

A summary of responses to Cheshire East Council's

Home Repairs and Adaptations Policy Consultation 2025



Executive Summary

Introduction

Cheshire East Council consulted on several proposed changes to its Home Repairs and Adaptations Policy between 9 December 2024 and 22 January 2025.

The council proposed these changes to focus its financial resources on statutory services, and on the most vulnerable residents. These proposed changes formed the council's preferred option for the future of the policy, with the following 3 options for changes to the policy considered during the consultation:

1. Do nothing
2. Remove all discretionary funding
3. Remove some discretionary funding

Option 3 was put forward as the council's preferred option as it strikes a balance between making the required savings, while continuing to provide grants and loans for some of the most vulnerable in the borough.

In total 80 survey completions were received as part of consultation feedback.

Affordable Warmth Grant – Proposal feedback

There was general support for the proposed changes to the Affordable Warmth Grant:

- 77% supported proposed changes to the works eligible for the grant, 14% opposed them
- 64% supported proposed changes to applicant eligibility for the grant, 27% opposed them

Although there was general support for the proposed changes to the Affordable Warmth Grant, for some this support was reluctantly given.

Concern about these proposed changes included:

- Opposition to the requirement that people must now be in receipt of a means tested benefit to qualify for the grant, as this would negatively impact some who are struggling to keep their homes warm
- Some felt the grant should be available to all pensioners
- Opposition to the removal of building insulation from the list of eligible works, as this does not support the council's vision for carbon neutrality

Disabled Facilities Grant – Proposal feedback

63% of survey respondents supported the proposed changes to the Disabled Facilities Grant, 29% opposed them.

Those in support of these proposed changes felt that £30,000 still seemed like a reasonable level of grant that would still allow minor adaptations to be made.

Concern about these proposed changes included that:

- Many adaptations cost in excess of the statutory £30,000, and a 40% cut in funding is significant
- It means people will not be able to afford the adaptations they need
- There are not enough suitable alternative properties available within Cheshire East for those affected to relocate within their local area

Others suggested:

- The tender process for completing the works should be made more robust – it is felt that contractors overcharge Local Authorities for these types of building works
- Applicants should be assessed on a case-by-case basis, or that the grant should be means tested

Healthy Homes & Empty Homes Loans – Proposal feedback

65% of survey respondents supported the proposed changes to the Healthy Homes and Empty Homes Loans, 18% opposed them.

Comments on these proposed changes included that:

- Clarity needs to be provided at the start of a financial year if funding for these loans will be available or not
- This is a short-sighted strategy given current housing shortages in Cheshire East, and will have a negative impact on the quantity of homes available
- The Healthy Homes Loans may cause people to live in unsuitable and unhealthy conditions

Independent Living Loan – Proposal feedback

There was general support for the proposed changes to the Independent Living Loan:

- 76% supported the proposed changes to the loan amounts, 15% opposed them
- 74% supported the proposed changes to the loan conditions, 18% opposed them

Those in support of these proposed changes were so given the council finds itself in the midst of a financial crisis, and felt the upper loan amount increase of £15,000 to £25,000 was positive.

Concern about these proposed changes included:

- Opposition to the lower loan amount increase from £1,000 to £5,000
- That loan eligibility should be means tested on the applicant's ability to repay
- That the Independent Living Loan is very time consuming to administer for council Care & Repair and Legal Teams, compared to the £50,000 Disabled Facilities Grant system

General themes arising during feedback

A number of general themes arose within survey feedback, including:

- Concern proposals would disproportionately impact the most vulnerable and disabled residents
- Withdrawal of this financial support is short-sighted
- Concern proposals would increase pressure on council and NHS social care services, and would have negative long-term impacts
- Some support for option 3 (removal of some discretionary funding – the council's preferred option) as it seems to be reasonable

Finally, a number of professional council officers commented on the proposed changes:

Council Occupational Therapist views: OTs were opposed to the proposals as they felt they would not be able to meet the need of their most vulnerable clients as a result of them – they implored the council to have further discussions with them and Care & Repair Services before any decisions are made. They suggested that if the council truly wishes to reduce costs, then instead of cutting discretionary funding it should employ more Occupational Therapists who are trained in ensuring recommended adaptations are proportionate and necessary.

