

Meeting	Decision Session - Executive Member for Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods
Date	19 June 2017
Present	Councillor Lisle (Chair)

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#### **4. Declarations of Interest**

At this point in the meeting, the Executive Member was asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which he had in the business on the agenda. No additional interests were declared.

#### **5. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

#### **6. Minutes**

To approve and sign the minutes of the Decision Session held on 22 May 2017.

Resolved: That the minutes of the Decision Session – Executive Member for Housing & Safer Neighbourhoods held on 22 May 2017 be approved and then signed by the Executive Member as a correct record.

#### **7. Amendments to the Private Sector Assistance Policy**

The Executive Leader considered a report which outlined a number of proposed changes to the Private Sector Assistance Policy in order to ensure that York residents are able to maximise the funding that is available through the Better Care Fund (BCF) and Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). The Housing Standards and Adaptations Manager was in attendance to answer any questions.

It was explained that the increase in funding from the Department of Health aimed at preventing, reducing and delaying the need for NHS-commissioned and Social Care services provided an opportunity to review

the disabled facilities grant. The proposal of introducing a new non-means tested discretionary adaptation grant for work having a total value of less than £5,000 would result with significant reduction of processing times which will have beneficial effects for the customers. The suggested Discretionary Assistance changes broadening the scope of the work covered were also noted. It was confirmed that they were subject to the Council's annual budget setting procedures as well as the availability of sufficient levels of external funding. All such payments were at the Council's discretion and would be removed once available funds were exhausted.

The Executive Member asked for clarification in relation to improvement of the waiting times should the changes be approved. It was noted that the current processes take, on average, 272 days. Removing means testing for lower value work would allow certain adaptations to be carried out more quickly rather than having to wait for housing standards and adaptations service to carry out a financial assessment; this would also increase team's capacity to deal with other customers.

The Executive Member thanked the Officer for her input.

- Resolved:
- a) That the receipt of £1.101m from the Better Care Fund (BCF), complimented by the contribution from the Council's own capital budget, be noted.
  - b) That Option 1, to amend to the Private Sector Assistance Policy (the policy) and introduce a number of changes to the policy around the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) element, including some transitional arrangements, be agreed.

Reason:

To ensure that the increased DFG funding allocation is used effectively and offers a prompt and streamlined service which aims to prevent, reduce and delay need for NHS-commissioned and Social Care services.