

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Housing Adaptations Service update report</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>18<sup>th</sup> June 2014</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director Environment, Development &amp; Housing</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Martin Reid</b>	<b>Tel:</b> 29-3321
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>Martin.reid@brighton-hove.gov.uk</b>	
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 Brighton & Hove has a rising demand for housing adaptations as vulnerable children and adults are supported to live longer in their own homes. In particular, there is an increase in vulnerable over 85's and children with complex needs continuing to live at home. The Housing Adaptations Service enables vulnerable adults and children to live independently through disabled housing adaptations and assistance across all tenures in the City, including discharging Council statutory housing duties and Community Care Act requirements in relation to assessment and delivery of major housing adaptations.
- 1.2 Investment in housing adaptations promotes independent living and has been demonstrated to deliver significant cost benefits for Health, Social Care & Children's Services. National evidence regarding the benefits of timely housing adaptations identifies cost benefits and direct savings in relation to residential care, homecare, hospital admissions ('Better Outcomes, lower costs'- ODI/University of Bristol) as housing adaptations prevent or defer entry into residential care and hospital for older people.
- 1.3 The report gives an update on council and private sector housing adaptations delivered in 2013/14 and the level of commitments going forward.
- 1.4 The report highlights capital funding pressures this year and going forward in light of the end of the Private Sector Housing capital programme, and the options for managing the demand for major housing adaptations where this exceeds the capital funding available.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That Housing Committee note the out-turn in 2013/14 and commitments in 2014/15 and beyond.
- 2.2 That Housing Committee note the work already being done in Housing to more proactively manage the demand for adaptations and make the best use of the capital funding in both council and private sector.
- 2.3 That Housing Committee agree an options paper to come back to a future Housing Committee meeting to outline potential options to mitigate pressures identified.

### **3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Housing Committee (14 Jan 2010) approved recommendations to improve access to adaptations and creation of an integrated Occupational Therapy (OT) and technical team within Housing. The team's brief was to speed up the OT assessment process for all major adaptations i.e. those likely to cost over £1,000, make sure other mainstream capital investment in council homes e.g. Decent Homes helped deliver more accessible council homes, and to develop a preventative housing options approach in both council and private sectors.
- 3.2 These recommendations have been implemented. The time to OT assessment is significantly improved with over 50% of referrals coming direct from the Access Point. The average number of referrals stands at 40 to 50 per month, with the Service now assessing all referrals within the national guideline 12 weeks, typically within 7 weeks, and all critical cases within 2 weeks. Of the referrals into the Service it is estimated that 95% plus receive an OT assessment and of those assessed 90% plus go through to have adaptation work done.
- 3.3 All initial recommendations for adaptations likely to cost over £15,000 are subject to scrutiny. To approve any application for grant or council adaptation we must be satisfied that all proposed works are both 'necessary and appropriate' and, 'reasonable and practicable'.
- 3.4 Occupational Therapists (OTs) support households to make informed choices about their housing options. The Service works with Homemove to support people through the housing application and lettings process and dedicates OT hours to accompany disabled applicants to view offers of council and housing association properties, advising on the suitability of the property.
- 3.5 In the council housing sector the Service has worked closely with the Decent Homes programme, joint working/co-funding over 40 adapted bathrooms in 2012/13, working on sheltered housing refurbishments, and completing 3 major extensions and adaptation projects (contributing £61,000 ) with the 2013/14 extensions and conversions project.
- 3.6 The Service has strong links with the Housing Development Team in the commissioning of new affordable accessible housing and with Registered Providers and private developers at pre-planning design stages and on the letting of new wheelchair accessible housing both for rent and part buy part rent.
- 3.7 The Service is also working with City Regeneration on the New Homes for Neighbourhoods initiative, providing guidance on inclusive design principles to help maximise the amount of accessible and fully wheelchair adapted homes planned under our estates regeneration programme.
- 3.8 In 2013 the Service led on the joint Housing & Adult Social Care procurement of a Framework Agreement for specialist contractors to delivery all minor, electrical and sensory and major adaptations in council homes. The framework delivers cost benefits across both Housing and Adult Social Care and also allows access by private sector housing applicants, Registered Providers and / or other schemes currently managed via Home Improvement Agency.

- 3.9 In 2013/14 the Service worked with Housing Support on the new contract and service specification for home improvement agency (HIA) services. We entered into the new contract on 28 Feb 2013. The HIA provide casework and technical support for disabled people in the private sector applying for Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) toward the cost of adaptations. Importantly, in terms of our preventative role, the HIA also provide a broader housing advice and support service for older and disabled people to explore alternative housing options as an alternative to costly and disruptive adaptations.

