

CONSULTATIONS INTO TWO DERBYSHIRE SERVICES

Consultations have been launched into future options for two services delivered by Derbyshire County Council.

The county council's Cabinet agreed on July 25 to hold public consultations to seek people's views on the following:

- Future options for design services for people in receipt of Disabled Facilities Grants
- Refocusing the scope of the Derbyshire Healthy Homes Project.

Residents can have their say by visiting the county council's website at

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/consultations

Members of the Cabinet heard of the financial challenges facing the authority, including rising demand, higher than expected inflation and a rise in the cost of energy and materials. This means the county council has to look at all spending to ensure services are sustainable so it can continue to support people who need it most.

Part of the work the county council's disability design team does supports the delivery of the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) scheme, which is funded by the Government and administered by the county's district and borough councils. However, the architectural, design and procurement work undertaken by the design team is not currently fully charged for.

Given the budgetary pressures faced by the council, the authority is looking at its discretionary spending and is consulting on three future options for the design team service:

- Retain the in-house disability design team but seek full funding from the DFG funding held by districts and boroughs for all the discretionary services and support it provides.
- Retain the in-house design service to support projects the county council is legally obliged to carry out, ceasing to do any discretionary work.
- Cease to operate the design team, with outside providers commissioned to do the work on statutory projects.

Cabinet members also agreed to consult on the future scope of the Derbyshire Healthy Homes Project which supports people with long-term health conditions made worse by the cold to stay well and warm at home.

The project predominantly supports people with eligible care needs to identify heating solutions via nationally available grants.

However, councillors heard the service delivered by the Derbyshire Healthy Homes project had over the years expanded from its original scope and required careful review to realign its offer to ensure it is sustainable and within the bounds of adult social care's statutory responsibilities.

Cabinet agreed to consult on three options for the future of the project:

- To remodel the service to ensure only those with adult social care needs and low incomes can access help which Derbyshire County Council would continue to manage.
- To work with the district and borough councils which have a responsibility to help vulnerable people with their homes or a third party to introduce a new service that they will manage.
- To decommission the service.

Derbyshire County Council's Cabinet Member for Adult Care Councillor Natalie Hoy said: "Demand for social services is increasing and with the budgetary pressures we're facing, we're having to look at how best we can continue to support those who need us most. "Where in the past we've been able to find funding for work and projects outside our statutory duties, we're now having to look at doing things differently and considering all areas of spending."

Encouraging everyone to take part in the consultations, Councillor Hoy added: "We've always prided ourselves on being well managed but like all other councils across the country we're facing increasing financial pressures that are outside our control.

"I'd like to reassure everyone that these are proposals only and no decisions will be made until everyone's views are taken into account."

The options to deliver design services for Disabled Facilities Grants consultation closes on Friday 27 September and the future options for the Derbyshire Healthy Home Project consultation closes on Friday 20 September.

To find out more and complete the questionnaires, visit the council's [website](#)

www.derbyshire.gov.uk/consultations