



DERBY CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL CABINET
27 April 2004

Report of the Social Care and Health Commission

Adaptations Funded Through Disabled Facilities Grant

RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To note the 14% reduction in Derby's Disabled Facilities Grant allocation by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) for 2004/05.
- 1.2 It is recommended that the Council Cabinet makes a written representation to the ODPM to determine the reasons for the reduction in the budget and asks for it to be re-instated to its previous level.
- 1.3 The Commission re-iterates its previous recommendation contained in the Adaptations Topic Review Report to employ a progress chaser to support the Disabled Facilities Grant applications.
- 1.4 The Commission confirms its previous recommendation contained in the Adaptations Topic Review Report to establish block contracts for providing stairlifts and bathing facilities and present a report to the Commission in six months time detailing its progress.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Commission was informed that Derby City Council has a good track record of providing value for money and keeping down the costs for providing DFG related works. Despite this, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has reduced the Disabled Facilities Grant allocation for Derby by around 14%. The Commission requests the Cabinet to make representations to the ODPM to identify why the budget for Derby has been reduced and ask for it to be re-instated.
- 2.2 The Commission was informed that the timescales for providing adaptations through the DFG have increased substantially from 362 days at the time of the Topic Review in 2002 to 517 days on 1 March 2004. This is mainly due to an increase in the level of demand for adaptations. The numbers of applications has risen from a net total of 204 in 2002/03 to 287 up to 1 March 2004, an increase of approximately 40%. This has put substantial pressure on resources and therefore the priority system has been implemented more rigorously, resulting in an 18 months wait for priority 2 cases. The increased waiting times has further strengthened the case for the appointment of the progress chaser as originally recommended in the Topic Review Report to the Council Cabinet (recommendation 9). The purpose of this post is to be the main point of contact for private sector adaptations process. This post should

help to improve the administrative process by liaising with the contractors and keeping the applicants informed about the progress of their application.

- 2.3 The Commission further reiterated its previous recommendation contained in the Adaptations Topic Review Report (Recommendation 8) to consider appropriate use of block contracts for stairlifts and shower bathing facilities. The Commission was informed that there are mainly two types of stairlifts - straight and curved. By monitoring the number of lifts installed over a period of time, it should be possible to forecast the numbers required in the future. It should therefore be possible to enter into a contract with a suitable contractor provide a minimum number of stairlifts over a given period of time. It is considered that by establishing block contracts, it should help the Cabinet to reduce the unit cost of works due to ordering greater quantities and also cut waiting times by not having to re-tender for every application. The Topic Review report found that this was working effectively in the public sector housing adaptations process.
- 2.4 The Commission also requested a report to be presented in six months detailing the progress made on establishing block contracts.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council Cabinet referred the Adaptations Funded Through Disabled Facilities Grant report to the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Commission in December 2003. Due to insufficient information available at that meeting, Commission was unable to consider the issues full and asked the Director of Policy for additional information. The Commission reconsidered the report at its March meeting and gives its recommendations.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

4. None.

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| Background papers: | None |
| List of appendices: | Appendix 1 – Implications |

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

1. The appointment of a progress chaser and adopting block contracts is likely to have financial implications.

Legal

2. Disabled Facilities Grant are made under the provisions of Part 1 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and are mandatory entitlement.

Personnel

3. The Commission has re-iterated its previous recommendation to establish the post of a progress chaser to assist with DFG applications.

Corporate Themes and Priorities

- 4.1 This report meets to the Council's key objectives **protecting and supporting people**.
- 4.2 It also satisfies the Council's priority of **enabling people to live independent lives they choose**.

