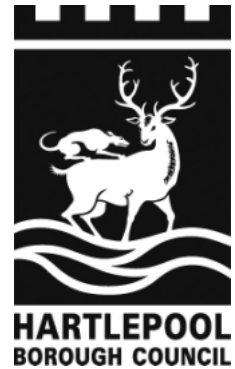


**JOINT MEETING OF
REGENERATION & PLANNING
SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM,
CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY
FORUM AND ADULT & COMMUNITY
SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM**



Monday, 27 September 2010

at 5.00pm

**in the Council Chamber,
Civic Centre, Hartlepool**

MEMBERS: REGENERATION & PLANNING SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM,
CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM AND ADULT & COMMUNITY
SERVICES SCRUTINY FORUM

Councillors C Akers-Belcher, Atkinson, Barclay, Cook, Cranney, Gibbon, Fleet, Griffin, Ingham, James, A Lilley, Lauderdale, Law ton, London, Maness, A Marshall, McKenna, Preece, Rogan, Shaw, Simmons, P Thompson and Wells

Resident Representatives:

Christine Blakey, Ted Jackson, Evelyn Leck, John Maxwell, Joan Steel and Angie Wilcox

Co-opted Members David Relton

Young People's Representatives: Aarthi Suresh, Ashleigh Bostock, Lauren Carroll, Demi Coull, Shauna Hanley and 1 vacancy

- 1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**
- 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
- 3. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS**
- 4. RESPONSES FROM THE COUNCIL, THE EXECUTIVE OR COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL TO FINAL REPORTS OF THIS FORUM**

No Items
- 5. CONSIDERATION OF REQUEST FOR SCRUTINY REVIEWS REFERRED VIA SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE**

No Items

**6. CONSIDERATION OF PROGRESS REPORTS / BUDGET AND POLICY
FRAMEWORK DOCUMENTS**

No Items

7. ISSUES IDENTIFIED FROM FORWARD PLAN

No Items

8. ITEM FOR DISCUSSION

8.1 Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee Referral - Housing Adaptations Policy
2010 – 2013

(a) Covering Report – *Scrutiny Support Officer*

(b) Presentation – *Housing Regeneration and Policy Manager*

9. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS ARE URGENT

**JOINT REGENERATION AND PLANNING
SERVICES, ADULT AND COMMUNITY
SERVICES AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES
SCRUTINY FORUM**



Report of: Scrutiny Support Officer

Subject: SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE
REFERRAL - HOUSING ADAPTATIONS POLICY
(2010 - 2013) - COVERING REPORT

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members with the opportunity to respond to the referral from the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee and contribute to the consultation process for the development of the draft Housing Adaptations Policy 2010 – 2013.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its meeting of 3 September 2010, during consideration of the Forward Plan, it came to the attention of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee that the Housing Adaptations Policy (2010 – 2013) was being reviewed. In exploring the Forward Plan entry, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee raised concerns that there had been no Elected Member involvement in the development of the Housing Adaptations Policy (2010 – 2013).
- 2.2 In light of these concerns, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee referred consideration of the draft policy to a joint meeting of the Regeneration and Planning Services, Adult and Community Services and the Children's Services Scrutiny Forums. The aim of this meeting being to allow Members to:-
- (i) Consider the Draft Housing Adaptations Policy (2010 – 2013) and formulate a view for consideration by Cabinet as part of the consultation process;
 - (ii) Formulate a response to the referral for consideration by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

2.3 In order to assist Members in the formulation of their view / response, evidence will be provided in the followings forms:-

(i) Officers from the Housing Regeneration and Policy Department will be in attendance at today's meeting to give a presentation providing an overview of policy and a summary of consultation results received to date; and

(ii) Copies of the draft policy have been e-mailed to all Members and placed in the Members Lounge.

2.4 Please note that it is recognised that not all Members access their e-mail accounts on a regular basis, and may not attend the Civic Centre prior to the meeting. As such, hard copies of the draft policy are also available on request from Nigel Johnson – Housing Regeneration and Policy Manager on 01429 284339.

