

This Report will be made public 12 October 2022



Report Number **C/22/50**

**To:** Cabinet  
**Date:** 20 October 2022  
**Status:** Non key  
**Responsible Officer:** Andy Blaszkowicz  
Director - Housing and Operations  
**Cabinet Member:** Councillor Collier, Cabinet Member for Property Management and Grounds Maintenance

**SUBJECT:** Changing Places Grant (Round 2) – Grant Application

**SUMMARY:**

The report provides details on a recent grant application for the Changing Places Grant (Round 2). If successful this will provide funding for three Changing Places Toilet Facilities within the District at the Coastal Park, Coast Drive Destination Project and FOLCA.

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Cabinet is asked to agree the recommendations set out below because approval is required to apply for, and accept, any Grant offered to the Council. The report also updates Members on the Grant applied for including ongoing revenue implications associated with installation of any funded Changing Places toilet facilities.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. To receive and note Report C/22/50.
2. To note and approve the Expression of Interest submission to The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) for a £205,000 grant for capital funding towards the installation of up to 3 Changing Places toilet facilities.
3. To agree to delegate authority to the Director of Housing and Operations to accept grant awarded towards the installation of up to 3 Changing Places toilet facilities, with appropriate update reports given in due course.
4. To approve the ongoing revenue implications for cleaning.

## **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Changing Places Toilets enable some disabled people the freedom to go out in public without the worry of finding adequate public conveniences to meet their personal care needs. In 2020, it became compulsory to provide Changing Places toilets in certain new publicly accessible buildings to increase the provision of facilities across the Country.
- 1.2 Following this change in legislation, in 2021 the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) made available £30 million in grant funding to local authorities for the installation of new Changing Places toilet facilities within existing suitable buildings, to further increase the provision. In Round 1, £23.5 million of this money was allocated to 191 local authorities. Round 2 aims to allocate the remaining £6.5 million to a select invited list of local authorities who have zero provision or have the highest user needs. Folkestone and Hythe District Council is on the select list to be able to apply for grant funding under Round 2. The application process allows for each local authority to apply for funding for up to 3 Changing Places toilet facilities within their area.
- 1.3 Changing Places toilets have been designed to meet the needs of disabled children and adults with complex care needs who rely on carer support, appropriate equipment, and more space. This is because standard disabled toilets were only designed to meet the needs of disabled people who can use a toilet independently. The new Changing Places toilets include a ceiling hoist, changing table and specialist toilet to support users with multiple disabilities and needs. The DLUHC has partnered up with Muscular Dystrophy UK, to provide expertise and support to Local Authorities when carrying out works to design and install these new facilities. This advice and support will be available to the Council to assist with delivery of any new facilities if successful in being awarded grant funding.
- 1.4 Phase 2 of the Grants aims to increase the geographical spread of Changing Places toilet facilities, in particular in areas currently with zero provision, and increasing the provision in areas of greatest need. All venues and location types are in scope for this round of grant funding, including new modular units in areas where existing buildings or no building provision is available.

## **2.0 CONSULTATION**

- 2.1 Research has been carried out by the Research Institute for Disabled Consumers outlining priority areas where disabled people would like to have more Changing Places facilities made available. The top two locations on the priority list are beaches/seaside and parks/gardens. Changing Places facilities in these recreational areas will enable disabled people with additional care needs to have a day out and undertake social and recreational activities with dignity and confidence.
- 2.2 The need for a provision of Changing Places in Folkestone was raised during the public engagement as part of the development of the Folkestone Town Centre Place Plan, which was approved by Cabinet in September 2021.

## **2. PROPOSED CHANGING PLACES FACILITIES**

2.1 The Council was unsuccessful in being awarded funding in Round 1 due to the requirements of the grant at that time being mainly focused on provision in existing buildings without the loss of existing disabled facilities. An application for Round 2 has been submitted for 3 changing places toilets in the District.

