

Report of Head of Housing Support

Report to Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods

Date: 24 October 2014

Subject: Adaptations Service Model

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

1.0 Summary of main issues

- 1.1 Adaptation services are currently organised on the basis of tenure with Strategic Housing being responsible for owner occupied, privately rented and housing association properties and Property and Contracts being responsible for council housing. Both divisions carry out work relating to scheme assessment, design and delivery.
- 1.2 It is proposed to re-organise adaptation service provision around the two themes of assessment and delivery. Strategic Housing would be responsible for cross tenure assessment and Property and Contracts cross tenure delivery – whether that is direct delivery through the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) or commissioning of external services. The proposal will involve the transfer of 10 FTE posts from Property and Contracts to Strategic Housing.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Approve the recommendation to reorganise adaptation service delivery with Strategic Housing Services carrying out assessment work and Property and Contracts adaptations delivery.
- 2.2 Approve the recommendation to transfer 10 FTEs from Property and Contracts to Strategic Housing.

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To approve the recommendation to re-organise adaptation service delivery with Strategic Housing Services carrying out the cross tenure assessment function and Property and Contracts carrying out cross tenure delivery work – whether that be directly installing adaptation schemes or commissioning external services to do so.
- 1.2 To approve the transfer of 10 FTE posts to Strategic Housing from Property and Contracts.

2.0 Background Information

- 2.1 The legal framework relating to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) is set out in the 1996 Housing Constructions Grants and Regeneration Act. DFGs cover the cost of major adaptations, costing a minimum of £1k, to help create an accessible living environment so that disabled people can continue or return to live independently in the wider community. The legal framework states that the Council is obliged to give a means-tested grant up to the value of £30k; although the Council will assess each application on its individual merits and may well decide to fund schemes costing more than the statutory cap.
- 2.2 The 1996 Act states that access to a DFG should be tenure neutral, although there are differences to the criteria for accessing grant funding dependent on whether the disabled person is a council tenant or non-council tenant. A non-council tenant principally refers to home-owners, private rented or housing association tenants. Strategic Housing is responsible for non-council housing adaptations and Property and Contracts is responsible for council housing adaptations.
- 2.3 Funding for non-council adaptations is sourced through government grant and is supplemented by other Council capital funding whilst council housing adaptations costs are covered through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). DFGs in non-council housing are means-tested and therefore the grant recipient may well need to make a contribution to the cost of the adaptations. Council housing tenants incur no charge for the cost of adaptations to their home. Non-council tenants can request a 'preferred scheme' where the agreed statutory scheme is augmented by additional works and/or the applicant decides to use their own contractor. The 'preferred scheme' option is not available for council tenants.
- 2.4 The 1996 Act states that an adaptation scheme should be agreed if the Council believes that adaptations are 'necessary and appropriate' to meet the person's accessibility needs and that it is 'reasonable and practicable' to adapt the person's accommodation. All legal duties relating to the 1996 Act sit with the housing authority – with the expectation that the housing authority will consult with the social services authority, whether that be Adult Social Care or Children's Services, in respect of carrying out the 'necessary and appropriate' assessment.
- 2.5 The current functional breakdown is as follows:

- Adult Social Care or Children’s Service carry out the ‘necessary and appropriate’ assessment – work carried out by an Occupational Therapist or Occupational Therapist Assistant.
- Property and Contracts carry out the ‘reasonable and practicable’ assessment for council housing – work carried out by a surveyor.
- Strategic Housing Services carry out the ‘reasonable and practicable’ assessment for non-council housing - work carried out by a surveyor.
- Property and Contracts either directly install adaptations, or commission external contractors to do so, for council housing – work overseen by a surveyor.
- Strategic Housing Services commission external contractors, and since April 2014 use Civic Enterprise and Property and Contracts, to install adaptations in non-council housing - work overseen by a surveyor.
- Both Property and Contracts and Strategic Housing need to ask specialist providers to supply adaptation equipment such as stair lifts, through floor lifts and modular ramps.
- Property and Contracts carry out the assessment of whether a potential council let meets a disabled applicant’s housing accessibility need; with this assessment partly based on the medical re-housing assessment that is carried out by Strategic Housing Services – work carried out by an Occupational Therapist, Occupational Therapist Assistant or Re-Housing Officer.
- Property and Contracts carry out the assessment of whether an occupied council property meets a disabled persons housing accessibility need – work carried out by Occupational Therapist or an Occupational Therapist Assistant.