3. NEXT STEPS

3.1 The response from the joint Forum meeting to the Draft Housing Adaptations Policy (2010 – 2013) will be presented to the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee at its meeting on 15 October 2010. Subject to Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee approval the views of the joint Forum will then be submitted to Cabinet in November as part of the consultation process.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 That the Joint Regeneration and Planning Services, Adults and Community Services and Children's Services Scrutiny Forum consider the Draft Housing Adaptations Policy 2010 – 2013, along with the consultation feedback, and seek clarification from officers on any relevant issues where appropriate.

4.2 That Members formulate a response to the Draft Housing Adaptations Policy (2010 – 2013) for consideration by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee on 15 October 2010 which, subject to approval, will be referred to Cabinet in November for consideration as part of the consultation process.

Contact Officer:- Elaine Hind – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department – Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council
Tel: 01429 52 3647
e-mail: elaine.hind@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) HBC Housing Adaptations Policy Review August 2010
- (ii) HBC Housing Adaptations Policy 2010 – 2013
- (iii) HBC Housing Adaptations Policy Action Plan 2010 – 2013
- (iv) HBC Housing Adaptations Policy 2010 – 2013 Consultation 1.9.10 – 30.9.10

Joint R&P CS,
x ACS SF
27/9/10
8.1.

Hartlepool Borough Council

Housing Adaptations Policy 2010-2013

***A policy to contribute to supporting people to live
as independently as possible***





Foreword by the Mayor

This Housing Adaptations Policy 2010-2013 has been developed in partnership with a range of agencies and stakeholders and produced to demonstrate Hartlepool Borough Council's commitment to support people to live as independently as possible. Outlined within this policy are the priorities for action, the policy tools and the level of resources available to the Council to ensure the objectives of this policy are delivered.

The Government is committed to assisting people who are who are older or disabled to remain in their own home and live independently in safety and comfort. The UK has an ageing population and the impact on costs and demand for public services is becoming apparent. The nature of new supply and adaptations of existing stock will play an increasing role in supporting people to maintain an independent lifestyle. In Hartlepool a shared vision and common objectives to support people with disabilities to live as independently as possible has been developed through this policy.

Impact of not adapting or rehousing people with disabilities??

My vision is to XXXXX

Stuart Drummond
Elected Mayor



The Housing Adaptations Policy

INTRODUCTION

Hartlepool Borough Council has prioritised a review in the way that housing adaptations, Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and rehousing options are utilised to enable people to live independently in their current or future homes whilst providing services that are value for money and cost effective. A review of the current position in Hartlepool is available as a separate document.¹

This policy outlines an effective framework to deliver the vision of supporting people to live as independently as possible in homes that are safe and comfortable. It intends to provide an equitable DFG policy for the future that works across tenure, is cost effective and makes full use of policy tools in the delivery of services to clients. It also details how the Council will work to the preventative agenda, thereby reducing the need for costly adaptations and improving how it works in partnership with agencies across Hartlepool.

A three year life span has been set for this policy and it will be reviewed annually.

The need for this policy is underlined by the challenges and opportunities related to improving services for people with disabilities and our need to co-ordinate the actions of a diverse range of agencies in improving the standard of living and health and well-being of our communities.

POLICY AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Hartlepool has developed this Policy due to the current resource position, long waiting list and current procedures together with the need to reduce the backlog, review the service delivery, make efficiencies and respond to people's needs and aspirations.

Improvements in health care means that the number of people with support needs living in the community is increasing. People are living longer and there is a preference among people with support needs to live independently in their own homes.