Council Housing Officers: It was commented throughout feedback that there is a lack of suitable alternative properties in Cheshire East for those with disabilities. Officers felt there should be changes to Section 106 (Affordable Housing Clearing Service) obligations, so that “affordable housing” is not built in a one size fits all

model, but that it incorporates more accessible properties including properties with the ability for adaptations to be carried out if required.

Conclusions

It is positive to see overall support for each of the proposals put forward in this consultation, and some support for option 3 (the council's preferred option).

This suggests an acceptance among respondents for the need to make savings, while at the same time attempting to protect the most vulnerable in society. Many felt the proposals seemed reasonable.

That said there were a number of legitimate concerns raised about each of the proposals which should be looked at closely to see if any mitigations can be put in place, these are listed in detail throughout this report. There was concern that these proposals would affect some of the most vulnerable in society and would therefore have negative impacts on social care services in future.

The views from council Occupational Therapists and Housing Officers are particularly interesting and should be explored further with these professionals – it is clear some professionals think there are other, more effective ways of making savings than those that have been proposed.

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Introduction

Purpose of the consultation

In response to the severe financial pressures it faced, Cheshire East Council consulted on several proposed changes to its Home Repairs and Adaptations Policy. The council proposed these changes to focus its financial resources on statutory services, and on the most vulnerable residents.

The Home Repairs and Adaptations Policy was first produced in 2009, and sets out how the council helps disabled and vulnerable residents to manage their own care and wellbeing at home, by funding repairs and adaptations to their homes so that people can continue living in accessible and safe environments.

The consultation was conducted between 9 December 2024 and 22 January 2025.

The options considered during the consultation

3 options for changes to the current policy were considered during the consultation:

1) Do nothing – The current policy would continue to be delivered in its current format, with households continuing to receive the same level of support with home repairs and adaptations.

2) Remove all discretionary funding – This would include the removal of all discretionary (non-statutory) funding from the policy, leaving only the statutory part of the Disabled Facilities Grant. This would mean the removal of the Disability Relocation Grant, the Targeted Regeneration Grant, the Urgent Adaptations Grant, the Affordable Warmth Grant, the Healthy Homes & Empty Homes Loans, and the Independent Living Loan.

3) Remove some discretionary funding – This would mean that the Disability Relocation Grant, Targeted Regeneration Grant, and the Urgent Adaptations Grant would be retained within the policy as they are, with changes being proposed for the Affordable Warmth Grant, Disabled Facilities Grant, Healthy Homes & Empty Homes Loans and the Independent Living Loan.

Option 3 was put forward as the council's preferred option as it strikes a balance between making the required savings, while continuing to provide grants and loans for some of the most vulnerable in the borough.

Consultation methodology and response

The consultation was widely promoted, including via [the council's consultation portal](#), through [media releases](#) and via social media.

Existing service users were also invited to take part in the consultation via email, and council teams with an interest in the consultation were invited to take part through face-to-face presentations.

Finally, the consultation was also promoted through the following groups and council teams via email:

Age UK, Alsager Community Support, Alzheimers Society, Cheshire Autism, Cheshire Buddies, Citizens Advice, Crossroads, David Lewis Centre, Deafness Support Network, Disability Information Bureau, Disability Positive, East Cheshire Eye Society, Edge Inclusion Partners, Health Watch Cheshire, Muir Group, Onward Housing, Parkinsons UK, Peaks & Plains Housing Trust, Plus Dane Housing, Regenda Homes, Riverside, Rossendale Trust, Rubys Fund, Space 4 Autism, Speaking Up Speaking Out, Stroke Association, The Guinness Partnership, Young Stroke Society, Energy Projects Plus, Cheshire East Council Adult Social Care Team, Cheshire East Council Occupational Therapists, and the Cheshire East Council Housing Standards & Adaptations Team.

Consultation response

In total 80 survey completions were received as part of consultation feedback.

The following report summarises these survey responses.

