

Single Member Cabinet Decision

**Executive
Forward Plan
Reference**

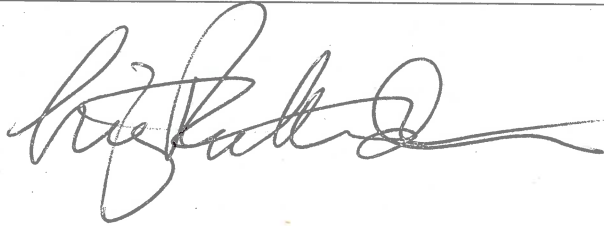
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Decent Homes Policy Update 2016

Decision maker/s	Cllr Liz Richardson, Cabinet Member for Homes and Planning
The Issue	<p>The Decent Homes Policy sets out how Housing Services will provide assistance, including financial assistance, to help low-income, elderly, disabled and other vulnerable residents to undertake essential repairs, improvements and adaptations to their homes.</p> <p>The updated Decent Homes Policy 2016 includes three amendments. Firstly, the ability in exceptional circumstances to offer a discretionary financial “top-up” where the assessed cost of disabled adaptations exceeds the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant limit. Secondly, expanding the availability of low cost home energy loans to all residents in B&NES for energy efficiency improvements through the Council’s Energy at Home Scheme. Finally, widening the eligibility criteria for the small Urgent Repairs Grants to include Home from Hospital Clients.</p>
Decision Date	On or after 29th October 2016
The decision	The Cabinet Member agrees the Decent Homes Policy 2016 Update contained in appendix 1 to the Report.
Rationale for decision	<p>The proposed changes to the Decent Homes policy will benefit a wide range of residents by helping to fund improvements to housing conditions which might otherwise not go ahead. They will mean that the policy is more effective in helping a wider range of home owners and tenants to live independently in warm and more energy efficient homes. Improving the safety and suitability of homes can improve health and wellbeing and reduce costs to the health service in the long run.</p> <p>The proposed changes will also bring the policy in line with new opportunities provided by the Council’s Energy at Home scheme enabling residents to fund home energy improvements with no upfront costs. It provides in a single policy all housing related assistance under the Regulatory Reform Order 2012, including empty homes assistance.</p>

<p>Financial and budget implications</p>	<p>The schemes within the Decent Homes Policy, including Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs), are funded from the following sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DFG programme – the 2016/17 budget (£1.002m) is funded through a combination of the DFG element of the Government’s Better Care Funding grant (£571k), a voluntary contribution from Curo Housing (£150k) and corporate revenue funding (£281k). In 2017/18 an increase in the DFG element of the Better Care Funding grant will significantly reduce the revenue funding element. • Non-DFG programme – the 2016/17 budget (£120,000) is funded by a s256 grant from Health. <p>The proposed non-DFG changes will not have an adverse impact on the budget for two reasons. Firstly, that the loan scheme, which is administered by Wessex Resolutions Community Interest Company (WRCIC), is effectively (excluding an annual administration fee) self-financing. Secondly, the Urgent Repairs Grant budget has historically been underspent.</p> <p>The proposed DFG “top-up” will create an additional pressure limited to £50,000 p.a. over the existing capital programme. Current estimates for 2017/18 capital DFG requirements are at £1.1m including both this top-up element and demand pressure for the statutory element.</p> <p>The additional cost of DFG capital can be funded through the increase in Better Care Funding grant in 2017/18 and subsequent years.</p> <p>Capital programme increase will need to be sought through the Council’s budget setting process.</p> <p>The DFG “top-up” will reduce down-stream pressure on the social care and health budgets as a result of reducing the need for alternative care where a necessary adaptation could not otherwise be provided.</p> <p>These changes are all subject to the availability of funding and subject to annual budget limits.</p>
<p>Issues considered (these are covered in more detail in the report)</p>	<p>Social Inclusion; Sustainability; Property; Equality (age, race, disability, religion/belief, gender, sexual orientation); Other Legal Considerations</p>
<p>Consultation undertaken</p>	<p>Cabinet colleagues; Staff; Other B&NES Services; Stakeholders/Partners; Section 151 Finance Officer; Monitoring Officer</p>
<p>How consultation was carried out</p>	<p>Meetings and Email</p>

Other options considered	None
Declaration of interest by Cabinet Member(s) for decision, including any dispensation granted:	<i>The nature of interest and whether interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest or an-other interest, including any conflict of interest, (as defined in Part 2, A and B of the Code of Conduct and Rules for Registration of Interests). Any Member who needs to clarify any matters relating to the declaration of interests is recommended to seek advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer or a member of their staff before taking the decision.</i>
Any conflict of interest declared by anyone who is consulted by a Member taking the decision:	

Signatures of Decision Makers	
Date of Signature	
Subject to Call-in until 5 Working days have elapsed following publication of the decision	

