



SCRUTINY BOARD (ADULT SOCIAL CARE)

17TH JUNE 2009

Item 12 Inquiry into Major Adaptations for Disabled People – Draft Report

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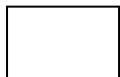
Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development

Scrutiny Board (Adult Social Care)

Date: 17th June 2009

Subject: Inquiry into Major Adaptations for Disabled People – Draft Report

Electoral Wards Affected: All



Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

☐

Community Cohesion

☐

Narrowing the Gap

☐

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 During the last municipal year, the Scrutiny Board (Adult Social Care) agreed to carry out an inquiry into Major Adaptations for Disabled People.
- 1.2 This Inquiry has now concluded and the Board is in a position to report on its findings and recommendations resulting from the evidence gathered.
- 1.3 Scrutiny Board Procedure Rule 14.3 states that "where a Scrutiny Board is considering making specific recommendations it shall invite advice from the appropriate Director(s) prior to finalising its recommendations. The Director shall consult with the appropriate Executive Member before providing any such advice. The detail of that advice shall be reported to the Scrutiny Board and considered before the report is finalised".
- 1.4 Any additional advice received which has not already been incorporated into the draft report will be reported at the Board's meeting for consideration, before the Board finalises its report.
- 1.5 Once the Board publishes its final report, the appropriate Director(s) will be asked to formally respond to the Scrutiny Board's recommendations within three months.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Board is asked to agree its inquiry report on Major Adaptations for Disabled People.

Background Papers

None

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Leeds
CITY COUNCIL

Major Adaptations for Disabled Adults

Draft Scrutiny Inquiry Report

Introduction and Scope



1. Introduction

- 1.1 In June 2008 we identified adaptations as a potential area for a more detailed scrutiny inquiry. We were advised that a previous scrutiny inquiry on adaptations had been undertaken a number of years ago and a report was published in October 2002.
- 1.2 At the meeting in September 2008 we considered a report which outlined the current arrangements for the delivery of adaptations in Leeds. Whilst we recognised and acknowledged that progress had been made since the previous inquiry in 2002, we were keen to identify whether the Council was providing good customer service when assessing and delivering adaptations.
- 1.3 Recognising the limited amount of funding available each year for the provision of adaptations, we wanted to explore whether value for money was being achieved. We also wanted to ascertain whether sufficient funding was being made available to adequately fund the provision of adaptations for the occupants of both public and private housing.
- 1.4 We were keen to identify whether the wellbeing of the individual was a general consideration when providing adaptations, and if equality was achieved across all housing tenures.
- 1.5 We considered the best approach for carrying out this inquiry and concluded that by establishing a working group we would have the capacity to undertake the inquiry in greater detail. Terms of reference for this inquiry were agreed at our Board meeting on the 6 October 2008.
- 1.6 We originally anticipated that this inquiry would be conducted over a relatively short period of time. This however did not prove to be the case and to ensure that aspects were investigated to the satisfaction of the working group the time frame for scrutiny was extended. As a result, the inquiry spanned a period of six months.
- 1.7 We feel it is important to recognise the roles and responsibilities which the Adult Social Services Department, Environment and Neighbourhoods Department, ALMO's and Belle Isle Tennant Management Organisation have for the assessment and delivery of adaptations. We also feel it is important to recognise the significant work undertaken on a daily basis to improve the safety, comfort and quality of life for service users.
- 1.8 We are very grateful to everyone who gave their time to participate in this inquiry and for their

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commitment in helping us to understand and review this matter.

2. Scope of the Inquiry

2.1 In September 2008 we received a report from the Director of Environment & Neighbourhoods providing information on the Councils current arrangements for providing adaptations. This report included:

- comparative information in terms of average completion times,
- average costs for private sector dwellings,
- value for money considerations, and,
- opportunities for future development.