This Policy for Hartlepool sets out the strategic direction for housing adaptations and rehousing and supports Hartlepool's Local Area Agreement outcomes. Its objectives are to:

¹ Housing Adaptations Policy Review – August 2010



One: Enable and support people to live independently in their current and future homes



Two: Promote, encourage and ensure fair access for disabled people to all appropriate adaptations services



Three: Work in partnership to deliver a seamless service to disabled people, providing services and equipment that are cost effective and value for money



Four: Make best use of Registered Providers' existing housing stock

Adaptations provided through Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) are consistently effective. They produce significant health gains and prevent accidents and admission to residential care².

This Policy also sets out how the Council will consider options for disabled people in addition to mandatory DFGs as prescribed by legislation.

It can also be linked to wider objectives such as:

- Reducing the number of people with disabilities living in inappropriate accommodation
- Increasing the supply of suitable and affordable housing to meet the demand of the increasing numbers of people with disabilities
- Wider agendas including social inclusion, community care and hospital discharge
- Accident prevention
- Quality of life
- Support for carers
- Reduction in child poverty

² *Better outcomes, lower costs: implications for health and social care budgets of investment in housing adaptations, improvement and equipment: a review of the evidence*, Heywood F and Turner L, 2007

POLICY CONTENT

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

Hartlepool Borough Council administers Mandatory DFGs to all owner-occupiers, social and private housing tenants and occupiers who are able to satisfy the criteria laid out in the main legislation that governs its provision; the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. The maximum grant limit is set by Government and is £30,000 per application.

Where there is an application for assistance by a person with disabilities, an assessment of the needs of the person (and their carer if applicable) will be made by the Council's Occupational Therapist before any decisions in accordance with the Policy are made about the provision of equipment or adaptations. Recommendations are passed to the Council's Special Needs Housing Team who process requests in waiting list order.

Adaptations Operations Panel

A panel comprising of officers across the Council will be established. Its purpose will be to undertake case reviews and to deal specifically with service user issues. This will make the process more transparent; improve partnership working across the Council and aims to make best use of resources by exploring all options in addition to DFG.

Consultation question: should the panel be convened based on the cost of the recommended adaptation? If so, what amount? Or should it be convened based on an officer's judgment as to whether the adaptation is the best option for the client? Or should it be flexible and be used in either instance?

Use of DFG funding by Registered Providers (RPs)

The Council works closely with its RP partners to deliver adaptations to tenants. In order to make best use of resources, an agreement is being developed with RPs to decide which adaptations will be funded through DFG. A common framework agreement will also be developed to agree a consistent approach to the level of minor works they will fund.

Rehousing as an Option

In cases where major adaptations to a client's home are required and it is difficult to provide a cost effective solution, assistance will be offered to help the client move into suitable alternative accommodation or housing that is suitable for adaptation.

Adapted social rented housing is advertised through the Compass Choice Based Lettings scheme which covers the Tees Valley. Such properties are re-let to applicants who match the requirements of the property.

Within Child and Adult Services a financial profile is being developed for clients which will detail costs of care and support in a range of settings e.g. own home, extra care or residential or nursing care. This will assist clients to move to more appropriate and sustainable housing rather than undertaking an adaptation to meet short-term needs.

Prevention

Minor adaptations are undertaken for people who fall below the threshold if there is a clear case that an intervention would prevent falls, reduce risk or prevent deterioration.

Financial Assistance

The Council participates in the North East Regional Loans Scheme. This scheme assists owner-occupiers and private landlords to undertake essential home improvements which help improve residents' long term health and well-being and maintaining their independence.

Working in Partnership

The Council actively works with all its partners to maximise the best use of resources in delivery of this policy. Internally the Occupational Therapy Team works in close liaison with the Special Needs Housing Team. The teams also work in partnership with the Health Authority and Registered Providers of social housing.

Recycling Equipment

The Council's Special Needs Housing Team endeavors to make savings where possible through recycling of adaptations such as stairlifts, through floor lifts and modular (metal) ramps.

Procurement

Where major adaptations are approved the Special Needs Housing Team obtains two quotes from an approved contractor except for stairlifts. Stairlifts are procured as part of a sub-regional contract which offers cost savings and value for money.

