

Part I

Main author: Paul Horsley

Executive Member: Cllr Gemma Moore

All Wards

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET HOUSING PANEL – 19 MARCH 2025
REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (RESIDENT SERVICES AND CLIMATE
CHANGE)

AIDS AND ADAPTATIONS POLICY

1 Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Aids and Adaptations Policy, as set out in Appendix A, has been reviewed. This report recommends the approval of the Policy.
- 1.2 The aim of the policy is to set out the scope of the service in providing aids and adaptations and the criteria by which the council will assess requests for aids and adaptation work.
- 1.3 The Aids and Adaptation Policy sets out the Council's approach to comply with the relevant legal and statutory requirements in relation to the provision of disabled adaptations, supports the needs of disabled tenants in providing adaptations, subject to the provision of available funding.
- 1.4 The Policy also promotes the delivery of high quality disabled adaptations service where there are clear channels of communication and established joint working practices with partners.
- 1.5 We are currently consulting with the Residents Panel on this Policy.
- 1.6 The review of this policy includes minor amendments as set out in the report.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 Cabinet Housing Panel to consider and note the revised Aids and Adaptations Policy (appendix A).
- 2.2 To recommend the policy to Cabinet for Approval. However, if the Policy is agreed by the Cabinet Housing Panel unanimously, the policy will be approved instead an Executive Member Decision Notice following feedback from the Tenants Panel consultation.

3. Explanation

- 3.1 The Council provides visual aids and adaptations to enable tenants to continue to live suitably within our council homes. In 2023/24 we completed 514 adaptations cases with a total spend of £1,153,196, this comprised:
 - 216 Minor Adaptations (less than £500). Actual spend of £90,937
 - 298 Major Adaptations (over £500). Actual spend of £1,062,259
 - Complex Adaptations - 3 door widenings.
- 3.2 The review of the policy aims to ensure that the policy is in line with relevant legislation and give a clear distinction between the role of WHBC and that of HCC.

- 3.3 The changes made to the policy aims to outline any additional support that the council can offer to residents when accessing the Aids and Adaptations service.
- 3.4 The review of the policy has also been updated to remove the mention of flexible tenancies and updated the process for undertaking a feasibility assessment.
- 3.5 The policy has also been updated to include the potential for recouping costs for adaptations where a resident moves from their home or completes a Right To Buy application within 5 years of receiving the adaptation.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 The Equalities Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against people with the protected characteristics that are specified in section 4 of the act. Disability is one of the specified protected characteristics.
- 4.2 The Council will make a positive difference to our communities and to the people we employ, provide services to, and do business with, and aims to provide Services which meet the needs of customers, employees and other people and groups, including people with protected characteristics, as defined by the Equality Act 2010.
- 4.3 The Council will ensure that no person or group of persons will be treated less favourably than another person or group of persons and will carry out our duty with positive regard for the core strands of equality.
- 4.4 The Council will also ensure that all services and actions are delivered within the context of current Human Rights legislation. Staff and others with whom we work, will adhere to the central principles of the Human Rights Act (1998).

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no known new financial implications as a result of this report at this time.

6. Risk Management Implications

- 6.1 The council is committed to providing services that enable disabled council tenants to live safely and independently within our homes. By not providing a high quality aids and adaptations service there is a risk of reputational damage of the council not complying with this commitment and its duties as a local authority.

7. Security and Terrorism Implications

- 7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications arising from this report.

8. Procurement Implications

- 8.1 There are no new procurement implications arising from this report at this time.

9. Climate Change Implications

- 9.1 There are no new climate change implications arising from this report.

10. Human Resources Implication(s)

10.1 There are no human resource implications arising from this report.

11. Health and Wellbeing Implications

11.1 The provision of an aids and adaptations service will have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of many of our tenants each year and improve their quality of life through the range of adaptations carried out.

12. Communication and Engagement Implications

12.1 The policy may be subject to a further review following recent updated guidance from the Housing Ombudsman Service.

13. Link to Corporate Priorities

13.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priorities: Homes to be proud of, Run an effective council and Together, create opportunities for our communities.

14. Equality and Diversity

14.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) has been carried out in connection with the proposals that are set out in this report. Please see Appendix B.

Name of author(s):	Paul Horsley
Title(s)	Service Manager (Investment Programme Delivery)
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Appendices:

Appendix A – Aids and Adaptations Policy
Appendix B - EqIA