

North Somerset Council Decision

**Decision Of: Cllr Bell – Deputy Leader of the Council
(Public Health & Regulatory Services)**

**With Advice From: Director of Public Health & Regulatory Services,
Section 151 Officer**

Directorate: Public Health and Regulatory Services



Decision No: PH027 2021/2022

Subject: Better Care Fund (DFG) - Virement to Adult Social Care

Key Decision: Yes

Reason: Expenditure is over £500,000 but within approved budget.

Background:

The Better Care Fund (BCF) capital allocation makes specific provision for local authority expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for the provision of home adaptations to help older and disabled people to live as independently and safely as possible in their own homes.

In addition, a portion of the grant may also be used for wider social care capital projects when DFG commitment has been fully met and unallocated funds remain. The primary duty on local authorities is to provide adaptations to the homes of those eligible and qualify for a DFG.

The BCF recognises the crucial role home adaptations can play in supporting the integration of housing, health and social care to help enable people of all ages to live safely and independently at home for longer. Annual increases in the allocation under the BCF for the DFG programme has seen the national funding rise to the current £573m in line with spending review commitment.

Decision:

1. To approve the virement of £750,000 from the existing Disabled Facilities Grant budget to a new Adult Social Care Technology Enabled Care programme in 2021/22.

2. Authorise the Director of Corporate Services to make the necessary adjustments to the capital programme, set up a new capital code and report through usual MTFP and monitoring process.

Reasons:

To make funding available to increase and develop Technology Enabled Care (TEC) provision and Acoustic monitoring devices across North Somerset in support of maintaining independence and improved health outcomes.

Options Considered:

There are specific purposes this BCF funding can be used; either for delivery of the DFG programme or Adult Social Care capital projects. The only other option would have been to retain the funds in the DFG programme which would have resulted in a significant carry forward into 2022/23 which would have been far in excess of anticipated DFG requirements.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications arising from this decision which demonstrate maximising use of available resources to improve service delivery, based on current spend and projections against the grant.

Costs:

Any costs will be funded through the transfer of funds up to the agreed amount.

Current Expenditure, commitment and projections

The BCF allocation for 2021/22 for North Somerset was £2,361,483. In addition, an “in-year” additional allocation was made in December 2020 of £280,246 which was carried forward into this financial year. Any remaining budget from 2020/21 was also carried forward to cover historic commitments. Therefore, the DFG budget for 2021/22 is £3,162,292.

The pandemic seriously impacted on the construction sector through a combination of restrictions when working in people’s homes, furloughed staff and in some cases suspension of non-urgent works. This resulted in a reduced number of completions and a backlog of cases waiting assessment or technical surveys. The situation is improving but inevitably the demand for materials and labour will continue to impact on delivery through this year and into 2022/23.

There are cases at different stages of the process which have to be included in projecting the budget outturn, although as we approach mid-year, applications received in final quarter of the year, are usually completed in the following financial year i.e. 2022/23. The projections below incorporate some provision for additional expenditure on unforeseen work and other inflationary contingencies.

Expenditure and commitments (August 2021)

Disabled Facilities Grant	£
Approved Budget	3,162,292
Agresso Payments (to date)	582,736
Remaining Budget	2,579,556
Grants approved (o/s commitment)	825,000
Balance	1,754,556

A breakdown of cases at various pre-approval stages is shown below:

Applications received not approved (36)	£365,000
Application invited but not received (15)	£80,000
Enquiries visit pending (39)	£250,000
Awaiting assessment by OT Service (50) (includes Disabled Children's Team)	£325,000
Total	£1,020,000

Taking account of the expenditure to date, commitments, and projections there is sufficient approved DFG budget to support the programme and transfer £750,000 to adult social care capital projects.

Funding:

The funding will come from the approved Disabled Facilities Grant Allocation for 2021/22.

Legal Powers and Implications:

The DFG is capital funding for the provision of home adaptations to help older and disabled people to live as independently and safely as possible in their homes. Where agreed locally a portion of the grant may also be used for wider social care capital projects, under the terms of the allocation.

Climate Change and Environmental Implications:

The increased use of TEC and related technologies will reduce the amount of travel requirements with the resulting carbon emission reduction.

Consultation:

The Adult Services and Housing Policy and Scrutiny Panel Working Group have been consulted and support using funds in this way to improve health and well-being outcomes.

Adult Social Care colleagues provided the background information in support of the request to fund TEC related products and services.

Risk Management:

Any risks associated with this decision have been fully evaluated and there are no unmitigated risks associated with this decision.

Equality Implications:

Have you undertaken an Equality Impact Assessment? No

There are only positive outcomes from this decision.

Corporate Implications:

There are no corporate implications as this decision will support maintaining independence in the home.

Appendices:

None

Background Papers:

None

Signatories:

Decision Maker(s):



Signed:

Title: Deputy Leader of the Council

Date: 7 October 2021

With Advice From:



Signed:

Title: Director of Public Health and Regulatory Services

Date: 7 October 2021

Signed: 

Title: Section 151 Officer

Date: 7 October 2021