

ANGUS COUNCIL

INFORMATION REPORT - PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANTS 2022/23 1 JULY TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2022

REPORT BY ALISON SMITH, DIRECTOR OF VIBRANT COMMUNITIES & SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

ABSTRACT

This report provides information to members on the Private Sector Housing Grants, albeit that a decision is not required in terms of the current Scheme of Delegation to Officers and the Order of Reference of Committees.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) Note the current and forecasted budget position and current issues impacting on delivery of grant eligible works.

2. ALIGNMENT TO THE COUNCIL PLAN

This report contributes to the following priorities within the Angus Council Plan 2022-2025:

- To maximise inclusion and reduce inequalities
- Our communities to be strong, resilient and led by citizens
- Angus Council to be efficient and effective

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The provision of major adaptations in the Private Sector (as required under the Housing (Scotland) Act 2006) is administered by Building Standards. This assistance is contributing to the Local Housing Strategy (LHS) (Ref 329/17)

- It includes the aim that people can access appropriate housing options and related services to meet their needs and enable them to live independently

3.2 People living in private sector homes can apply for grant funding to help adapt their home, in order that it is more accessible, and so that they can continue to live there, as their medical conditions or mobility needs change. Following assessment by an Occupational Therapist, various types of adaptations are approved for funding, including, but not limited to, level access showers, external access ramps and provision of ground floor sanitary facilities. It should be noted that grant funding can only support the minimum alterations required to meet the assessed need.

3.3 This means that people can continue to live in the place that they choose, and also in a safe environment that meets their needs. This is not only good for the health and wellbeing of the individual, but also saves the public purse by keeping people out of, or delaying admission to, expensive supported or acute health care accommodation.

4. CURRENT/FORECASTED POSITION

4.1 The lockdowns throughout the Covid-19 pandemic continue to have a significant impact on the progress of completing grant works. Contractors were not allowed into occupied homes and this not only resulted in a backlog of work, it also affected spend in the previous financial year. Services are working hard to ensure all outstanding and new applications are progressed timeously and within the constraints of the available budget, but various other factors may still affect progress. It is currently well known that there are national and global shortages of certain building materials, and applicants and/or contractors' staff may still require to isolate due to Covid symptoms, all of which may well have a continuing effect on the progress of work on site.

It should therefore be noted that there may be variations to the estimated final outturn following completion of end of financial year processes.

- 4.2 The availability of contractors currently remains the most significant challenge when in relation to carrying out works in private sector homes. As noted, demand for private Contractors continues to be at an unprecedented level and commitment from contractors to carry out works is continuing to be challenging. Once grant funding is identified and approved for works to be carried out the Applicant has 1 year to carry out the works. As the contract is between the Applicant and the contractor, they have the freedom of choice of contractor. Due to the abundance of available private work, contractors continue to have long waiting lists, and few are committing to timescales. This has been identified as a national issue.
- 4.3 To address the gap in contractors, Caledonia Care & Repair and PSHG's have carried out significant work to identify and advertise for additional contractors. It has also recently been agreed to do a social media campaign. The ongoing cost of living crisis may also result in less homeowners choosing to carry out works in their homes which has potential for additional private contractors to tender for private sector adaptations.
- 4.4 Due to staffing resource challenges in AHSCP and Caledonia Care & Repair the applications for grant funding has been unusually sporadic early this financial year. This also has an impact on budget spend/timescales, if less applications are received/approved later in the year there is less time to fully spend the budget. Equally, if there are surges in applications/approvals there are not enough contractors to complete the works at the same time. Caledonia Care & Repair, AHSCP and Private Sector Housing Grants have worked together to reduce the peaks in applications and provide more consistency in application times and numbers this quarter to reduce the impact as much as possible.
- 4.5 Appendix A lists Grant Applications in respect of Adaptations which have been approved and paid under delegated authority for the period 1 July 2022 to 30 September 2022 as well as presenting the estimated year end outturn.

In this second quarter

- 26 grant applications have been approved, with a further 14 due to be assessed and approved.
- 12 approved grants have been completed and paid, with a further 6 completed and pending processing.

5. 2022/23 BUDGET ALLOCATION

- 5.1 The 2022/23 base budget allocation is £477,471 split as follows:
- £350,000 Capital Budget to fund adaptations within applicant's homes (R65/22), subsequently reduced to £300,000 as part of a budget review
 - £109,000 Additional Capital one-off monies from Adult Services (R212/21) and carried forward to 22/23 to fund adaptations within applicant's homes
 - £68,471 Revenue Budget to fund associated staffing, third party payments and supplies and services to support the delivery of the service.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Summary Position

- 6.1 The overall estimated outturn position of Private Sector Housing Grants is summarised as below.
- 6.2 The current drawdown from the Capital budget would appear to be low for this time of year. However, due to the sporadic pattern of the grant submissions and approvals this year, it is expected to see an upturn in expenditure over the next quarter. It should be noted that works only commence when the applicant agrees to the work proceeding at a time that suits them. The estimated outturn will be therefore be subject to continual review and reported accordingly.
- 6.3 Table 1 outlines at the end of Quarter 2 £253,397 has been approved/committed from the £300,000 Capital budget for private sector major adaptations work. As the year progresses it

is likely some works committed for this year may be drawn down from 2023/24 budget depending in timescales for the works to be carried out. While we expect to fully commit the Capital budget it is not likely that all works will be carried out in 2022/23. As noted under 4.2, the timescales for works being carried out are dependent on Applicant's choice and availability of their chosen contractor.

Table 1 – 2022/23 Summary Position

Description	Total Budget (£)	Estimated Outturn (£)	Variance Adv / (Fav) (£)
Capital	300,000	250,000	(50,000)
Capital – from Adult Services	109,000	0	(109,000)
Revenue	68,471	65,186	(3,285)
Total	477,471	315,186	(162,285)

Description	Total Budget (£)	Approved to 30/09/22 (£)	Completed to 30/09/22 (£)	Estimated Outturn (£)	Variance Adv / (Fav) (£)
Capital	300,000	253,397	64,850	250,000	(50,000)
Capital (*AS)	109,000	0	0	0	(109,000)
Revenue	68,471	18,952	18,952	65,186	(3,285)
Total	477,471	272,349	83,802	315,186	(162,285)

**AS – Adult Services Funding*

The £253,397 Capital approved to date includes £76,208 of grants approved in 21/22 which are due to be completed and paid in 22/23

NOTE: No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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