Affordable Warmth Grant

The Affordable Warmth Grant is available to eligible applicants to ensure their home has suitable heating, and this includes the provision of boiler replacements and hot water system repairs.

Changes to applicant eligibility

The proposed changes

The following changes were proposed to applicant eligibility for the Affordable Warmth Grant, to determine who can apply for the grant:

- Removal of the current household income and savings criteria
- Removal of the Covid-19 criteria
- Addition of a criteria that applicants must be in receipt of a means tested benefit

Level of support and opposition to these proposed changes

64% of survey respondents supported these proposed changes to applicant eligibility for the Affordable Warmth Grant, while 27% opposed them.

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose...

...these proposed changes to applicant eligibility for the Affordable Warmth Grant?



Number of responses = 73

Comments made about these proposed changes

Survey respondent comments about these proposed changes to applicant eligibility for the Affordable Warmth Grant have been categorised and summarised in the tables below.

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Support for the proposals | 8 |
| Reluctant support for the proposed changes to applicant eligibility. Difficult times require difficult decisions and in the current situation any available funding needs to be targeted. | 7 |
| Supports removing assistance to Covid 19 vulnerable people. | 1 |
| Opposition to the proposals | 14 |

| | |
|--|---|
| Opposition to the proposal that applicants must be in receipt of a means tested benefit to qualify for the grant – Lots of people are not on means tested benefits who are struggling to keep their homes warm without help. The requirement for a means tested benefit would just create a further burden on this group of people who are just above the eligibility criteria. Cutting this back would put more pressure on other services, including social care and the NHS, and will potentially lead to bed blocking at hospitals etc. | 9 |
| General opposition to reductions in resident eligibility. Not all people will be prepared to fund necessary work and will choose to ignore potential risks to their health. | 3 |
| Opposed to removing assistance to Covid 19 vulnerable people. These people are categorised as such by medical provision and therefore this aspect should be retained. | 1 |
| Alternative savings idea: Expenses for Councillors and council employees should be closely examined to see if savings can be made there. | 1 |

| | |
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| General comments | 13 |
| The Affordable Warmth Grant should be available to all pensioners. Pensioners have already been targeted by the government through the removal of the heating allowance. | 4 |
| Not everybody who is entitled to benefits claims them. Take-up of means tested benefits is much lower than expected, particularly pension credit. | 2 |
| More information is needed, it is unclear as to what is being proposed. | 2 |
| The amended policy should be much easier to understand. You've written it in the language of official channels, it should be written for the people it is aimed at. The population at large should be able to negotiate any policy without having been to college first. | 1 |
| The council does not listen to consultation results. | 1 |
| Challenge supplier/contractor costs. | 1 |
| Managing long established publicly funded support expectations will be hard. | 1 |
| Opposed to people on benefits getting this support. | 1 |

Changes to the works eligible for the grant

The proposed changes

The proposal was to remove the following types of work from being eligible for assistance:

- All types of building insulation
- Low carbon heating and hot water solutions

Level of support and opposition to these proposed changes

77% of survey respondents supported these proposed changes to the works eligible for the Affordable Warmth Grant, while 14% opposed them.

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose...

...these proposed changes to the works eligible for the Affordable Warmth Grant?



Number of responses = 73

Comments made about these proposed changes

Survey respondent comments about these proposed changes to the works eligible for the Affordable Warmth Grant have been categorised and summarised in the tables below.

| Support for the proposals | | 9 |
|--|--|---|
| General support: If there are other grants available, hopefully people can get the support required to make the necessary changes to their home. Not sure people on benefits can afford to pay to run low carbon heating anyway. | | 6 |
| The Warm Homes Grant – This should really be the only way to fund this, doing it from existing funds is a drain on council resources. | | 3 |
| Opposition to the proposals | | 7 |
| Removing insulation and low carbon solutions works does not support the council's vision for carbon neutrality. Central Government should be supporting local government to do this as part of the UK's green agenda. | | 4 |
| Opposed to the removal of building insulation from the list of eligible works – Insulation is one of the easiest and most effective ways to retain heat and therefore, lower energy use and bills, as well as lowering the carbon footprint for houses (and therefore for the council). | | 2 |
| There are many people who don't qualify for means-tested benefits who are struggling financially and already have issues with heating their homes. Cutting this back would put more pressure on other services, including social care and the NHS. | | 1 |
| General comments | | 4 |
| Stop all grants. Opposed to grants for full new central heating systems. | | 2 |
| Not enough information to understand the impact on the most vulnerable people to comment with any real meaning. | | 1 |
| The council does not listen to consultation results. | | 1 |

