with local authority powers to provide assistance, contained in the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 and the Councils published Policy.

8.2 The Council will need to ensure that it complies with any terms and conditions attached to any Welsh Government grant funding.

**Background Papers:** Private Sector Housing Renewal and Disabled Adaptations Policy to Provide Assistance 2012-2017

**Appendices:** None