

LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

26 JUNE 2018

UPDATE ON THE BETTER CARE FUND

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To update Members on the schemes that has been delivered from funding from the district's allocation of the Better Care Fund.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Care Act 2014 amended the NHS Act 2006 to provide the legislative basis for the Better Care Fund (BCF). It creates a local single pooled budget to incentivise the NHS and local government to work more closely together around people, placing their wellbeing as the focus of health and care services, and shifting resources into social care and community services for the benefit of the people, communities and health and care.
- 2.2 A specific element of the Better Care fund is allocated for the statutory delivery of Disabled Facilities Grants across the district. In circumstances where the DFG allocation is in excess of that required to meet the demand for DFGs the local authority is empowered to use the remaining allocation for 'wider social care capital projects'.
- 2.3 Members will recall that a number of projects were identified that fit the above definition. Each year the district is provided with a BCF allocation to meet its DFG obligations and any additional schemes. The allocations for the current year and previous two years are shown below.

2016-17	£803,805
2017-18	£874,962
2018-19	£946,838

3.0 Governance Arrangements for the BCF

- 3.1 The Better Care Fund Programme Board is chaired by the County Council and has the responsibility for the operational governance of the Better Care Fund. The Terms of reference of the Board are:

The purpose of the Better Care Fund (BCF) Programme Board is to provide system leadership to ensure delivery of the BCF plan to improve outcomes for the people of Nottinghamshire. The Programme Board reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board, with the main focus being upon delivery assurance and proactive performance management of the agreed County-wide plan. The Programme Board will also be instrumental in creating the evidence base and sharing best practice for successful integration leading to best possible outcomes for the population of Nottinghamshire within available resources.

- 3.2 All the district and boroughs are now represented on the Board. Each year the spending plans for the new financial years are agreed by the Board and are then recommended for approval by the Health and Wellbeing Board.
- 3.3 It should be noted that the BCF Programme Board does not only oversee the DFG element of the Better Care Fund but is responsible for the larger BCF allocation that is used for primary secondary and social care provision.
- 3.4 The funding allocated to each local authority is based on a complex formula taking into account various indices of need, disability, health care and population demographics. The allocations vary across the county and it is not always obvious how the allocations reflect the general makeup of the local populations.

4.0 **Delivery of Local Schemes**

The table below shows the three year funding allocated for these schemes. Members will note that some allocation from 2017/18 was underspent. This has been rolled forward into the 2018/19 financial year to support scheme that have now developed momentum and where expenditure is expected to grow.

		2016/17	2017/18	2018/19 allocation	Comments
Mandatory DFGs	Budget	£573,695	£729,503	£700,000	Demand has increased over the previous two years
	Spend	£529,491	£731,842		
Discretionary DFGs	Budget	£175,000	£154,810	£75,246	The range of options available have been increased as part on the integrated living model and demand is slowly growing.
	Spend	£20,189	£36,266		
Warm Homes on Prescription	Budget	£42,500*	£140,000 (includes £70K 2016/17 allocation)	£100,000	*In 2016/17, NSDC used Energy Company Redress Funding (accessed via a one-off LAEP bid to NEA) for WHOP energy efficiency capital measures so our 2016/17 BCF WHOP allocation was carried forward into 2017/18. A considerable amount of work has taken place to engage with health professionals to build sustainable referral pathways. The development of
	Spend	£41,102	£81,747		

					other referral schemes has also increased and demand is now growing. (£22K of commitments have already been made in 2018/19)
Handy Person Adaptation scheme	Budget	£30,511	£66,657	£66,592	The £12,373 underspend from 2017/18 is currently held by Nott's County Council (top-sliced from BCF)
	Spend	£30,511	£54,218		
Assistive Technology	Budget	£50,000	£50,000	£50,000	Annual bids are submitted to the BCF Board to invest in the procurement of assistive technology (lifelines) to support the Council's private sector lifeline programme managed by Newark & Sherwood Homes. The rental income from this goes into the general fund (2017/18 £53k)
	Spend	£50,000	50,000		
Accessible Homes	Budget	N/A	£118,000	£0.00	A bid was submitted and approved by the BCF Board to deliver improved accessibility standards to up to 6 of the new build units in the HRA development programme, with a focus on the bungalow provision.
	Spend		Rolled over to 2018/19	Spend will occur 2018/19	
Total Budget		654,470	1,258,970	946,838	
Total Spend		610,702	889,539		

- 4.1 The pooling of the previous DFG element and the social care elements that have now been passed to second tier authorities has allowed significantly increased the overall budget available. In 2015/16 the only allocation for the district was £469,695 and this was expected to be spent on DFGs. The increased allocations have allowed for the development of new schemes and have also facilitated the development of a Housing and Health Integrated Independent Living Model which brings together a number of housing

functions, undertaken by NSDC to enable more effective delivery of a range of interventions to provide healthy homes. The following section sets out the range of schemes available within the integrated model framework.

