

Subject:	Decent Homes & Adaptations		
Date of Meeting:	20 June 2012		
Report of:	Strategic Director, Place		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Glyn Huelin	Tel: 29-3306
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1. The council is currently part way through an extensive modernisation programme designed to ensure all council housing properties meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) by 31st December 2013. The Decent Homes Standard is the government standard for improving the condition of housing stock.
- 1.2. There is a locally agreed specification for carrying out refurbishment works to properties which is called the Brighton & Hove Standard.
- 1.3. On 22nd March 2012 full Council carried the Labour & Co-Operative Group's Notice of Motion on "Tenants with disabilities and the Brighton & Hove Standard". This motion asked for a report on the subject to be brought to Housing Committee.
- 1.4. This report sets out proposed changes to the delivery of the council's Housing Investment programme and the Brighton & Hove Standard in relation to properties where disabled adaptations have been carried out for the current tenant.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1. That Housing Committee agrees a change to the Brighton & Hove Standard and the surveying process for Decent Homes whereby adaptations to the kitchen or bathroom carried out for the current tenant do not affect the eligibility of the property to have a replacement kitchen or bathroom installed.
- 2.2. That Housing Committee agrees the HRA capital budget will fund this change by carrying out any additional installations through the existing kitchens and bathrooms budgets in 2012/13.

- 2.3. That Housing Committee agrees that refurbishment works to those properties that have already been surveyed are phased over the financial years 2013/14 and 2014/15.
- 2.4. That Housing Committee agrees a review of the Brighton & Hove Standard will be started in 2012/13 for implementation after the planned achievement of decency in December 2013.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1. Joint working with Housing Adaptation
Strong partnership working is in place between the Housing Adaptations team and the council's Repairs & Improvement Partner Mears. The adaptations team check all new referrals with the programme to ensure replacement work and adaptations are done together. At the point of survey Mears ask the resident if they have any difficulties with bathing or using a standard kitchen and they can be referred to Housing Adaptations as a result. All necessary adaptations subsequently identified, whether kitchen or bathroom or both are acted upon so that the property meets the long term needs of the resident.
- 3.2. Where a resident has a permanent and substantial disability and an Occupational Therapist recommends adaptations to the kitchen and/or bathroom the necessary and appropriate adaptations are carried out by the Housing Adaptations team.
- 3.3. Current situation
A key element of the council's investment programme is the replacement of kitchens and bathrooms. Where a property has a kitchen and bathroom that both fail the Decent Homes Standard (DHS) residents are given a choice of which they would like to have replaced. The DHS only requires that one of the two rooms passes the assessments and therefore the council's investment strategy is that only one is currently replaced.
- 3.4. Currently, if a property has a bathroom that has already been substantially adapted and now meets the DHS the resident would not be offered a replacement kitchen. This is in line with the policy set out above in 3.3.
- 3.5. In some cases the resident may request a referral to Housing Adaptations after they have had their kitchen or bathroom replaced which could result in adaptations to the home in order to meet their needs.
- 3.6. This can mean that disabled residents receive different outcomes depending on whether their needs are identified before or after a kitchen or bathroom replacement. Where needs are identified before a

survey, significant adaptations may be carried out to a bathroom or kitchen. These adaptations may mean that the property meets the DHS and no further works would be undertaken to bring that property up to the standard. If a residents needs were identified after a replacement kitchen or bathroom was installed and those needs meant the property would need significant adaptations to a kitchen or bathroom then those adaptations would be undertaken and may result in both rooms being substantially replaced.

3.7. Proposed change

It is proposed that this process is modified so that when adaptations have been made to a property for a current tenant they are not taken into account when assessing whether the property meets the DHS. For example, with this change if a property has had a substantial adaptation to the bathroom and the kitchen fails the DHS then the kitchen will be replaced.

3.8. Analysis of the council's stock condition data indicates that this change will affect 112 dwellings; this may alter as individual properties are surveyed and detailed information is collected.

3.9. If agreed this change will be made to the surveying process with immediate effect. In addition, for properties that have already been surveyed and would be eligible for decent homes works under this changed process the partnership will programme kitchen or bathroom replacements over 2013/14 and 2014/15.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

4.1. The change proposed in this report was discussed with the Repairs & Improvement Partnership Core Group made up of Council Officers, Mears and resident representatives on 28/05/12. Following this a meeting of the Tenant Disability Network and the Repairs and Maintenance Monitoring Group considered and supported the changes on 30/05/12.

4.2. The Brighton & Hove Standard is a key part of the council's local offer to residents and has been developed with residents from the Asset Management Panel and approved through Housing Management Consultative Committee.

4.3. This report proposes that a full review of the standard is undertaken for implementation after the achievement of the DHS, the target for this is December 2013.

4.4. This review would be undertaken with involvement of residents and would reflect their priorities as well as ensuring adequate asset management of the council's housing stock. This will be supported by a full equalities impact assessment.

- 4.5. It is envisaged that this work will commence in early 2013 and be completed by autumn 2013 for implementation on the 1st January 2014.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 The additional capital costs arising from this change to the current policy are estimated to be £250,000. This will be funded through the use of the existing 2012/13 Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme budgets for kitchens and bathrooms. The kitchen and bathroom replacements already surveyed with replacements to be phased over 2013/14 and 2014/15 will be included in the Housing Revenue Account Capital Programme budget strategies for these financial years.

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen Date: 31/05/12

Legal Implications:

- 5.2 The Housing Committee has the necessary authority to agree the recommendations set out in section 2 above.

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley Date: 08/06/12

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 The current policy and process has been reviewed by both Housing & Social Inclusion and the Housing Adaptations team. There is evidence of good partnership working and the Housing Adaptations team carry out their statutory duty to adapt properties to meet resident's needs. This policy treats all residents consistently and enables support of residents who have additional needs within their homes.
- 5.4 The body of this report outlines a change to the current policy and process so that assessment against the DHS does not take into account any adaptations made to properties.
- 5.5 Initial work has been undertaken on an equalities impact assessment for this work area. This will be completed and published as part of the review detailed in section 4.

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.6 A new contract of this size has potential to impact on the city's environment and carbon emissions. The partnership will aim to minimise its impact on the environment by reducing waste and minimising carbon emissions from its operations.

- 5.7 The partnerships current business plan includes a number of sustainability activities including undertaking an assessment of the carbon impact of operations.

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.8 None envisaged.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.9 This change will mean that there are additional properties to refurbish with associated costs. Analysis of existing data indicates that this will affect 112 dwellings; this may change as individual properties are surveyed and detailed information is collected. Where a need to undertake work is identified it will be programmed into the appropriate year.

- 5.10 There are further opportunities to simplify and update the local investment standard. These will be considered in the full review of the Brighton & Hove Standard which will be started in 2013 and will be carried out in full consultation with residents.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.11 None envisaged.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.11 The contract has the potential to bring significant benefits to the city and its residents. It is also important that a contract of this size does not have a negative impact on established local businesses.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 None considered

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To address inconsistencies in the implementation of decent homes work for disabled residents who have had adaptations carried out and to set out the strategy for review of the Brighton & Hove Standard.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:	None
Documents in Members' Rooms	None
Background Documents	None

