

## Individual Decision

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<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Council response to the 'Disabled Facilities Grant Programme: The Government's proposals to improve programme delivery' consultation</b>		
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	<b>Councillor Marcus Franks, Portfolio Holder for Leisure &amp; Culture</b>	<b>on:</b>	<b>11 April 2007</b>
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	ID1437		

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### **Purpose of Report:**

To agree the Council's response to the 'Disabled Facilities Grant Programme: The Government's proposals to improve programme delivery' consultation

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### **Recommended Action:**

That the Council respond to the 'Disabled Facilities Grant Programme: The Government's proposals to improve programme delivery' consultation, in accordance with the draft response attached to the report.

### **Reason for decision to be taken:**

The Council currently contributes significant resources towards the provision of DFG. The consultation document contains proposals that may impact on the resources allocated to DFG in the future.

### **List of other options considered:**

N/A

### **Key background documentation:**

'Disabled facilities Grant Programme: The Government's proposals to improve programme delivery' consultation paper, January 2007

<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Marcus Franks
<b>Tel. No.:</b>	01635 841552
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	mfranks@westberks.gov.uk

### **Contact Officer Details**

<b>Name:</b>	Melanie Brain
<b>Job Title:</b>	Housing Strategy Manager
<b>Tel. No.:</b>	01635 519403
<b>E-mail Address:</b>	mbrain@westberks.gov.uk

## Supporting Information

### 1. Background

- 1.1 West Berkshire Council approved 136 DFGs in the current financial year (2006-2007), totalling £ 838,123. Around 53% of the applications are received from Housing Association tenants. The majority of the work falls within the £1,000-£10,000 bracket and the average cost of a DFG in the district is £6163. Demographically, the Council is facing an increased demand for DFGs.
- 1.2 During the current financial year, the demand for mandatory DFGs was such that the Council had to introduce a waiting list, meaning some applications have been held up to 6 months from the date of receipt before approval. A capital bid was made and an additional budget allocation of £100,000 was approved to try and meet demand in 2007/08.
- 1.3 The Government has published a consultation paper, 'Disabled Facilities Grant Programme: The Government's proposals to improve programme delivery', which sets out their intentions for DFGs in the future. The main proposals are to increase the grant limit of mandatory DFGs, remove the funding ring fence for DFGs, improve strategic planning for provision and simplify and speed up the existing application process. Some of the proposals could have resource implications for the Council.
- 1.4 In order to develop the Council's response, a cross-service group of officers, all of whom have an input into the current DFG system, met to consider the proposals. The draft response has been written to reflect those views and is now being presented to Members for their views and approval to submit as the Council's formal response to the consultation.

### Recommendation

**That the Council respond to the 'Disabled Facilities Grant Programme: The Government's proposals to improve programme delivery' consultation, in accordance with the draft response attached to the report.**

### Appendices

Appendix A - Draft Response to the consultation paper, 'Disabled Facilities Grant Programme: The Government's proposals to improve programme delivery'

#### Implications

<b>Policy:</b>	The implications for policy are as contained within the report.
<b>Financial:</b>	Some of the proposals could impact on the Council's resources. These proposals are highlighted within the draft response.
<b>Personnel:</b>	None
<b>Legal:</b>	None
<b>Environmental:</b>	None
<b>Equalities:</b>	None
<b>Partnering:</b>	None
<b>Property:</b>	None
<b>Risk Management:</b>	None

**Community Safety:** None

**Consultation Responses**

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**Members:**

**Leader of Council:** Councillor Graham Jones

**Overview & Scrutiny  
Commission Chairman:** Councillor Jeff Brooks

**Ward Members:** None – policy has district-wide applicability

**Opposition Spokesperson:** Councillor Phil Barnett

**Policy Development  
Commission Chairman:** Councillor Quentin Webb – approved of the Council's draft formal response  
Councillor Barbara Alexander  
Councillor Gordon Lundie

**Local Stakeholders:**

**Officers Consulted:** June Graves, Head of Housing & Performance  
Karen Reeve, Head of Children's Services  
Jan Evans, Head of Older People's Services  
Bob Watson, Group Accountant  
Tandra Forster, Supporting People Manager  
Jenny Meurer, Assistant Team Manager  
Rachel Palin, Castlecroft Team Manager  
Anne Paice, Private Sector Renewal Officer

**Trade Union:** N/A

Is this item subject to call-in.	Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>	No: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by OSC or associated Task Groups within preceding 6 months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>