

Classification: Public

Key Decision: No

Gravesham Borough Council

Report to: Housing Services Cabinet Committee

Date: 6 September 2022

Reporting officer: Nicole Arthur- Service Manager (Housing Operations)

Subject: Aids & Adaptation Policy for Council Tenants

Purpose and summary of report:

To inform the Housing Services Cabinet Committee of the proposed Aids & Adaptation Policy for Council Tenants and seek comments prior to the policy being agreed by Cabinet Member, Housing Services.

Recommendations:

1. For Housing Services Cabinet Committee to discuss and provide feedback on the proposed Aids & Adaptation Policy for Council Tenants for the Cabinet Member, Housing Services to consider prior to authorising the policy.

Key Implications:	
Item	Implications
Legal	<p>It is a statutory duty to produce this policy under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 (Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996) that provides the Council with the discretion to develop new schemes for providing financial assistance to deal with adaptations that are required in Council owned accommodation.</p> <p>Section 2 of the policy (Appendix 1) outlines the Legal and Regulatory Framework associated with the policy.</p>
Finance and Value for Money	<p>Gravesham Borough Council as a landlord meets the cost to supply and fit aids and adaptations to council homes. These costs are met through the Councils Housing Revenue account.</p> <p>C608/C0031: £521,750 Capital work H936/51113: £180,000 for minor adaptations works H995/51113: £45,000 for servicing and maintenance</p>
Corporate Plan	<p>#People- Safeguard residents- put in place a package of housing measures and creative interventions that support the most vulnerable.</p>

	Provide a proactive, supportive and financially efficient housing service: high quality tenant management experienced through a service making full of its assets.
Climate Change	Mobility and medication can make those who are disabled or with long term health issues more susceptible to climate change, such as heatstroke and dehydration. These factors will be taken into consideration in assessment of needs under the policy.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Aids and Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants (Appendix 1) outlines how the Council will support tenants to remain as long as possible independently in their current home and also in carrying out essential daily activities which may be hampered by long-term health issues or disability, or, if this is not possible or practical, to assist them in finding suitable alternative accommodation.
- 1.2 The policy also confirms the council's commitment to meeting the needs of tenants as well as effectively using the council's existing housing stock and ensuring a fair distribution of aids and adaptations within finite resources. Whilst the needs of tenants will be given proper consideration it is inevitable that the use of the councils housing stock must additionally be considered in parallel to ensure that all residents are being treated fairly, particularly where the nature of the adaptation is substantial.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Aids and Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants replaces the Housing Policy for Discretionary Disabled Adaptations which sat outside of the Housing Operations Service and under the previous Housing Partnerships Manager.
- 2.2 Responsibility for the policy transferred to the Service Manager (Housing Operations) last year and as the policy was due for renewal in 2022, it was an opportunity to improve the information within the policy for both staff and tenants.
- 2.3 The new policy now:
 - States clearly how new aids and adaptations requests will be accessed, considered, prioritised, approved or rejected.
 - Makes best use of existing adaptations in council properties through the reallocation of those properties to those with needs most closely meeting the property attributes.
 - Specifies threshold indicators and limits relating to types of adaptations
 - Indicates what support can be offered in terms of re-housing to more suitable accommodation when an option appraisal makes the application nonviable for the existing dwelling or its occupants.
 - States clearly which adaptations will not be funded

3. Proposed Policy

- 3.1 The policy covers two areas, adapting existing homes and allocation of and best use of existing stock currently part or fully adapted to meet housing demand.

- 3.2 The policy also introduces a change in the application process for adaptations. Previously a tenant would contact the Occupational Therapist directly and the majority of the time without the Council being notified until the report and recommendations was sent through to the Aids & Adaptation Surveyor.
- 3.3 Going forward, in order to enquire or apply for an assessment for a disabled adaptation to a Council property, tenants should contact their Housing Officer in the first instance who will discuss with the tenant their current circumstances and will arrange an initial visit to ensure there aren't any safeguarding concerns and discuss whether a referral to the Occupational Therapy Service is required and if they need any support undertaking the referral.
- 3.4 The new improved policy and change in process will ensure that tenants have better support in accessing the service, clearer guidance as to what the Council will and wont do and ensure we use our assets in the best way.

4. Appendices

- 4.1 The following documents are to be published with the report:
 - Appendix 1- The Aids and Adaptations Policy for Council Tenants
 - Appendix 2- Housing Policy for Discretionary Disabled Adaptations
 - Appendix 3- Equality Impact Assessment

5. Background Documents

- Background documents Housing Policy for Discretionary Disabled Adaptations which can be found at Appendix 2.

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Secondary Implications	
Risk Assessment	<p>Risk of no access provided by tenants resulting in us not being able to complete the required works. BEIS encourages RPs to engage early with tenants, to support successful delivery of projects.</p> <p>Delay in project completion extending past the deadline of 31st January 2023. If the grant is not fully spent by March 2023 then BEIS reserves the right to request return of all or any proportion of the grant.</p> <p>Tenants without the correct support and advice could result in fuel poverty, and not be able to pay bills and their rent to the council.</p>
Data Protection Impact Assessment	<p><i>A data protection impact assessment (DPIA) should be carried out at the start of any major project involving the use of personal data or if you are making a significant change to an existing process.</i></p> <p>a. Does the project/change being recommended through this paper involve the processing of personal data or special category data or criminal offence data? A definition of each type of data can be found on the Information Commissioner’s Office website via the above links. No</p> <p>b. If yes to question a, have you completed and attached a DPIA including Data Protection Officer advice? N/A</p> <p>c. If no to question b, please seek advice from your nominated DPIA assessor or the Information Governance Team at gdpr@medway.gov.uk. N/A</p>
Equality Impact Assessment	<p>a. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper have potential to cause adverse impact or discriminate against different groups in the community? If yes, please explain answer. No</p> <p>b. Does the decision being made or recommended through this paper make a positive contribution to promoting equality? If yes, please explain answer. No</p> <p><i>In submitting this report, the Chief Officer doing so is confirming that they have given due regard to the equality impacts of the decision being considered, as noted in the table above</i></p>
Crime and Disorder	Click here to start typing
Digital and website implications	Click here to start typing
Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults	Click here to start typing