

Report to: **Housing Review Board**

Date of Meeting: 28 March 2019

Public Document: Yes

Exemption: None



Review date for release: None

Agenda item: 15

Subject: **Review of Landlord Disabled Adaptation Policy**

Purpose of report: In 2017 Members agreed a revised landlord adaptation policy.
This report will set out a further review to the policy with a recommendation that going forward we review the policy every two years or sooner if there is a significant legislative need to review our position.

Recommendation: **(1) Members are asked to approve the revised Landlord Disabled Adaptation Policy to Council homes**
(2) Give delegated authority to the Acting Housing Service Lead in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing for any minor amendments to the policy prior to its publication

Reason for recommendation: In an environment of growing demand for adaptations to our stock, we must ensure we are delivering a consistent approach to adaptations. There is also the need to ensure that we are meeting our legal duties in relation to management of the stock.

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Financial implications: These are contained in this report.

Legal implications: The legal framework is set out in the policy annexed to this report and requires no further comment.

Equalities impact: High Impact
Property adaptations ensure our most vulnerable tenants are able to remain living at home for longer.

Risk: Low Risk

Links to background information:

- <http://eastdevon.gov.uk/media/1973368/combined-hrb-agenda-120117.pdf>
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Link to Council Plan: Living in this outstanding place.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Landlord Disabled Adaptation Policy was revised in 2017 and agreement was given that the policy should be reviewed every 2 years. The Policy provides a clear framework which sets out the Councils approach to providing adaptations for tenants or their household members to help them live independently at home.
- 1.2 We have consulted with tenants, staff and key stakeholders in order to test the policy and receive feedback in relation to the review. The revised policy is attached as **Annexe 1**.
- 1.3 We are continuing to see a growing demand for adaptations to our stock. It is not only residents within our sheltered housing stock that require such adaptations, we are also seeing an increased demand for adaptations to general needs housing.
- 1.4 So far since the start of the 2018/19 financial year we have received 327 requests for adaptations. These are a mix of formal statement of needs (received from Occupational Therapists) as well as Mobile Support Officer requests for adaptations to tenants homes (mainly minor adaptations). In total for the year 2017/2018 we received 353 adaptation requests, this again includes all major and minor adaptation requests.
- 1.5 We are finding the most common requests come from sheltered housing properties and are for wet room showers. We recognise that these adaptations could be considered when sheltered properties become void, this could prevent the demand coming in at a later point.
- 1.6 We are also continuing to assess rolling programmes (capital budget) to take a preventative approach to managing our sheltered housing stock. For example improving level access across sheltered housing schemes on a rolling programme would be particularly desirable in order to make the schemes more accessible to people with mobility needs from the outset.

2. Customer feedback

- 2.1 On a day to day basis our policy has served us well providing a solid framework for providing adaptations and ensuring consistency. Individual cases can be extremely complex, particularly when a household has a number of family members with individual needs that need to be met. Strong partnership working with Occupational Therapists is vital and their presence at our internal adaptation panel meetings helps us manage these cases.
- 2.2 We have recently surveyed residents who have had an adaptation undertaken. In total 32 people responded to the survey asking for their views on the adaptation service we provide. The respondents reported high levels of satisfaction in all aspects of the service, from the quality of work to the communication between tenant and the housing department. The average scores for all aspects were between 1 and 2.2 with 1 being very satisfied and 5 very dissatisfied. Some areas which were mentioned as needing improvement were better communication during the work and the tidiness of the operatives.

3. Policy

- 3.1 Although some minor changes have been made to the policy, the principle of continuing to adapt properties (where appropriate) to meet tenants needs remains the same.
- 3.2 Changes to the revised policy include;
- An additional clause to recognise adaptations that might be required as a result of a hospital discharge. We will always attempt to prioritise such cases where practical to do so although we can never guarantee all needs can be met and any adaptations required will be reviewed on an individual basis by the Adaptations Officer.
 - We have increased the minor adaptation cap from £1000 to £1200, this is to capture rising costs of building works.
 - Installing wet room showers on all sheltered housing voids where a bathroom replacement is due.
 - Where major adaptations are required and it is deemed alternative accommodation could be considered, if after a period of 3 months alternative accommodation has not been secured the case will be reviewed again.
- 3.3 It is critical that we ensure an appropriate statement of need is in place for all adaptation requests that are likely to cost over £1200. The revised policy continues to ensure this is being consistently applied. It should be noted that a proportion of adaptations between £250 and £1200 may also require a statement of need. This is to ensure that the needs of the tenant/household have been fully considered and we are capturing everything that is required.
- 3.4 We have also re-iterated that properties currently in the Right to Buy process will not be eligible for adaptations.
- 3.5 We have once again taken the opportunity to consult widely with our Occupational Therapists (OTs) colleagues on this policy, their input has been particularly helpful in order to ensure we are joining up with regards to our approach to adaptations. On a day to day basis, excellent partnership working is underway between us and the East Devon OT team. These links are continuing to strengthen and we will continue to invite a representative OT to our Internal Adaptation Panel meetings in order to support us with internal decision making.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 It is likely we will see demand for adaptations continue to rise as we see a continuing shift in national policy that encourages people to remain in their homes for longer. Our revised policy will continue to ensure we treat all requests consistently.