2.2 We identified a number of areas of particular interest which we felt warranted further investigation. We decided that the purpose of the inquiry would be to make an assessment of the overall adaptations process for disabled adults to both public and private sector dwellings (cross-tenure) and, where appropriate, make recommendations on the following areas:

- The overall time to complete the adaptations process from the initial point of contact with the Council to practical completion of the adaptation, with particular reference to high risk cases and families with complex needs.

- Specific and identifiable stages within the overall adaptations process.
- The determination of risk within the adaptations process and how low level needs are addressed.
- Delivery of consistently high levels of customer service throughout the process, including the availability of customer advice/guidance and the collection/use of customer feedback.
- Current safeguards in place to ensure the Council receives 'value for money' in the delivery of adaptations, including the re-use of aids and equipment.

2.3 Recognising the range of stakeholders involved and responsible for the delivery of adaptations, we received a range of evidence both in written and verbal form from the following:

- Executive Board Members
- Officers from the Neighbourhoods and Environment Department
- Officers from the Adult Social Services Department
- Officers from the Development Department
- Representatives from the Arms Length Management and Tennant Management Organisations

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- Corporate Procurement
- NHS Leeds
- Service User Representatives.

2.4 The inquiry consisted of five working group session, the presentation of written information (detailed at the latter end of this report) and feedback from individuals who have experienced the service.

The main areas of discussion at each session were as follows:

2.4.1 1st Session.

Ombudsman report and action plan – This specified a case independently investigated by the Ombudsman which reported a number of failings by Leeds City Council. We were particularly interested in what the Ombudsman had concluded and what action had subsequently been, and still needs to be taken.

Determination of risk and addressing low level need - We were presented with information that advised us of the assessment activity undertaken by the Disability Service Teams within Adult Social Care and the criteria for assessing risk.

2.4.2 2nd Session

Entry criteria and social worker allocation – We were advised of the issues associated with access to social worker support in the adaptations process.

Case Management Approach – We were advised of the approach and defined stages for case management which would aid the delivery of more complex adaptations. We understand the definition of a complex to case to be where any of the following are met:

- where there is evidence that adaptations works which are necessary and appropriate for the disabled person and family, may not be reasonable and practicable to achieve in the property.
- where high cost/multiple adaptations are required and the family want to consider rehousing or the adaptations will cost in excess of £20,000.
- where the family are requesting an extension to the property.
- other circumstances requiring detailed multi agency co-ordination.

Assistive Technology Hub – We heard about the long-term vision

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that will help disabled people and their families access the range of assistive technology (AT) services available across the City.

Disabled Facilities Grant and Test of Resources – We were advised of the circumstances when DFG can be provided and of the initial means test at the beginning of the grant delivery process, following receipt of a referral from Adult Social Care.

2.4.3 3rd Session

Adaptations framework – We were provided with an overview and advised that the scope of the framework is to ensure that customers receive a consistent service irrespective of the ALMO/agency delivering it.

Target times for assessment and delivery – Following the difficulties in obtaining comprehensive performance data we discussed the current targets set for the assessment and delivery of adaptations for cases at each level of priority.

2.4.4 4th Session

Value for Money – Information was presented to us which specified the expenditure for each adaptation provider. We were also advised of the procurement methods employed for the provision of adaptations.

Performance Reporting – Updated information was discussed which again focused our attention on the targets defined for the delivery of adaptations and those cases which would not be delivered on time.

2.4.5 5th Session

Customer Care – After requesting examples of case studies, compliments and complaints we considered the level of care and attention provided to those seeking adaptations.

Sustainable Design, Lifetime Homes and Planning – Encouraging information was received about the design of Lifetime Homes and how this would facilitate the provision of adaptations in the future.

Partnership working NHS Leeds and Leeds City Council – The extent of partnership working and joint service provision was presented to us.

Financial Pressures for Adaptation Providers – The full extent of budgetary implications and the capacity to provide adaptations across all sectors was explained in detail.

