

# Housing Scrutiny Commission Briefing Report

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Disabled Adaptations

Housing Scrutiny Commission: 27<sup>th</sup> August 2024

Lead director: Chris Burgin

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## Useful information

- Ward(s) all
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- Report version: v.1

### 1. Summary

The council deliver adaptations for residents that have been assessed as needing them regardless of the tenure of their home. This is achieved by Social Care and Education (SCE) and Housing working together to deliver the adaptations service.

This report talks about the process followed for the delivery of minor and major adaptations by tenure, council owned and all other, and the two distinct funding routes that apply.

### 2. Recommendation

That member of the Housing Scrutiny Commission notes the contents of this report.

### 3. Supporting information including options considered:

The start of the adaptation journey is when a resident calls the Contact and Response Team in SCE. If the resident is known to SCE, they are referred to the locality teams for assessment if not then they are referred to the adaptations team, either way they are assessed by a member of staff from SCE.

The assessment is carried out by an Occupational Therapist (OT) who decides what level of support is required. This could be something simple like an additional stair rail, grab rail or a toilet frame or alternatively major adaptations may be required that require the installation of a wet room or additional ground floor facilities.

Whilst all requests for adaptations are dealt with in the same way initially, the funding routes are different, and this decides the journey the request takes.

Adaptations for Council Tenants – Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

All minor adaptations (work costing less than £1000) are completed as they are received by the division from SCE, some can be done very quickly if it's just a grab rail or additional stair rail that is required and others, like a ramp to the front door may take a little longer but they are completed by the in house craft staff in the order that they are received based on resources being available.

Major adaptations regardless of tenure are prioritised by the OT, this is because they have actually met and assessed the person, are familiar with their medical history and are qualified to recommend adaptations that will improve outcomes for the residents.

Housing's role is purely to carry out the works that have been recommended and to make sure we do this in priority order, so that those in the most need are waiting the least time. This is done based on the priority points allocated to each case by the OT. The highest priority is given to end of life cases and life limiting illnesses. It is difficult to respond to questions about waiting lists and waiting time because they are dependent on the number of cases we get and the number of points they are allocated, the list is constantly changing, it is a dynamic and designed to ensure that nobody in urgent need is waiting longer than it takes to practically complete the adaptations.

The following table shows the number and type of adaptations that are completed every year for council tenants:

Type of adaptation	21/22	22/23	23/24
Rails/handrails	340	335	382
Ramps	29	30	38
Layout alterations	0	0	1
Level access showers	75	70	45
Wash/dry toilets	4	3	21
Stairlifts	48	50	38
Step lifts	3	3	5
Through floor lifts	14	10	20
Extensions	3	3	3
<b>totals</b>	<b>516</b>	<b>504</b>	<b>553</b>

#### HRA budget

Adaptations for council tenants are paid for from the HRA capital programme, the following table shows how much by year we spend on adaptations.

	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Budget	£1.2m	£1.2m (including £300k for adapt to let scheme	£1.3m (including £300k for adapt to let scheme	£1.2m (adapt to let scheme % to be agreed)
Actual spend	£1.1m	£1.2m	£1.4m	

Other ways we deliver adaptations in the HRA:

#### Adapt to let.

Due to the high demand for Adapted properties the HRA is also in a position to reconfigure some of its existing stock to try and support residents on the housing register, these may be tenants who live in homes that have been assessed as needing adaptations but they are unable to be carried out at their current home for technical reasons, or they may be new applicants who have faced similar issue in other tenures of accommodation.

If a property is partially adapted, then an assessment is made to see if it can be altered to become fully wheelchair accessible. This has proven to be a successful approach and we rehoused 17 applicants in 23/24 that were waiting for accessible accommodation.

New build council housing:

As part of the local Authority new build programme all sites will deliver 10% wheelchair accessible homes. The following sites are in our current delivery pipeline and expected to deliver new wheelchair accessible homes in the next 3 years.

Saffron Velodrome  
Stocking Farm  
Southfield Newry  
Forest Lodge Education Centre (FLEC)  
Hospital Close

### **Non HRA housing. Disabled Facility Grants (DFG)**

The assessment by the OT is the same. Minor adaptations are not sent to housing but completed by contractors that SCE has appointed, once completed they are checked to be suitable by a member of SCE staff. They are paid for by SCE.

Major adaptations.

Major adaptations for all other tenures follow the Disabled Facility Grant (DFG) process if the resident needs or wants help to finance the works. This is a means tested process so not all those that apply for a DFG will be eligible for one, some will only be eligible for part payment and will have to make a financial contribution themselves and others not eligible at all and they will have to directly fund the full cost of the adaptation, some applicants choose not to follow the DFG process at all.

The DFG grant must follow a fixed process because we have to demonstrate that we have complied with the Housing Grant, Construction and Regeneration Act and we are audited every year to ensure compliance. The act makes it clear what a DFG can be used for:

Providing access into and out of the home by installing:

Ramps, front and rear  
Step lifts front and rear  
Access to rear garden

Providing access in and around the home so that a resident can meet their assessed needs by providing:

Level access showers  
Stairlifts  
Through floor lifts  
Level access shower

The following table shows the type and number of adaptations that we have completed.

