

Report of the Manging Director

Urgent action request – Disabled facilities grant

1 Purpose of report

To note the urgent action taken to change the payment structure to Care and Repair (Spire Homes) to deliver a home improvement agency service until March 2019.

2 Executive summary

An urgent action request was approved by the chairman of services and resources committees. The request sought to change the payment structure paid to Spire Homes to ensure a smooth transition of the service as it is brought in house from April 2019.

3 Appendices

A. Urgent action request

4 Proposed action:

4.1 The committee is invited to RESOLVE to note the urgent action taken by the Director.

5 Background

5.1 An urgent action request was signed on 2 October 2018 approving the monthly fee of £5000 to Spire Homes for home improvement agency services instead of 15% per completed case from 1 October 2018 until 31 March 2019.

6 Discussion

6.1 At resources committee in June 2018 it was agreed that the disabled facilities grant (DFG) service (home improvement services) would be brought back in house from April 2019. In response to this, Care and Repair would be unable to accept further referrals for large scale schemes from the 30th September 2018 and for all other schemes from the 31st December 2018. An alternative payment arrangement was sought to avoid any break in the service and ensured that cases could continue to be handled until April 2019.

- 6.2 Care and Repair had received funding from Northamptonshire County Council to cover the cost of completing 'Healthy Homes Assessments' for residents until the end of September 2018 and whilst this is not a statutory function the member of staff employed part time also completes DFG casework for this council. The costs of which are included below.

7 Legal powers

Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended)
Localism Act 2011.

8 Financial and value for money implications

- 8.1 The home improvement agency work in the borough was previously funded through payments of 15% of the total build cost of the works from the DFG capital budget. 20% VAT is charged on any fees paid out from a DFG grant because the grant is awarded to the client to cover the costs of the work and therefore the council cannot reclaim the VAT. All these costs are recovered from the capital grant provided by central government. The government allocation for the council in 2018/19 is £540,709.
- 8.2 Based on a spend of £165,649.91, including Care & Repair fees, during the same period of 2017/18, it was estimated that the total cost paid to Care and Repair for completed works between October 2018 and March 2019 would be £21,606.51. This does not include the costs related to the support worker role which ended on the 30th September 2018.
- 8.3 Care and Repair provided the following costs to run the service until March 2019, including the support worker role, over the 6 month period from 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019:

Staff Salaries inc NI and Pension	£23944.11
Travel	£2000.00
Overheads	£3891.62
Total Cost including Overheads – Office Costs, management	£29835.73

9 Risk analysis

The council has a duty to provide disabled facilities grants and provide aids and adaptations to prevent increased accidents and injury, hospitalisation; and blocking of beds and residential care.

The budget has been underspent for a number of years which has highlighted the need to consolidate services in house and improve referral arrangements with the county council.

10 Implications for resources

Bringing the service in house will require experienced employee resources to enable a smooth transition to manage a home improvement agency service.

11 Implications for stronger and safer communities

The provision of a home improvement service ensures people can remain in their homes reducing the incidences of hospital stays and provides the enablement from hospital to home. Providing adaptation services reduces the demand for allocation of new homes and the provision of intensive care and support in residential care settings.

12 Implications for equalities

The provision of an effective service to support applications for disabled facilities grant enabling local residents to maintain their independence has a positive impact on equalities within the Borough.

13 Author and contact officer

Vicki Jessop, Assistant Director

14 Consultees

Senior Management Team

15 Background papers

None

REQUEST FOR URGENT ACTION
(In accordance with Section 3.3.08 Urgent Action of the Constitution)

REPORTING COMMITTEE: Services Committee
DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 15/01/2019
PURPOSE OF REPORT: Request for approval to pay Care & Repair a monthly fee of £5000 instead of 15% per completed case from 1 October 2018 until 31 March 2019 to ensure a smooth transition of the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) service prior to the service coming back in house.
REASON FOR URGENCY: At resources committee in June 2018 it was agreed that the DFG service would be brought back in house from April 2019. In response to this, Care & Repair advised that they would be unable to accept further referrals for large scale schemes from the 30th September 2018 and for all other schemes from the 31st December 2018 resulting in the service being unable to be run during this interim period until it is brought back in house, for the reasons set out below. An urgent decision is required -to allow for the service to continue to be run by Care & Repair from 1 October 2018. Due to the end of funding to Care & Repair from NCC and urgent decision is required to retain the support worker role beyond the end of September.
KEY FACTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This alternative payment arrangement avoids any break in the service and ensures that cases can continue to be handled until April 2019.• A monthly payment allows for cases that will not be completed by 31st March 2019 to still be managed and processed by Care & Repair after April 2019. Care & Repair advised that under this system, the cut-off date for referrals for technical surveys for works would be 15th March 2019 which would be acceptable.• Care & Repair receive funding from Northamptonshire County Council to cover the cost of completing 'Healthy Homes Assessments' for residents. 'Healthy Homes Assessments' are not a statutory function but the member of staff employed part time by C&R to complete these assessments also completes casework for DFGs. This NCC funding will cease at the end of September 2018 and consequently the 0.5FTE support worker role will no longer exist.

NB: To comply with the Constitution this signed urgent action pro forma must be attached to a report to the next meeting of the Committee concerned.

- Officers will continue to prepare the arrangements for the service from April 2019. This will require a review of staffing resources required to run this service, including consideration of any TUPE implications.
- It is proposed that BCW will make 6 monthly payments of £5000 to Care & Repair from 1st October 2018 to 31st March 2019 and cease paying 15% of the net build cost per job for all cases approved as of the 1st October 2018. The costs to run this service will be met fully from the DFG capital grant budget.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

BCW currently pay 15% of the net build cost per job at the completion of works. Based on a spend of £165,649.91, including Care & Repair fees, during the same period of 2017/18, it is estimated that the total cost paid to Care & Repair for completed works until March 2019 would be £21,606.51. This does not include the costs related to the support worker role ending on the 30th September 2018.

Care & Repair have advised the following service costs to run the service until March 2019, including the support worker role, over the 6 month period from 1 October 2018 to 31 March 2019:

Staff Salaries inc NI and Pension	£23944.11
Travel	£2000.00
Overheads	£3891.62
Total Cost including Overheads – Office Costs, management	£29835.73

SIGNATURES:

- REPORT AUTHOR: J HODGSON  DATE: 2.10.18
- DIRECTOR: JULIE THOMAS  DATE: 2.10.18
- CHAIRMAN/VICE-CHAIRMAN OF COMMITTEE :
CLLR ALLEBONE  DATE: 02.10.18

IF FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS SIGNATURE OF:

- CHAIRMAN/VICE-CHAIRMAN OF RESOURCES COMMITTEE:  DATE: 2.10.18

NB: To comply with the Constitution this signed urgent action pro forma must be attached to a report to the next meeting of the Committee concerned.