

## Report of the Cabinet Member for Climate Change & Service Transformation

Cabinet - 18 November 2021

### Disabled Facilities & Improvement Grant Programme 2021/22 - Transfer of Budget

<b>Purpose:</b>	<p>To provide details of Disabled Facilities &amp; Improvement Grant Programme in 2021-22 and to seek approval to vire budget from Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) to the Council's Capital General Fund and Minor Adaptations Grant and from Valleys Taskforce Grant budget into Western Valleys Grant budget.</p> <p>To comply with Financial Procedure Rule No.7 (Capital Programming and Appraisals) - to commit and authorise schemes as per the Capital Programme.</p>
<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 2017-2022.</li></ol>
<b>Consultation:</b>	Legal, Finance, Access to Services.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	<p>It is recommended that Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) Approve the transfer of £1,210,000 from DFG budget to Council's Capital General fund;</li><li>2) Approve the transfer of £307,000 from DFG budget to Minor Adaptations Grant budget;</li><li>3) Approve the transfer of £105,000 from Valleys Taskforce Empty Property budget to the Western Valleys Taskforce Empty Property 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 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2017.

## **2.0 Capital Programme Process**

- 2.1 The Disabled Facilities Grants and Improvement Grant Budget for 2021-22 of £5.2 million was agreed by Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021. A further £2.977 million was carried forward from 2020-21 due to delays in the capital programme resulting from the Covid pandemic restrictions encountered during the year. From the £5.2 million budget, £4.3million was allocated to DFGs and £338,000 was allocated to Mini Adaptations Grants (MAGs).
- 2.2 The Welsh Government Valleys Taskforce Phase 2 and Western Valley Empty Property Grant scheme programme was agreed by Cabinet on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020. These programmes required capital contributions from the Council of £140,000 for the Valleys Taskforce and £182,000 for the Western Valley schemes.

## **3.0 DFG Underspend**

- 3.1 The budget allocation of £4.3 million for DFGs in 2021-22 and £200,000 carried forward from 2020-21, giving a total budget figure for DFGs of £4.5 million is fully committed for spend during 2021-22. The current levels of budget will continue to be needed in future to service the ongoing demand for DFGs.
- 3.2 Demand for DFGs has been assessed and has now returned to pre Covid levels. It is forecast the budget of £4.5 million in 2021-22 will be sufficient to meet the in year demand. This means a significant proportion of the DFG budget carried forward from 2020-21 as a result of Covid will not be required for the DFG programme in 2021-22. It is proposed that £1,210,000 of the DFG carry forward is therefore returned to the Council's Capital General Fund.
- 3.3 It is proposed a further £307,000 of the carry forward DFG underspend from 2020-21 is transferred to the Minor Adaptations Grant budget for 2021-22 to meet the assessed demand for smaller adaptations.

## **4.0 Minor Adaptations Grant.**

- 4.1 The MAG programme assists vulnerable elderly and disabled residents to receive minor adaptations quickly through the Western Bay Care and Repair Handyperson service. Demand for the service is increasing year on year.
- 4.2 The budget of £293,000 for MAG is forecast to have a significant overspend in 2020-21, with a forecast spend of £600,000.
- 4.3 The proposed transfer of DFG budget of £307,000 to the MAG programme will address the funding shortfall.

## **5.0 Valleys Taskforce and Western Valleys Empty Property Grant programmes.**

- 5.1 Welsh Government reduced the required Council contribution towards the Valleys Taskforce Empty Property grant on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021 from £140,000 to £35,000.
- 5.2 The Western Valleys Empty Property Grant scheme, in operation since January 2021, has seen significant interest from applicants. Additional funding is required to meet this ongoing demand. It is proposed the £105,000 saving from the Valleys Taskforce scheme Council's contribution is vired into the Western Valleys scheme accordingly.

## **6.0 Integrated Assessment Implications**

- 6.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:
- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
  - Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
  - Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage
  - Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language
  - Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
  - Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.
- 6.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.
- 6.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.
- 6.4 An IIA Screening Form has been completed and a full IIA report is not required at this stage. The proposal to transfer DFG budget to other programmes will not negatively impact disabled clients as it is forecast there is sufficient funds in the capital programme for 2021-22 to meet the demand for DFGs. The transfer of funds to the Minor Adaptations Grant programme will result in more elderly and disabled clients receiving minor adaptations quickly to assist in preventing

hospital admissions and assisting hospital discharges. The provision of additional funds to the Western Valleys Empty Property scheme will assist Community Cohesion by bringing wasted empty properties back into use that often blight communities, reducing anti-social behaviour associated with empty properties including fly-tipping and substance misuse and assist in tackling poverty by creating additional affordable accommodation for people on low income currently on the housing register.

## 7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 The proposed virements are detailed below.

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Existing Funding 21-22</b>	<b>Virement figure</b>	<b>Proposed Revised Funding</b>
DFG	£6,017,000	-£1,517,000	£4,500,000
Minor Adaptations Grant	£293,000	£307,000	£600,000
Valleys Taskforce Empty Property Grant	£400,000	-£105,000	£295,000
Western Valleys Empty Property Grant	£520,000	£105,000	£625,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£7,125,000</b>	<b>-£1,210,000*</b>	<b>£5,915,000</b>

\* £1,210,000 to be returned to Council's General Capital Fund

## 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.

**Background Papers:** None

**Appendices:** None