

Subject:	Housing Adaptations Update		
Date of Meeting:	14 November 2012		
Report of:	Strategic Director, Place		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Martin Reid	Tel: 29-3321
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Ward(s) affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 Brighton & Hove has a rising demand for housing adaptations in the City as people live longer with more complex needs.
- 1.2 Investment in housing adaptations promotes independent living and has been demonstrated to deliver significant cost benefits for both Health & Social Care.
- 1.3 The Integrated Housing Adaptations Team within Housing Commissioning works to improve access to housing adaptations across all tenures in the City.
- 1.4 As requested at Housing Committee on 26 September this report provides background information on the role of the Integrated Housing Adaptations Team within Housing Commissioning and its work to improve access to housing adaptations across all tenures in the City.
- 1.5 As part of the on-going work of the team and in response to the deputation to Housing Committee 26 September this paper also sets out proposals to improve the communication and client involvement in what can be a complex process, by providing more and better information about the process and timescales for both council and private sector residents waiting for housing adaptations.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Housing Committee note the background information and service improvements to better manage the demand for adaptations, the improved assessment and delivery times, and the current situation concerning capital budgets.
- 2.2 That Housing Committee note and approve the proposals to improve communication and client involvement through the team's on-going work with the Fed (the Brighton & Hove Federation of Disabled People) and Tenants Disability Network. In particular, as outlined in 3.9 below, to identify contact details for a named officer contact within the Housing Adaptations Service.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

3.1 Brighton & Hove has a high number of households with a support need and a rising demand for housing adaptations in the City in light of:

- General growth in the number of households in the City;
- An ageing population, in particular, a projected growth of more vulnerable older households in the City. It is estimated that by 2030 there will be a 35% increase in people aged over 85 in the City increased demand on Housing, Adult Social Care, Health and other Third Sector provision delivering services to older people to support independent living. Up to 75% of those living 85years+ are likely to experience a life limiting illness which is likely to impact on the proportion of people able to maintain living in their own homes. Over half the older people in Brighton and Hove live in the 40% most deprived areas for older people in England;
- Applicants with disabilities, in particular children, are living longer and displaying more complex needs;
- More people requiring adaptations remaining at home rather than in residential care settings.

Pressures on meeting demand for housing adaptations are compounded by the topography of the City and age and location of housing stock. Much of the City is hilly preventing full wheelchair access. Many homes were built in the 19th Century and subsequently converted into flats, often with small rooms and narrow stairways making accessibility and adaptation difficult.

3.2 Last year, in 2011/12, the Housing Adaptations Team invested £2.0 million in 711 council and private sector housing adaptations in the City:

- 556 council housing adaptations, including 264 major adaptations
- Investing £0.876 million &
- 155 private sector housing adaptations
- Investing £1.098 million (Disabled Facilities Grant including local authority 'top up').

3.3 Following changes arising from Improving Access to Housing Adaptations report in November 2010 the trend has been for reduced assessment time despite increased demand for major housing adaptations. Based on our Q1 figures for this financial year 2012/13 we are within national assessment time guidelines:

- average time from receipt of the case in the Housing Adaptations Team to the OT recommendation, Q1 our performance 8.25 weeks, national guideline within 12 weeks;
- average time from OT recommendation to start on site for council adaptations, Q1 our performance 14 weeks, the Care Quality Commission benchmark is 26 weeks;

- In response to feedback we have simplified & speeded up the assessment process and now 'fast track' some of the most common adaptations e.g. level access showers.

3.4 The team more proactively manage the demand for adaptations:

- Adopting a housing options approach, look at re-housing as an alternative to costly & disruptive adaptations, in both council and private sectors;
- Dedicating up to 18.5 OT hours with the council's lettings team to ensure accessible housing, Mobility rated 1 & 2, goes to those with matching need, working closely with the Accessible Housing Officer, accompanying disabled people at the property viewing;
- Making best use of resources – linking adaptations in council homes with the Decent Homes programme, joint working & co-funding 47 bathroom adaptations to date, and with the upgrading & modernising the council's sheltered housing stock e.g. Laburnum Grove where 29 single units previously shared bathroom were refurbish all with wet room showers; linking with the Extensions & Relief of Overcrowding Project to joint work & co-fund the relevant works where there is both an overcrowding and a disability need;
- Delivering 'Enhanced Assessor' training to the Housing Estates Team enabling estate based staff to assess and install minor adaptations for council tenants in response to a request at the housing office rather than a Community Care Act assessment in Adult Social Care;
- Commissioning new affordable housing ensuring all meet Lifetime Homes Standard and a proportion, 10%, wheelchair accessible from start, with currently over 43 new wheelchair adapted homes funded as part of our current Affordable Housing Development Programme 2011-14;
- Re-commissioning the Home Improvement Agency service - commissioning a HIA that will develop the housing options approach in the private sector, and less reliant on Disabled Facilities Grant aided work.

3.5 In terms of current demand the team currently receive 30 to 40 new referrals each month and currently have 130 cases in the assessment process. Referrals are prioritised based on the risk assessment, whether critical, substantial or moderate need, and by date of first referral to the service. Post assessment there are currently around 266 council adaptations where works are being ordered or are in progress and 212 private sector cases.

3.6 Housing Cabinet meeting in January this year approved the re-tender and joint procurement with Adult Social Care of specialist adaptations framework contract, with representatives from the Fed and Tenants Disability Network engaged in process throughout. This framework of specialist contractors will deliver housing adaptations in both council and private sectors; it simplifies the current arrangements, and will deliver better value for money.

