



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Service Transformation

Special Cabinet – 29 September 2022

### Disabled Facilities & Improvement Grant Programme Transfer of Budget 2022/23

<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide details of Disabled Facilities & Improvement Grant Programme in 2022-23 and to seek approval to vire budget from Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) to the Council's Minor Adaptations Grant and Homefix loans budget to the Council's Capital General Fund. To comply with Financial Procedure Rule No.7 (Capital Programming and Appraisals) - to commit and authorise schemes as per the Capital Programme.
<b>Policy Framework:</b>	1. Local Housing Strategy. 2. Private Sector Housing Renewal and Disabled Adaptations: Policy to Provide Assistance 2022-2027.
<b>Consultation:</b>	Legal, Finance, Access to Services.
<b>Recommendation(s):</b>	It is recommended that Cabinet:  1) Approve the transfer of £230,000 from DFG budget to Minor Adaptations Grant budget;  2) Approve the transfer of £500,000 from Homefix loans budget to the Council's Capital General Fund.
<b>Report Author:</b>	Darren Williams
<b>Finance Officer:</b>	Ben Smith
<b>Legal Officer:</b>	Debbie Smith
<b>Access to Services Officer:</b>	Catherine Window

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The current Private Sector Housing Renewal and Disabled Adaptations Policy was approved by Council on 27th January 2022.

## **2.0 Capital Programme Process**

- 2.1 The Disabled Facilities Grants and Improvement Grant Budget for 2022-23 of £5.695 million was agreed by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022. A further £1.605 million was carried forward from 2021-22 due to delays in the capital programme resulting from implications of the Covid pandemic including building material shortages and contractor capacity issues due to labour shortages. From the £5.695 million budget, £4.3million was allocated to DFGs, £370,000 was allocated to Minor Adaptations Grants (MAGs) and £949,000 was allocated to Homefix property appreciation loans.

## **3.0 DFG Underspend**

- 3.1 The initial budget allocation of £4.3 million for DFGs in 2022-23 will be fully committed for spend during 2022-23. 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 is returning to pre Covid levels. At this stage the budget of £4.3 million in 2022-23 will be sufficient to meet the in year demand. At current demand levels a significant proportion of the DFG budget carried forward from 2021-22 of £1.255 million will not be required for the DFG programme in 2022-23. It is proposed that £230,000 of the DFG carry forward is transferred to the Minor Adaptations Grant budget for 2022-23 to meet the assessed demand for smaller adaptations.
- 3.3 The removal of means test contributions for medium adaptation DFGs from the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 as instructed by Welsh Government is expected to result in an increased demand for DFGs in the future. It is proposed that the remaining DFG budget carried forward from 2021-22 of £1.025 million remains within the DFG budget for 2022-23 as a contingency.

## **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 £370,000 for MAG is forecast to have a significant overspend in 2022-23, with a forecast spend of £600,000.
- 4.3 The proposed transfer of DFG budget of £230,000 to the MAG programme will address the funding shortfall.

## **5.0 Homefix loans**

- 5.1 There continues to be a reduced demand for Homefix property appreciation loans from elderly and disabled applicants to carry out urgent and emergency repairs to their homes compared to pre-covid levels. At this stage a budget of £776,000 should be sufficient to meet current demand levels. It is proposed that £500,000 of the Homefix loan budget carried forward is returned to the Council's Capital General Fund.

## **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.
- 6.1.1 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'.
- 6.1.2 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.
- 6.2 An IIA Screening Form was completed for the Disabled Facilities & Improvement Grant programme FPR report agreed by Cabinet on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2022 and a full IIA report was not required at this stage. The screening form confirmed the grant programme does not negatively impact on any protected characteristic groups, with a number benefitting from the forms of assistance provided.

6.3 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 2022-23 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 proposal to return Homefix loan budget to Council's Capital General Fund will not negatively impact the elderly and disabled client group as it is forecast there is sufficient funds in the capital programme to meet demand for these loans.

## 7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 The proposed virements are detailed below.

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Existing Funding 22-23</b>	<b>Virement figure</b>	<b>Proposed Revised Funding</b>
<b>DFG</b>	£5,555,000	-£230,000	£5,325,000
<b>Minor Adaptations Grant</b>	£370,000	£230,000	£600,000
<b>Homefix loans *</b>	£1,276,000	-£500,000	£776,000
<b>Comfort, Safety and Security Grant</b>	£53,000	nil	£53,000
<b>Grant For Noms</b>	£46,000	nil	£46,000
<b>Totals</b>	<b>£7,300,000</b>	<b>-£500,000*</b>	<b>£6,800,000</b>

\* £500,000 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