

**MEMBERS' QUESTIONS**

**AGENDA ITEM 8**

**QUESTION 1**

**MR ROGER EVANS** will ask the following question:

At the last Cabinet the Capital Monitoring report was received. I note that under Private Sector Housing in Appendix 1 on page 5, it is shown that there was a budget in financial year 2010 -11 of £2.2M to help provide Disabled Facilities Grants for those who needed them. These are Shropshire residents who have had their houses inspected by Occupational Therapists. These OTs have recommended that adaptations need to be made to the homes to enable the resident to continue to live in them. I understand that by the end of March almost all of this had been spent or allocated. I also note that under Private Sector Housing in Appendix 2 on page 5, the budget allocated for financial year 2011 -12 is £1.397M, reducing to £1.076M in following years. For this year this is a reduction of £800K. I understand that already, before the end of April over £900K of the original £1.397M is allocated with 11 months still to go.

Can the cabinet member inform me how it is proposed that the work to carry out the adaptations which are both needed and identified going to be met. A few years ago in some parts of Shropshire some residents were having to wait 2 and 3 years for the identified adaptation work to be carried out. This, besides being illegal according to case law, is to me not acceptable for those of our residents who are in desperate need of having alterations carried out. Alterations like having a chair lift installed so that they can get upstairs, like having a walk in shower fitted when they are unable to use the bath. The list is varied and long.

**MR M T PRICE**, the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning, will reply:

The Cabinet decision to set the original DFG budget for 2011/12 was made in the context of ongoing financial pressures. The decision not to 'top up' funding from Government in the present climate is one that other Local Authorities are having to make.

During 2010/11, a decision was made as part of the review of capital expenditure to curtail prudential borrowing. DFG funding was for that year being topped up by £600k from this source. This top up was removed in year. This resulted in the use of funding thought to be available for 2011/12 having to be brought forward into 2010/11.

There was never any intention to restrict DFG funding over an extended period without reconsideration at an appropriate stage. As the immediacy of the budgetary pressures has now been established, additional funding has been identified to allow the DFG budget to be reinstated to a level sufficient to permit approvals to be made throughout the year.

It is recognised that the DFG is an important part of people being able to continue to live at home and it is anticipated that as part of the new arrangements within the council there will be a more systematic integration of our Social Care and Housing functions and a better targeting of this investment.