4.2 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants

In 2008-09 the scope for use of DFG funding was widened to support any local authority expenditure incurred under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. The aim was to enable authorities to use specific DFG funding for wider purposes, which may be more appropriate for individuals than existing DFG arrangements allowed. Creating greater flexibility allowed the DFG to be used for associated purposes, such as moving home, where this was seen as a more appropriate solution, or funding could be pooled to purchase portable extensions which are suitable for re-use, through improved procurement models.

4.3 The authority has a duty to deliver the mandatory grants relating to applications for DFGs. There has been increasing demand for DG as the population ages and adult social care policy now seeks to provide more independence and facilitate wherever possible people remaining in their own homes if they can be adapted to meet the individual's needs. The spend in 2017/18 was over £200,000 more than the previous year.

4.4 In the past financial year 74 mandatory schemes were completed ranging from large complex adaptations including the provision of additional space (often downstairs bathrooms or sleeping accommodation) to more straightforward level access showers of stair lifts.

4.5 It is not anticipated that demand will significantly reduce in the current year. There is a £700,000 budget for this work in 2018/19 and there is potential for this to be supplemented from the discretion DFG budget if required.

4.6 Discretionary DFGs

Currently the maximum grant payable as a mandatory DFG is £30,000. A number of schemes each year require funding above this amount. These are normally large schemes for severely disabled clients that require extensive structural work to the property consisting for example of extensions to the accommodation or the installation of an internal vertical lift. A discretionary element of a maximum of £10,000 can be awarded for all grants exceeding the statutory maximum of £30,000. This provides a top-up assistance to mandatory DFG where the local authority takes the view that the amount of assistance available under DFG is insufficient to meet the needs of the disabled person and their family.

4.7 The mandatory DFG regime only allows work that is reasonable and appropriate to meet the client's needs to be grant funded. This can often result in adaptations being carried out to a property that is defective in other areas, such as poor insulation or in serious disrepair. This can result in a client having the adaptation completed to allow them to stay in their own home but in a home that in other ways does not meet their needs. Many DFG clients have limited mobility and therefore a cold damp house has a proportionally adverse impact on their health and wellbeing than a more able bodied mobile occupant. An Essential Works Grant in support of DFG clients is used to ensure that where a DFG is awarded the overall condition of the property is suitable for occupation by that client. The take up of these grants has been limited, although they were only introduced two years ago.

4.8 **Handy Person Adaptations Schemes**

The Handy Person Adaptation Service (HPAS) aims to provide the help and support people need to keep safe and secure in their home with low cost but high quality essential adaptations and small practical jobs.

4.9 The Service is available to Nottinghamshire residents aged 60 or over, or with a disability, and all work is carried out by professional traders who have been approved by NCC's Trading Standards officers. The jobs undertaken reduce the risk of falls or help vulnerable residents remain living independently and range from fitting hand rails and half steps to changing light bulbs, fitting door locks and putting up shelves and can include key safes if referred by a health professional. Often very small jobs such as fixing loose carpets or installing a hand rail can prevent a fall and avoid a lot of unnecessary distress as well as high costs to health and social care services.

4.10 The budget for this service is passed directly to the county council as they are responsible for delivering this service. The allocation is calculated as % split across all the districts and boroughs.

4.11 The delivery of the Handy person scheme has recently been subject to a procurement exercise. Newark and Sherwood Homes have been successful in obtaining the contract to deliver the installations, repairs and adaptations in both Bassetlaw and Newark and Sherwood.

4.12 **Warm Homes on Prescription**

Local authorities in Nottinghamshire, led by Newark & Sherwood District Council who host the Programme Manager, are working together with health partners, to deliver the Warm Homes on prescription project

4.13 GP Practices and Integrated Care Teams have been identified in each district/borough council and are contacting 'high risk' patients with long term conditions made worse by cold living conditions, particularly COPD and other respiratory diseases and those at risk of heart attack, stroke and falls.