Land Charges

Depending on the nature of the work carried out the Council will seek to place a local land charge against a property. For DFGs that cost more than £5,000 Local Land Charges may be placed on the property (up to a maximum of £10,000) should the property be sold within 10 years.

Clients will be advised of the amount they will be expected to repay at the DFG approval stage. The placing of charges will allow the Council to recycle some funds back into the DFG budget.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Council is committed to delivering services to people who need them without discriminating against any client or service user. It aims to treat all clients with courtesy and respect regardless of their gender, race, age, disability, religion, belief or sexual orientation.

An Equality Impact Needs Assessment has been carried out on this policy to ensure the impact of its practices do not negatively impact upon any individual.

POLICY MONITORING AND REVIEW

An action plan for delivery of this Policy up to 2013 has been developed using the 4 strategic objectives. Each year an annual action plan will be developed based on this framework, commencing in 2010/11.

Monitoring of the Housing Adaptations Policy will take place through regular reporting to Hartlepool's Housing Partnership and the Action Plan will be monitored through the Housing, Care and Support Strategy Steering Group.

A review of the policy will also take place on an annual basis and in line with legislative or regulatory changes.

SCRUTINY CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE

15 October 2010



Report of: Chair of the Joint Regeneration and Planning Services
Scrutiny Forum, Children's Services Scrutiny Forum
and Adult & Community Services Scrutiny Forum.

Subject: REFERRAL FEEDBACK REPORT - HOUSING
ADAPTATIONS POLICY REVIEW 2010 - 2013

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee with the views of Members present at the joint meeting of the Regeneration and Planning Services, Children's Services and Adult & Community Services Scrutiny Forums regarding the referral of the Housing Adaptations Policy (2010 – 2013).

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 At its meeting of 3 September 2010, during consideration of the Forward Plan, it came to the attention of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee that the Housing Adaptations Policy (2010 – 2013) was being reviewed. In exploring the Forward Plan entry, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee raised concerns that there had been no Elected Member involvement in the development of the Housing Adaptations Policy (2010 – 2013).
- 2.2 In light of these concerns, the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee referred consideration of the draft policy to a joint meeting of the Regeneration and Planning Services, Adult and Community Services and the Children's Services Scrutiny Forums. The Joint Forum met on 27 September 2010 to:-
- (i) Consider the Draft Housing Adaptations Policy (2010 – 2013) and formulate a view for consideration by Cabinet as part of the consultation process;
 - (ii) Formulate a response to the referral for consideration by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee.

- 2.3 Officers from the Housing Regeneration and Policy Department attended the Joint Forum meeting on 27 September 2010 to present an overview of the policy and consultation and to answer Members questions.

3. JOINT FORUM CONSIDERATION OF THE REFERRAL

- 3.1 The Joint Forum considered the presentation by the Officers from the Housing Regeneration and Policy Department and sought clarification on a number of issues regarding the policy and the consultation process.

- 3.2 Members present at the meeting of the Joint Forum raised grave concerns about the absence of Member consultation on the Housing Adaptations Policy 2010 – 2013. These concerns mirrored those initially expressed by the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee at the time of the referral of the policy to the Joint Forum.

- 3.3 During the course of discussions:-

- (i) Members noted that an email had been sent to all Members from the Department seeking their views on the Housing Adaptations Policy 2010-13. It was, however, emphasised that this had only been sent as a result of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee referral;
- (ii) Members agreed that they were comfortable with the policy as a whole, but were keen to input to the development of the Housing Adaptations Policy as it continues;
- (iii) It was agreed that Members be given the opportunity, over and above discussions at the Joint Scrutiny meeting to submit detailed views on the content of the Policy. These views should be submitted to the Housing Regeneration and Policy Officer for consideration as part of the consultation process; and
- (iv) Members explored the frequency and triggers for convening the Adaptations Operations Panel, as detailed in the consultation documentation, and reinforced the need for them to be as flexible as possible (based on Officers professional judgement). As such, the Adaptations Operations Panel should be convened on a flexible basis.

