

**DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS AND CHARGES ON PROPERTIES  
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Social Well-Being) and  
(Economic Well-Being)).**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 At meetings held on 4th and 6th October 2011, the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Social Well-Being) and (Economic Well-Being) considered a report by the Head of Housing Services on the possible introduction of charges on properties adapted through Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). This report summarises their discussions.
- 1.3 The Panels were addressed by the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing and the Head of Housing Services who provided background to the proposal to introduce charges on properties to recover DFGs for certain defined purposes.

**2. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (SOCIAL WELL-BEING)**

- 2.1 The Panel has discussed a number of matters including the resources that the proposal would require to implement, the anticipated level of charges that could be placed on properties together with the criteria utilised to claim repayments. Having questioned when applicants would be notified of charges, assurances were received that they would be alerted by Officers during the application process. The Panel also discussed the market value of properties that had been adapted with DFGs and noted the reasons why the proposed charges would only be levied on grants in excess of £10,000 for garage/outbuilding conversions and/or an extension to a property. The Panel has expressed their satisfaction with the proposals.

**3. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)**

- 3.1 The Economic Well-Being Panel has also endorsed the proposals to introduce a charge on properties to recover the cost of DFG in certain circumstances. Members have referred to the likely impact of the proposals on property values, the cost of imposing charges and the length of time occupiers will remain in their properties. They have also queried whether there would be a sliding scale for repayments over time and have been informed that if the property is sold within a ten year period the full amount would be claimed up to a maximum limit of £10,000.
- 3.2 With regard to adaptations undertaken at properties owned by Registered Social Landlords, it is hoped that Landlords will manage their housing stock to ensure that tenants who require adaptations are allocated to properties where works have already been undertaken, thus reducing future demand for Grants.
- 3.2 The Panel has commented on the limited funding which is provided by Central Government for DFGs and has suggested that the District Council, in conjunction with other local authorities in the region should make representations to Government requesting additional support. Members have also commented that the maximum amount that could be reclaimed by local

authorities has been capped at £10,000 for several years and that representations should also be made that the figure should be index linked.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 The Cabinet is requested to take into consideration the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Social Well-Being) and (Economic Well-Being) as set out above when considering this item.

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