4.14 Home visits are being undertaken to assess the energy efficiency of the home and whether the patient can afford to keep the house at a healthy temperature. A range of actions are then taken to achieve affordable warmth on behalf of the householder, including commissioning heating and insulation works and income maximisation (benefits checks and fuel switching) which will allow the resident to remain independent in their own homes.

4.15 **Assisted Technology**

The Council has operated a private sector lifeline facility for a number of years, managed by Newark & Sherwood Homes. This is where an assistive technology service (mainly provision of lifeline units) is offered to residents across the District outside of the HRA. This is an expanding service and each resident is charged for rental and monitoring, generating an income to both the HRA (NSH) and the GF.

4.16 Through the introduction of BCF and to meet its priorities, annual bids have been made into the programme to increase the capacity of this service, for which there is a growing demand.

4.17 The Council and Company meet to monitor this service, which has the potential for wider diversification to meet the health and wellbeing agenda and generate increased income.

4.18 **Accessible Homes**

Further to a successful bid into the BCF programme for £118,000 to deliver improved accessibility standards to up to 6 of our new build units in phase 1 of the HRA Development Programme, in consultation with the Company we have now identified 10 properties:

- California Road 1 bungalow
- Wolfit Avenue 2 bungalows
- Wolfit Avenue 1 bungalow
- Wolfit Avenue 2 bungalows
- Adj 67 Greenwood Crescent 1 bungalow
- Adj 31 Trinity Road 1 bungalow
- 102 Haywood Oaks Lane 2 ground floor flats

4.19 The Company are currently in a value engineering exercise with Woodheads to finalise the cost details with the intention to deliver level access / low access showers to each unit and level entry access where appropriate. The completion for these works is September 2018.

4.20 There is further opportunity through the BCF to deliver improved accessibility to future new build units being delivered through the HRA development programme, by Registered Providers and private developers.

5.0 **Schemes for Future Years**

5.1 An increase in spend on mandatory DFGs and the ongoing to commitment schemes such as the Warm Homes on Prescription does limit the opportunity to start to develop new schemes, particularly as there is no indication of any allocation figure for 2019-20. It has taken some considerable effort to build interest and engage the public to take up the grant available from some of the schemes so it is important that funding remains in place to support them.

5.2 It should be noted that the BCF monies are only available for capital schemes.

6.0 **Future Developments**

6.1 The government have announced a review of Disabled Facilities Grants. The Department of Health and Social Care has appointed the University of West of England to carry out an independent review of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) in England. The University will be working with Foundations, the Building Research Establishment, Ferret Information System and an experienced Occupational Therapist to look at both the operation of the grant and the wider delivery of home adaptations to support the independence of disabled people living in their own homes.

6.2 Despite increases to the annual DFG budget, demand for adaptations has always outstripped supply and this is set to continue as the population ages. The review will seek to ensure that home adaptation policy remains fit for purpose and that funds are being allocated as effectively as possible.

- 6.3 Topics to be explored include:
- How the DFG is used currently – who gets what and how it's delivered;
 - How the DFG could change in the future – focussing on the means test, the £30,000 upper limit, the allocation formula and methods of delivery;
 - The link between adaptations and health and social care services, including timely discharge from hospital;
 - The changing aids and adaptations market – considering new innovations and technology, market development and supporting people who are not eligible for a DFG; and
 - The impact of Section 36 of the Equality Act 2010 on adaptations to communal areas.
- 6.4 It is anticipated that the review will report back later this year with evidence-based recommendations on how the grant could operate in the future.
- 6.5 In addition to the above reviews the Better Care Fund Programme Board have a work stream to examine whether there are opportunities to pool housing and social care themes to provide an integrated model of practical housing support and independent living. This is a model that has been adopted in Leicestershire and has had an impact on the provision of local services at a district level as the aim has been to provide community based hubs to provide housing support integrated with health and social care teams.
- 6.6 Although in its early stages in Nottinghamshire the development of this model will need to be carefully analysed to ensure that it does deliver benefits and that the impact on our own ability to continue to deliver local services are not damaged.

7.0 RECOMMENDATION

The Committee consider the contents of this report and support the continued delivery of Local Schemes.

Reasons for Recommendations

To provide information for members on the Better Care Fund.

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Alan Batty -Business Manager – Environmental Health and Licensing on 655467.

Leanne Monger as Interim Director – Communities responsibilities
(*Health and Wellbeing, Community, Arts and Sports Development*)