

## Report of the Cabinet Member Next Generation Services

Cabinet – 16 March 2017

### HOUSING GENERAL FUND (HGF) DISABLED FACILITIES & IMPROVEMENT GRANT PROGRAMME 2017/18

<b>Purpose:</b>	To provide details of the Disabled Facilities & Improvement Grant Programme and to seek approval to include schemes in the 2017/18 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 2017/18 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 2017/18 of £5.2m was agreed by Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2017.

## **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 2017/18 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 when available, 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 to Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2013 and the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2014 respectively.
- 4.2 Due to a fall in demand attributable to applicants having to repay the funding when a property is sold, it is proposed that the Emergency Repair Fund (ERF) budget be reduced to 0 in 2017/18. In future, applicants needing repairs of this type will be assisted by the funding provided to Care and Repair Western Bay. The ERF scheme will be the subject to review in 2017. It is proposed that the ERF budget for 2017/18 will be transferred to the Homefix loan scheme to help meet rising demand for loan based larger scale repairs.
- 4.3 Ring fenced Welsh Government grant funding for Renewal Areas in Wales ended in 2016/17. Bids for future funding for the Sandfields Renewal Area for 2017/18 and beyond will be made when appropriate and will be reported separately. There is currently a budget of £258k available on ERF and it is proposed that £200,000 of ERF carried forward to 2017/18 be utilised for the Sandfields Renewal Area to help maintain the programme of works in the area whilst alternative sources of funding are sought. The balance of carried forward ERF funding will be utilised by the Homefix loans programme for 2017/18.
- 4.4 It is also proposed that £739,000 of Renewal Area funding held in balances be used in the Sandfields Renewal Area Programme for 2017/18. This funding is made up of £674,000 of receipts from the Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP) for energy efficiency works completed in the former Hafod Renewal Area and £65,000 received from private landlords who are required to contribute towards works they have received via the Sandfields Renewal Area programme.

**Table 1 details proposed 2017/18 programme and draft programme for 2018/19.**

<b>Table 1</b>			
<b>SCHEMES</b>	<b>2016/17</b>	<b>Proposed 2017/18</b>	<b>Draft 2018/19</b>
DFG, mini and fast track adaptations	£4,300,000	£4,300,000	£4,300,000
Tenant adaptations (HRA funded)	£2,750,000	£2,750,000	£2,750,000
Homefix Loans	£415,000	£420,000	£420,000
Emergency Repair fund	£5,000	£0	£0
Grants for nominations	£80,000	£80,000	£80,000
Care and Repair Western Bay Handyperson	£400,000	£400,000	£400,000
Sandfields Renewal Area	£729,760	£939,000	£0
<b>TOTAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>£8,679,760</b>	<b>£8,889,000</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
Renewal Area	£ 729,760	£ 939,000	£0
<b>Total funding</b>	<b>£8,679,760</b>	<b>£8,889,000</b>	<b>£7,950,000</b>

4.5 Revenue running costs for 2017/18 are estimated at £1,092,200 and are met from fees of £1,085,400 generated from administering grants. The balance is met from a contribution of £6,800 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 as there is no change to the policy or to the process involved in assessing eligibility for receiving assistance.

## **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