Type of adaptation	21/22	22/23	23/24
Stairlift	54	70	60
Step lift, platform lifts	6	16	20
Level access shower	101	131	88

Ramps	3	7	14
Combined shower and toilet cubicles	17	22	11

## DFG Budget

The following table shows how much we spend each year on DFG's

year	Government grant	Council contribution	total
21/22	£2,080m	£20k	£2,100m
22/23	£1,861m	£50k	£1,911m
23/24	£1,861m	£320k	£2,181m
24/25	£1,861m	£200k	£2,061m

## Feedback from customers:

We have recently started to assess how the adaptations we have done have impacted on the lives of the customer, after all adaptations are completed the OT asks a series of questions. To date we have only completed a small number, so we do not have enough data for this report, however early indications are looking good with positive responses about the impact the adaptations have had on their lives. A full breakdown will be provided in the next update to the committee.

## Adaptations Strategy

It has been agreed that we need an Adaptations Strategy to ensure that all the information is held in one place and future adaptation services meet the needs of Leicester residents. This is being supported by the Housing Transformation Team (HTT).

The initial scoping exercise has been carried out and initial milestones agreed.

Actions	Timescale
Undertake background research and data collection	complete
Develop draft key themes for the strategy	End of August 24
Consult with internal and external stakeholders of the key themes of the strategy	End of September 24
Write the draft strategy	End of October 24
Present draft strategy to relevant meetings for comment	End of October 24
Undertake a 2 <sup>nd</sup> . Consultation exercise	End of November 24
Final sign off.	December 24

Members of the Housing Scrutiny will be consulted as part of the process.

## 4. Details of Scrutiny

## 5. Financial, legal and other implications

### 5.1 Financial implications

. There are no financial implications associated with this update report. The capital budgets for adaptations are included in the main body of this report.

Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance

### 5.2 Legal implications

While there are no legal implications arising out of the contents of the report and the proposal to create an Adaptations Strategy, it is worth noting that local authority owned properties that are constructed or have been adapted for disabled persons may be excluded from the Right to Buy scheme. Paragraph 7 of Schedule 5 of the Housing Act 1985 states *“The right to buy does not arise if the dwelling-house has features which are substantially different from those of ordinary dwelling-houses and are designed to make it suitable for occupation by physically disabled persons, and (a) it is one of a group of dwelling-houses which it is the practice of the landlord to let for occupation by physically disabled persons, and (b) a social service or special facilities are provided in close proximity to the group of dwelling-houses wholly or partly for the purpose of assisting those persons.”*

Disabled Facilities Grants awarded to private owner/occupiers are governed by the Housing Grant, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. The Act sets out the terms and conditions under which grants may be offered and their repayment terms. The Act states that the grant is repayable if a property is disposed of within a period of 5 years from the date of the grant. The grant is registrable as a local land charge in order to protect against a property being sold without a grant being repaid. Once a grant period has expired, the local land charge entry should be removed.

Although not referred to above, loans for adaptations works may also be offered under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970. The conditions for these are more stringent and the loan is registrable as a legal charge on a property at the Land Registry. Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act loans have been awarded by the Council in the past but tended to relate to expensive, structural adaptation works and it is likely that, as this is not a statutory duty, with

the reductions in budget provision, the authority is simply no longer able to afford to offer this service.

### 5.3 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction implications

There are limited climate emergency implications directly associated with this report. As the delivery of these works will generally contribute to the council's carbon emissions consideration should be given to opportunities to reduce any impacts of this work. This could include encouraging and enabling low carbon travel by staff, using materials efficiently and following sustainable procurement guidance, as applicable and appropriate. For some measures consideration could also be given to opportunities to reduce emissions, for example through procuring lifts with good energy ratings, or ensuring that extensions are well-insulated and energy efficient, as appropriate and relevant to the measure.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

### 5.4 Equalities Implications

Under the Equality Act 2010, public authorities have a Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which means that, in carrying out their functions, they have a statutory duty to pay due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation, to advance equality protected characteristic and those who don't and to foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who don't.

Protected Characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation.

Local authorities have legal obligations to help children and adults who need home adaptations to meet a range of needs resulting from physical, sensory and cognitive impairments, neurodiversity and mental health conditions. This report talks about the process followed for the delivery of minor and major adaptations by tenure, council owned and all other, and the two distinct funding routes that apply.

The purpose of an adaptation is to modify disabling environments in order to restore or enable independent living, privacy, confidence and dignity for individuals and their families.

It is important that information about adaptations is easily accessible and available.

Equality considerations should be embedded throughout the proposed strategy, any consultation/engagement with key stakeholders including community engagement needs to be accessible, fair and proportionate and targeted to the relevant group(s).

Equalities Officer, Surinder Singh, Ext 37 4148

5.5 Other Implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

n/a

**6. Background information and other papers: None**

**7. Summary of Appendices: n/a**

**8. Is this a private report (If so, please indicated the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)? no**

**9. Is this a “key decision”? no**

**10. If a key decision please explain reason**