

## **For Publication**

### **Adoption of Adaptations Policy And Procedure (CC000)**

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Meeting:	Cabinet
Date:	16 May 2017
Cabinet portfolio:	Cabinet Member for Homes and Customers
Report by:	Housing Manager

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#### **For publication**

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#### **1.0 Purpose of report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval of a new policy and procedure for assessing and delivering disabled adaptations within the Council's housing stock.

#### **2.0 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Cabinet approve and adopt the attached "Adaptations Policy and Procedure 2017 - 2020" **Appendix A.**
- 2.2 To review the recording of adaptation work and develop a reporting system.
- 2.3 To carry out an ongoing review of the impact of this Policy and Procedure, and report back to Cabinet by April 2019.

#### **3.0 Report details**

- 3.1 Chesterfield Borough Council in partnership with Derbyshire County Council forms the Derbyshire Adaptation Partnership. This

facilitates provision of adaptations to council tenant's homes in order to meet the tenant's needs having regard to their disability. Provision of adaptations promotes tenants wellbeing and reduces potential hospitalisation and demand on social care services.

- 3.2 The Derbyshire Adaptation Partnership's provision is separate to that arranged through Disabled Facilities Grants, which primarily deal with grant applications made by owner occupiers, private rental tenants and Housing Association tenants. The Derbyshire Adaptation Partnership deals solely with council tenants.
- 3.3 An annual budget of £750,000, within the Housing Capital Programme, has been agreed to fund both minor and major adaptation requests.
- 3.4 Adaptations can vary from the installation of grab rails (minor) to the installation of a level access shower (major). Occasionally larger and more significant adaptations to a property have been carried out to meet a disabled person's needs.
- 3.5 Examples of the types of adaptations that the council installs are as follows (not exhaustive):

Minor

Grab rails (internal and external)  
Lever taps  
Hand rails

Major

Stairlifts  
Level access showers  
Low rise shower trays  
Ramps

- 3.6 The council via its Allocations Policy tries to minimise the need for installing adaptations by allocating properties in accordance with need e.g. if a property has previously been adapted and notice has been given by the outgoing tenant, we will seek to allocate the property on the basis of the adaptation already in situ. Preference is given to applicants with a medical need when allocating adapted properties.
- 3.7 Alternatives to adaptation are also initially sought where appropriate, such as resolving matters through provision of equipment or care or rehousing to suitable accommodation.
- 3.8 Nationally the life expectancy rate is increasing. However, Public Health England reports that “the health of people in Chesterfield is generally worse than the England average” with “life expectancy for both men and women in Chesterfield significantly lower than the England average”.

Around 23% of people in the Borough identified themselves as having a disability during the 2011 Census.

Such statistics highlight the increasing need for adaptations and the importance of having a robust policy in place to appropriately manage and monitor service delivery.

- 3.9 The Derbyshire Adaptation Partnership has a Panel of members which meets on a regular basis and continually receives requests for adaptations for elderly and younger disabled residents. The Panel members include a Derbyshire County Council Service Manager and Occupational Therapists, Chesterfield Borough Council’s (Assistant) Housing Options Manager and representatives from the Construction & Design Team.

All members of the Panel have been consulted on the proposed Policy and Procedure.

- 3.10 Currently the Panel decide on a case by case basis whether to approve or refuse requests for adaptations; having general consideration for the guidelines as set out in the policy. Adoption of the Adaptations Policy and Procedure will provide the panel with a robust framework to work within and will allow a clearer, transparent decision making process.

Considering cases subjectively and without the policy framework could potentially lead to inequality plus excessive and unnecessary expenditure.

In 2016/17, most of the budget had been committed in the first three-quarters of the financial year – some of this expenditure was due to additional work being agreed that had not initially been identified as a priority, for example providing ramps at each exit door rather than only the main door, or improving access to areas of the garden, or the provision of storage for a mobility scooter.

The policy will provide consistency and fairness and enable us to manage the adaptations budget appropriately, whilst maintaining a discretionary element to consider those additional requests.

The consequence of utilising most of the budget by December 2016 has created a backlog of requests for adaptation work, which has delayed tenants getting essential work carried out.

3.11 Research has been conducted with other Authorities in terms of the type of adaptations considered and approved, processes used, and examples of best practice. Most Authorities have an Adaptations Policy and most have similarities to the proposed policy.

3.12 Information relating to adaptation work is currently recorded on the Keystone IT system, but reports are not currently available to provide detailed information on the type and level of adaptation work in the Council's housing stock.

The recording of information relating to adaptation work will be reviewed, and a reporting system developed to provide information on the type and level of work carried out.

#### 4.0 **Human resources/people management implications**

4.1 The Policy has been considered by the Human Resources Manager

4.2 There are no additional resources required and the policy will be delivered by existing staff.

## 5.0 **Financial implications**

5.1 Adoption of the new policy and procedure will have positive financial implications, for example discouraging approval of non-standard adaptations that have a cost implication. The policy also promotes pursuance of "value for money".

5.2 The policy has been considered by the Director of Finance and Resources.

## 6.0 **Legal and data protection implications**

6.1 The policy has been considered by the council's Legal Section with subsequent adjustments and alterations made. The policy states what legal framework has been considered when drafting the policy

## 7.0 **Consultation**

7.1 Officers having experience and expertise in the subject matter have been consulted with suggested alterations and amendments made throughout. Consultation has been made with stakeholders, and with all members of the Derbyshire Adaptations Panel.

7.2 Consultation has been carried out with tenants via the Tenant Participation Communication Group with suggested amendments made.

## 8.0 **Risk management**

Description of the Risk	Impact	Likelihood	Mitigating Action	Impact	Likelihood
Adoption of the policy could make the process too rigid	Medium	Medium	The policy contains a discretionary clause which allows discretion	Medium	Low
Legal challenge, adoption of the policy increases	High	Medium	Legal advice has been sought with recommended	High	Low

the potential for legal challenge			amendments made		
Potential increase in expenditure	High	Medium	Strict budget management and monthly monitoring will be undertaken	High	Low

## 9.0 **Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA)**

9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached at **Appendix B.**

## 10.0 **Alternative options and reasons for rejection**

10.1 The alternative to adopting the Policy would be to continue without the Policy. This would result in the Panel making decisions without a supportive framework and could lead to inequality, unfairness and reduced control in relation to expenditure of budget. Therefore this is not considered to be a reasonable option.

## 11.0 **Recommendations**

11.1 That Cabinet approve and adopt the attached "Adaptations Policy and Procedure 2017 - 2020" **Appendix A.**

11.2 To review the recording of adaptation work and develop a reporting system

11.3 To carry out an ongoing review of the impact of this Policy and Procedure, and report back to Cabinet by April 2019.

## 12.0 **Reasons for recommendations**

12.1 To provide a robust framework that promotes equality and fairness along with compliance with disability legislation, and to meet the increasing demands and needs of our tenants whilst enabling effective management of the service and budget.

## **Decision information**

<b>Key decision number</b>	<b>722</b>
<b>Wards affected</b>	All wards
<b>Links to Council Plan priorities</b>	To improve the quality of life for local people To improve the health and well-being of people in Chesterfield Borough To reduce inequality and support the more vulnerable members of our communities

## **Document information**

<b>Report author</b>	<b>Contact number/email</b>
Chris McDermott	01246 345385 chris.mcdermott@chesterfield.gov.uk
<b>Background documents</b> These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when the report was prepared.	
<b>Appendices to the report</b>	
Appendix A	Adaptations Policy and Procedure 2017 - 2020
Appendix B	Equality Impact Assessment