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**To:** Supporting People Commissioning Body 26 January  
2012

**Subject:** Home Improvement Agency (HIA) and Handyperson  
Services

**Classification:** Unrestricted

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### **Summary**

The Commissioning Body agreed that HIAs and Handyperson services should be re-tendered to bring a more consistent and efficient approach to delivery. Further to this subsequent discussions have taken place with the Districts and Boroughs to enable them to include an additional service, namely Disabled Facilities Grants, in the contract with the successful provider/s if required.

The refining of the procurement process has resulted in a delay to the anticipated tendering process timeframe, with the result that the existing HIA and Handypersons contracts need to be extended for a further 6 months to 30 September 2012. This has caused an additional pressure on the budget and an agreement is required to utilise reserve funding of £445k to support the extension of existing service provision (see Appendix 2).

## **1. Introduction**

(1) In its October meeting, the Commissioning Body agreed to the tendering of all Home Improvement Agencies and handy person services for new contracts to be let in time for their commencement in April 2012 on a district by district basis. The Commissioning Body also noted that representatives from two district/borough councils not involved in the tendering process would be invited to be part of the team assessing each tender.

(2) The county council subsequently met with all the districts and boroughs to discuss the procurement process further and the outcome of that discussion is detailed within this report.

(3) HIA services are delivered by one provider in ten of the twelve districts and boroughs, by two in-house district/borough agencies, and by one provider county wide for the Handyperson services.

(4) The Commissioning Body agreed that that HIAs and Handyperson services should be re-tendered to provide a more consistent and efficient service resulting in a reduced investment of just under £900K.

(5) Following further discussions with the districts and boroughs the need to include an option in the retendering process relating to Disabled Facilities Grants if required became apparent.

(6) The inclusion of the Disabled Facilities Grant Services into the tendering process as an option for districts and boroughs will prevent them from having to undertake individual costly procurement exercises at a local level.

(7) Work has been undertaken with KCC's legal and procurement departments to enable this piece of work to be incorporated into the overall procurement process. The programme is seeking further advice from legal and procurement to ensure that the county council is not liable in anyway for the operation of the contract between the relevant district or borough and the agency. Should this be the case, the county council will be unable to procure on the basis required by the districts and boroughs. A further update will be given at the meeting.

(8) The existing provider contracts are due to expire at the end of March 2012. The current budget build for 2012/13 included an allocation of £689K for HIA and Handyperson services only.

(7) In order to ensure that service users are able to continue to receive an uninterrupted service until the tender process is successfully completed it is necessary to continue to contract with current providers for a further six months. This will ensure that the service recipients are able to remain safely, securely and living independently in their own homes.

## **2. The Procurement process**

(1) Extending the original timeframe for the procurement of the HIA and Handyperson services will give the opportunity for Districts and Boroughs to secure a Disabled Facilities Grant Service from the successful provider/s where required.

(2) The tendering process will enable the districts and boroughs to prescribe to a potential provider the Disabled Facilities Grant Service that they require within their area(s).

(3) To enable the new services to be in place by 1 October 2012 tendering will commence by the end of the March 2012.

(4) The proposed configuration for the procurement will be:

- A West Kent wide agency comprising Dartford, Gravesham, Sevenoaks, Tonbridge and Malling and Tunbridge Wells.

- Ashford, Dover and Shepway as one agency
- Canterbury, Maidstone, Swale and Thanet as individual agencies

### **3. Consultation and Communication**

(1) The service specification has been extensively consulted upon with a range of stakeholders.

(2) An Equality Impact Assessment has already been undertaken and submitted to the Commissioning Body in a previous report (October 2011). The county council met with representatives from the district and boroughs on 4 November 2011 to discuss the procurement process and to clarify how the county council would ensure that the district and boroughs would be able to obtain a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) service from the successful provider(s). A description of Disabled Facilities Grant is described in Appendix 1.

(3) The meeting also agreed that the services would not be tendered on a district by district basis because districts and boroughs had subsequently expressed an interest in some circumstances grouping together. The county council will be ensuring that the districts and boroughs lead in the procurement of a Disabled Facilities Grant service.

### **4. Risk and Business Continuity Management**

(1) The proposal set out in this report ensures continuity of service whilst the tender for services takes place. An updated risk and business continuity log is attached at Appendix 1. The Districts and Boroughs also want to ensure they have continuity of service for Disabled Facilities Grants.

(2) The consequences of not continuing to contract with the current providers for a further six months would mean that services are disrupted leading to implications for statutory services such as the police, housing, health and social care. Additionally the skills expertise and experience of the staff in current services will be lost.

### **5. Financial Implications**

(1) Due to a delay in the retendering process to include the option for District and Boroughs to add the Disabled Facilities Grant to the tender a further £445k of investment (£345k for HIA and for £100k for Handypersons services) is required. It is proposed this is supported through the use of non recurring reserve funds.

### **6. Legal implications**

(1) A single source tender will need to be completed and agreed to enable the services to be extended for a further 6 month period.

## **7. Sustainability Implications**

(1) By delaying the retendering to incorporate the aspirations of the District and Boroughs to include the Disabled facilities Grant (where required) will ensure services are more sustainable in the long term.

## **8. Conclusion**

(1) The Supporting People Programme is seeking to delay the retendering of the new HIA and Handyperson services with a consequent financial pressure of £445k in 2012/13. The delay will provide the opportunity for Districts and Boroughs to include the Disabled Facilities Grant Service to the contract where necessary avoiding costly local procurement exercises.

## **9. Recommendations:**

9(1) The Commissioning Body is asked to;

- 1. Agree to the delay of the procurement process to incorporate the option for Districts and Boroughs to include the Disabled Facilities Grant into the contract with provider/s where required. This recommendation is subject to confirmation that there is no legal liability for the county council in the procurement of this option.**
- 2. Agree to the use of non recurring reserves up to £345k to support the extension of the existing service provision.**

## **Background Documents**

Strategic Review of Home Improvement and Handyperson Services,  
Commissioning Body report, October 2011

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**Appendix 1: Description of Disabled Facilities Grant**  
**Appendix 2: Updated Risk and Business Issues Log**  
**Appendix 3: Funding**

## **Appendix 1 A Description of Disabled Facilities Grant**

A Disabled Facilities Grant is a grant from local district or borough councils. It helps towards the cost of adapting your home to enable you to continue to live there. A grant is paid when the council considers that changes are necessary to meet your needs, and that the work is reasonable and practical

Who can get a Disabled Facilities Grant

You can claim if you, or someone living in your property, is disabled and:

- you, or the person on whose behalf you are applying, are either the owner or tenant (including licensees) of the property
- you can certify that you, or the person on whose behalf you are applying, intend to occupy the property as your/their only or main residence throughout the grant period - currently five years

A landlord may apply on behalf of a disabled tenant

A grant can be used to give you better freedom of movement into and around your home and/or to provide essential facilities within it.

If you are disabled, acceptable types of work include:

- widening doors and installing ramps
- providing or improving access to rooms and facilities - for example, by installing a stair lift or providing a downstairs bathroom
- improving or providing a heating system which is suitable for your needs
- adapting heating or lighting controls to make them easier to use
- improving access to and movement around the home to enable you to care for another person who lives in the property, such as a child



## Appendix 2

### HIA and handypersons Funding 2012/13

	April to Sept £k	Oct to Mar £k	Total £k
HIA funding in base budget	689		689
Age UK (reserves)	100		100
Retender (reserves)		345	345
Total			1,134
From 2013/14			
Cost of service			689
In Base budget (as above)			(689)