2.6 The budget for 2014/15 non-council housing adaptations is £5.5m and council housing is £4.5m.

3.0 Main Issues

3.1 The housing authority in Leeds has been re-configured, establishing ‘Housing Leeds’, and comprising three divisions: Council Housing Management, Property and Contracts and Strategic Housing.

3.2 One of the principles underpinning the establishment of Housing Leeds is that the divisions should be principally responsible for functions that fall within the divisional remit. The assessment of housing need is a core function of Strategic Housing and the delivery and commissioning of works is the lead responsibility of Property and Contracts.

3.3 The current functional breakdown does not reflect this principle, is unnecessarily complex and potentially leads to a disparate service depending on the tenure of the applicant.

3.4 The proposal therefore assumes the following:

- The ‘necessary and appropriate’ assessment is carried out by the two social care directorates subject to agreement to transfer the functional responsibility to Strategic Housing.
- The ‘reasonable and practicable’ assessment will be carried out by Strategic Housing Services.
- Strategic Housing will be responsible for drawing up complex adaptation schemes that meets the disabled person’s housing need and are practical in respect of the housing type and condition.
- Property and Contracts will be responsible for drawing up non-complex schemes and will deliver the schemes by either carrying out the works or commissioning an external contractor to do so.
- Non-council housing applicants will retain the right to have a ‘preferred’ scheme
- Non-council housing adaptations will continue to be means-tested with some applicants needing to make a contribution to the cost of the adaptations.
- Property and Contracts will need to continue to source adaptation equipment, such as stair lifts, through floor lifts and modular ramps, from specialist providers.
- Property and Contracts will look at the cost effectiveness of installing such equipment rather than asking the supplier to do so.
- Strategic Housing Services will carry out the assessment of whether a council property is suitable for a disabled applicant on the basis of the medical re-housing assessment that is already carried out by Strategic Housing.
- Strategic Housing will carry out the assessment of whether an occupied council property meets a disabled persons housing accessibility need – work carried out by Occupational Therapist or an Occupational Therapist Assistant.

4.0 Next Steps

4.1 Property and Contracts – Delivery Vehicle: The proposal will involve Property and Contracts becoming responsible for delivering the majority of non-council and council housing adaptation schemes based on the assessments carried out by Strategic Housing. The following points will need to be addressed:

- The proportion of work that will be delivered directly by Property and Contracts and that to be delivered by external contractors.
- This will include whether Property and Contracts will install adaptations works, such as stair lifts, through floor lifts and modular ramps, that are supplied by specialist providers.
- Whether Property and Contracts will deliver ‘non-standard’ adaptation works, such as property extensions, and/or commission external contractors to do so.
- Building capacity to carry out this work including the recruitment of staff to carry out the work and to oversee the delivery if external contractors are being used.
- Arrangements for delivering ‘preferred schemes’ in terms of delivery and/or overseeing progress.

4.2 Discussions will take place between Strategic Housing and Property and Contracts to agree the breakdown of works to be delivered directly and that to be externally commissioned. The proposal will be set out in a further report including the staffing

resource required in Property and Contracts that will be covered by the additional income generated from non-council housing adaptation scheme delivery.

4.3 **Budget Responsibility:** The available budget for adaptations works is approximately £10m per annum comprising £5.5m for non-council housing and £4.5m for council housing. Both divisions will have an interest in both parts of the budget: Strategic Housing in terms of carrying out the cross tenure assessment of housing need/duty and adaptations required/practicable and Property and Contracts in terms of ensuring that cross tenure adaptations are delivered to requisite standards and in a timely/cost effective way. Budget responsibility has yet to be agreed.

