

LEISURE & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

25 JUNE 2019

UPDATE ON THE BETTER CARE FUND

1.0 Purpose of the Report

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

2.0 Background

- 2.1 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'.

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 in 2018/19

- 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. The increased allocations have allowed for the development of new schemes.

The initial total allocation for 2018/19 was £946,838. In December 2018 the Government made some additional funding available and the Council was able to secure a further £106,844 towards the delivery of its mandatory improvement DFG programme.

4.2 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants

The majority of the spend from the BCF allocation goes on the delivery of the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant programme. In 2018/19 this accounted for a spend of £785,263.45 covering 90 schemes across the district. These can range from simple stair lifts to large extensions to provide ground floor facilities for severely disabled adults or children. The Council benefited from an additional allocation of £106,000 in December that enabled it to proceed with grant schemes that may have been delayed into the new financial year but also approve schemes in preparation for the contractors being available to start work.

4.3 Discretionary DFGs

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.

4.4 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.

4.5 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.

4.6 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.

4.7 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.

4.8 Warm Homes on Prescription

This scheme has now been operating for a number of years and its client base continues to grow.

- 4.9 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.
- 4.10 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.
- 4.11 **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.
- 4.12 The out turn for the schemes set out above in 2018/19 were as shown below. All underspends are carried forward to support schemes in future years.

Scheme	Budget	Spend	Carry forward
Mandatory DFGs	812,072	765,385	46,687
Discretionary DFGs	148,790	67,665	81,125
Assistive Technology	77,889	77,889	Nil
HPAS	61,364	61,364	Nil
Warm Homes on Prescription	173,852	99,852	74,000
Life time Homes	88,947	88,947	Nil

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. However, with the increased allocation for 2019/20 there are some opportunities to develop new schemes.
- 5.2 Indicative costing for delivering the core programme of schemes is set out below. It can be seen that there is currently an unallocated amount of around £97,000 however the final cost of the HPAS scheme for 2019/20 has yet to be agreed.
- 5.3 The use of the discretionary DFG allocation has been slow in the previous two years however, this is already showing signs of an increased uptake and it is anticipated that this will achieve a full spend in the current year.

5.4 Officers are currently investigating the use of temporary accommodation that has been adapted for use by patients requiring hospital discharge but that are currently awaiting adaptations to their own home. This scheme is in its early stages of development and has proved successful in other areas across the county. The unallocated funds would be used to support this scheme.

6.0 Financial Implications

6.1 The Allocation from central government for 2019/20 is £ £1,021,695

6.2 The table below shows the indicative costings for each of the programmes

Scheme	Carry forward from 2018/19	2019/20 allocation	Total Budgets for Scheme
Mandatory DFGs	46,687	700,000	746,687
Discretionary DFGs	81,125	18,875	£100,000
Assistive Technology	Nil	50,000	50,000
HPAS	Nil	66,592 (TBC)	66,592
Worm Homes on Prescription	74,000	50,000	124,000
Independent Living		39,315	39,315
TOTAL		923,190	1,126,594
Unallocated		96,913	
			£1,223,507

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that:

- (a) Members note the schemes that are funded for 2019/20 ; and**
- (b) a new scheme to develop temporary adapted accommodation be supported.**

Reasons for Recommendations

To provide information for members on the Better Care Fund and to indicate the schemes that are being supported.

Background Papers

Nil

For further information please contact Alan Batty -Business Manager – Public Protection on 01636 655467.

Matthew Finch
Director – Communities & Environment