

# Decision under Delegated Powers

## Officer Requesting Decision

Rebecca Short – Private Sector Housing Manager

## Officer Making the Decision

Alison Simmons – Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing

## Recommendation

- 1 To approve the temporary increase in hours for the post of Housing Support Coordinator (M338) at a salary grade E (from cost centre F321) from 111 hours to 148 hours per week, with effect from 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 until 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021. The post will report to the Private Sector Housing Manager. The post will be funded through the 2020-2021 additional Disabled Facilities Grant funding award.
- 2 To approve the temporary increase in hours for the post of Technical Officer (M356) at salary grade SO1 (from cost centre F321) from 37 hours per week to 74, with effect from 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021 until 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022. The post will report to the Private Sector Housing Manager. The post will be funded through the 2020-2021 Disabled Facilities Grant funding award.

## Reason

- 1&2 To maximize the number of residents assisted through the provision of a Disabled Facilities Grant, through an increase in resources focused on the processing of Disabled Facilities Grant referrals and applications in accordance with the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, and the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.

## Authority for Decision

Section 8.2 of the Constitution gives delegated authority to Heads of Service, (following consultation with the Council's Human Resources team and subject to the decision complying with the Council's existing policies) to make temporary appointments to be held against existing permanent posts or within the overall budget;

[Item 2 (vii) on page 8 - 3].

## Decision and Date



Alison Simmons  
Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing

13<sup>th</sup> January 2021

## **Background**

On 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020, The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government wrote to Local Authorities to advise of an additional payment of £68 million for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) in 2020-2021, which included £133,699 additional DFG funding for Charnwood Borough Council.

This extra boost in DFG funding is to help support local authorities to deliver more home adaptations for those people with disabilities who qualify for a DFG. MHCLG recognise that following the outbreak of Covid-19, local authorities have displayed innovation and resilience in maintaining the delivery of essential services under very challenging circumstances and have faced difficulties, including the delivery of the DFG during the ongoing pandemic.

With this in mind, although MHCLG encourage the allocation of as much of this funding within this financial year, any amounts that cannot be reasonably spent within the year should be spent at the earliest opportunity to ensure that eligible applicants are not disadvantaged.

In March 2020, 71 residents were waiting for a housing assessment. On 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 the first COVID-19 lockdown began, and all housing visits were suspended to protect the vulnerable residents that are assisted through Lightbulb. Although partial housing assessments were completed over the telephone, and via video calls where possible, physical assessments within the home did not reconvene until 21<sup>st</sup> September 2020, by which time the waiting list had increased significantly to 212.

The Locality Lightbulb Team at Charnwood consists of 3 FTE Housing Support Coordinators (HSCs), 1 Technical Officer, 0.5 FTE Administrative Officers, in addition to a co-located Occupational Therapist Resource employed by Leicestershire County Council.

However, the Government announced the third national lockdown earlier this week as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and it is estimated that the lockdown will be in place for at least 7 weeks. With Extremely clinically vulnerable residents being asked to shield and a significant number of Lightbulb service users likely to be shielding to protect themselves, this will impact once again on the physical visits that can be undertaken.

The proposal is to recruit 2 additional officers for a period of 34 weeks, 1 officer to focus on the housing assessment and reduction of the referrals on the waiting list between 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 until 5<sup>th</sup> September 2021 making a positive impact on assessment waiting list times, and the second from 30<sup>th</sup> August 2021 until 24<sup>th</sup> April 2022 increasing the number of grants processed, approved and reducing completion times for DFGs, including Discretionary Grants, in line with the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy.

## **Comments from HR**

HR Adviser: Anna Cairns (11/1/21)

The normal recruitment process should be followed. Or if current CBC employees are working additional hours, a variation eform will need to be completed for each employee.

### **Financial Implications**

For recommendation 1 – total cost for year at point 018 is £35,000 including oncost.  
For 34 weeks that's  $\text{£}35,000/52 \times 34 \text{ weeks} = \text{£}22,884$

For recommendation 2 – total cost for year at point 23 is £39,000 including oncost.  
For 34 weeks that's  $\text{£}39,000/52 \times 34 = \text{£}25,500$

These total  $\text{£}22,884 + \text{£}25,500 = \text{£}48,384$ .

The posts will be funded through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government DFG allocation of £133,699 on the 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

### **Risk Management**

There are no risks identified with this decision.

Key Decision: No

Background Papers: DD124 (19/20)

