

BOLSOVER DISTRICT COUNCIL

Meeting of the Customer Services Scrutiny Committee on 29th September 2025

Welfare Adaptation Policy

Report of Councillor Smith Portfolio Holder with Responsibility for Housing

Classification	This report is Public
Contact Officer	Deborah Whallett, Housing Services Manager

PURPOSE/SUMMARY OF REPORT

To consider and provide comment on the updated Welfare Adaption Policy

REPORT DETAILS

1. Background

- 1.1 Bolsover District Council has 4940 housing properties. The Council is committed to providing suitable housing to meet the needs of its residents and housing adaptations can play an important role in allowing people to live independently in comfort and safety in their own home.
- 1.2 The Welfare Adaptation Policy ("the Policy") provides a framework for the provision of adaptations to the homes of tenants living in Council accommodation. This could be in their current home or rehousing to suitable accommodation that may already be adapted and would meet their housing need.
- 1.3 For the purpose of this Policy, an adaptation is alterations or addition to the property to make it safer and easier to move around the home and do everyday tasks.

2. Details of Proposal or Information

- 2.1 The Council approved the Welfare Adaptation Policy in May 2022. This set out who can apply for a Welfare Adaptation and the procedure we follow when considering requests. To be eligible for an adaptation the tenant or a member of the tenant's household must be an occupant of a BDC property using this as their permanent or principal home.

- 2.2 The Policy, also provides definitions of adaptations at paragraph 4.2. Minor adaptations are simple, cost effective solutions to assist a person to live independently. Examples include grab rails, small external handrails and over bath showers. These tend to be under £1000. In the last financial year we have undertaken 42 minor adaptations.
- 2.3 Major adaptations are valued over £1000 and are generally structural changes to a property, for example, replacing a bath with a level access shower or wet room, hard-standing/drive ways and stair lifts. In the last financial year we have undertaken 141 major adaptations.
- 2.4 The Policy is now due for renewal. As part of the review process, we held several sessions with the various officers involved in the Welfare Adaptation process, including a representative from Derbyshire County Council. In addition, we reviewed the Housing Ombudsman Good Practice Guidance issued in February 2025 regarding disabled adaptations in social housing.
- 2.5 We invited several tenants who had been through the Welfare Adaptation process to form a working group to discuss their experiences, make suggestions for improvement to the Policy and Process. The key theme was around improved communication during the process. As a result of which we have implemented an additional step within the process regarding the applicant being notified in writing about the application, outlined at paragraph 4.5. We have also stated the applicant will be notified of the reasons for refusal in writing and be provided details of who they are able to appeal the decision (paragraph 4.9).
- 2.6 We have amended the Policy to be clearer with regards to what works we can and will undertake to ensure that we are managing expectations. The key changes within the policy are as follows;
- Eligibility – we have added that the occupant must be using the property as their permanent or principal home for 12 months or more.
 - Where a stair lift is required in a block of flats this will only be considered following a feasibility and fire risk assessment.
 - Feasibility assessment's will be undertaken when looking at the provision of hard standing for wheelchairs users or where this could provide a more economical solution to provide a hard standing that providing additional paths/ramping from the roadside.
 - Ramping for self-purchased wheelchairs or mobility scooters may not be considered unless assessed as a necessary requirement by an Occupational Therapist or other suitably qualified medical professional.
 - Where a level access shower is required in properties at first floor or above, this can be considered following a feasibility and/or accommodation needs assessment.
 - Should alternative suitable accommodation become available prior to work commencing we can make this as an alternative offer to the adaption agreed.
 - We have removed reference to £500 rent arrears threshold, rather stating where there are any arrears, that we make contact with the applicant to ensure a payment plan is in place and being adhered to prior to works being carried out.

3. Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 It is considered good practice to have a policy which sets out the Council's approach to Welfare Adaptations. Having a robust policy protects the Council, both when it makes decisions to make adaptations and in those limited circumstances when we have no alternative but to refuse the request.

4 Alternative Options and Reasons for Rejection

- 4.1 The policy is considered necessary so that members of the public are aware of the adaptations we are able to undertake, the process we will follow and provides an appeals process. The changes made are based on Ombudsman recommendations and comments from our tenants.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

1. That the Scrutiny Committee review and provide comments on the updated Welfare Adaptation Policy prior to final approval by Executive.

Approved by Councillor Smith, Portfolio Holder for Housing

IMPLICATIONS:

<u>Finance and Risk</u>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Details: There are no additional financial implications arising from this report, funding for welfare adaptations is already included in the medium term financial plan. On behalf of the Section 151 Officer		
<u>Legal (including Data Protection)</u>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Details: There are no legal implications arising from the report or Policy. On behalf of the Solicitor to the Council		
<u>Staffing</u>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Details: There are no staffing implications arising from the report. On behalf of the Head of Paid Service		
<u>Equality and Diversity Impact and Consultation</u>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

Details

On behalf of Information, Engagement and Performance Manager

Environment **Yes** ☐ **No** ☒

Please identify (if applicable) how this proposal/report will help the Authority meet its carbon neutral target or enhance the environment.

Details:

On behalf of Climate Change Officer

DECISION INFORMATION:

<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Please indicate which threshold applies:</p> <p>Is the decision a Key Decision? A Key Decision is an Executive decision which has a significant impact on two or more wards in the District, or which results in income or expenditure to the Council above the following thresholds:</p> <p>Revenue (a) Results in the Council making Revenue Savings of £75,000 or more or (b) Results in the Council incurring Revenue Expenditure of £75,000 or more.</p> <p>Capital (a) Results in the Council making Capital Income of £150,000 or more or (b) Results in the Council incurring Capital Expenditure of £150,000 or more.</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>(a) <input type="checkbox"/> (b) <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Is the decision subject to Call-In? <i>(Only Key Decisions are subject to Call-In)</i></p> <p>* Is the Call-in period to be waived in respect of the decision(s) proposed within this report <i>(decisions may only be classified as exempt from call-in with the agreement of the Monitoring Officer and the relevant Scrutiny Chair)</i></p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> *No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>District Wards Significantly Affected: (to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the District)</p> <p>Please state below which wards are affected or tick All if all wards are affected:</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>All <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Consultation: (this is any consultation carried out prior to the report being presented for approval)</p> <p>Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Deputy Leader <input type="checkbox"/> Executive <input type="checkbox"/> SLT <input type="checkbox"/> Relevant Service Manager <input type="checkbox"/> Members <input type="checkbox"/> Public <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Presented to Housing Stock Management Group</p>

Links to Council Ambition: Customers, Economy, Environment, Housing

DOCUMENT INFORMATION:

Appendix No	Title
A	Updated Welfare Adaptation Policy