Disabled Facilities Grant

The proposed changes

The proposal was to reduce the maximum amount of Disabled Facilities Grant allowed to the statutory minimum amount of £30,000, down from £50,000. This would remove the additional discretionary amount of £20,000 per grant.

Level of support and opposition to these proposed changes

63% of survey respondents supported these proposed changes to the amounts of grant allowed for the Disabled Facilities grant, while 29% opposed them.

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose...

...these proposed changes to the amounts of grant allowed for the Disabled Facilities Grant?



Number of responses = 76

Comments made about these proposed changes

Survey respondent comments about these proposed changes to the amounts of grant allowed for the Disabled Facilities grant have been categorised and summarised in the tables below.

| Support for the proposals | 5 |
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| General support. | 2 |
| £30,000 still seems like a reasonable level of grant. | 1 |
| Removal of the extra £20,000 available on Disabled Facilities Grant would still allow for minor adaptations to be made. | 1 |
| The discretionary supplement appears to only benefit the few rather than the many. | 1 |

| Opposition to the proposals | 43 |
|---|----|
| Many adaptations cost in excess of the statutory £30,000 – a 40% cut in this grant is massive. This will have a huge impact on the ability to provide necessary extensions and major adaptations to those that most need it. £30,000 will not cover extensions / major property alterations. DFG adaptations cannot always be made within the footprint of the house, and sometimes the only option for highly vulnerable people to be able to remain at home is to have an extension. Clients will have to pick and choose which adaptations they have. | 14 |
| This disproportionately impacts on disabled people , who are already struggling because of government policy. This will cause families to struggle | 8 |

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| in a climate where they are already struggling. There are other steps we could take before we just take money off people who obviously need it. | |
| There are not enough suitable properties available for those affected to relocate to within their local area/close to support networks. In particular there is a shortage of suitable housing stock for families requiring more than 3 bedrooms and space for a disabled family member in Cheshire East. There is not enough social housing (especially adapted social housing) to be able to advise people to move to a more suitable home and so DFG and discretionary funding is vital in ensuring that these vulnerable people are safe and can be cared for in their own home. | 7 |
| This is very likely to place greater pressure on council and NHS support services , and is a shortsighted saving. This could impact on local councils nursing and care home costs, on children's social care, and on respite care services. | 7 |
| Council Occupational Therapist views – Opposition to the proposals. We are aware of how much the DFG can significantly improve the quality of life for clients through the provision of adaptations, that enable a person-centred approach which includes supporting the client to remain in their current property. This has a significant impact on their identity and overall wellbeing. | 3 |
| If the council wants to reduce the costing of DFGs then it needs to employ more Occupational Therapists. It is the role of OTs to look at a client's health conditions and their functional ability and assess if any adaptation is necessary. If the council truly wishes to reduce overall DFG costings, then instead of cutting discretionary funding, employ more Occupational Therapists who are trained in ensuring recommended adaptations are proportionate and necessary, and have the skills and experience to look at alternative out of the box ideas to help maintain people's independence. | 2 |
| There are no suitable alternative funding solutions for these vulnerable people if the discretionary funding is removed – There is no funding from other sources to make up the shortfall. | 1 |
| This is a very ill thought through policy. | 1 |

| | |
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| General comments | 11 |
| How robust is the tender process for completing the works? It is well known that contractors and suppliers tend to add to the bottom line knowing that local authorities and public services overpay. Rather than reduce the value of the grant, we should ensure that we are getting the best deal from the contractors being used to complete the works instead. | |
| The council should look to seek a fixed pricing scheme and renegotiate current contracts with build teams which reflects the market and actual costings, rather than paying inflated pricing. The current scheme for contract procurement is likely to satisfy the contractor rather than the taxpayers purse, creating a monopoly and reducing competitive pricing. | 5 |
| Previously necessary work was carried out by a council labour force (Direct Works) when costs could be controlled. Private contractors, although | |

