

**REVISED DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT TOP-UP POLICY: OVERVIEW AND  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE COMMENTS**

*To:* **Cabinet**

*Date:* **4<sup>th</sup> March 2014**

*From:* **Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee  
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee**

*Electoral division(s):* **All**

*Forward Plan ref:* **2014/022** *Key decision:* **Yes**

*Purpose:* **To inform the Cabinet's consideration of the revised  
Disabled Facilities Grant Top-up Policy.**

*Recommendation:* **Cabinet is recommended to consider the report.**

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## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 The Adults, Wellbeing and Health (AWH) and the Children and Young People (CYP) Overview and Scrutiny Committees (OSCs) considered the proposed revised Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Top-Up Policy at their meetings on 4<sup>th</sup> February (AWH OSC) and 6<sup>th</sup> February (CYP OSC) 2014, in relation to the impact on adults and children with disabilities respectively.
- 1.2 Claire Bruin, Service Director: Adult Social Care attended the AWH OSC and Richard Holland, Head of Service: Disability, Children's Social Care attended the CYP OSC to provide information and answer members' questions.
- 1.3 The comments from both Committees are set out below.

## **2. COMMENTS**

### Financial assessment

- 2.1 The AWH OSC welcomed the proposal to remove the second, County Council financial assessment, as this would make the process less cumbersome than is the case at present.

### Proposed arrangements for Council top-up assistance

- 2.2 Both the AWH and CYP OSCs were concerned that the expectation on applicants to provide evidence that they have made reasonable efforts to seek additional funding from elsewhere, as described in paragraph 4.1 of the proposed DFG Top-Up Policy, was too complex and off-putting, and should be made less onerous.
- 2.3 One concern was that applicants could be caught in a referral 'loop' between the banks and the County Council, with each expecting the applicant to seek funding from the other.
- 2.4 Both OSCs were concerned that if people were expected to seek funding from the commercial sector, such as a loan or equity release, they might obtain financial products on terms that were not in their best interests.
- 2.5 The AWH OSC requested greater clarity in the policy on what was expected of people in terms of seeking alternative sources of funding first, particularly in relation to products regulated by the Financial Services Act.
- 2.6 The AWH OSC considered that there should be some flexibility in the new arrangements, as there might be circumstances where a grant was appropriate, for example where the adaptation does not add to or removes value from the property.

Children whose main residence is out of County

- 2.7 The CYP OSC was concerned that where the care of a disabled child was split between parents living in two different counties, the parent with whom the child spent less time could find themselves with no assistance with housing adaptations, unless there was an agreement between the authorities concerned. This had implications for some families where the child lived part of the time in Cambridgeshire but whose main residence was outside the county.
- 2.8 The CYP OSC agreed to ask the Local Government Association to seek a consistent approach between authorities to funding home adaptations for children living in two local authority areas, in order to ensure equitable provision for such families regardless of where they lived.

Source Documents	Location
Reports and minutes of Adults Wellbeing and Health OSC on 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2014 and Children and Young People OSC on 6 <sup>th</sup> February 2014	<a href="http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk">www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a> Jane Belman 01223 699140