

**HOUSING COMMITTEE****Agenda Item**

Brighton &amp; Hove City Council

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Pilot of Level Access Shower Installations: Update</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>Area Panels January 2015 Housing Committee March 2015</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director of Environment, Development &amp; Housing</b>		
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Janine Healey</b>	<b>Tel: 293314</b>
	<b>Email:</b>	<b>janine.healey@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 In March 2014 a report to review the Brighton & Hove (Property) Standard came to Housing Committee, with an approved recommendation to run a 6 to 12 month pilot enabling all one bed ground floor flats that become empty and require a bathroom replacement, to be considered for the installation of a level access shower instead of a bath.
- 1.2 As requested by Housing Committee, this report provides an update following the first six months of the pilot.

**2. RECOMMENDATION:**

- 2.1 To continue to identify properties in this way and update team procedures to reflect this.
- 2.2 To include this in the new Adaptations Policy for Council owned and managed properties (agreed at Housing Committee 10/9/14).

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 This pilot was introduced as part of the review of the Brighton & Hove (Property) Standard, with the aim of increasing the number of properties within the council owned housing stock that are suitable for people with mobility difficulties.

3.2 On 10<sup>th</sup> September 2014 a recommendation was approved by Housing Committee to introduce an Adaptations Policy for council tenants. It seems appropriate to include this area of work within that policy.

### 3 RESULTS OF PILOT

4.1 The table below provides information for all six properties identified to date. Two of these have been re-let and four are currently empty and undergoing works (at time of writing this report Nov 2014).

Address	Total Days empty (calendar)	Area of City	Mob rating of property following work	No of Home-move bids	Time on waiting list of person re-housed	General repair cost to re-let (excl. shower)	Shower cost	Contact with Access Point?
Property A	45 days	Moulse-coomb	3 (low)	65 bids	Band C May 2010	£986	£3540	no
Property B	21 days	Beven-dean	3 (low)	97 bids	Band B August 2012	£1600	£3623	no
Property C	tbc 10 days	Kemp Town	3 (low)	198 bids	Band A May 2014	£1411	£3322	tbc
Property D	currently empty	Portslade	3 (low)	N.B. This information will be available once the property has been re-let.				
Property E	currently empty	Portslade	3 (low)					
Property F	currently empty	Whitehawk	3 (low)					

4.2 It was anticipated that up to 15 properties a year would become available and be suitable for this work. There was a total of 37 one bedroom ground floor flats that were re-let during the period of this pilot. Of these, 16 already had adaptations of some type, which left 21 properties with the potential to install a level access shower. However, only two of these properties were actually suitable for the installation and categorisation as a Mob 3 property for re-letting. Since this date there have been a further 4 properties identified which are currently undergoing work.

4.3 It was anticipated there would be no increase in the general repair costs to empty properties, and acknowledged that installing a level access shower would be more expensive than simply replacing a bath or carrying out repair work. Details of the cost of this work is included in the table at 4.1.

4.4 The two properties that have been re-let during the pilot have both been let to home seekers who have been on the waiting list between 2 and 5 years. These

properties were empty for an average of 33 days, compared to similar properties citywide that were empty for an average of 38 days.

- 4.5 The residents of both these properties have not made a subsequent request to Housing Adaptations for assessment for further adaptations.
- 4.6 All six of the properties identified have been advertised with a mobility 3 category. This means that people with a mobility need will be prioritised for shortlisting.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 Installing level access showers in empty properties has not negatively impacted on the time the property remained empty or the time it took to complete the work. Although this is a small number both properties were let relatively quickly.
- 5.2 Financial control will occur via budget setting and established Targeted Budget Management processes to ensure that the empty property repairs budgets and adaptations budgets are not adversely impacted.
- 5.3 Adopting this as a policy will continue to enable our residents to live independently whilst offering increased value for money for the Housing Revenue Account and providing a good customer experience.

## **6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

### 6.1 Financial Implications:

- 6.1.1 It is estimated that six level access showers will be installed as a result of this project during 2014/15. These costs will be met from the HRA Adaptations budget of £1.150 million for 2014/15. This scheme should achieve good value for money as the costs of the adaptations is likely to have occurred anyway, and possibly in a flat or house that would not be 'Mob 3' compliant.
- 6.1.2 Going forward, it is estimated there will be 15 of these in a full financial year at an estimated cost of £53,000. This cost will be met by the HRA Property & Investment service, via the HRA Disabled Adaptations budget.

Finance Officer Consulted:      Name Monica Brooks      Date: 26/11/2014

### 6.2 Legal Implications:

#### 6.2.1

Lawyer Consulted:

### 6.3 Crime & Disorder Implications

6.3.1 None