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| tendering under a competitive tender basis, are chosen from a limited pool and through high overheads and “cartel arrangements” their base tender thresholds will be lifted. What's more variations in the works will be charged at high day work rates. | |
| All applicants should be assessed on a case-by-case basis , not on a "one size fits all" approach. The grant should be means tested and those who can pay a little towards these proposals should do so. | 2 |
| Changes should be made to planning requirements to ensure more accessible properties are made available in Cheshire East. This should include changes to Section 106 (Affordable Housing Clearing Service) obligations – Not just to build “affordable housing” in a one size fits all model, but to incorporate more accessible properties including properties with the ability for adaptations to be carried out if required e.g. modular builds which can be altered at little expense to install track hoists etc. | 1 |
| Finding suitable alternative properties is an extremely difficult process with a lot of red tape. For owner occupiers if they have spare equity on their property it isn't an easy process through the council legal team – forwarding cases to the council legal team for a charge to be added can take 6 to 12 months, as legal don't have enough capacity to work on the loans. Quotes then go out of date. It's also time consuming for caseworkers in Care and Repair, obtaining permissions from mortgage providers, checking enough equity is in the property, getting valuations on the property, before referring cases to the legal team. It's a stressful experience for the client, especially if mortgage providers don't agree to a second charge, as well as for staff within Care and Repair, stopping them working on other adaptations which are on a waiting list. | 1 |
| The council does not listen to consultation results. | 1 |
| Not enough information has been provided to be able understand the impact of proposals on the most vulnerable people. | 1 |

Healthy Homes & Empty Homes Loans

The proposed changes

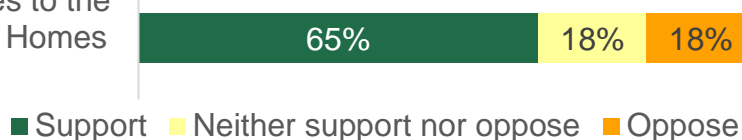
The proposal was that both loans would be retained within the policy, but would only be awarded if funding became available.

Level of support and opposition to these proposed changes

65% of survey respondents supported these proposed changes to the Healthy Homes and Empty Homes Loans, while 18% opposed them.

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose...

...these proposed changes to the Healthy Homes & Empty Homes Loans?



Number of responses = 74

Comments made about these proposed changes

Survey respondent comments about these proposed changes to the Healthy Homes and Empty Homes Loans have been categorised and summarised in the tables below.

| General comments | 15 |
|--|----------|
| This is a short-sighted strategy given the current housing shortage issue. This proposal is bound to have a negative impact on the quantity of decent homes available for people to rent. Given the ever-increasing number of empty homes in Cheshire East and the demand for affordable housing, Cheshire East should set aside funding for a project to return empty homes to use; either by purchasing, renovating and selling, or to rent or lease for the private rented sector where affordable rented housing is most in demand. | 6 |
| General support for this whole proposal. | 3 |
| Clarity needs to be provided at the start of a financial year if this support for these loans will be available or not. The council has ongoing debts and can't meet current demands so the discretionary element to revisit this again in the future if funding is available is highly unlikely to happen. | 2 |
| This proposal will add to the pressure on social care services, shelters, hostels and hospitals. | 2 |
| Previous experience suggests that the council disregards any inputs to these surveys, and is paying lip service to council taxpayers. | 1 |
| Ensure quality standards are imposed on contractors doing the work. | 1 |
| Comments on the Healthy Homes Loan | 9 |

| | |
|--|---|
| This is a risky policy – Not offering support will cause many people to live in unsuitable and unhealthy conditions. It is not acceptable to have people living in squalor, we are supposed to be a modern caring society. | 3 |
| General opposition to the proposal around the HHL – Removal of this loan will just create pressures for wider social care services. | 2 |
| General support for the proposal around the HHL – This loan is difficult to administer and is expensive for the council to fund. Homeowners can be guided towards equity release or other loans secured against the property instead. | 2 |
| What happens to these families of uninhabitable homes? Does the council pay for hotel accommodation and find them alternative housing? If a home is not habitable then where do the occupants go, and who pays the bill for that? | 2 |

