

ITEM 11 - APPENDIX F

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 17 MARCH 2014

EXECUTIVE – 1 APRIL 2014

Title:

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY

[Portfolio Holders: Cllrs Carole King and Keith Webster]
[Wards Affected: All]

Summary and purpose:

To present a new integrated Aids and Adaptations Policy to assist Waverley residents to live independently in their own homes.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

This report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities of Affordable Housing, Understanding Residents' Needs and Value for Money.

Financial Implications:

A budget is proposed for approval each year for Disabled Adaptations. The suggested cap on expenditure potentially means more residents (in particular tenants) will benefit from the adaptations than may otherwise be the situation. Restricting the funding level should not have an adverse effect on the available budgeted funding. The funds will, as currently, follow legislative guidance and remain separate, controlled by the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account (HRA). It is the allocation of funds within the HRA that this report seeks to mirror the General Fund.

Legal Implications:

The report seeks Member consideration of the proposed Aids and Adaptations Policy, including the results of the consultation in respect of the draft Policy. A properly-consulted and considered policy will support constituency in decision-making when applications are made for grants under the Policy. The Policy is consistent with the Council's public sector equality duty under the Equality Act 2010.

Introduction

1. The Borough has an ageing population with a high percentage of residents with disability or long term illness. This is one of the factors that is leading to an increase in grant funding for adaptations to enable older people to continue to live independently in their own homes. Aids and adaptations are also required by families with disabled children and younger people with disabilities.

2. Waverley currently has two separate systems to carry out adaptations to residents' homes across the Borough. The Private Sector Housing Team runs a means-tested grant scheme (Disabled Facilities Grant) that is partially government-funded. The grant is available for disabled residents who need an adaptation to enable them to continue to live at home and have an Occupational Therapist recommendation.
3. The maximum grant available is £30,000 per application. The 2013/14 budget was £450,000 (£252,000 from central government and £198,000 from Waverley).
4. Local authorities are required to provide grants to eligible residents under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
5. The Disabled Facilities Grant scheme and funds are governed by central government. This Policy will be update following any change in the grant scheme or variation in thresholds.
6. The second scheme is run by the Housing Service for Council tenants and is funded by the Housing Revenue Account. The scheme is not means-tested and is available to all Council tenants, irrespective of their savings or income. The majority of minor works and all major works have been recommended by Occupational Therapists. The 2013/14 budget was £540,000.
7. Minor aids and adaptations, such as grab rails, key safes and pull cords are carried out by Adult Social Services for private residents and by social landlords for social tenants.

Policy

8. The new integrated Aids and Adaptations Policy brings these two schemes together to create a tenure-blind application process and scheme. The policy ensures all residents are treated fairly when requesting assistance irrespective of tenure. With the current schemes private residents and council tenants experience a different level of service.
9. The policy recommends that the threshold for all adaptations is set at the Disabled Facilities Grant threshold (currently £30,000) for all works, irrespective of tenure. There is currently no financial threshold in the current Council homes aids and adaptations policy. Adopting a threshold will ensure parity for all residents.
10. The policy identifies the range of works included in aids and adaptations and seeks to support the long-term needs of the applicant. The draft policy strengthens the focus on reviewing the long term needs of the applicant to ensure independent living.
11. Officers considered a number of factors during the policy development. Views were sought from the Private Sector Housing team, Tenancy and Estates team and Property Services team. Customer satisfaction and good practice was also reviewed to develop the policy.

12. The Tenants' Panel were consulted on the draft policy themes and support the tenure blind scheme, equal threshold and long term needs focus if the policy. The Tenants' Panel were instrumental in ensuring timescales were added to the policy. They also supported the:
 - i. tenure blind policy
 - ii. threshold £30K to match DFG
 - iii. minor adaptations eg grab rails, mixer taps
 - iv. use of OT to validate requests
 - v. Tenants' Panel helping recycle equipment if required, and
 - vi. to decline major adaptations to family homes for under occupiers

13. The Tenants' Panel also suggested that properties be clearly designated as disabled properties when people move on, that clear timescales be set for adaptations and to identify any differences in adaptations for children or adults.

Conclusion

14. The new policy integrates two schemes to ensure fair delivery of aids and adaptation to all residents in Waverley. The policy sets clear guidance and service standards.

15. Corporate Overview and Scrutiny Committee was pleased to note that the Tenants' Panel had been consulted and their feedback had been taken into account in the final Policy, and endorsed the new Aids and Adaptations Policy to the Executive for adoption.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Aids and Adaptations Policy be approved and adopted.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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ANNEXE 1

Waverley Borough Council Housing Service Aids and Adaptations Policy

Introduction

Waverley is committed to ensuring all residents are able to live independently at home for as long as possible. Aids and adaptations can play an important role in this aim and improve the health and wellbeing of residents.

The aids and adaptations policy sets a framework for aids and adaptations to all residents in the borough.

