



Report of Cabinet Member for Service Transformation

Cabinet – 21 September 2023

Disabled Facilities & Improvement Grant Programme 2023/24 – Transfer of Budget

Purpose:	To provide details of Disabled Facilities & Improvement Grant Programme in 2023-24 and to seek approval to return unused funding from Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) and Homefix loans budgets to the Corporate Centre. To comply with Financial Procedure Rule No.7 (Capital Programming and Appraisals) - to commit and authorise schemes as per the Capital Programme.
Policy Framework:	1. Local Housing Strategy. 2. Private Sector Housing Renewal and Disabled Adaptations: Policy to Provide Assistance 2022-2027.
Consultation:	Legal, Finance, Access to Services.
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that Cabinet: 1. Approve the transfer of £460,519 from DFG budget and £712,556 from Homefix loans budget to the Corporate Centre.
Report Author:	Darren Williams
Finance Officer:	Ben Smith
Legal Officer:	Debbie Smith
Access to Services Officer:	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 initial Disabled Facilities Grants and Improvement Grant Budget for 2023-24 of £5.2 million was agreed by Cabinet on 23rd March 2023. A further £1.401million was carried forward at the mid-point of 2022-23 due to delays in the capital programme resulting from lack of contractor capacity issues. From the £5.2 million budget, £4.3million was allocated to DFGs, £370,000 was allocated to Minor Adaptations Grants (MAGs) and £500,000 was allocated to Homefix property appreciation loans.
- 2.2 At the end of 2022-23 there was a further £1,010,416 capital budget underspend that is to be carried forward to 2023-24.

3.0 DFG Underspend

- 3.1 The initial budget allocation of £4.3 million for DFGs in 2023-24 will be fully committed for spend during 2023-24. The current levels of base budget will continue to be needed in future to service the ongoing demand for DFGs.
- 3.2 Officers are monitoring the demand for DFGs carefully following removal of means test contributions for medium adaptation DFGs. DFG funding of £1.025 million was carried forward from 2021-22 into 2022-23 as a contingency in case of increased demand following the removal of the means test. There is now evidence of this increase in demand with a marked increase in grant applications to date in 2023-24 compared to pre-covid years levels. However, not all of the contingency will be required and it is forecasted that a budget of £5 million in 2023-24 will be sufficient to meet this in year demand. It is proposed the remaining £460,519 is returned to the Corporate Centre for future allocation to other capital projects.

4.0 Homefix loans.

- 4.1 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 it is anticipated a budget of £400,000 will be sufficient to meet current demand levels. It is proposed that £712,556 of the Homefix loan budget is returned to the Corporate Centre for future allocation to other capital projects.
- 4.2 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.

4.3 The proposed virements are detailed below :

Fund	Original Funding 2023-24	Carry Forwards 2022-23	Budget 2023-24	Virement figure	Proposed Revised Funding 2023-24
DFG	£5,325,000	£135,519	£5,460,519	-£460,519	£5,000,000
Homefix loans	£876,000	£236,556	£1,112,556	-£712,556	£400,000

5.0 Integrated Assessment Implications

5.1 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.

5.1.1 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’.

5.1.2 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.

5.2 An IIA Screening Form was completed for the Disabled Facilities & Improvement Grant programme FPR report agreed by Cabinet on 23rd March 2023 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.

5.3 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 2023-24 to meet the demand for DFGs.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 This reports seeks approval to move a total of £1,173,075 from the Disabled Facilities Grant budget (DFG) (£460,519) and the Homefix Loans budget (£712,556) to the Corporate Centre.

7.0 Legal Implications

7.1 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 Council's published Policy.

Background Papers: None

Appendices:

Appendix A - IIA screening form.