| | |
|--|----------|
| Comments on the Empty Homes Loan | 7 |
| This loan should only go to anyone on a very low income who perhaps have inherited an old property, and not to developers or landlords. | 2 |
| The council must ensure any funding to repurpose empty homes should be used for that purpose , or be used to assist local Registered Social Landlords to buy the properties via Compulsory Purchase Orders rather than the soft EHL approach where only the property owner benefits and not the wider housing market. People should only get funding if it helps to increase the number of available rental properties. | 2 |
| General support for removal of this loan. | 1 |
| General opposition to the removal of this loan. Not offering support will cause a lot of houses to go into disrepair. | 1 |
| If funding is available, then there should be a requirement to make these homes disability friendly when having works completed to get them up to standard. That will hugely impact not only the relocation housing situation but reduce the number of DFGs required in the future. | 1 |

Independent Living Loan

Changes to the loan conditions

The proposed changes

The proposal was to remove the equity share loan option leaving interest-free repayment loans as the only funding option.

Level of support and opposition to these proposed changes

74% of survey respondents supported these proposed changes to the loan conditions for the Independent Living Loan, while 18% opposed them.

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose...

...this proposed change to the loan conditions?



Number of responses = 73

Comments made about these proposed changes

Survey respondent comments about these proposed changes to the loan conditions for the Independent Living Loan have been categorised and summarised in the tables below.

| Support for the proposal | | 3 |
|--|--|----|
| Supportive given the council finds itself in the midst of a financial crisis | | |
| through years of poor financial management, it seems prudent to move to a repayment loan, at least in the short term. | | 1 |
| Interest free loans seem very fair. | | 1 |
| This must be on an immediate loan repayment basis, just as it is with external loan funding, thereby income back into the council may be quantified under these loans, and figures are available immediately and therefore are accurately projected. The time taken at present to gain the funds / costs of these loans is too long. | | 1 |
| Opposition to the proposal | | 12 |
| Loan eligibility should be means tested on the applicant's ability to repay | | |
| – You can't get blood out of a stone so if they can't repay the loan they won't have the works done, or they would struggle to repay the loan. What happens if they cannot repay the loan? | | 4 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Think about the longer-term impacts and how the proposal may cost the council more via other social service costs, mental wellbeing of residents and through the overall state of properties in the area. This could lead to properties becoming uninhabitable and a danger to health. | 4 |
| This proposal would put more pressure on already vulnerable people. These changes just seem to have the aim of making life more difficult for people who already have a difficult life. | 2 |
| The equity share option meant that people could have assistance when they needed it. | 1 |
| Where a disabled person dies their spouse (carer) could be forced into repaying a large loan just to continue living in what they consider to be their home. This seems highly undesirable and potentially an unfair risk. | 1 |

| | |
|---|----------|
| General comments | 9 |
| Queries: Who guarantees the loans? What will happen if the borrower defaults? Would this support children who require adaptations to a property owned by parents, when the cost of such adaptations is in excess of the statutory DFG funding? | 3 |
| Opposed to the loans at all , the money spent and returned is cyclical and is likely to cost lots to administer. | 2 |
| The Independent Living Loan is so time consuming for the staff member of the Care and Repair team and the legal team, compared to the system at the present time with grants of £50,000. Quite often you can go through the whole process and then the mortgage provider doesn't agree to an additional loan, or the process can take so long that quotes go out of date. The wait for disabled clients, especially waiting for hospital discharge, can then result in bed blocking. | 1 |
| The onus should be on the council to support society not deferring to the individual. | 1 |
| There isn't enough information to understand the impact on the most vulnerable people to comment with any real meaning. | 1 |
| Previous experience suggests the council totally disregards any consultation feedback and is paying lip service only to council taxpayers. | 1 |

Changes to the loan amounts

The proposed changes

The proposal was that the maximum loan amount that would be considered would be increased from £15,000 to £25,000, and the minimum loan amount that would be considered would be increased from £1,000 to £5,000.

