

FAREHAM

BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to the Executive for Decision 07 November 2022

Portfolio:	Housing
Subject:	Fareham Borough Council Social and Affordable Housing Adaptations Policy
Report of:	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Corporate Priorities:	Providing Housing Choices

Purpose:

To seek approval of the draft Fareham Borough Council Social and Affordable Housing Adaptations Policy.

Executive summary:

In 2009 the Executive approved the Disabled Aids and Adaptations Policy – Council Housing. Since its approval, several key areas of legislation have been amended resulting in a requirement for this policy to be updated.

The Social and Affordable Housing Adaptations Policy recognises accessibility as a fundamental design principle. The document outlines the process in ensuring Council tenants with disabilities be provided with housing that best meets their assessed needs in addition to the Council meeting the relevant statutory requirements.

Recommendation/Recommended Option:

It is recommended that the Executive approves the draft Fareham Borough Council Social and Affordable Housing Adaptations Policy, as provided in Appendix A to this report, for publication. This to supersede and replace the Disabled Aids and Adaptations Policy (2009).

Reason:

To detail how the Council makes its social and affordable housing properties accessible for those who require it.

Cost of proposals:

The cost of publication is covered in the existing Fareham Housing operational budget.

Appendices: **A:** Fareham Borough Council Social and Affordable Housing Adaptations Policy

B: Equalities Impact Assessment

Background papers: None

Reference papers: Disabled Aids and Adaptations Policy – Council Housing (2009)

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Executive Briefing Paper

Date:	07 November 2022
Subject:	Fareham Borough Council Social and Affordable Housing Adaptation Policy
Briefing by:	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
Portfolio:	Housing

INTRODUCTION

1. At its 13 January 2009 meeting, the Executive approved the original Disabled Aids and Adaptations Policy – Council Housing. The policy's aims were to set out a framework for dealing with requests for disabled aids and adaptations in the Council's housing stock.
2. Since the last policy was approved there have been revisions to legislation and statutory requirements. The draft Fareham Borough Council Social and Affordable Housing Adaptation Policy updates the existing document with reference to the new legislation and reflects the changes within the current Housing department structure. There is little change in the fundamental aspects of the policy, instead the procedures have been explained more clearly.

THE POLICY

3. In carrying out its housing function, the Council must pay regard to the relevant statutory requirements. The policy sets out how this is met. In short, consultation with Hampshire County Council's Occupational Therapy (OT) team will take place. This process ensures that any adaptation works are reasonable and practical, paying due regard to the age and condition to the property, whilst also meeting the needs of the tenant. Tenants are required to contact their OT to start the adaptations process.
4. In order to be considered for an adaptation, a tenant must meet certain eligibility requirements. The policy details these as being a tenant of the Council, and with a physical or mental impairment. Under the Equality Act 2010 a person has a physical or mental impairment if it has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on their ability to do normal daily activities.
5. Adaptations are split into 'major' or 'minor' alterations. Minor ones are generally fixtures such as access ramps or grab rails. Major adaptations include wet rooms and widening doors. The timescales for completion of these works are 3 months for a minor adaption and 6 months for a major one (excluding the timeframe needed to gain any required planning permission).

LONG TERM HOUSING NEEDS

6. The Council will generally only complete major works where they have been identified as necessary, appropriate, reasonable, practical and will meet the needs of the applicant. Through consultation with the tenant and the OT, due care will be taken to ensure that the property is suitable in the long term. Appropriate alternative accommodation may be offered to the applicant if they find this a more agreeable and suitable option.
7. Not all properties will be suitable for adaptations. This may be because of the construction type, the age of the dwelling or space for alterations such as extensions. Where this is the case, the Council will discuss alternative options with the household and the OT. If it is agreed that a move to another property would be preferable, the procedures set out in the Council's Allocations Policy will take effect.
8. Other circumstances may apply which mean that we cannot undertake an adaptation. These are covered within the policy but include: where the household is awaiting a move to another property, the adaption would put others at risk, or the property is overcrowded.
9. Each case will be considered on its merits, paying due regard to the individual circumstances of the applicant and the property. The Council will also have due regard to its Public Sector Equality Duty pursuant to Section 149 of Equality Act 2010 when making any decisions under this policy.

EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

10. An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been undertaken of the Fareham Borough Council Social and Affordable Housing Adaptations Policy. This is included as Appendix B to this report. The EIA has not identified any detrimental equality impacts as a result of the proposed policy.

CONCLUSION

11. Fareham Borough Council recognises accessibility as a fundamental design principle. The Council also accepts responsibility for preventing and changing disabling environments for its tenants. The aim of this policy is to ensure that tenants with disabilities be provided with housing that best meets their assessed needs. This may be through adaption of their existing accommodation or by providing options for more suitable, alternative housing. The Executive is invited to review this policy and approve its contents for publication.

Enquiries:

For further information on this report please contact Fleur Allaway. (Ext 4304)