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1. Value for Money

1.1 We were advised that both the Adaptations Agency and the ALMO's have already taken steps to improve value for money, introducing standardised specifications and fixed cost schedules of work for standard installations, driving down cost through negotiation.

1.2 Each ALMO can individually engage contractors by following an established procurement process, however certain ALMO's deliver the service in partnership with their repairs contractors resulting in additional buying power and economies of scale. In the private sector the contract exists between the customer and the contractor with the Adaptations Agency being the commissioner and intermediary to manage the process.

1.3 We were interested to identify why there were varying cost per unit particularly when comparing the public and private sector. We were advised and somewhat surprised to hear that the Adaptations Agency does not have the same buying power as the ALMO's.

1.4 With regard to contractual arrangements currently in place we felt the practice of the Adaptations Agency and ALMO's operating as separate entities was a missed opportunity in terms of value for money.

Recommendation 1 – Before 31st March 2010 the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods re-evaluates the current adaptation procurement practices in place and explores potential partnership arrangements which will increase buying power and expand the possibilities for price negotiation in future financial years.

2. Consistent Service and Equality Across Housing Tenure.

2.1 In addition it was reported to us that a factor which contributes to higher unit costs in the private sector is the lack of uniform building structures. It is acknowledged that a certain amount of preparation work can be carried out in public sector housing whilst conducting general maintenance which will diminish some adaptation cost however it was of concern to us that the standard of adaptation work is not consistent across the public and private sector with regard to finish and specification. For example we were advised that the standard of tiling in private properties is higher because customer expectations are greater.

2.2 We consider that the difference in the standard of specification and finish cannot be justified.

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Recommendation 2 – The Directors of all adaptations providers establish a consistent standard for all non complex major adaptations regardless of tenure before the 1 April 2010.

2.3 We have encountered a further example of service level being determined by the housing type rather than individual need. We were advised that target dates set for the delivery of council tenant adaptations is shorter than for private owner/occupiers.

2.4 The process for delivering Disabled Facilities Grant creates delay within the private sector, a process which we acknowledge can be complicated and can be significantly influenced by the individual applicant. We feel that the additional time allocated for this process immediately presents a disadvantage to private owner/occupiers which should be minimised.

Service User	Regulating Body	No of days for assessment	No of days for recommendation	Total Days
New Adults	CSCI	28	28	56
Other Adults (current service users)	LCC Targets	90	28	118

Table - Number of days for Adaptation Assessment

Sector	Priority High	Priority Medium	Priority Low
Private- Adaptations	114	186	305

Agency			
Public- ALMO's and BITMO	80	160	269

Table – Number of days for Adaptation Delivery

2.5 The information above demonstrates that an individual living in their own home in need of an adaptation classed as a low priority may have to wait a maximum of 423 days, 36 days longer than a council tenant. We have been advised that the target dates are in line with those recommended by the Department of Communities and Local Government.

Better outcomes, lower costs (ODI/University of Bristol, 2007) sets out evidence that timely adaptations and appropriate equipment can produce direct savings to the public purse in terms of reducing residential care, hospital admissions and delayed discharges, and home care requirements (more likely with younger people). They can directly reduce risk of falls, hip fractures, lessen ill health among care givers and help reduce depression. Delays, the report points out, cost money – to other services, in terms of re-assessments, or inappropriate or no-longer-needed services. Disabled adaptations – the current agenda - Housing Quality Network October 2008.

2.6 We are dissatisfied with the overall targets currently in place and deem that the DCLG recommended target dates for

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delivery of adaptations in the public & private sector to be unacceptable.

- 2.7 We commented particularly on an example of a low priority case considered to have been delivered well by the Adaptations Agency., The time taken to deliver the adaptation was 297 days for a service user who was 88 years old. We felt that approximately nine months for delivery was too long. We acknowledge that priority cannot be given on the basis of age above a persons needs and therefore consider the re-evaluation of all delivery targets as essential.

