

## **REPORT TO EXECUTIVE**

Date of Meeting: 23 September 2025

## **REPORT TO COUNCIL**

Date of Meeting: 14 October 2025

Report of: Strategic Director Operations

Title: Home Adaptations for Council Housing Policy 2025-2030

### **Is this a Key Decision?**

No

### **Is this an Executive or Council Function?**

Council

### **1. What is the report about?**

1.1 The report summarises the new Home Adaptations for Council Housing Policy 2025-2030. It is proposed that the revised Policy be adopted and implemented. A copy of the Policy document is appended.

### **2. Recommendations:**

2.1 That Executive recommends that Council approve the adoption of the new Home Adaptations for Council Housing Policy for the period 2025-2030.

### **3. Reasons for the recommendation:**

3.1 The Council is required by the Regulator of Social Housing under the Safety and Quality Standard (of the new Consumer Standards) to 'Assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services'

3.2 Within this standard the requirements are that social landlords: 'Must clearly communicate to tenants and relevant organisations how they will assist tenants seeking housing adaptations services.' and 'Must co-operate with tenants, appropriate local authority departments and other relevant organisations so that a housing adaptations service is available to tenants where appropriate.'

This is our proposed policy to ensure compliance.

### **4. What are the resource implications including non financial resources**

4.1 Resource has already been committed from existing budgetary & staffing resources however, should there be an increase in demand or the need for change a further paper will be brought forward.

## **5. Section 151 Officer comments:**

5.1 5.1 Whilst there are no direct financial implications arising from this report, any impact on demand upon the Adaptations capital budget will be reported to Members as part of the quarterly HRA budget monitoring reports or the annual budget setting cycle.

## **6. What are the legal aspects?**

6.1 The Care Act 2014 (CA 2014) sets out provisions concerning adaptations to properties in order to promote individual wellbeing and enabling independent living. Local authorities have a duty to consider the suitability of living accommodation as part of their care and support functions. This includes the provision of housing adaptations to meet the needs of disabled individuals, which can contribute to their physical and mental wellbeing, personal dignity, and ability to live independently.

6.2 Under the Care Act 2014, local authorities may fund minor adaptations, such as grab rails and bath seats, which do not require structural work. These adaptations are considered "community equipment (aids and minor adaptations)" if their cost is £1,000 or less, as defined in the Care and Support (Preventing Needs for Care and Support) Regulations 2014.

6.3 For major adaptations, disabled facilities grants (DFGs) are available under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (HGCRA 1996). These grants are subject to means testing and can cover significant modifications, such as stair lifts or bathroom alterations, to enable disabled individuals to remain in their homes. Local authorities are required to assess the necessity and appropriateness of such adaptations to meet the disabled person's needs.

6.4 The Equality Act 2010 (EA 2010) is relevant to the requirement for adaptations under the Care Act 2014 (CA 2014) and the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (HGCRA 1996) as it provides a framework to prevent discrimination against disabled individuals, ensuring that their needs are met equitably. The Act reinforces the obligations under the CA 2014 and HGCRA 1996 to provide necessary adaptations for disabled individuals, ensuring their rights are upheld and their needs are addressed in a non-discriminatory manner.

## **7. Monitoring Officer's comments:**

7.1 Members will note the legal aspects at paragraph 6 of this report. The Monitoring Officer has no additional comments.

## **8. Report details:**

8.1 In January 2024 the Housing Ombudsman published a report entitled 'Spotlight on attitudes, respect and rights – relationship of equals'.<sup>2</sup>

8.2 In summary the report recognised the challenging and complex environment that social landlords now must work within, including: the cost-of-living crisis, increase in mental health difficulties and housing shortages. The Ombudsman stressed the need for landlords to create human-centric policies, adapt to meet the needs of all their residents and ensure the most vulnerable residents are not left behind.

8.3 In January 2025 the Housing Ombudsman published a further report on Learning from severe Maladministration<sup>3</sup> which directly addressed issues concerning requests for home adaptations.

8.4 Amongst the recommendations in the report the Housing Ombudsman stated that landlords have a responsibility to assess the feasibility of the adaptations and make informed decisions whether to proceed with them, ensuring residents are afforded respect by decisions being communicated in a timely way, clear explanations given, and expectations managed appropriately. It acknowledged that if a feasibility assessment concludes that the majority of the adaptations are not possible, landlords should continue working with the resident and the Occupational Therapist to find a suitable alternative property.

This policy includes these recommendations.

8.5 Before this policy was drafted a survey of tenants who had received an adaptation in their home was undertaken, consideration has been given to the suggestions and responses made.

8.6 This policy has also been taken to our Tenants' Voice group, Council housing and Development Advisory Board (CHADAB) and Senior Management Board, suggestions made by this group have been incorporated into the policy.

8.7 As it is purely departmental and follows the guidelines as set out by the Housing Ombudsman and the Regulator for Social Housing, it is not a requirement for this policy that further, public consultation is necessary.

## **9. How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Plan?**

9.1 One of the intended outcomes under the 'Homes' section refers to

*'Better quality, energy efficient and more affordable homes to buy or rent.'*

Any work that improves our Council homes contributes to this outcome.

9.2 Under the 'A Well Run Council' section one of the outcomes is

*'Effective investment and maintenance programmes for our assets that underpins our business'*

Adapting our Council homes will contribute to this outcome.

## **10. What risks are there and how can they be reduced?**

10.1 Prioritisation of cases based on need & ensuring cost effective procurement will assist in meeting the allocated budget.

10.2 There are reputational risks in not having an up-to-date Home Adaptations for Council Housing Policy; with the introduction of more stringent regulation any inspection of the housing service by the Regulator of Social Housing would include a review of our policies and strategies to ensure they are fit for purpose.

10.3 The Regulator of Social Housing under the Safety and Quality Standard (of the new Consumer Standards) requires registered providers to 'Assist tenants seeking housing adaptations to access appropriate services'

## **11. Equality Act 2010 (The Act)**

11.1 Under the Act's Public Sector Equalities Duty, decision makers are required to consider the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other prohibited conduct;
- advance equality by encouraging participation, removing disadvantage, taking account of disabilities and meeting people's needs; and
- foster good relations between people by tackling prejudice and promoting understanding.

11.2 In order to comply with the general duty authorities must assess the impact on equality of decisions, policies and practices. These duties do not prevent the authority from reducing services where necessary, but they offer a way of developing proposals that consider the impacts on all members of the community.

11.3 In making decisions the authority must take into account the potential impact of that decision in relation to age, disability, race/ethnicity (includes Gypsies and Travellers), sex, gender identity, religion and belief, sexual orientation, pregnant women and new and breastfeeding mothers, marriage and civil partnership status in coming to a decision.

11.4 In recommending this proposal potential impact has been identified on people with protected characteristics as determined by the Act and an Equalities Impact Assessment has been included in the background papers for Member's attention.

## **12. Carbon Footprint (Environmental) Implications:**

12.1 No direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

## **13. Are there any other options?**

13.1 There are no alternatives to the adoption of this policy as it is one of the 'required outcomes' within the Safety and Quality Standard (part of the Regulator of Social Housing's Consumer Standards which came into force on 1st April 2024).

**Strategic Director of Operations, Adrian Pengelly**

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## **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1972 (as amended)**

Background papers used in compiling this report:-

1. [Annex 3: Consumer standards 1 April 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/annex-3-consumer-standards-1-april-2024)
2. [Spotlight on: Attitudes, respect and rights – relationship of equals \(housing-ombudsman.org.uk\)](https://housing-ombudsman.org.uk/spotlight-on-attitudes-respect-and-rights-relationship-of-equals)

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