

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL**PUBLIC REPORT**

Report to:	CABINET
Report of:	Interim Corporate Director Adult Social Care & Health
Date of Decision:	16th May 2017
SUBJECT:	CARERS' GRANTS – PERMISSION TO CONSULT
Key Decision: Yes	Relevant Forward Plan Ref: 003626/2017
If not in the Forward Plan: (please "X" box)	Chief Executive approved <input type="checkbox"/> O&S Chairman approved <input type="checkbox"/>
Relevant Cabinet Member	Cllr Paulette Hamilton - Health and Social Care
Relevant O&S Chairman:	Cllr John Cotton - Health, Wellbeing and the Environment
Wards affected:	ALL

1. Purpose of report:
1.1 To seek permission to consult carers, citizens and stakeholders on proposals for the Carers' Grant scheme.

2. Decision(s) recommended:
That Cabinet:-
2.1 Approves the further consultation on the Carers' Grant Scheme, given the reductions to funding in 2017/18 and 2018/19

Lead Contact Officer(s):	Charles Ashton-Gray Service Lead – Commissioning Centre of Excellence
Telephone No: E-mail address:	0121 464 7461 Charles.Ashton-Gray@birmingham.gov.uk

3. Consultation
<p>3.1 <u>Internal</u></p> <p>Legal & Governance, City Finance and the Directorate's Management Team have been involved in the preparation of this report.</p> <p>3.2 <u>External</u></p> <p>The Council consulted on its proposed 2017/18+ budget savings between 8th December 2016 and 16th January 2017 and received 1,639 responses to the online survey on the 'Be Heard' portal. One of the savings proposals was HW13 Carers' Grant.</p> <p>This consultation set out broad issues for the corporate consultation and the overall budget position. It identified that there would also be consultations on specific service proposals in the new year; and that implementation would be subject to the required governance process.</p>
4. Compliance Issues:
<p>4.1 <u>Are the recommended decisions consistent with the Council's policies, plans and strategies?</u></p> <p>This report is in line with the Council's Financial Plan 2017+, as approved by Council on 28th February 2017.</p> <p>Members are reminded of their Corporate Parenting responsibility when considering Cabinet reports. The proposals within this report have no specific implications to this effect.</p> <p>4.2 <u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p>The Carers Budget for 2017/18 is £408k before any savings. This includes small payments to individual carers who apply for the grant. The Council's approved budget savings proposals included reductions to Carers' Grant of £222k in 17/18 and £440k in 18/19. This report is seeking to consult on the future arrangements to support Carers within the reduced resources available in to allow the Directorate to achieve the budget savings for 2017/18 and beyond.</p> <p>4.3 <u>Legal Implications</u></p> <p>The relevant legal powers are contained in the Care Act 2014 together with associated legislation and statutory guidance relating to the provision of services for carers.</p> <p>4.4 <u>Public Sector Equality Duty</u></p> <p>An initial Equality Analysis has been undertaken to support this decision. It is apparent that the suspension of the scheme will cause hardship, but the purpose of the consultation is to seek views on proposals to refocus resources upon carers with the highest needs.</p>

5. Relevant background/chronology of key events:	
5.1	In their report “Valuing Carers 2015”, Carers UK estimate that the estimated 113,000 informal carers in Birmingham contribute £2.4bn to the care and health economy. The vast majority of informal carers do not benefit from an adult social care, carers assessment and will be supporting individuals undergoing medical treatment; those who do not meet the adult social care eligibility criteria, self-funders, or those who are unaware of the support that may be available.
5.2	Since 1999 the Directorate has provided grants to carers who support a person aged 18 years or older. Each grant is worth £250 and is paid directly to the carer to be used towards the cost of a holiday, or something else that will help sustain them in their caring role. Carers have been able to re-apply for a grant every 2 years, with allocation usually on a first come, first served basis.
5.3	A review of the scheme was completed in June 2013 and identified that over 12,000 carers had received a single grant, out of an approximate population of 110,000 carers; with over 8,000 carers having received two or more grants. It also identified that the existing scheme did not provide evidence of a grant’s impact on a carer’s wellbeing.
5.4	In 2015, the City Council consulted with carers, citizens and stakeholders on proposals to change the way the Carers’ Grant Scheme was operated. The consultation considered a proposal to use an e-marketplace. Although half of the respondents at the time were in favour of the e-marketplace, a large number of comments were received regarding the fact that it did not offer a consistent selection of services across all of Birmingham and the proposal has not yet been taken forward.
5.5	<p>These new proposals for a revised carers’ grant scheme will build on the 2015 consultation in which almost 60% of the 130 respondents to the BeHeard questionnaire were in favour of the proposed eligibility criteria which were to be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • caring for a relative, partner or friend, who is ill, frail, disabled, or has mental health or substance misuse problems; • providing more than 10 hours support per week; • willing to provide feedback on what impact the grant has had on their quality of life; • willing to rate the quality of the service/ product they have purchased; and • registered with the Birmingham Carers Hub.
5.6	<p>Other proposals could explore:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the potential to introduce a direct link between the assessments carried out by the Carers’ Hub and the offer of any grant, so that specific outcomes for the carer could be achieved; • introducing bandings instead of a flat £250 grant; • the use of pre-loaded cards for carers to spend at locations of their choice; and • whether partners, such as health wish to contribute to a fund for carers’ grants.
5.7	Another proposal could be that the carers’ grant scheme in Birmingham is discontinued if a method of ensuring value for money cannot be agreed upon.
5.8	The consultation will be supported by Forward Carers, who hold the current contract for the City Council’s carer support.

- 5.9 If approved, the consultation could take place for 49 days, commencing on 12th June and concluding on 30th July 2017. A report on the findings of the consultation, with recommendations for the future of a grant scheme could be brought back to Cabinet in September 2017 for implementation in October 2017, thus allowing the saving to be made.

6. Evaluation of alternative option(s):

- 6.1 The alternative option of reducing the volume of grants available in 2017/18 to make the required saving has been discounted as this would not meet the requirement to consult further and would not deliver value for money.

7. Reasons for Decision(s):

- 7.1 The Carer's Grant is subject to further consultation having been included as part of the Council's savings proposals for 2017/18+. The consultation will seek views on ways in which we can use the Council's diminishing resources to better target and focus the remaining funds.

Signatures

Date

Councillor Paulette Hamilton
Cabinet Member for
Health and Social Care

Graeme Betts
Interim Corporate Director Adult
Social Care & Health

List of Background Documents used to compile this Report:

1. Birmingham City Council Financial Plan 2017+ - 28th February 2017
2. Budget Consultation 2017+ - December 2016
3. Making the Carer's Small Grant Scheme work better for carers – June 2015
4. "Valuing Carers 2015", Carers UK

List of Appendices accompanying this Report (if any):

Equality Assessment

Report Version	V3	Dated	02/05/2017
-----------------------	-----------	--------------	-------------------