Recommendation 3 –

- a) Local more rigorous and challenging cross tenure targets should be implemented with effect from 1 April 2010.**
- b) Before that date the Directors of all adaptation providers and the Director of Adult Social Services should investigate how assessment, referral and delivery can be speeded up to reduce cost in terms of wider public finance and to the health of the individual. Such targets should aim to achieve an equitable status in terms of waiting times for both public and private owner/occupiers.**

3. Customer Service

- 3.1 As part of our investigations relating to the target dates set for the delivery of an adaptation we asked if service users were advised as a matter of course of the target date determined for the installation of their adaptation. We were advised that this does not happen as the delivery date could fluctuate, however it could be introduced and incorporated into correspondence issued.

- 3.2 We felt that keeping the customer in an uninformed position did not reflect good customer care. Service users should be made aware of the approximate time they will have to wait before their adaptation is delivered so that they can plan any alternative assistance in the intervening period.

Recommendation 4 – That the Directors of all adaptation providers make the necessary arrangements to consistently advise customers of the approximate adaptation delivery time, once their needs have been assessed.

- 3.3 Various public information examples have been presented to us throughout the inquiry which aims to provide assistance to anyone who may wish to know more about Disabled Facilities

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Grants or the provision of adaptations. We were concerned to learn however that booklet publications were not available in one of our one stop centres and that staff working there had no knowledge of the Disabled Facilities Grant even though the information is readily available on the Councils website.

We were advised that the Assistive Technology Hub, when established will provide a single point of information on all types of equipment and adaptation services for staff and all people in Leeds. Until such time that this resource is fully available anyone seeking advice about adaptations should have access to information at our public access points.

Recommendation 5 –

- a) That the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods, ALMO Directors and the Assistant Chief Executive (Planning Policy and Improvement) make necessary provision for the display and replenishment of published adaptations information in all Council buildings accessible to the public for general or housing enquires.**
- b) Customer Service staff should be adequately skilled to signpost those seeking assistance to the appropriate officer/information or provide the necessary adaptations**

3.5 In November 2008 we were presented with a report '*Housing Options for Disabled People – A case management approach*'. We were advised that for some disabled people providing housing that meets their physical access needs, and other family requirements, can only be achieved by complex, often high cost, schemes of adaptations. The report outlined that, in some circumstances, re-housing needed to be considered, but the potential impact on all family members affected by such a major decision needed to be taken into account.

3.6 We agree that it is a major decision for a family to fundamentally change the physical layout of their home which invariably impacts on all family members. Even more significantly the family may have to move house which can mean moving away from support networks, trusted friends and neighbours, GP and other health care services, schools and leisure activities.

3.7 The report also detailed that following an ombudsman investigation (2007) it was agreed to develop an improved approach and we acknowledge that steps have been taken and policies developed to improve the customers experience during the delivery of a complex adaptation.

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3.8 During the process of our inquiry we have been given examples of cases where unnecessary delays have occurred often due to differences of opinion between the provider and adaptations user and breakdowns in communication during the various stages of assessment and adaptation provision. Further delays have occurred because cases are not being tracked adequately from first contact to completion. We therefore consider that in some cases the current case management approach is insufficient in meeting the needs of individuals with complex requirements.

3.9 We feel it is essential that a resource such as a specialist casework coordinator is provided to oversee complex cross tenure cases from start to finish. Our understanding of what defines a complex case is detailed in the introduction of this report. In addition any high priority cases that cannot be delivered within its deadline should also receive direct attention. We believe the coordinator should ensure the effective delivery of the adaptation, working with all stakeholders involved and mediating to achieve consensus and agreement between the organisations and individuals. Also aiming to achieve the best solution to meet the needs of the individual as efficiently as possible whilst

minimising disruption, delays and upset.

3.10 The complex casework coordinator would be required to understand the processes involved and manage relationships to prevent breakdown in communication. We consider this will considerably strengthen a case management approach in order to better track and performance manage cases to a successful conclusion.

