

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing

Review of Disabled Facilities and Additional Grants Policy1. Purpose of Report

To review the criteria within the existing Disabled Facilities and Additional Grants Policy (Private Dwellings). The policy was updated in 2025 but following two reports to Cabinet to approve grants outside the discretionary threshold, a review of the criteria to facilitate more efficient approval of the larger and complex projects being submitted, was added to the work programme. This is in accordance with the Council's Corporate Priority of Housing to provide a good quality home for everyone by responding to need and to facilitate adaptations for disabled people in the private sector.

2. Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that the Disabled Facilities and Additional Grants Policy (Private Dwellings) is updated to allow approvals of amounts outside the discretionary threshold by the Head of Environmental Health, Licensing and Private Sector Housing in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and the Interim Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer of, subject to funding being available be approved.

3. Detail

The Council, in its role as a local housing authority, is under a statutory duty by virtue of the provisions of the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (the Act) to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) for private sector residential adaptations where the appropriate legislative conditions are met. The purpose of the grant includes making sure the dwelling is safe for the disabled occupant and to overcome obstacles which prevent access to its facilities and amenities.

Although the provision of mandatory DFG is covered by the Act and the Council must comply with the legislation, the Policy (which was developed in collaboration with the other Nottinghamshire authorities) sets out how these matters will be dealt with regard to matters not covered by the legislation and in respect of other priorities and discretionary grants administered by officers within the Private Sector Housing team.

The grants are funded by an allocation from Central Government through the Better Care Fund. The Policy includes the priority given to mandatory grants and that discretionary grants will only be awarded where the funding is available.

In 2025, the Policy was updated to reflect legislative and operational changes, to improve the clarity between the mandatory and discretionary grants and increase the discretionary limit from £20,000 to £30,000. The Policy does not deal with adaptations in Council property which is subject to a separate policy.

The 2025 Policy review included increasing the discretionary top up limit to £30,000 in recognition of the increasing costs of building works and the number of larger and complex adaptations to allow the progression of these projects. This was agreed across the Nottinghamshire local authorities for consistency.

The existing Policy requires any deviation from the limits to have Cabinet Approval. Over the last 12 months, three reports have required Cabinet approval (one that was within the Policy limits but unforeseen significant drainage works resulted in an exceedance part way through the project). However some projects have been delayed where limits have been exceeded to require attempts to raise alternative funding. Delegated approval of applications outside the Policy limits to the Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer and the Head of Environmental Health, Licensing and Private Sector Housing, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, will allow timely decisions to be made on applications and progression of larger and more complex projects more quickly. Approvals will still be subject to funding being available.

The proposed amended policy is attached at **Appendix 1** with a table summarising the key Policy updates being attached at **Appendix 2**.

Consideration could be given to additional policy changes such as further increasing the discretionary approval limits under the existing scheme of delegation to the Head of Environmental Health, Licensing and Private Sector Housing, additional discretionary grants such as for hoarding or specific health conditions/disabilities or disregarding the first part of income for all applicants. Whilst additional Better Care Funding from Central Government has been received in recent years, any variations need to be contained within the budgets and to allow all mandatory grants to be approved. Historically when applications exceeded funding available, applicants have been placed on a waiting list until funding has become available and this situation has created delays in works being completed.

4. Key Decision

This report is a key decision as defined under Regulation 8 of the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 as results in the Council incurring expenditure of £250,000 or more and is significant in terms of its effects on communities living in an area comprising of two or more Wards or electoral divisions in the Council's area.

5. Updates from Scrutiny

Amendment to section 4.2 for clarity.

6. Financial Implications

The comments from the Interim Deputy Chief Executive and Section 151 Officer were as follows:

The cost of Disabled Facilities Grants is recognised in the approved Capital Programme with the scheme being fully funded by an allocation from central government through the Better Care Fund (BCF).

Any uplift in Policy limits will likely impact on the use of available funds. The scheme will continue to be funded by the BCF allocation with the caveat included in the Policy that any grant is subject to the necessary funding being available.

7. Legal Implications

The comments from the Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The relevant legislation is outlined in the report and policy. The Council must comply with the legislation in order to avoid any challenges that may arise. By having an approved policy in place also helps avoiding such challenges.

8. Human Resources Implications

There were no comments from the Human Resources Manager.

9. Union Comments

There were no Union comments.

10. Climate Change Implications

There are no climate change implications.

11. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any OFFICIAL(SENSITIVE) information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

12. Equality Impact Assessment

No Equality Impact Assessment is required as the change is only a procedural change to one element of the policy already approved.

13. Background Papers

Nil.