### **2013 / 14 Housing Adaptations Service Out-turn**

- 3.10 Last year, 2013/2014, in the private housing sector (rented and owner occupied) where major housing adaptations are largely funded through the DFG, the Service delivered £962,826 in DFG investment, completing 107 grants, the average amount of grant being awarded just under £9,000. The DFG is a mandatory grant; the maximum amount available under DFG (excluding any additional Council assistance) is £30,000.
- 3.11 Last year in council homes, where the Housing Revenue Account funds adaptations, Housing invested £1,194,849, completing 793 minor adaptations and 329 major adaptations (those costing over £1,000). The average cost of a major adaptation was £3,156.
- 3.12 We know that timely adaptations can significantly improve people's quality of life and help people live at home as independently as possible. '**Better Outcomes, lower costs**' (ODI/University of Bristol, 2007) evidences that timely adaptations and appropriate equipment can produce direct savings - reducing residential care, hospital admissions and delayed discharges. The Audit Commission (2009) '**Building Better Lives – getting the best from strategic housing**' found that spending between £2,000 and £20,000 on adaptations that enable an elderly person to remain in their own home can save £6,000 per year in care costs.
- 3.13 The total investment in adaptations last year in response to a Community Care Act assessment has to be seen in the context of all the work the Service does to better manage the demand for reactive adaptations, through its partnership working with other housing investment programmes and the accessible housing register as well as in the commissioning of new affordable accessible homes.

### **2014/15 Housing Adaptations Service Commitments**

- 3.14 The DFG spend to date (1 May 2014) is £86,532, which plus commitments to date (i.e. grants approved).of £885,748, will total £972,280. Under the Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1996 once the grant is approved the applicant has 12 months to complete the works. Some adaptations do have a long lead in time, we would however expect to complete and pay the vast majority of these approvals by the end of this financial year.
- 3.15 The DFG grant provided by national government for local housing authorities has never been intended to meet 100% of local adaptations expenditure. Local housing authorities, social services, health and social housing providers have all been contributors to adaptations provision. In Brighton & Hove, Private Sector

Housing Renewal capital funding has been used to 'top up' the DFG grant and to offer some discretionary assistance over and above the mandatory DFG grant limit in qualifying cases. In addition Adult Social Care have contributed to major adaptations to meet duties arising under the Community Care Act and Chronically Sick & Disabled Persons Act where work falls outside the scope of the DFG, costs exceed the grant limit or where the client has an assessed contribution and claims hardship. As previously reported to Housing Committee there is currently no Private Sector Housing capital funding programme.

- 3.16 In 2014/15 the projected Government DFG allocation is £751,000. There is a residual sum of private sector housing renewal money of which we propose to allocate £111,826 for DFG top up, which added to DFG allocation ( £751,000 ) and grant carried forward from last year against existing commitment (£137,174 ) provides a total DFG budget for 2014/15 of £1,000,000.
- 3.17 As above, DFG spend plus commitments to date total £972,280, so close to total budget provision 2014/15. After 2014/15, for future funding, there is no discretionary Housing capital identified to continue to top up.
- 3.18 In July 2013, as part of the Government spending review, it was announced that from 2015/16 the DFG grant for local authorities will be £220m (this is the same amount as in 2012/13) and that from 2015/16 this funding will be provided by Dept of Health and included in the new Better Care Fund.
- 3.19 Discussions are underway with Adult Social Care and Health in preparation for the implementation of Better Care funding arrangements. The Government announcement in a joint letter from the Dept of Health and Dept for Communities & Local Government regards funding arrangements for DFGs via the Better Care Fund, indicates that for Brighton & Hove the minimum Better Care funding for DFG should be £911,000 (2015/16).
- 3.20 The key issue is the need to flag again future potential capital pressures on Adult Social Care and Children's Services related to discharge of Community Care Act duties relating to major housing adaptations in light of end of the Private Sector Housing capital programme which has in the past significantly supported the DFG investment in meeting the needs of some of the most vulnerable residents in the City.
- 3.21 In terms of the HRA budget and future funding adaptations in council homes the budget allocation for 2014/15 remains as £1.150 million. It is confirmed that the overspend on adaptations for 2013/14, £44,849, was absorbed by under spends elsewhere within the HRA Capital programme. Capital pressures on this budget also need to be flagged given rising demand and demographics, the national evidence of the cost benefit of timely adaptations and the contribution to delivering more accessible council homes.
- 3.22 In light of these pressures we propose to fully consider all alternative funding, application parameters and delivery options and bring these back to members for consideration at a future Housing Committee meeting. These options will include looking at ways to maximise the funding for adaptations and value for money and ,based on an initial review of practice in other local authorities, could include:

- Consideration of Health and Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) part funding some adaptations, looking at the future funding allocation through the Better Care Fund linked to better health outcomes;
- Potential recycling of private sector housing assistance monies where repaid to the council to continue to be able to 'top up' the DFG grant allocation;
- Reviewing the delivery of adaptations with Register Provider partners, local agreements and housing association landlord's applications;
- Use of the adaptations Framework Agreement for private sector DFG grant aided adaptations;
- Reviewing the provision of equipment through the DFG route and the provision of extended warranties on equipment.

3.23 In the event the demand for DFG exceeds the total capital budget the option would be to manage a waiting list for grant-aided work to start on site following the DFG approval. Clearly this would have significant implications for the individual and our capacity to manage the risk of falls and injury for the client, and potentially on the Health, Adult Social Care and Children's Services budgets as a result of an increase in admissions to hospital, early entry to residential care, or higher cost of care and support packages at home.