3.11 We acknowledge that an appeals process is in place to resolve disputes and that the process is not designed to be adversarial, however it is a formal process which some may find overwhelming. We believe that a casework co-ordinator would create greater capacity to manage cases through to a satisfactory conclusion, minimising the need for a customer to initiate a formal appeals process.

Recommendation 6 – Within the next 6 months the Directors with responsibility for the delivery of adaptation and the Director of Adult Social Services work in partnership to evaluate the provision of a cross tenure complex case coordinator(s) with the necessary specialist support skills to meet the objectives set out in this report, with a view to securing this function within the next 12 months.

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4. Planning for the Future

There is an emphasis on organisations undertaking holistic planning for demographic change in terms of services and resources, for example in the new National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, *Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods* and the Audit Commission's recent report *Don't stop me now – Preparing for an ageing population* (July, 2008), which draws attention to the differential geography of demographic change. The Housing Corporation's *Investing for lifetimes – Strategy for housing in an ageing society* (April, 2008) stresses the need for social landlords to have asset management plans which are informed by both projections of need and aspirations for independent living. - Disabled adaptations – the current agenda - Housing Quality Network October 2008

4.1 Throughout our six month inquiry we have investigated a number of elements which generate the delivery of adaptations. Current national research demonstrates that we are evolving into an aging population. A trend which has in part been evidenced by the rising need for adaptations within the city over recent years.

4.2 We witnessed reports and presentations which did not seek to consider the service beyond the current financial year even though it was stressed to us in October

2008 that there is a considerable and growing demand for adaptations. We feel that the city's adaptation providers are 'fire fighting'.

4.3 Leeds Disabled People's Housing Strategy 2008 – 2011 and Draft Leeds Housing Strategy 2009 - 2012 support much of the factual evidence presented to us. Both Strategies exhibit general targets for service improvement, however and we saw no evidence of an overall strategic management plan which clearly projected the increase in the demand for adaptations or made estimations for financial and resource projections in the long term.

Recommendation 7 – Within the next 12 months the Directors of all adaptation providers and the Director of Adult Social Services produce a specific city wide Adaptations Strategy and Delivery Plan spanning a number of years, for both the public and private sector. The strategy should take into consideration that demographically the population is ageing and other recommendations contained in this report.

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5. Adequate Future Resources

5.1 Funding for adaptations to council-owned homes is provided through the housing capital programme managed by ALMOs on behalf of the Council. Within the private sector, funding is generally by means of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). Local Authorities must provide a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for disabled persons in need of certain essential works. The grant can only be paid to owner-occupiers or to tenants of private landlords or registered social landlords.

5.2 In September 2008 we were advised that in 2007/08, 1901 homes received a major adaptation (704 private sector; 1,107 public sector) and the total expenditure on major adaptations across the city in 07/08 was £13.7m (£5.25m private sector; £8.55m public sector). There has been an upward trend in expenditure and delivery on adaptations to private and public sector homes over recent years. From evidence received we anticipate that this trend will continue for decades to come and similarly that the annual budget provision will need to reflect the raise in adaptations demand in addition to the economic stimulus usually considered.

5.3 We recognise that Leeds City Councils investment to the

Disabled Facilities Grant has increased since 2005/6 from £1,873,345 to £4,430,000 in 2009/10. We were informed that in addition grant funding bids are made each year to the Government however in 2008/9 the award was significantly less than the £3.6m requested by approximately £1m.

5.4 We were advised on a number of occasions that it is possible to speed up adaptation delivery, however the work throughput had to be managed according to the annual budget allocation. Currently the availability of resources is impeding the speed of delivery. In 2008/9 an enhanced allocation of £6m for private sector housing was in place however we were informed that the demand was outstripping the budget provision not only in the private sector but in the public sector also.