3.7 The emerging pressure is availability of future capital funding for both council and private sector adaptations going forward:

- We already have significant spend of £0.611million against the 2012/13 HRA Council adaptations budget for major adaptations of £0.850 million;
- In terms of private sector housing adaptations, this year we are able to maintain 'top up' of Government DFG allocation of £0.723 million through private sector housing renewal capital in order to maintain a total programme of £1.1million. However, no private sector housing renewal capital funding is currently identified for 2013/14 to top up Government DFG allocation. Commitments against current private sector housing adaptations budget, including DFG & top-up are significant: £0.722million.

3.8 In terms of assessing the cost benefit of timely housing adaptations we know that:

- Housing adaptations help prevent or defer entry into residential care for older people; one year's delay will save £26,000 per person, less the cost of the adaptation;
- Housing adaptations that remove or reduce the need for daily homecare visits pay for themselves in a time-span ranging from a few months to three years and then produce annual saving; national evidence suggests annual savings varied from £1,200 to £29,000 a year (using an average DFG of £6,000);
- The average cost to the state of a hospital admission for a fractured hip is £28,665 i.e. four times the average DFG;
- CIEH & BRE toolkit estimates the cost of poor housing. For Brighton & Hove it suggests there are more than 1,200 excess cold & falls in the home related incidents each year that impact on quality of life & cost society £20 million per annum (£8 million NHS costs & £12 million in lost work & the need for benefits & support). The cost to adapt & improve this housing is estimated at £2 million.

3.9 We accept that communications and client involvement in what can be a complex process can be improved, providing more and better information about the process and timescales for both council and private sector residents waiting for housing adaptations, including the contact details for a named contact within the Housing Adaptations Service.

We have committed to do this as part of our on-going work with the Fed and with the Tenants Disability Network.

We propose to work with the Fed and the Tenant Disability Network and signatories to this deputation to fully consider and report back on the implementation of recommendations of this deputation.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

4.1 Housing Adaptations Operational Manager and Senior OT regularly attend Tenants Disability Network meetings; a meeting with TDN specifically to work on updating and improving the information leaflet to council tenants is due to take place 17 October , this piece of work one of three key pieces of work to be completed by TDN this year. HAS involvement with TDN will be on-going.

- 4.2 On-going involvement with the Fed, Housing Adaptations Service is currently working with the Fed and Dr Jon Hastie to update & improve the information leaflet for private sector residents.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

5.1 Financial Implications:

The capital programme budgets for both Council Housing adaptations and Private Sector (DFG) adaptations will be reviewed as part of the councils 3 year Capital Programme Strategy for 2013/14 to 2015/16. Progress against the current financial years capital programme budgets will be updated through the Targeted Budget monitoring report to the Policy & Resources Committee.

Finance Officer Consulted: Susie Allen

Date: 10/10/12

5.2 Legal Implications:

The legislation in relation to the delivery of adaptations is fragmented. For example, the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 places a duty on social services authorities to arrange practical assistance in the home and any works of adaptation or the provision of additional facilities designed to secure greater safety, comfort or convenience; the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 establishes a requirement that a needs assessment must be carried out where it appears to the social services authority that any person for whom they may provide or arrange community care services, may be in need of such services and under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 local housing authorities are under a duty to provide grant aid for disabled people for a range of adaptations to their homes. The report sets out how the council discharges its functions under those Acts. The report's recommendations do not adversely affect any individual's human rights

Lawyer Consulted: Liz Woodley

Date: 10/10/12

5.3 Equalities Implications:

A full Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out on the Service October 2011 The scope of the assessment to review the assessment and delivery of major housing adaptations following the Improving Access to Housing Adaptations recommendations Jan 2010 - to move toward a preventative approach to managing major adaptations demand pro-actively rather than in response to a Community Care Act assessment, to improve and simplify the assessment and delivery of major adaptations within the Housing Adaptations Service. For further information about the review of the Housing Adaptations Service and follow up actions please contact: Sarah Potter, Operational Manager Housing Adaptations at: sarah.potter@brighton-hove.gov.uk Tel: 01273 290789

5.4 Sustainability Implications:

The delivery of major adaptations in council homes enabling people to live as independently as possible for as long as possible is an investment in the existing council housing stock, increasing the supply of accessible council housing for its life long use. Adapted and accessible council and housing association homes for rent are advertised and re-let through the council's homemove scheme to those on the council's housing register with a matching need. The accessible housing register ensures accessible properties are let to those with a matching need. In addition the housing options approach as an alternative to costly and disruptive adaptations in public & private sector homes where it is appropriate ensures we adapt where it is reasonable and practicable to do so.

5.5 Crime & Disorder Implications:

The Housing Adaptations Service EIA action plan includes developing links with the Community Safety Team, in particular around disability hate crime and role of adaptations in preventing and responding to this.

5.6 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

Risk and opportunity implications are outlined in the report.

5.7 Public Health Implications:

The delivery of housing adaptations positively promotes disability equality enabling disabled people to live as independently as possible for as long as possible in their homes. In line with the Older Peoples Housing Strategy 2008-13, we know we need to improve the supply of housing that can be adapted to meet changing needs, and in line with the roll out of more personalised support, & ASC commissioning continue to focus on people maintaining their independence for as long as possible, we know the importance of timely adapts in enabling this.

5.8 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

The recommendations in this report intend to improve the provision of information about the adaptations services and timescales and to identify service improvements to benefit disabled adults with a permanent and substantial disability across the City.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

6.1 No alternative options are considered

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To provide the background and information regarding the on-going service improvements, and the emerging pressure on capital budgets.
- 7.2 To provide a full response and action plan going forward in response to the deputation presented at Housing Committee meeting 26th September, for approval for the proposals to improve communication and client involvement through the team's on-going work with the Fed and Tenants Disability Network.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:
None