Level of support and opposition to these proposed changes

76% of survey respondents supported these proposed changes to the loan amounts for the Independent Living Loan, while 15% opposed them.

Generally speaking, how strongly do you support or oppose...

...these proposed changes to the loan amounts for the Independent Living Loan?



Number of responses = 75

Comments made about these proposed changes

Survey respondent comments about these proposed changes to the loan amounts for the Independent Living Loan have been categorised and summarised in the tables below.

| Comments | 19 |
|--|----|
| Support for the upper loan amount increase from £15,000 to £25,000. This should be increased to £30,000. Escalating costs in the construction industry, plus the inclusion of VAT on most building elements of an extension, mean that most single storey extensions to provide ground floor bedroom and bathroom cost over £55,000, particularly once extra items such as ramping or wash-dry toilets are included. | 7 |
| Opposition to the upper loan amount increase from £15,000 to £25,000. There are many other alternative funding options. Most people only take this option because money is being loaned interest free. | 1 |
| Opposition to the lower loan amount increase from £1,000 to £5,000. The minimum loan amount of £1,000 could mean the difference between a client having their adaptations provided and not, why not leave this at £1,000? £1,000 may not seem a lot but when manging on disability benefits (as I do) it may as well be £1,000,000. What is the benefit to the council for increasing the minimum loan amount? | 4 |
| Support for the lower loan amount increase from £1,000 to £5,000. | 1 |
| Opposition to the loans at all. Council costs for providing these services require recoupling wherever possible, there are a lot of man hours from several departments that go into the set-up of these interest free loans. | 3 |
| General support for the proposal , as it counters the reduction of the DFG discretionary funding. | 1 |
| The extra £20,000 discretionary top up funding for DFG's is essential in maintaining the health, safety, independence and wellbeing of client's who need DFG funding. | 1 |
| Previous experience suggests the council totally disregards any consultation feedback and is paying lip service only to council taxpayers. | 1 |

Final comments

The final question of the survey asked respondents if they had any final comments to make in relation to this consultation. Responses have been categorised and summarised in the tables below.

| Opposition to the proposals | 24 |
|--|----|
| <p>General opposition to proposals because of the impact on social services and social care. Proposals will have a negative impact on residents and on social care services, and so will not save money in the long term.</p> <p>The financial return of money spent on adaptations elsewhere in the welfare system (be it NHS, or local authority) is well known and well proven. Removing this support is a very short-term solution which will cost CEC more in the long term.</p> <p>This is already known and acknowledged but likely ignored as the priority of the authority is no longer its residents but its own survival.</p> <p>The fear is the resulting reputational damage will further negatively impact the council, and make the jobs of those who deliver the services even more challenging as they're expected to "perform miracles with no money to do it".</p> | 8 |
| <p>General opposition to the proposals as the withdrawal of this financial support to the most vulnerable residents is harsh, damaging and short-sighted. Although the council is responding to its financial pressures, it is worrying that it will simply be pushing those issues on to vulnerable people, who most probably already have their own financial pressures.</p> | 5 |
| <p>Other general opposition to the proposals Look for other ways to raise funds rather than cost cuts. The DFG grant of £30,000 is not enough.</p> | 4 |
| <p>Council Occupational Therapist views – OTs will not be able to meet the needs of our most vulnerable clients as a result of these proposals.</p> <p>We implore the council to have further discussions with the Occupational Therapy and Care & Repair Services before any decisions are made.</p> <p>By removing urgent grants, moving home grants and the discretionary £20,000 top up funding for Disabled Facilities Grants, the council Occupational Therapy service will be hugely impacted as it will not be able to meet the needs of our most vulnerable clients who require either multiple adaptations or an extension in order to live independently at home.</p> <p>There is research to show that those who have adaptations remain in their own home for longer which reduces costings and pressure on residential / care homes and the NHS.</p> <p>If the council removes the discretionary funding OTs will be highlighting severe risks about vulnerable people and will have no way of providing the adaptations to remove those risks. Charitable funding options help currently</p> | 3 |