Objectives

- To ensure all residents have access to accommodation that enables independent living, privacy and dignity for the individual and their families, by adapting their current home or facilitating a move to more a suitable home.
- To provide a service that seeks to meet the needs of the older or disabled persons through consultation with them
- To ensure the adaptation improves the way in which the individual can live independently
- To deliver a service that offers a cost effective solution and that provides value for money

Minor Adaptations

The Council will provide simple adaptations for disabled residents. Minor adaptations are non structural alterations or additions to a home between £1,500 and £5,000 eg grab rails, bathroom equipment.

The applicant may state what aids and adaptations they request. An Occupational Therapist's advice will be sort, where necessary, to determine if the work is required.

At the outset a timescale for commencement and completion of the work will be agreed with the resident.

The funding for minor adaptations will depend on tenure:

Tenure	Funder
Owner Occupiers	Adult Social Care or owner
Private Rented Tenants	Adult Social Care or landlord
Housing Association Tenants	Housing Association landlord
Council tenants	Council landlord

Minor adaptations carried out in a Council home will belong to and be maintained by the Council. Minor adaptations in private sector homes will belong to the individual and be must maintained by them.

Removable aids and adaptations will be recycled where possible to ensure value for money.

Major Adaptations

The Council will provide funding for major adaptations for eligible applicants for eligible adaptations. Major adaptations involve extensive alterations e.g. level access showers, internal and external ramps. The Council will consider works between £5,000 and £30,000 (equivalent to the DFG threshold).

Approval to carry out works depends upon the following criteria:

- a review with the individual to assess long term needs and suitability of home
- an Occupational Therapist's assessment and clear recommendations that the work is necessary to enable independent living
- the proposed works are reasonable and practicable given the type, age and condition of the property
- the proposed works meet all planning and building regulations
- the individual meets the Disabled Facilities Grant financial means test (if over the age of 18 – no means test will be applied for adaptations required for children)

Major adaptations carried out in the private sector or with tenants own resources will belong to them and they will be responsible for the management and maintenance of the adaptation.

Where an adaptation to a private sector home increases the value of the property (eg an extension) the Council will apply a condition to the Disabled Facilities Grant for repayment of works over £5,000 within a ten year period. The maximum repayment is £10,000.

The Council will maintain a record of adapted Council and housing association homes to ensure when these homes are re-let in the future they will be clearly advertised and made available to disabled households.

Exclusions

Major adaptations will not be carried out if the individual has a Right to Buy or Housing Needs Application with the Council.

To make best use of Council homes major adaptations will not be carried out in family sized homes if the tenant under occupies the property. Alternative suitable accommodation will be sought and assistance given through the Under occupation scheme.

In exceptional circumstances the Council may consider works in excess of £30,000 where all other long term options have been considered, other funding options been investigated and there are internal funds available. The Head of Housing Operations in agreement with Operational Director can authorise additional works for council tenants. For private residents further funding may be available through social services or charities if the work exceeds the DFG threshold.

Aids and Adaptations - Service Standards

To help you live independently we will:

- Provide advice about our services at the first point of contact.
- Work with you to review long term options to enable independent living.
- Provide a named contact who will give practical help and advice to you before, during and after the works have been completed.
- Make a decision about your minor adaptation request within 10 working days of your first contact with us.
- Complete agreed minor adaptations within 30 working days of appointment.
- Make a decision about major works within 28 days of receiving an Occupational Therapist's recommendation.
- Complete all major works funded by Waverley within 3 months of confirming approval to the work.
- Visit all major adaptation work on completion to check that you are satisfied with the work provided.
- Monitor satisfaction with the service against a target of 95%.

Example Types of Aids and Adaptations

Minor Works

Rails:

- Grab rails
- Banister rails
- Handrails for steps

Doors and Windows:

- Provide and fit doors
- Widen doors ways
- Improve thresholds
- Replace door glass with Perspex or similar
- Alter doorsteps
- Provide and fit door entry equipment
- Provide and fit temporary ramp

Plumbing:

- Provide and fit lever taps
- Extensions to heating systems
- Showers over bath (mixer taps)

Electrics

- Provide and fit smoke detectors
- Extend pull cord switches
- Lower light switches
- Raise power points
- Provide and fit external sockets

Kitchens and bathrooms:

- Minor alternations to units and sinks

- Bath lifts

Miscellaneous:

- Provide and fit key safe

Major Works

- Stair lifts
- Level access shower
- External and internal ramps

(NB this list is not exhaustive)

Related Policy documents

Home Improvement Policy

Allocation Policy

Under occupation Policy

Legal and Regulatory Framework

The Equality Act 2012 defines who should be considered as disabled and to give due regard to take account of disabled persons disabilities even if this means treating disabled people more favourably.

The Disabled Facilities Grant is governed by the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

Date Drafted: January 2014

Date Approved:

Review date: 12 months from approval