

**North East Derbyshire District Council**

**Communities Scrutiny Committee**

**26 February 2025**

**Adaptations Policy Update**

Classification: This report is public

Report By: **Diane Parker / Lorraine Shaw**

Contact Officer: Diane Parker

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**PURPOSE / SUMMARY**

The Adaptations Policy for Council owned homes has been amended as advised by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman, this is in line with legislation and case law.

This report gives an update of how the amendments to the policy has impacted the Council, Rykneld Homes Limited and tenants requiring adaptations to their homes since implementation.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. To give Scrutiny an update on the impacts of the mandatory amendments to the Adaptations Policy.
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**IMPLICATIONS**

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**Finance and Risk:** Yes  No

**Details:**

There is a financial implication to the Council as adaptations to Council owned homes are funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). This is a statutory duty for the Council.

The amendments made to the policy are in line with legislation and recent case law which may increase the number of adaptations per annum.

On Behalf of the Section 151 Officer

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**Legal (including Data Protection):**

**Yes**

**No**

**Details:**

The Adaptations Policy is developed within a legislative framework and reflects national statutory guidance. Data protection will be in conjunction with the Councils and Rykneld Homes Limited's existing policy and procedures and will be compliant with legislation, including data protection laws.

On Behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

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**Staffing:** **Yes**

**No**

**Details:**

This will be included within existing officer workloads.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

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## DECISION INFORMATION

<b>Decision Information</b>	
<p><b>Is the decision a Key Decision?</b>  A Key Decision is an executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more District wards or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p><b>NEDDC:</b>  <b>Revenue - £125,000</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Capital - £310,000</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	No
<p><b>Is the decision subject to Call-In?</b>  (Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</p>	No
<b>District Wards Significantly Affected</b>	All indirectly
<b>Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) details:</b>	
<p><b>Stage 1 screening undertaken</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed EIA stage 1 to be appended if not required to do a stage 2</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Stage 2 full assessment undertaken</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Completed EIA stage 2 needs to be appended to the report</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Consultation:</b>  <b>Leader / Deputy Leader</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <b>Cabinet</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <b>SMT</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Relevant Service Manager</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  <b>Members</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Public</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <b>Other</b> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Details: The Local Government &amp; Social Care Ombudsman</p>

<p><b>Links to Council Plan priorities;</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>A great place that cares for the environment</b></li> <li><b>A great place to live well</b></li> <li><b>A great place to work</b></li> <li><b>A great place to access good public services</b></li> </ul>
<p>A great place to live well</p>

## REPORT DETAILS

- 1 **Background** (reasons for bringing the report)

- 1.1 The Council has oversight and overall responsibility for adaptations to Council owned accommodation.
- 1.2 Rykneld Homes Limited has delegated responsibility to apply the Adaptations Policy on the Council's behalf.
- 1.3 The Adaptation Policy embeds the procedures to deliver minor and major adaptations which support tenants to maintain independent living in properties which will meet their needs.

## **2. Details of Proposal or Information**

2.1 To right a wrong the Ombudsman suggested that we write to applicants who were originally refused an adaptation, referring them to the Environmental Health department for a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) assessment:

- 28 DFG letters were sent to tenants
- 7 adaptations were completed through the Environmental Health Panel

### **2.2 Old Policy – From April 2023 to March 2024**

- 102 adaptation requests were received in 23/24
- 37 were declined in 23/24
- Approximate cost of adaptations completed in 23/24 was- £501,678
- 1 tenant agreed to a supported move

### **2.3 Amended Policy – April 2024 to end of January 2025**

- 79 adaptation requests were received
- 9 adaptation requests were declined, the reasons for this are as follows:
  - 3 tenants requested a supported move, negating the major adaptation
  - 5 requests were not feasible
  - 2 requests did not meet the hardstanding criteria
- The approximate cost of adaptations completed was £395,266
- Major adaptation works waiting to be allocated has an approximate cost of £69,000
- No appeals have been received
- No new referrals have been sent to Environmental Health following the implementation of the amended policy
- Waiting times approximately 8 weeks – the waiting times is expected to increase slightly to approximately 12/16 weeks

When showing a breakdown of what specific adaptations have been requested some of the 79 referrals received contain requests for more than one major adaptation therefore the figure below is higher than the 79 stated:

- 7 x Path widening/improved access
- 7 x Ramped/ level access
- 58 x Level access shower
- 6 x Hardstanding
- 1 x Door entry system

- 19 x Straight stairlift
- 5 x Curved stairlift
- 2 x Wash/dry toilet
- 2 x Shower over bath
- 1 x Conversion of outhouse to create level access bathing

2.4 Following the Adaptations Panel Rykneld Homes Limited visit all tenants who have requested major adaptations to discuss their long-term housing need and provide the option of a supported move, with priority banding should they wish to consider this. Unfortunately, this is not a desirable option and in most cases the offer is declined.

**25. Impact on Tenants**

The amended policy has had a positive impact as adaptation requests are agreed in line with the national DFG criteria, which allows tenants to remain living independently in their homes.

**26. Impact on Council/Rykneld Homes Limited**

Adaptations to Council Homes are funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), if requests for major adaptations increase the cost to the Council will continue to rise.

Rykneld Homes Limited are seeing an increase in requests for multiple adaptations in houses, whilst these properties can be advertised as adapted when they become void, the demand is not always there. Straight stairlifts can be removed and use in other properties as reconditioned but they are unable to reuse curved stairlifts as these are made to measure, some may be used for parts, but this is not always the case. As curved stairlifts cost in the region of £5000/£6000 this can add up to a considerable loss.

27. It is difficult to forecast what adaptations requests will be received as Rykneld Homes Limited are unable to determine how many referrals will be sent from Derbyshire County Council’s Adult Care each month, however there is a noticeable rise for multiple adaptations to properties, for example, level access showers and stairlifts as well as ramped access and hardstanding installations.

**3 Reasons for Recommendation**

3.1 To give the scrutiny panel an update on the impact of the policy amendments.

**4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection**

4.1 There are no alternative options as the policy is within a legal framework.

**DOCUMENT INFORMATION**

Appendix No	Title

<p><b>Background Papers</b> (These are unpublished works which have been relied on to a material extent when preparing the report. They must be listed in the section below. If the report is going to Cabinet you must provide copies of the background papers)</p>	