3.24 In the event the demand for funding council adaptations in response to a Community Care Act assessment exceeds the capital budget the option would be to manage a waiting list for work to start on site following the occupational therapy assessment. Clearly this would have significant implications for disabled tenants, and potentially on the Health, Adult Social Care and Children's Services budgets as a result of an increase in admissions to hospital, early entry to residential care, or higher cost of care and support packages at home.

3.25 We continue to work with Registered Provider and other delivery partners to commission newly build accessible and fully wheelchair adapted homes to meet the need of those households who approach us for assistance. We also continue to make best use of our existing accessible and fully wheelchair adapted homes through our Accessible Housing Register, matching the needs of households who require adapted or accessible homes with mobility rated housing ring-fenced to meet these needs on Homemove.

#### **4. ANALYSIS & CONSIDERATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

4.1 Analysis and consideration of a full range of options is proposed.

4.2 Without reviewing alternative funding and delivery options it is likely that the capital provision will be fully spent and committed and we would have to operate a waiting list.

#### **5. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

No community engagement or consultation has been carried out at this time but will be carried out, including a peer review of the position with other local authorities, as part of the review of alternative funding and delivery options.

## 6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The key reason for the update report and recommendations is the pressure on capital budgets this financial year and going forward and the need to put in place measures to mitigate pressures identified.

## 7. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

### Financial Implications:

- 7.1 During 2013/14 the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) invested £1.195m in disabled adaptations for council dwellings, overspending by £0.045m which was absorbed by under spends elsewhere within the HRA Capital programme. The 2014/15 HRA capital programme includes £1.15m for disabled adaptations.
- 7.2 The Housing General Fund (GF) invested £1.012m in disabled adaptations for private sector dwellings in 2013/14, made up of £0.963m against the Disabled Facilities Grant and £0.049 against Major Adaptations. This resulted in an underspend of £0.204m against the 2013/14 budgets which has been carried forward to 2014/15. The 2014/15 GF capital resources available includes £1.0m for Disabled Facilities Grant and £0.066m for Major Adaptations which will be funded by reprofiled budgets of £0.204m, grant funding of £0.751m and a contribution from the renovation capital budget of £0.111m.
- 7.3 These budgets will need to be closely monitored during 2014/15 to identify any pressures arising due to increased demand. Changes to future year's budgets will need to be considered as part of the capital budget process for 2015/16.
- 7.4 The Disabled Facilities Grant will form part of the Better Care Fund with effect 01<sup>st</sup> April 2015, as detailed in the General Fund Budget Report ,13 February 2014.

*Finance Officer Consulted: Monica Brooks / Neil Smith      Date: 03/06/14*

### Legal Implications:

- 7.5 As this report is essentially for noting, there are no significant legal or Human Rights Act implications to draw to Members' attention. However, the future options paper will need to be carefully assessed against the complex legislative framework which governs adaptations.

*Lawyer Consulted:                      Name Liz Woodley                      Date: 03/06/14*

### 7.6 Equalities Implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment is planned to assess the impact of any changes to the current housing adaptations service, funding and delivery options, as a result of the recommendations in this report.

### Sustainability Implications:

- 7.7 The delivery of major housing adaptations enabling people to live as independently as possible for as long as possible is an investment in the existing

housing stock, in particular increasing the supply of accessible council housing for its life long use. Adapted and accessible council and housing association homes for rent are advertised and re-let through the council's Homemove scheme to those on the council's housing register with a matching need. The Accessible Housing Register ensures accessible properties are let to those with a matching need. In addition the housing options approach as an alternative to costly and disruptive adaptations in public & private sector homes where it is appropriate ensures we adapt only where it is reasonable and practicable to do so.

Any Other Significant Implications:

- 7.8 These are included in the body of the report where possible.

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

### **Appendices:**

1. none

### **Documents in Members' Rooms**

1. None

### **Background Documents**

1. Improving Access to Adaptations Housing Committee Report (14 January 2010)
2. **'Better Outcomes, lower costs'** (ODI/University of Bristol, 2007)
3. The Audit Commission (2009) **'Building Better Lives – getting the best from strategic housing'**

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 1.1 None.

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 1.2 A full risk and opportunity statement will accompany the full options report in the light of any changes to the current housing adaptations service, funding and delivery options. The full options report is the opportunity to explore options and risks. The risk of not approving the recommendation to come back to Housing Committee with this report is that options will not be fully explored and that current demand and spend will need to be closely monitored this year with the risk of having to manage waiting lists in both private and council sectors.

Public Health Implications:

- 1.3 The delivery of housing adaptations contributes to ensuring disabled people can live as independently at home for as long as possible, managing the risk of falls or injury through adaptation of the home facilitating safe access in to and out of the home, and the provision of essential facilities within it for safe bathing and the safe preparation of food.

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 1.4 The delivery of housing adaptations positively promotes disability equality enabling disabled people to live as independently as possible for as long as possible in their homes. In line with the Older Peoples Housing Strategy, we know we need to improve the supply of housing that can be adapted to meet changing needs, and in line with the roll out of more personalised support, and Adult Social Care commissioning continue to focus on people maintaining their independence for as long as possible, we know the importance of timely adapts in enabling this.