5.5 We were most concerned to learn that some adaptations with a target delivery date before the 31st of March 2009, the end of the financial year, were not being delivered due to lack of funding and would be delivered in 2009/10 once additional finance was received. We were alarmed to note that 200 approved schemes were being delayed. The value of the shortfall in the private sector was £1.5million. Similar shortfalls in funding have also been reported by the ALMO's. Further schemes

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at pre-approval state had also not been progressed as quickly as possible due to inadequate funding.

5.6 Although an increased private sector budget of £7m has been allocated for 2009/10, this information has highlighted to us that financial resources are already inadequate across all sectors in what is a service with growing demand. This creates a never ending circle of cases held back at the latter part of each financial year.

5.7 Although Leeds ALMO's are not permitted to use Major Repairs Allowance funding to carry out adaptations work, we have been advised that the improvements undertaken to bring homes up to a decent standard have reduced the cost of property adaptation at a later point in time. We are therefore concerned that the government funding allocated to the ALMO's for decency work is a decreasing resource which could in turn create additional demand for adaptation funding in future years. Adaptation work has historically been partially financed by the ALMO's through Right to Buy receipts which we fear in the current economic climate will be a funding source to rapidly diminish.

Research into the impact of the provision of housing adaptations demonstrates clear benefits in terms of both improved quality of life and significant cost savings due to the preventative nature of the service. The provision of adaptations has shown to speed up hospital discharge and to reduce admissions to hospital or residential care due to the prevention of accidents. Perhaps more importantly, research also shows that the quality of life of recipients of adapted properties is also greatly enhanced including that of carers and of family members.

Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – A Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society – CLG, Crown Copyright 2008

5.8 The University of Bristol undertook research which identified that carrying out adaptation work to prevent the need for residential care, on average, would save £26,000 per annum per person not admitted. With the knowledge that delays in adaptation delivery can create a greater financial impact in other service areas and to the welfare of the individual we consider the current level of financial resources allocated insufficient to best meet the needs of those requiring timely adaptations. The requirement to manage a limited adaptations budget further supports to requirement for a long term strategic plan.

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Recommendation 8 – That the Directors of all adaptation providers ensure

a) that the full budget provision is proposed each year in the annual budget to meet all anticipated in year demand thus removing the financial barrier currently hindering the timely delivery of some adaptations.

b) that where it becomes apparent that actual adaptations demand will exceed anticipated need further financial provision is requested each year from 2010/11 onward to ensure the perpetual delivery backlog at the conclusion of each financial year is brought to an end.

to Lifetime Homes standards due to the design features incorporated, which will in turn help residents remain independent in their homes for as long as possible.

Double the numbers of older disabled people in England from 2.3 million in 2002 to 4.6 million by 2041. Research shows that the numbers of older people, disabled people and those requiring housing with care is set to rise dramatically. Put simply, we are not building enough inclusive, adaptable mainstream housing for the additional 2.3 million older and disabled people that it is expected there will be in England by 2041. – Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods A Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society – CLG, Crown Copyright 2008

6. Lifetime Homes.

6.1 We have heard that the Government's aspiration is that all new housing will be built to Lifetime Homes standards by 2013, making the standard a mandatory part of the Code for Sustainable Homes and encouraging take-up on a voluntary basis by the housing industry over the next few years. Whilst we appreciate the Government is monitoring housing development we consider that the standard should be a mandatory requirement in Leeds before 2013 for all new housing. It was explained to us that it is far easier and cheaper to adapt a home built

6.2 We consider that it is essential to plan for the years ahead by taking the necessary steps now to minimise expenditure in the future. The additional cost of building Lifetime Homes ranges from £165 to a maximum of £545 per dwelling, depending on the size, layout and specification of the property with little or no impact on the size of the physical building. We consider this to be minor expenditure in comparison to the benefits the investment will bring.

