

Bolsover District Council

**Extraordinary Meeting of the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee on 26 April
2022**

Review of Council-owned Adapted Accommodation

Report of the Chair of Customer Services Scrutiny Committee

Classification	This report is Public
Report By	Joanne Wilson, Scrutiny & Elections Officer, 01246 242385, joanne.wilson@bolsover.gov.uk
Contact Officer	Joanne Wilson, Scrutiny & Elections Officer, 01246 242385, joanne.wilson@bolsover.gov.uk

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

- To present to Scrutiny the completed report for the recent Review of Council-owned Adapted Accommodation.

REPORT DETAILS

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

- 1.1 The Customer Services Scrutiny Committee agreed to undertake a Review of Council-owned Adapted Accommodation, as part of the 2021-22 Work Programme.
- 1.2 The issue was initially raised via an Executive report in April 2021, highlighting the need to evaluate our supply of family sized adapted accommodation. It was noted that the Council had recently been approached by applicants seeking very specific accommodation as a result of having younger family members with disabilities. Although these applications are relatively rare, they had raised the issue of the supply of family-sized adapted accommodation.
- 1.3 Under the Equality Act 2010 the Council has a duty to make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities to ensure they receive the same services, as far as this is possible, as someone who is not disabled. A disability under this Act is defined as a physical or mental impairment that has a 'substantial' and 'long-term' negative effect on the ability to do normal daily activities. 'Substantial' and 'Long-term' mean:

- 'substantial' is more than minor or trivial, i.e. it takes much longer than it usually would to complete a daily task like getting dressed
- 'long-term' means 12 months or more, i.e. a breathing condition that develops as a result of a lung infection.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

2.1 The aim of the review was:

- To ensure that the Council has adequate plans and processes in place to maintain the required level of adapted accommodation for both individuals and families.

2.2 The objectives agreed were:

- Review of current policies and procedures
- Completion of an analysis of existing adapted stock inc. family-sized stock
- Assessment of demand against demographic profile of area.
- Assessment of current principles defining categorisation of stock as a 'disabled adapted property'

2.3 The key issues identified for investigation were as follows:

- Ensuring new supply through design and location of new stock – Bolsover Homes
- Location of existing stock across District
- Use of Housing management Officer information when assessing applications
- Existing approach for property categorisation
- Process for assessing demand/future demand
- Current cross-team working

2.4 The Committee met on six occasions in total and sought evidence by way of:

- Internal enquiries to establish existing policy and procedures and comparison of our policy approach with other local authorities.
- An assessment of our current supply of adapted accommodation.
- An analysis of the Districts profile in terms of health and disability and where hotspots for long-term ill health correlated to our stock profile.
- An evaluation of our procedure for categorising stock as disabled adapted.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 The Committee have put together ten recommendations which will hopefully assist the Council in improving our policy and procedures in relation to allocation and management of adapted accommodation.

3.2 The key findings arising from the review are:

- That a number of the Council's existing practices and procedures for allocation are satisfactory in addressing service delivery in this area.
- That the revised approach to officer meetings with DCC is working well to review applications and identify a clear course of action for the tenant.
- That the Council's approach to design of new stock via Bolsover Homes will ensure good quality housing and an increased supply of family-sized accommodation.
- That a revision is required to our existing policy which Members feel is met by the proposed draft which Scrutiny helped to develop.
- That the range of procedures identified during the course of the review are developed to support the effective implementation of the new Policy.
- That in order to aid officers to see stock availability at a glance, the data is mapped in both our GIS software and our data profiling tool, to aid future stock management and development.
- That the demographic profile will fill current knowledge gaps and aid future planning of additional stock.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 While the number of requests for family-sized adapted accommodation is far lower than for households without children or older person's accommodation, the Council still has a duty to provide accommodation that meets the needs of the tenants. As such a 'do nothing' approach was not an option and a review of the service area was required.
- 4.2 Executive could choose not to endorse the recommendations of the review, where they feel the course of action recommended is beyond the delivery capacity of the Authority.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Committee endorses the recommendations of the review outlined in section 2 of the attached report.
2. That Committee submits the report to Executive for approval, in accordance with the Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference – Part 3.6 (3) of the Constitution.
3. That following approval by Executive, monitoring of these recommendations by Committee takes place over a twelve month period via the PERFORM system with an update report to Committee at the end of the monitoring period.

IMPLICATIONS:

Finance and Risk: Yes No

Details:

None from this report. Suggested action for the service can be contained within existing budgets.

On behalf of the Section 151 Officer

Legal (including Data Protection): Yes No

Details:

In carrying out scrutiny reviews the Council is exercising its scrutiny powers as laid out in s.21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and subsequent legislation which added/amended these powers e.g. the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

The Council has a statutory duty under s.149 Equality Act 2010 to have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity and to eliminate discrimination.

On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council

Staffing: Yes No

Details:

There are no staffing implications from this report.

On behalf of the Head of Paid Service

DECISION INFORMATION

<p>Is the decision a Key Decision? 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>Revenue - £75,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Capital - £150,000 <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>Please indicate which threshold applies</i></p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p>	<p>No</p>

District Wards Significantly Affected	None
Consultation: Leader / Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Members <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	Yes Details: Relevant Service Managers and Portfolio Holder engaged during the review process.

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy and Environment.
The review supports the Corporate Ambition of 'Customers' and the Priority of 'Providing excellent services', and indirectly supports the Corporate Target CUS.08 - Maintain high levels of tenant satisfaction with council housing and associated services.

DOCUMENT INFORMATION	
Appendix No	Title
1	Review of the Council-owned Adapted Accommodation

Background Papers
<i>(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 Executive you must provide copies of the background papers).</i>
Please contact Scrutiny & Elections Officer where further information is required.