

Appendix D – Information relating to the current Housing Improvement and Adaptations Grant Policies (including Disabled Facilities Grants)

Statutory requirements

1. **The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996** places a mandatory duty on the local housing authority to provide grants towards the costs of works required for the provision of facilities for disabled people. Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) are provided to adapt the home environment to restore or enable independent living for individuals with a disability. The maximum amount of grant funding that can be awarded under a mandatory DFG is currently £30,000.
2. **The Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) 2002** provides powers to local authorities to give assistance for housing renewal to any person in their area for the purposes of acquiring living accommodation and adapting, repairing or improving living accommodation. Under the RRO each of the Districts were required to adopt and publish a policy setting out how the powers would be used. These policies were co-developed by District Council officers working in partnership and have more similarities than they do differences.
3. Any money paid under the DFG capital grant determination must only be used for the specific purpose of providing adaptations for disabled people who qualify under these schemes (or for other social care capital projects where otherwise agreed as detailed above).
4. Each of the Districts provide a range of adaptation grants which facilitate a flexible and holistic approach based on the needs of the person with the disability
5. Currently the policies in place in the district areas enable the flexible use of DFG funding (as permitted in the RRO), for preventative interventions. Broadly the policies across the Districts are similar but this paper recommends that the remaining minor differences should be harmonised for vesting day.
6. Applications for mandatory DFGs that are made on behalf of a disabled child are not means tested. However, across the Districts there is a different policy in respect to the means test for 'top up' grants for adaptations required for children and young people (CYP).

7. The similarities of grant offerings are shown in the table below:

	DFG Grant type	AVDC	CDC/SBDC	WDC	Harmonisation requirement
Disability based Housing Grants	Ordinary DFG	30k	30k	30k	None
	Top up DFG	20k	15k	15k	Increase 'top up' to 20k and remove means test for the top up for CYP applications
	Minor Works DFG	10k	10k		WDC to do the same as the others ahead of and after vesting day. Change name to Small Scale DFG.
	Healthy Homes on Prescription	5k	5k	5k	None

8. The far right column indicates areas of the grant policies are required to change in the immediate term for vesting day. In the main the policies are consistent but there are some easily remedied minor differences that will have minimal financial impact and eliminate any area inequalities for applicants.

Grant Differences

In CDC / SBDC, the current grant policy provides further assistance funded under a separate capital pot provided by those Districts. In the main these relate to grants for Mobile Homes, and for Small Repairs Grants, of which there have been a total of 16 applications this financial year to date. The majority of these could be helped by the harmonised policy. The data amalgamated for the last **3 years** is presented below:

Safer Homes Grants

	Chiltern	South Bucks
Number completed	14	8
Expenditure	£38K	£26K
Number of these which could potentially be dealt	7	6

with under other grants		
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Mobile Home Grants

	Chiltern	South Bucks
Number completed	4	3
Expenditure	£17K	£7K
Number outstanding	3	0
Commitment	£10K	0
Number of these which could potentially be dealt with under other grants	-	-

A Decision is recommended to remove the Mobile Homes and Small Repairs grant offerings but to review any gaps in need when the review of the Improvement and Adaptations Policy is undertaken post vesting day

9. There is an opportunity to better integrate housing grants into the new Integrated Care System for Buckinghamshire. Studies in a range of disciplines confirm that the home environment is a quantifiable determinant of health, quality of life and well-being. The quality and suitability of the home environment is particularly important for disabled people, older people, those living with a chronic disease (e.g. dementia) or the consequences of a serious injury and those who experience functional and cognitive difficulties. Home adaptations directly reduce health and social care costs, help to reduce risk of further injury (e.g. from falls), enable faster hospital discharge, delay onset of admission to residential care and reduce care costs (e.g. for people with dementia).