

<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Communities and Well Being O & S Committee	
<b>DATE:</b>	01 December 2025	
<b>PORTFOLIO:</b>	<b>Councillor Melissa Fisher - Deputy Leader of the Council (Housing and Regeneration)</b>	
<b>REPORT AUTHOR:</b>	Sarah Whittaker	
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	Disabled Facilities Grants	
<b>EXEMPT REPORT (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A)</b>	<b>No</b>	Not applicable
<b>KEY DECISION:</b>	<b>No</b>	If yes, date of publication:

## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update the Committee on Disabled Facilities Grants, the process, the funding that we receive and what is delivered with the funding.
- 1.2 To report on the current programme and waiting list times

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That committee notes the content of the report and directs any questions to Sarah Whittaker, Regeneration Manager.

## 3. Reasons for Recommendations and Background

- 3.1 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) are mandatory grants delivered under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. The 1996 Act sets the framework for the Disabled Facilities Grant. It gives local authorities a legal duty to award grants where the criteria are met—but it also allows for a maximum amount to be set by the regulations. The current maximum grant is £30,000 and this has been in force since 2008. Grants under this legislation are awarded by the Council to home owners, tenants and landlords to carry out works that will enable a disabled person to remain in their own homes. The 1996 Act also stipulates what works can be covered. The Act defines the purposes for which a DFG can be given (e.g. facilitating access to the home, making the dwelling safe, improving heating or access to essential amenities for the disabled occupant). These purposes have been updated by later regulations (for

example, access to gardens was added by the Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008).

- 3.2 The grants awarded as DFG's relate to work that has been prescribed by an Occupational Therapist (OT) or Trusted Assessor (TA) as being works that are required for the disabled person to remain independent within their home. These people have the medical training in order to state what is necessary and appropriate for the disabled persons needs to enable them to remain independent.
- 3.3 All applicants for a DFG are given the choice of either the Council managing the works on their behalf, or for them to self-manage the works at the start of the grant application process. Most of these grants are project managed by the Council, and each are individual projects tailored to the individual's needs and the individual's residence. In some instances the applicant organises the work themselves if they want to do something different to what has been prescribed by the OT or TA. The Council is able to provide the funding that would have been allocated to carry out the works that we would have done, provided that what is then done by the applicant still meets the needs of the disabled person, and that those alterations have been approved by their OT or TA.
- 3.4 The funding for the DFG programme moved in 2015/16 to become part of the Better Care Fund (BCF) and instead of being paid directly to the Local Authorities, was paid to Lancashire County Council (LCC) as part of the Social Care Funding and it was then distributed to the individual Local Authorities. This move meant looking at the Care Act 2014 alongside the DFG policies to try and prevent hospital admissions and to keep people living at home as much as possible.
- 3.5 Each year a determination letter is issued to the Local Authorities stating how much funding each Local Authority will receive. The allocation for Hyndburn for 25/26 is £1,359,906 for the BCF. We carried forward £357,069 from 2024/25 and have a programme for 2025/26 of £1,716,975. Hyndburn Council is able to introduce its own grant policies under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England And Wales) Order 2002 (RRO) which meant that Council's had more freedom in order to design our own local policies in order to support disabled people and offer additional support alongside DFG's.
- 3.6 We first introduced our own community tailored grants through our Housing Renewal Assistance Policy July 2019. We introduced several types of grants including Discretionary DFGs, whereby we removed the need for a means test for any items under £7,500 and introduced an additional £20,000 top up if people were on low incomes or had low savings. This was because we were finding that people applying for Stairlifts didn't want to divulge their financial details and were therefore not getting grants, and because the maximum DFG of £30,000 did not cover the costs of extensions any more. We also introduced the Affordable Warmth Grants, Home Security Grants, Hospital Discharge Grants and Emergency works grants and all were introduced to facilitate vulnerable people to remain in their own homes via a number of additional types of grants. These were also introduced at a time when we had a build up of underspends from previous years because funding received had risen from

£761,990 in 2015 to almost £1million in 2019 and we were spending around £650,000 per annum on DFGs.

3.7 We reviewed the policy again in April 2025 and changed the upper limits for some grants, taking the amount before we means test up to £10,000 from £7,500 to match the Lancashire DFG review funding suggestion. The Home Security Assistance Grants were renamed Home Safety Assistance Grants and eligible works now includes replacement floor coverings, house clearance and dementia friendly and safety works. The aim of these changes is to make the grants more accessible and support a wider range of vulnerable households. We also introduced fees for non-agency grants (where applicants manage the application themselves) of 7.5% + VAT. prior to that there was no charge, so we are now able to offer more support to those carrying out works themselves as the costs for our time spent dealing with those grants are now covered.

3.8 Appendix 1 shows the allocation of funding, the types of grant that it is attributed to, the current spend to date, the allocation committed and the amount remaining to be committed. It also sets out the current waiting list for DFG's and gives a summary of performance in previous years.

#### **4. Alternative Options considered and Reasons for Rejection**

4.1 Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) are mandatory grants delivered under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. The 1996 Act sets the framework for the Disabled Facilities Grant. It gives local authorities a legal duty to award grants where the criteria are met, and the RRO gives Councils discretion to introduce its own grants to meet local need.

#### **5. Consultations**

5.1 The portfolio holder was consulted in terms of the breakdown of the funding to each type of grant, as was the Head of Regeneration and Housing who issues the grant approvals.

#### **6. Implications**

<b>Financial implications (including any future financial commitments for the Council)</b>	All forms of assistance will be subject to approval in the Council's Capital Programme. The Council's DFG allocation for 2025/26 is £1,716,975.
<b>Legal and human rights implications</b>	DFG's are a mandatory grant. The Council is required by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 to adopt and publish a policy setting out how it will exercise the power to provide the housing assistance set out in Article 3 of the Order.
<b>Assessment of risk</b>	By not approving and publishing the Housing Renewal Policy we would be contravening Article 4 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and

	<p>Wales) Order 2002 and thus not able to provide housing assistance. The main financial risk is overspending on the annual approved budget. This continues and will be closely managed and monitored through appropriate internal controls and regular reporting at the capital programme working group and to Cabinet</p>
<p><b>Equality and diversity implications</b>  <i>A <a href="#">Customer First Analysis</a> should be completed in relation to policy decisions and should be attached as an appendix to the report.</i></p>	<p>The Council is subject to the public sector equality duty introduced by the Equality Act 2010. When making a decision in respect of the recommendations in this report Cabinet must have regard to the need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation; and</li> <li>• advance equality of opportunity between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't; and</li> <li>• foster good relations between those who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who don't. For these purposes the relevant protected characteristics are: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.</li> </ul>

**7. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985:  
List of Background Papers**

7.1 *Copies of documents included in this list must be open to inspection and, in the case of reports to Cabinet, must be published on the website.*

**8. Freedom of Information**

8.1 The report does not contain exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A and all information can be disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.