6.3 The enhanced design features of a lifetime home was explained to us. It was evident that the interior

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space was specifically laid out in order to easily incorporate future adaptations, thus reducing the need for structural alternation or additional building works. For example, adequate wheelchair turning space within the property and a reasonable route for a potential hoist from a main bedroom to the bathroom. Other features include bathrooms designed for ease of access to the bath, WC & wash basin with the internal walls already being capable of taking adaptations such as handrails.

6.4 Whilst it was stressed to us that currently developers need only build to Lifetime Homes standard on a voluntary basis we were informed that the Mayor of London introduced supplementary planning guidance in 2004 which specifies the following:

'All residential units in new housing developments are designed to Lifetime Home standards. These standards should be applied to all new housing, including conversions and refurbishments, and including blocks of flats, for both social housing and private sector housing, and should cater for a varying number of occupants.' Accessible London: achieving an inclusive environment — The London Plan Supplementary Planning Guidance. April 2004 Mayor of London

6.5 As this stipulates a compulsory requirement for all housing to be built/converted/refurbished to

Lifetime Homes standards we expressed our wish to see something similar to the London model adopted in Leeds for all types of residential development, not just social housing, thereby reducing potential adaptation expenditure in the future.

Recommendation 9 –The Director for Development investigates and reports on the viability of adopting a model which reflects the spirit of the London Supplementary Planning Guidance for mandatory development to Lifetime Homes Standards, but suits the diversity and specific requirements of the City of Leeds, reporting findings to the Executive Board before 31 December 2009.

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7. Performance Monitoring

7.1 We were advised that the provision of adaptations is monitored by a cross tenure Adaptations Operations Group with representatives from all the statutory agencies which deliver adaptations across Leeds. The types of targets monitored were relayed to us, which we consider to be key information and should be routinely reported to elected members and be readily available on request. A key performance indicator which has held our attention throughout this inquiry is the time taken to complete adaptations.

7.2 We consider the provision of a cross tenure performance report an effective tool for comparing data and highlighting effective or poor operational implementation. It creates an opportunity to identify which providers are functioning particularly well and sharing best practice.

7.3 The Leeds Disabled People's Housing Strategy 2008- 2011 states that 'The Council will monitor adaptation turnaround on an ongoing basis...This will inform decision making on how such services should be developed to better meet the needs of disabled people.' As a result of some of the difficulties experienced during our enquiry to obtain information we remain unconvinced at present by

the current systems in place to provide accurate and timely information.

7.4 We accept that it is complicated to report on activity which spans different council services, who use different operating systems, however the value of reporting will be limited if accurate performance data is not provided.

Recommendation 10 –

a) The Directors of all adaptation providers and the Director of Adult Social Services conduct a full review, within the next 6 months, of how performance information is collected , collated and reported.

b) The provision of quarterly cross tenure adaptation assessment and delivery performance reports to the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board (or its successor), including a summary of any known Leeds cases which the Local Authority Ombudsman have decided to investigate or have reported on. The first performance report for 2008/9 quarter 4 will be scheduled early in the Scrutiny work programme 2009/10.

Evidence



Monitoring arrangements

Standard arrangements for monitoring the outcome of the Board's recommendations will apply.

The decision-makers to whom the recommendations are addressed will be asked to submit a formal response to the recommendations, including an action plan and timetable, normally within two months.

Following this the Scrutiny Board will determine any further detailed monitoring, over and above the standard quarterly monitoring of all scrutiny recommendations.

Reports and Publications Submitted

Report of the Director Environment & Neighbourhoods giving background information of adaptations in Leeds – 17 September 2008

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development providing the scope of the inquiry – 17 September 2008

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development providing the Terms of Reference – 15 October 2008

Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods and Director of Adult Social Care to Executive Board, Local Government Ombudsman report on adaptations to a Council house to meet the needs of the disabled tenant. - 23 January 2008 (appended action plan and Ombudsman report).

