

5th March 2018

Community, Health and Housing Committee

Aids and Adaptations Policy

Report of: *Angela Abbott, Interim Head of Housing*

Wards Affected: *All*

This report is: *Public*

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The report sets out proposals for a new Aids and Adaptations Policy to be implemented within the Housing Department.
- 1.2 The Policy provides the Council with the ability to manage adaptations within its Housing Stock to ensure that properties already adapted for disabled needs, are utilised before further adaptations are done.

2. Recommendation(s)

2.1 Committee is asked to approve the new Aids and Adaptations Policy

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1 Housing Services are currently reviewing the repairs section. This has highlighted that there is no current Aids and Adaptations Policy.
- 3.2 Brentwood Borough Council receive many Occupational Therapist reports for minor and major adaptations within Tenant's homes each year.
- 3.3 Types of adaptation requests include but are not limited to, handrails, ramps, stairlifts and wet rooms.
- 3.4 Due to the lack of policy almost all requests are granted without further questioning and are fully funded by the Housing Revenue Account.
- 3.5 Social Housing is currently in high demand and properties with adaptations are generally more difficult to re-let.

3.6 Officers of the Council are currently working to identify other options for residents whom have requested adaptations to manage and reduce unnecessary work.

4. Issue, Options and Analysis of Options

4.1 The cost of adaptations is vast and this cost lies solely with the Council.

4.2 Further to this, the Council have high numbers of Housing Applicants on its Housing register that we currently have a lack of suitable accommodation for.

4.3 In order to improve the current service for Aids and Adaptations there are two options available for the Council.

4.4 Option 1 – To continue conducting all adaptations that are requested at the full cost to the Council.

4.5 Option 2 – To introduce an Aids and Adaptations board that reviews each request over £400, looking at other available options to meet the requirements of the Tenant prior to conducting adaptations.

4.6 Option 1 would reduce the amount of time each applicant has to wait for their adaptations. However, this would come at a large cost and may result in unnecessary adaptations being conducted if other suitable accommodation is available.

4.7 Option 2 would be the preferred option as it allows the Council to better manage not only its current housing stock but also the ever-restricted budgets.

4.8 The Council promotes independent living and strives to provide the best possible service for its residents.

5. Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 Aids and Adaptation requests are becoming more and more commonplace. The numbers being referred and the cost to implement these are mounting.

5.2 There has previously been no Policy outlining how the Council intends to manage Aids and Adaptations. This has meant that there has been very limited grounds for the Council to refuse or provide an alternative to the recommendations put forward by the Occupational Therapist.

- 5.3 This Policy will allow the Council to explore alternative options whilst still demonstrating Value for Money as well as meeting the requirements of the Tenant.

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Tenant Talkback, a panel of both Tenants and Leaseholders, has been consulted on the proposed Policy.
- 6.2 Their feedback was positive with no major changes suggested.

7. References to Corporate Plan

- 7.1 To Ensure the provision of the efficient and effective services.
- 7.2 Review the future delivery of housing services to provide the best outcomes for Brentwood residents.
- 7.3 Review the approach to allocating Council homes and managing Tenancies.
- 7.4 Manage our housing stock to recognise the limited resources available and the importance of supporting those in greatest need.

8. Implications

Financial Implications

Name & Title: Jacqueline Van Mallaerts, Financial Services Manager
(Deputy Section 151 Officer)

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- 8.1 On average the HRA spends 300k on aids and adaptations per annum within its Decent Homes Capital program. Any potential Budget savings in this area through this policy that may arise, could be reinvested into the decent homes capital program to support the HRA Business Plan.

Legal Implications

Name & Title: Daniel Toohey, Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

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- 8.2 Under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and associated regulations disabled facilities grants are available to disabled people when works to adapt their homes are necessary and appropriate to meet their needs and where it is reasonable and practicable to carry out such

works given the age and condition of a property. Either option in this matter would require the application of this Act.

Other Implications (where significant) – i.e. Health and Safety, Asset Management, Equality and Diversity, Risk Management, Section 17 – Crime & Disorder, Sustainability, ICT.

Health & Safety implications

Name & Title: David Wellings, Health & Safety Officer

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8.6 The Health and Safety implications include the Council's arrangements to enable legal compliance with statutory responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act and subordinate regulations, for property, machinery and equipment under the Council's ownership.

9. Background Papers (include their location and identify whether any are exempt or protected by copyright)

9.1 None

10. Appendices to this report

None

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