

ANGUS COUNCIL

INFORMATION REPORT FOR THE PERIOD - 1 OCTOBER 2022 TO JANUARY 2023

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. SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION - SCHEDULE

There is one schedule which contain key background information related to services delivered by the Vibrant Communities & Sustainable Growth Directorate for the period 1 October 2022 to January 2023.

Where there are references to other documents (e.g. consultation documents/audit reports) that are associated with the relevant schedule a link to that document has also been included.

2. REPORT AUTHOR

This report and associated schedule has been compiled by Karen Butchart who can be contacted by emailing PLNGrants@angus.gov.uk

List of Appendices:

Schedule 1 – Private Sector Housing Grants 2022/23 – 1 October to 31 December 2022

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANTS 2022/23 – 1 OCTOBER TO 31 DECEMBER 2022**1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 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
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 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.

2. CURRENT/FORECASTED POSITION

- 2.1 Although at the other side of the pandemic, impact of the lockdowns continues to have a significant impact on the progress of completing grant works. With contractors unable to enter occupied homes during this period, it not only resulted in a backlog of work, it also affected spend in the previous financial year. Services continue to work hard to ensure all outstanding and new applications are progressed timeously, 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 (although the latter is starting to reduce in terms of impact). It should therefore be noted that there may be variations to the estimated final outturn following completion of end of financial year processes.
- 2.2 The availability of contractors currently remains the most significant challenge to carrying out works in private sector homes. Demand for private Contractors continues to be at an unprecedented level and commitment from contractors to carry out works continues to be challenging. Once grant funding is identified and approved the Applicant has 1 year to carry out the works. 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.
- 2.3 To address the gap in contractors, Caledonia Care & Repair and PSHG's have undertaken additional activity, including a social media campaign, to identify and advertise for additional contractors. 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 contractors to tender for private sector adaptations. Early feedback from some additional contractors is that they may be in a position to submit tender prices in 2023.
- 2.4 Due to staffing resource challenges in AHSCP and Caledonia Care & Repair the applications for grant funding have been unusually sporadic early this financial year which 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. Depending on the availability of additional contractors, this may help with timescales, regarding getting works completed on site, although this may not be most effective until next financial year.

- 2.5 This appendix lists Grant Applications in respect of Adaptations which have been approved and paid under delegated authority for the period 1 April 2022 to 31 December 2022 as well as presenting the estimated year end outturn.

In this third quarter

- 17 grant applications have been approved, with a further 8 due to be assessed and approved.
- 20 approved grants have been completed and paid, with a further 1 completed and pending processing.

3. 2022/23 BUDGET ALLOCATION

- 3.1 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. It should be noted that, due to the difficulties encountered with contractors starting on site, and therefore affecting the spend, permission has been requested to carry this amount into 23/24.
- £68,826 Revenue Budget to fund associated staffing, third party payments and supplies and services to support the delivery of the service.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Summary Position

- 4.1 The overall estimated outturn position of Private Sector Housing Grants is summarised as below.
- 4.2 The current drawdown from the Capital budget would continue to 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 final quarter. It should be noted that works only commence when the applicant agrees to the work proceeding at a time that suits them and also when their chosen contractor can programme the works in. The estimated outturn will therefore be subject to continual review and reported accordingly.
- 4.3 Table 1 outlines at the end of Quarter 3 £313,550 has been approved/committed from the £409,000 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	68,830	359
Total	477,471	318,830	(158,641)

Description	Total Budget (£)	Approved to 31/12/22 (£)	Completed to 31/12/22 (£)	Estimated Outturn (£)	Variance Adv / (Fav) (£)
Capital	300,000	300,000	153,438	250,000	(50,000)
Capital (*AS)	109,000	13,550	0	0	(109,000)
Revenue	68,471	32,060	32,060	68,830	359
Total	477,471	345,610	185,498	318,830	(158,641)

**AS – Adult Services Funding*

The £313,550 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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