Report of the Adaptations Operations Group detailing proposals for setting up an Adaptations Appeal Panel - 3 April 2008. (inc Procedural Notes)

Report of the Disability Service Manager, Adult Social Care, detailing the definitions for prioritisation - 24 September 2008

Report of the Disability Service Manager, Adult Social Care, detailing activity data on Assessments by Disability Service Teams in Adult Social Care – 30 September 2008

Report of the Disability Service Manager, Adult Social Care, detailing access to Social Work Support in the Adaptations Process – 29 October 2008

Report of the Disability Service Manager, Adult Social Care, detailing the Housing Options for Disabled People, A Case Management Approach to Meeting Housing Needs of Disabled People. – 27 October 2008

Reports and Publications Submitted (continued)

Report of the Housing Policy and Monitoring Manager, Environment and Neighbourhoods, providing an overview of the Adaptations Framework - 4 November 2008

Report of the Adaptations Agency Manager providing an overview on the test of resources within the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) process – 4 November 2008.

Report of the Head of Scrutiny and Member Development providing an inquiry update – 29 December 2008

Report of the Disability Services Manager, Environment and Neighbourhoods, providing 2nd Quarter 2008 performance data – 12 January 2009.

Report of the Head of Asset Management, Aire Valley Homes detailing practice for continual process improvement and value for money by the Adaptations Agency and the ALMO's. - 12 January 2009.

Report of the Housing Policy and Monitoring Manager, Environment and Neighbourhoods, providing a range of case examples from each adaptation provider – 12 February 2009.

Report of the Adaptation Providers (ALMO's and Agency) providing an overview on available sources of advice and the compliments and complaints procedures with summaries of quarter 2&3 compliments and complaints- 5 February 2009.

Report of the Housing Policy and Monitoring Manager, Environment and Neighbourhoods detailing the Financial pressures for Adaptation providers – 6 February 2009.

Report from Planning and Development Service providing an overview of Sustainable Design Standards, Lifetime Homes and current relevant planning policy – 5th February 2009.

Report of the Disability Service Manager, Adult Social Care providing a summary of joint working with the NHS on the Delivery of Adaptations – 6 February 2009.

Report of the Disability Services Manager, Environment and Neighbourhoods, providing further information relating to adaptation delivery trends and financial pressures – 18 March 2009.

Action Plans and Guidance Documents

- Action plan in response to an Ombudsman Investigation– Updated June 2008
- Guidance – Eligible works for Disabled Facilities Grant
- Guidance – Provisions of Extensions
- Staff Guidance - 1.3 Eligibility Criteria Guide Community Care Services - May 2005 V. 1
- Leeds' Assistive Technology Service – A Vision

Evidence



Witnesses Heard

Cllr Peter Harrand – Executive Board Member for Adult Health and Social Care
Cllr John Leslie Carter – Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing
Helen Freeman – Chief Officer (Health and Environmental Action Service)
Andy Beattie – Head of Service (Pollution Control and Housing)
Colin Moss – Adaptations Agency Manager
Liz Ward – Disability Services Manager
Simeon Perry – Housing Policy and Monitoring Manager
Mandy Askham – East North East Homes Leeds
Richard Corbishley – Aire Valley Homes Leeds
Nesreen Lowson – West North West Homes Leeds
Robert Huntley – Belle Isle Tenant Management Organisation
Tony Bailey – Corporate Procurement
Lois Pickering - Planning and Economic Policy
Rachael Smalley - Planning and Development Services
Ernie Gray - Housing Development and Delivery
Amanda Douglas - NHS Leeds
David Everatt – Expert by Experience
Tim McSharry – Access Committee for Leeds (ACL)
Keith B Bowen (MBE) – Leeds Advocacy Services

Dates of Scrutiny

17 September 2008, Scrutiny Board
6 October 2008, Working Group
15 October 2008, Scrutiny Board – Terms of Reference
4 November 2008, Working Group
15 December 2008, Working Group
7 January 2009, Scrutiny Board – Update
12 January 2009, Working Group
12 February 2009, Working Group

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