- 3.4 It was, therefore, concluded that:-

- (i) Members were comfortable with the content of the draft Housing Adaptations Policy (2010 – 2013) as a whole and should proceed as planned;
- (ii) Members should be consulted / involved at appropriate stages in the continuing development of the Housing Adaptation Policy (2010 – 2013);

- (iii) The Adaptations Operations Panel should be convened on a flexible basis;
- (iv) Additional comments from individual Member regarding the Housing Adaptations Policy 2010 – 2013 (as detailed in Section 3.3 (iii)) should be made to the Housing Regeneration and Policy Officer for submission as part of the consultation process; and
- (v) Members should be included in the consultation process for all policies so that their views can be taken into account before they are enforced.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That Members of the Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee note and agree the views of the Joint Regeneration and Planning Services, Children's Services and Adult & Community Services Scrutiny Forum relating to the Housing Adaptations Policy 2010 – 2013 for presentation to Cabinet in November.

**COUNCILLOR CHRIS SIMMONS
CHAIR OF THE JOINT REGENERATION AND PLANNING SERVICES,
CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND ADULT & COMMUNITY SERVICES
SCRUTINY FORUM**

Contact Officer:- Elaine Hind – Scrutiny Support Officer
Chief Executive's Department – Corporate Strategy
Hartlepool Borough Council

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e-mail: elaine.hind@hartlepool.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The following background paper was used in the preparation of this report:-

- (i) The report of the Scrutiny Support Officer entitled 'Scrutiny Co-ordinating Committee Referral – Housing Adaptations Policy (2010 – 2013) – Covering Report' Presented to the Joint meeting of the Regeneration and Planning Services, Children's Services and Adult and Community Services Forum in 27 September 2010.
- (ii) HBC Housing Adaptations Policy Review August 2010
- (iii) HBC Housing Adaptations Policy 2010 – 2013
- (iv) HBC Housing Adaptations Policy Action Plan 2010 – 2013

- (v) HBC Housing Adaptations Policy 2010 – 2013 Consultation 1.9.10 – 30.9.10



Housing Adaptations

**Disabled Facilities Grants
(DFG)**

Background

- **HBC offer - Mandatory DFGs (to those who satisfy the criteria as per the Housing Grants, Construction & Regeneration Act 1996)**
- **HBC do not offer discretionary DFGs**
- **Maximum grant £30k**



Findings of the Review

- **Average waiting time for a DFG is 12 months**
- **1/3 of 2009/10 budget spent on RP property**
- **152 DFGs completed in 2009/10**
- **Current waiting list 129 applications**
- **Referal to completion in Hartlepool is 407 days**
- **In July 2010 – 320 people on the waiting list for re housing due to disability**
- **Demographic changes and ageing population impact**



What happens

- **OT makes assessment of need & refers recommendations to the SNHT**
- **OT assess urgency and prioritisation**
- **SNHT process request ensuring work is reasonable and practicable**
- **Essential minor (under £500) are referred to the SHNT Technician**
- **Low level preventative work completed via the SHNT, (self assessment service funded via Supporting People)**
- **HH funded higher level of works for 5 years following stock transfer**
- **Adapted social rented housing advertised via CBL**



Objectives of the Policy are:

- **Enable & support people to live independently in current or future home**
- **Promote, encourage & ensure fair access to all**
- **Work in partnership to deliver services, equipment cost effectively and which are value for money**
- **Make best use of Registered Providers stock in Hartlepool**



Action Plan

- **Proposal for an Adaptations Operational Panel to be established, with options**
- **Look at how best we can meet the clients needs**
- **Closely monitor how delivery can be improved, including use of stock and early preventative work**
- **Work with RP to encourage greater partnership working**



Who has been consulted

- **Housing Partnership**
- **Members**
- **Older Persons Forum**
- **Other Officers & Operational Staff**
- **Partners**