4.4 **Staffing Transfer:** The proposal involves a transfer of posts from Property and Contracts to Strategic Housing with the following posts, included in Appendix F of the Property and Contracts restructure Delegated Decision report from July 2014, in scope:

Post	Post Holder
Senior Occupational Therapist	Vacant
Occupational Therapist x2	1 FTE 0.57 FTE 0.43 FTE
Occupational Therapist	Vacant (agency worker arrangement to cease from 1 November)
Occupational Therapist Assistant x3	3 FTE (2 officers part time on temporary basis)
Case Worker x3	1 FTE 0.5 FTE (post holder on maternity leave with 1 FTE covering) Vacant

4.5 The agency worker arrangement for one of the PO2 Occupational Therapist posts will be ended at the point of transfer from Property and Contracts to Strategic Housing Services.

4.6 The officer carrying out SO1 Adaptations Case Worker post as a maternity cover will be transferred to Strategic Housing and will need to be included in the restructure for the Housing Leeds division in which their current substantive post sits.

5.0 Corporate Considerations

5.1 Consultation and Engagement

5.1.1 Due to the proposed changes to the terms and conditions of employment, which were unanimously agreed by the Council's General Purpose Committee on 29 July 2014, the implementation of restructure and assimilation process will be in accordance with the Council's policies and procedures in place at the time implementation commences.

5.1.2 A consultation exercise has taken place with the staff affected by the proposed transfer from Property and Contracts to Strategic Housing. Senior managers, along with HR representatives, have also set the proposals to Trade Union representatives at the Housing Leeds JCC.

5.2 Equality Diversity Cohesion and Integration

5.2.1 Adaptations are designed to create an environment where disabled people are able to live independently and to exercise greater choice and control over their housing options. An equality, diversity, cohesion and integration screening exercise has been carried out and is appended to this report.

5.3 Council Policies and City Priorities

5.3.1 The delivery of adaptation services makes an important contribution to the strategic vision of making Leeds the best city for health and wellbeing and the priority of supporting more people to live safely in their own homes.

5.4 Resources and Value for Money

5.4.1 The re-organisation of adaptations service around the two functions of assessment and delivery will deliver a more consistent and coherent service. It is believed that this improved structure will generate efficiency savings as both Strategic Housing and Property and Contracts can focus on their respective areas of expertise.

5.4.2 There is available funding to cover the transferring posts.

5.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

5.5.1 The proposals set out in this report reflect the provisions of Part I of the 1996 Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act and the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002.

5.5.2 The report contains no exempt information.

5.5.3 The report is a significant operational decision and therefore not eligible for call in.

5.6 Risk Management

5.6.1 This report will be followed by a further report setting out the proportion of non-council housing adaptations that Property and Contracts can deliver directly and that which external services will be contracted to deliver. It is essential that service provision to disabled people is maintained whilst these arrangements are put in place and implemented. A separate decision report setting out the proposals, including timescales and staffing resources, will be submitted for consideration.

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 The re-organisation of adaptation services with Strategic Housing carrying out cross tenure assessment work and Property and Contracts being responsible for cross

tenure delivery will result in a more consistent and coherent adaptation service. This will lead to an improved service for disabled people and will generate efficiencies. It is essential that the two divisions work together to meet the legal duties relating to adaptations and the proposal to have a pooled cross tenure budget will contribute to this as both divisions will be responsible, and therefore , of the budget position.

6.2 This report will be followed by another report setting out a definite position on timescales and staffing resources for Property and Contracts to become responsible for delivering cross tenure adaptations.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 To approve the recommendation to re-organise adaptation service delivery with Strategic Housing Services carrying out cross tenure assessment function and Property and Contracts carrying out cross tenure delivery work – whether that be directly installing adaptation schemes or commissioning external services to do so.

7.2 To approve the transfer of 10 FTE posts to Strategic Housing from Property and Contracts.

8.0 Background

8.1 None

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.