

## Report to Cabinet

28 September 2023

By the Cabinet Member for Environmental Health,  
Recycling and Waste

**DECISION REQUIRED**



**Horsham  
District  
Council**

Not Exempt

### Disabled Facilities grant – approval of budget and grant allocation

#### Executive Summary

Cabinet is recommended to ask Council to increase the Council's capital budget in 2023/24 to receive an allocation of £122,495 as part of an additional national top up of £50m for the Disabled Facilities Grant for 2023-24 funded through the Department of Health and Social Care.

Notification of the £122,495 grant was received on 7 September 2023.

In addition, Cabinet is recommended to (i) approve the allocation of grant funds in line with existing policy, and, (ii) delegate authority to officers to administer the grants.

#### Recommendations

That the Cabinet is recommended to ask Council to:

- i) Approve the receipt of the 2023/2024 Disabled Facilities Grant in the sum of £122,495; and
- ii) Approve an increase in the 2023/2024 capital programme budget to include the additional £122,495 Disabled Facilities Grant.

Subject to Council's approval of the above recommendations, Cabinet is recommended to:

- i) Approve the allocation of the Disabled Facilities Grant to eligible applicants; and
- ii) Delegate to the Head of Environmental Health and Licensing the authority to allocate the Disabled Facilities Grant in accordance with the West Sussex Disabled Facilities Grants Policy 2020-2024 and Housing Assistance Policy, both contained at Appendix 1 and any policies replacing the same provided that they comply with statutory requirements.

## Reasons for Recommendations

- i) Increasing the capital budget will allow the Council to receive and spend the disabled facilities grant offered by Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities. This will fund the provision of home adaptations to help eligible older and disabled people to live as independently and safely as possible in their homes.
- ii) Full Council must approve increases to budgets.
- iii) Cabinet approval is required to (i) allocate the grant funds, and, (ii) delegate authority to the relevant officer to administer grant applications in line with existing policy. The allocation of grant funds constitutes a key decision given the allocation of the grant fund pot could significantly affect the lives of people residing in the district.

**Background Papers** None

**Wards affected:** All

**Contact:** Marc Rankin - Head of Environmental Health and Licensing  
[marc.rankin@horsham.gov.uk](mailto:marc.rankin@horsham.gov.uk)

## **Background Information**

### **1 Introduction and Background**

- 1.1 On 7 September 2023, DLUHC informed the Council that they have been allocated a sum of £122,495 of grant income for Disabled Facilities as part of a £50m national top up to fund Disabled Facilities by the Department for Health and Social Care

### **2 Relevant Council policy**

- 2.1 The funds received support the Council in meeting the priorities set out in the Council's corporate plan to ensure Horsham District is a great place to live with a strong, safe and healthy community.

### **3 Details**

- 3.1 Disabled Facilities Grant is capital funding for the provision of home adaptations to help eligible older and disabled people to live as independently and safely as possible in their homes. They can also help to deal with access issues, enable rapid discharge of people from hospital, or prevent admission to hospital or residential care.
- 3.2 Any money paid under this grant determination must only be used for the specific purpose of funding adaptations for disabled people who qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant made under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 or under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (or any other social care capital projects where otherwise agreed).
- 3.2 The additional grant does not come with any spend deadlines restrictions, so if any grant is unspent at the end of the year, it can be rolled over into and used in 2024/25.
- 34 Accordingly, Council is being asked to increase the budget to facilitate the acceptance of the grant, and Cabinet is being asked to authorise the allocation of the grant and to delegate authority to facilitate such allocations.

### **4 Next Steps**

- 4.1 The proposal in this report needs to be discussed and approved by Cabinet who can then recommend to Full Council approval of the relevant recommendations contained in this report.

### **5 Views of the Policy Development Advisory Group and Outcome of Consultations**

- 5.1 The Environmental Health, Recycling and Waste Policy Development Advisory Group did not meet before the Cabinet meeting, but were emailed on 12 September 2023. They were supportive of accepting the grant income. Given the short notice timeframes, Overview and Scrutiny will also be briefed by the Director of Resources

at the meeting on 25 September 2023 and their views will be updated verbally at the Cabinet meeting.

- 5.2 The Monitoring Officer and the Director of Resources were consulted to ensure legal and financial probity.

## **6 Other courses of action considered but rejected**

- 6.1 The Council has considered not accepting the funds. This option has been dismissed as there is the possibility of increased demand on the homeless service if we are unable to implement adaptations in the residents' existing homes (which could be funded by these grants) at an earlier stage.

## **7 Resource consequences**

- 7.1 There is no officer resource impact accepting this grant.
- 7.2 The Council's existing disabled facilities capital budget for 2023/24 is £1.25m. At Month 5, spend at £462,000 or 37% of the budget is tracking slightly behind the budget curve. However, any unspent budget would be rolled forward into future years. There are no spending period restrictions.

## **8 Legal considerations and implications**

- 8.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 provides general powers for local housing authorities to provide assistance for adapting or improving living accommodation. These powers can only be used in accordance with a Housing Assistance Policy which was adopted by the Council in on 28 November 2019 and which is called the West Sussex Disabled Facilities Grant Policy.
- 8.2 Local Authorities must not discriminate against or harass a person applying for a grant on grounds of or for reasons related to disability or any other protected characteristic pursuant to the Equality Act 2010.
- 8.3 The Council should (i) comply with the terms of and conditions attached to the grant, and, (ii) complete any legal documentation which is required to give effect to the receipt and use of the said grant.
- 8.4 The grant funding will be managed in accordance with the Financial Procedure Rules (inter alia paragraph 4e.33 External Funding) contained in the Council's constitution.

## **9 Risk assessment**

- 9.1 The grant the Council will receive will fund adaptations for disabled people who qualify for a Disabled Facilities Grant made under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 or under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. Not receiving the grants could pose an additional financial risk to the Council through additional homeless service demand and accommodation costs.

## **10 Procurement implications**

10.1 There are no procurement implications identified.

## **11. Equalities and Human Rights implications / Public Sector Equality Duty**

11.1 The grants have specific criteria in respect of which cohorts must be supported.

## **12 Environmental implications**

12.1 There are no specific environmental implications arising from this report, although the development of all activities and initiatives will be mindful of the Council's target to be carbon neutral by 2030.

## **13 Other considerations**

13.1 There are no direct crime and disorder implications. The use of all databases and other sources of information will ensure that GDPR and data protection legislation is fully complied with.

Appendix 1

[Housing Assistance Policy](#)

[West Sussex Disabled Facilities Grants Policy 2020 - 2024](#)