

## HOMES POLICY DEVELOPMENT GROUP 20 JULY 2021

### AIDS & ADAPTATIONS POLICY

**Cabinet Member(s):** Councillor Bob Evans  
**Responsible Officer:** Simon Newcombe, Corporate Manager for Public Health, Regulation and Housing

**Reason for Report and Recommendation:** To provide Members of the Policy Development Group and opportunity to review the proposed update to the Aids & Adaptations Policy.

The reason for the recommendation is to for allow for formal adoption of the updated policy.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):** That Members recommend to Cabinet that they approve the revised Aids & Adaptations Policy as attached in Annex 1.

**Relationship to Corporate Plan:** The Aids & Adaptations Policy is key to ensuring that tenants with disabilities are supported to have access to facilities as set out by medical and related professional opinion, in accordance with individual need and ability in order to continue living in their home. This links to the wider Homes priority within the Corporate Plan 2020-24 as well as the Community priority and specifically opportunities to address public health issues and disparities to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone in Mid Devon including our Council housing tenants.

**Financial Implications:** The financial implications will be contained within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). More information on financial context is provided in Section 5.0 of the report.

**Budget and Policy Framework:** this is one of a suite of housing policies that ensure we are compliance with the regulatory framework set out below and is also consistent with the draft Housing Strategy 2021-25.

**Legal Implications:** It will be necessary to ensure that the Aids & Adaptations Policy addresses all the legal obligations the Council has as a Landlord under within the parameters of The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970, The Housing Act 1985, Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, Equality Act 2010, The Care Act 2014 and The Housing Regulatory Framework, specifically the Home Standard 2015.

**Equality Impact Assessment:** There is a suite of housing and repairs related policies. The use of these helps to ensure that service delivery is consistent and fair. There is a regulatory requirement for registered providers of social housing to tailor their service to meet the needs of the tenants and the Housing Service requests diversity data from tenants to enable compliance to be monitored.

**Risk Assessment:** The management of circa 3000 homes for some of our most vulnerable tenants contains many risks. These risks are managed at a service level.

## 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The last approved version (v2.3) of the Aids & Adaptations Policy was published in September 2016 and is due for review.
- 1.2 This draft updated version (v3.2) has been reviewed and updated to reflect some clarification based on delivery experience, further reference to relevant legislation, updates on financial thresholds, timescales and also exceptions. The main purpose of this is to better manage our tenants' expectations, to make the best use of Council housing stock and to form the basis of our operational process.

## 2.0 Proposed Changes to the Policy

- 2.1 If accepted, the proposal is for detailed changes to the previous policy to be published for officer use and tenant reference. For members benefit, the full policy is attached and a summary of the key changes is given below.
- Ramps, clarified to refer to as small ramps under Minor Adaptions as larger ramps are likely to be Major Adaptations (Section 4.1)
  - An eligible child must be under 18 and living at the property as their main permanent residence (Section 4.1)
  - Target completion dates added (Section 8.4)
  - Threshold requirement for contribution towards works changed for works costing over £1000 to £5000 (Section 9.2)
  - Right to buy information added (Section 20.0)
  - Appeals, disputes and complaints sections added (Sections 21.0 and 22.0)
- 2.2 This policy has also been aligned with the latest tenancy agreements.
- 2.3 We have taken into consideration tenant feedback, comments, and complaints received since this policy was last reviewed, and provided greater clarity to tenants requesting adaptations.
- 2.4 The term of the policy has been extended to 5 years and therefore will next be due review in 2026 or sooner if there are relevant legal or statutory guidance changes.

## 3.0 Tenant Consultation

- 3.1 The Housing 'Tenants Together' group have not been consulted on this policy and their comments taken into consideration. The group has not been functioning in its normal format during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## 4.0 Implementation

- 4.1 This policy will be published on the Council website, as well as Intranet shared policies. We also plan to publish via our social media pages to reach those who use these methods of information sharing. The points of clarification are intended to benefit tenants as much as it is the council.

4.2 Implementation of this policy will be supported by action from both the Building Services and Housing teams as a combined Mid Devon Housing service.

## 5.0 Financial Context

5.1 Maintaining the Councils housing stock is the largest ongoing element of the Councils capital programme.

5.2 Clarification of this policy and strict adherence to it should ensure that tenants with disabilities have access to homes suitable for their needs. If properly implemented,

5.3 There are no additional resource implications as a direct result of this policy.

## 6.0 Recommendation

6.1 In accordance with the above, it is recommended that Members recommend to Cabinet that they approve the revised Aids & Adaptations Policy as attached in Annex 1.

### Contact for more Information:

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### Circulation of the Report:

Members of the Housing PDG  
Cllr Bob Evans, Cabinet Member for Housing and Property Services  
Leadership Team  
Corporate Management Team  
Service/Operations Managers  
Legal Services

### List of Background Papers:

Current MDDC Housing Aids & Adaptations Policy  
<https://www.middevon.gov.uk/residents/housing/council-housing/strategies-and-policies/>

**Annex 1 – Proposed updated Aids & Adaptions Policy May 2021 v3.2**

(attached separately)