These are in the following locations, and for the following sums:

- Lower Leas Coastal Park (modular unit including groundworks and connection to services) - £85,000
- Coast Drive development (fit out of new building only) - £35,000
- FOLCA2 (standalone installation into the existing building, but with an external entrance to the Changing Places facility) - £85,000

2.2 Local Authorities are not guaranteed an award of a grant, and each facility will be assessed on an individual basis. Local authorities may be awarded full or part grants for up to 3 Changing Places toilet facilities. If successful, grant funding will be available for the financial year 2023/24 and Local Authorities must commit that the Changing Places toilet facilities will be delivered and registered by the end of this financial year (by 31 March 2024).

2.3 The Council must also commit to co-funding the project and details of co-funding are included within the application for the Grant. Co-funding includes:

- First 3 years maintenance and cleaning costs - £4520/toilet/year,
- Staff time for project management, surveying and technical support,
- Any capital or in-kind contributions.

2.4 Exit Strategy:

- Local Authorities are not obliged to accept any grant funding that may be offered.
- If an amount of grant funding is accepted and the project proves to be unfeasible at a later stage, the Council would need to agree any changes with the DLUHC, through their Project Change Request process.

## **3.0 ONGOING COMMITMENTS**

3.1 The Council will be required to commit to the ongoing cleaning and maintenance, estimated at £4,520 per facility per year. This is based on £4000 cleaning cost, for 3 visits per day including weekends. Servicing and maintenance of mechanical equipment £300 per year and an annual EICR at £220. Reactive maintenance will be included within the existing revenue budget.

If a third party organisation is appointed by the Council to manage the facility, the Council remains responsible to ensure the third party commits to maintain it.

## 4. RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES

4.1 A summary of the perceived risks follows:

Perceived risk	Seriousness	Likelihood	Preventative action
Project becomes unfeasible with awarded grant funding.	High	Medium	Project procured in timely manner from date grant awarded. Discussions with DLUHC if project costs change from initial estimates through their project change request process.
Project delivery not able to be met in financial year 2023/24	Medium	Low	Sufficient staff resources for delivery to be determined prior to acceptance of any grant award.
Full grant for each Changing Places Facility is not awarded.	Medium	Medium	Once award notified, a decision can be taken if additional budget is required to deliver each Changing Places facility and award offer can be rejected if required.

## 5. LEGAL/FINANCIAL AND OTHER CONTROLS/POLICY MATTERS

### 5.1 Legal Officer's Comments (NM)

There are no legal implications arising directly from this report. However, consideration will need to be given in relation to the grant agreement should the Council be successful and Legal Services can support with that at the appropriate time.

### 5.2 Finance Officer's Comments (CI)

The ongoing revenue maintenance cost will be £4,520 per facility per year, a total of £13,560 per year if all three facilities are approved. This cost is not within the existing revenue budget. The Changing Places toilet facilities must be delivered by the end of the 2023/24 financial year. A growth bid will need to be submitted for the revenue budget cost during the 2024/25 budget setting round.

### 5.3 Diversities and Equalities Implications (GE)

There are no negative equality and diversity implications directly arising from this report. Subject to the council's grant application being successful, the funding will deliver Changing Places Toilet Facilities within the District to support the needs of disabled children and adults with complex care needs who rely on carer support.

#### **5.4 Climate Change Implications (AT)**

No direct climate change implications arising from this report. The report asks for Cabinet approval to submit an expression of interest to DLUHC for a grant to fund toilet facilities. If successful with the expression of interest, emissions from the development of the resulting toilet facilities (construction, energy use, waste, water consumption, etc) would be determined by the specification of the facilities (modular, new build or retrofit) and would need separate permissions.

#### **6.0 CONTACT OFFICERS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Councillors with any questions arising out of this report should contact the following officer prior to the meeting

Andy Blaszkowicz

Telephone: 01303 853

Email: [Andy.Blaszkowicz@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk](mailto:Andy.Blaszkowicz@folkestone-hythe.gov.uk)

The following background documents have been relied upon in the preparation of this report: None