

EXECUTIVE DECISION

made by a Cabinet Member



REPORT OF ACTION TAKEN UNDER DELEGATED AUTHORITY BY AN INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBER


Executive Decision Reference Number – HCD02 25/26

Decision	
1	Title of decision: Independent Living Policy Review 2025
2	Decision maker: Councillor Chris Penberthy - Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities
3	Report author and contact details: Dave Ryland – Head of Housing Standards Dave.ryland@plymouth.gov.uk Tel: 01752304823 / Community Connections Service Director Matt Garrett, matthew.garrett@plymouth.gov.uk Tel: 01752306733
4	Decision to be taken: I. To approve the Independent Living Assistance Policy Review 2025.
5	Reasons for decision: <p>It is important to review the Independent Living Policy now to ensure continued compliance with statutory obligations and to reflect the evolving policy landscape, including the integration ambitions of the Better Care Fund and the care needs recognised under the Care Act 2014. Rising demand, increased adaptation costs, and a growing emphasis on flexibility and local responsiveness further underscore the need for an updated, robust policy that supports effective delivery and cross-sector collaboration.</p> <p>As part of the Policy review, public and professional consultation has been conducted receiving strong and constructive engagement, shaping local policy. Respondents expressed clear support for proposed amendments to the Independent Living Assistance (ILA) Policy, including the introduction of low-interest loans, continued availability of discretionary Moving On Grants, and access to a marketplace for privately funded works. Innovative delivery methods, such as modular construction, ramps, and wall panelling, were welcomed, alongside practical adjustments like omitting hardstanding's, where alternative access solutions (e.g. platform lifts or ramps) are viable. The consultation also revealed enthusiastic backing for the council's commitment to achieving Net Zero and for encouraging contractors to employ apprentices, reflecting a shared vision for sustainable development and inclusive growth.</p>
6	Alternative options considered and rejected: <p>Under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002, local authorities must publish a housing assistance policy before offering support. Since 1990, councils have been legally required to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to help disabled individuals adapt their homes.</p> <p>As such, alternative approaches to this Policy have not been considered.</p>
7	Financial implications and risks: <p>Revisions to the Housing Assistance Policy include an increase in the maximum discretionary assistance, for Top-Up Grant, from £20,000 to £30,000. This adjustment reflects global price inflation and aims to reduce financial barriers wherever possible for eligible residents. Additionally, the fee for 'Nil Grant'</p>

	<p>applications has been raised from 1% (INCIC) + 1% (PCC) to 1% (INCIC) + 2.5% (PCC), with 1% attributed to the infrastructure and systems used for tendering works (payable to INCIC), plus 2.5% assigned to the staffing resource required to manage project delivery from design through to completion (payable to PCC).</p> <p>Furthermore, means testing will now be applied to parents or legal guardians in children's cases where the grant amount exceeds the statutory maximum, for the discretionary Top-Up Grant amount only. This change is intended to ensure equitable access while maintaining fiscal responsibility within the broader funding framework.</p>		
8	<p>Legal Implications: (For completion by Legal Officers)</p> <p>No legal implications.</p>		
9	<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? (please contact Democratic Support for further advice)</p> <p>Please type an X into the relevant boxes</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>No</p>	<p>Per the Constitution, a key decision is one which:</p> <p>in the case of capital projects and contract awards, results in a new commitment to spend and/or save in excess of £3million in total</p> <p>in the case of revenue projects when the decision involves entering into new commitments and/or making new savings in excess of £1million annually</p> <p>is significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the local authority.</p>
	<p>If yes, date of publication of the notice in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions</p>	N/A	
10	<p>Please specify how this decision is linked to the Council's corporate plan/Plymouth Plan and/or the policy framework and/or the revenue/capital budget:</p>	<p>The provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) directly supports the corporate plan to "keeping children, adults and communities safe" by promoting independence, reducing health and social inequalities, and enabling individuals to live with dignity and respect. Major adaptations funded through DFGs allow people to remain safely in their homes, helping to mitigate rising costs in health and social care and reducing risks for disabled individuals, their families, and carers.</p> <p>Keeping children, adults and communities safe.</p> <p>Focusing on prevention and early intervention.</p> <p>Spending money wisely.</p> <p>This approach aligns with the Care Act 2014, which places wellbeing at the heart of adult social care. Local authorities are required to consider the suitability of living accommodation as part of their duty to promote wellbeing. Major adaptations serve as a preventative measure, enhancing quality of life and enabling individuals to live independently for as long as possible.</p>	
11	<p>Please specify any direct environmental implications of the decision (carbon impact)</p>	<p>No direct implications as a result of this decision.</p>	

Urgent decisions				
I2a	Is the decision urgent and to be implemented immediately in the interests of the Council or the public? Please type an X into the relevant box	Yes		(If yes, please contact Democratic Support (democraticsupport@plymouth.gov.uk) for advice)
		No	X	(If no, go to section I3a)
I2b	Reason for urgency:			
I2c	Scrutiny Chair Signature:		Date	
	Scrutiny Committee name:			
	Print Name:			
Consultation				
I3a	Are any other Cabinet members' portfolios affected by the decision? Please type an X into the relevant box	Yes	X	
		No		(If no go to section I4)
I3b	Which other Cabinet member's portfolio is affected by the decision?	Councillor Jemima Laing - Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Culture & Communications Councillor Mary Aspinall - Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care		
I3c	Date Cabinet member consulted	19 May 2025		
I4	Has any Cabinet member declared a conflict of interest in relation to the decision? Please type an X into the relevant box	Yes		If yes, please discuss with the Monitoring Officer
		No	X	
I5	Which Corporate Management Team member has been consulted?	Name	Gary Walbridge	
		Job title	Strategic Director Adults, Health and Communities	
		Date consulted	01 July 2025	
Sign-off				
I6		Democratic Support (mandatory)	JSI9 25/26	

	Sign off codes from the relevant departments consulted:	Finance (mandatory)	ITG.25.26.058						
		Legal (mandatory)	IW 5232						
		Procurement (if applicable)	N/A						
		Corporate property (decisions involving Council owned land or facilities) (if applicable)	N/A						
		Human Resources (if applicable)	N/A						
Appendices									
17	Ref.	Title of appendix							
	A	Independent Living Assistance Policy Review 2025 Briefing							
	B	Independent Living Policy July 2025							
	C	Equalities Impact Assessment							
	D	CIA - ILAP (July 2025)							
Confidential/exempt information									
18a	Do you need to include any confidential/exempt information? Please type an X into the relevant box		Yes		If yes, prepare a second, confidential ("Part II") briefing report and indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box in 18b below. (Keep as much information as possible in the briefing report that will be in the public domain)				
		No	X						
			Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18b	Confidential/exempt briefing report title:								
Background Papers									
19	Please list all unpublished, background papers relevant to the decision in the table below. Background papers are <u>unpublished</u> works, relied on to a material extent in preparing the report, which disclose facts or matters on which the report or an important part of the work is based. If some/all of the information is confidential, you must indicate why it is not for publication by virtue of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 by ticking the relevant box.								
Title of background paper(s)			Exemption Paragraph Number						
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Cabinet Member Signature							
20	I agree the decision and confirm that it is not contrary to the Council's policy and budget framework, Corporate Plan or Budget. In taking this decision I have given due regard to the Council's duty to promote equality of opportunity, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote good relations between people who share protected characteristics under the Equalities Act (2010) and those who do not. For further details please see the EIA attached.						
Signature			Date of decision	26 September 2025			
Print Name	Councillor Chris Penberthy - Cabinet Member for Housing, Cooperative Development and Communities						