| | |
|---|---|
| with equipment costing, but do not cover adaptations therefore there is just no other options out there for these vulnerable people. | |
| In my role as part of the OT Service, my job is to support clients to feel empowered, to be able to live as independently as possible, or to support informal carers to provide the highest level of care possible, and to improve quality of life for both clients, their carers, and their families. | |
| Without the necessary funding options available to offer clients to be able to provide the adaptations they need, we would be doing a disservice to them, impacting their health and wellbeing and not being able to meet their needs to provide enhanced occupational performance through participation in the occupations and activities of daily living they need to do to live a meaningful and fulfilled life. | |
| There is a lack of suitable properties in Cheshire East for those with disabilities. A large number of houses have been built recently and more are going up – Make it a stipulation that the builders have to build a number of houses for social housing and these must be handed to the council, and that a percentage of these should also be disabled friendly. | 2 |
| Support for option 1 – Do nothing. I am ashamed to be a resident in Cheshire East when it is targeting the most vulnerable members of our society. Cheshire East needs to look in- house and stop wasting taxpayers money on hairbrained schemes. | 2 |

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| General support for the proposals | 10 |
| Support for option 3 – Remove some discretionary funding (the council's preferred option). Support for option 3 is given reluctantly but the changes seem to fit the description as "reasonable". It is important to manage council costs whilst ensuring that those genuinely in need of assistance get it. The suggestions seem sensible where funding is restricted & demand is increasing. | 7 |
| When my wife needed a substantial ramp to access our front door in her wheelchair the council provided a quality one at no cost to us and was well within the proposed cost limitations proposed. | |
| General support – Proposals sounds sensible and well-considered in the circumstances. | 3 |

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| General comments | 10 |
| This should be dealt with through central government policy, with sufficient funds made available to local government, and ring fenced for its intended purpose. | 1 |
| Stop wasting Council Tax on this, or make it an optional part of Council Tax that people can opt out of. | 1 |
| The UK cannot afford to support poor and disadvantaged people without more coming from the rich. | 1 |
| Be open and honest about your plans – something governments shy away from. | 1 |

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| More information needed - It would be good to know the number of applications for DFG, Urgent grants, loans etc as I only use the DFG/Urgent grant and unaware how many people access the other loans mentioned. | 1 |
| Previous experience suggests the council totally disregards any consultation feedback and is paying lip service only to council taxpayers. | 1 |
| Orbitas Handyman service – Costs increased when this service moved to Orbitas. Can there not be a service where residents pay for the Handyman and this service can make money to help fund this service for service users coming from social care? | 1 |
| With regards to the Council, make the language you use easier. Get "real" people to read and follow the processes you put in place – are they able to understand what it is they are entitled to and how they get that assistance. | 1 |
| I believe where there is requirement for adaptations above £30K, those in a tenant position must allow consultation between the council and the relevant Housing Association to find alternative accommodation. It might be suggested that the council would utilise the Disabled Facilities Grant maximum amount to 'assist' the Housing Association to purchase an appropriate home 'from the open market' to allow that person's needs to be met. This allows the council's obligation to be met and the Housing Association have another property to add to their rentable property portfolio. | 1 |
| People using these services often receive a large amount of support from informal carers who also need to be supported through provision of adaptations that make life easier for them to be able to provide support, which also significantly impacts pressures on services and the long term costs of formal carer support. | 1 |

Conclusions

It is positive to see overall support for each of the proposals put forward in this consultation, and some support for option 3 (the council's preferred option).

This suggests an acceptance among respondents for the need to make savings, while at the same time attempting to protect the most vulnerable in society. Many felt the proposals seemed reasonable.

That said there were a number of legitimate concerns raised about each of the proposals which should be looked at closely to see if any mitigations can be put in place, these are listed in detail throughout this report. There was concern that these proposals would affect some of the most vulnerable in society and would therefore have negative impacts on social care services in future.

The views from council Occupational Therapists and Housing Officers are particularly interesting and should be explored further with these professionals – it is clear some professionals think there are other, more effective ways of making savings than those that have been proposed.

