

 Executive 10TH June 2009		Agenda Item No.
Title	Adoption of the Warwickshire County Council Accessible Housing and Inclusive Design Strategy 2008-2012	
For further information about this report please contact	Alison Simmons – 01926 456403	
Service Area	Housing and Property Services	
Wards of the District directly affected	All	
Is the report private and confidential and not for publication by virtue of a paragraph of schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, following the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006	No	
Date and meeting when issue was last considered and relevant minute number	Not applicable	
Background Papers		

Contrary to the policy framework:	No
Contrary to the budgetary framework:	No
Key Decision?	Yes
Included within the Forward Plan? (If yes include reference number)	Yes

Officer/Councillor Approval		
With regard to officer approval all reports <u>must</u> be approved by the report author's relevant director, Finance, Legal Services and the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).		
Officer Approval	Date	Name
Deputy Chief Executive		Bill Hunt
Chief Executive		Chris Elliott
CMT		
Section 151 Officer		Mike Snow
Legal		Peter Oliver
Finance		Sandra Jones
Portfolio Holder(s)		Cllr Grainger
Consultation Undertaken		
Please insert details of any consultation undertaken with regard to this report.		
<p>Consultation and discussions on the formation of the Strategy has been undertaken through the :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warwickshire Accessible Housing Strategic Advisory Group for Adaptations • Warwickshire Accessible Housing Project Board • County Heads of Housing 		
Final Decision?	Yes	
Suggested next steps (if not final decision please set out below)		

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks authority for the adoption of the Warwickshire County Council Accessible Housing and Inclusive Design Strategy 2008-2012 and participation in partnership working to achieve its objectives.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Executive approves the adoption of the Warwickshire County Council Accessible Housing and Inclusive Design Strategy 2008-2012 (see Appendix 1).

- 2.2 That the Executive approves participation in partnership working to achieve the Strategy's objectives which are:-

- To enable older and disabled people to remain and live independently in suitable accommodation.
 - To maximise the provision of more inclusively designed housing and the utilisation of adapted housing.
 - To streamline systems in order to deliver adaptations with minimal delay.
 - To promote, encourage and ensure fair access regardless of race, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, religion or belief.
 - To provide a service which is outcome focused, evidence based and is value for money

3. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The ageing society poses one of our greatest housing challenges. A number of demographic and social trends are influencing the demand for appropriate adaptations, housing, support, and health and care services over the coming decades:

- The number of people in all age bands over 60 years is increasing
- The number of older people who have a physical and /or mental frailty is increasing
- Most older people want to stay in their own homes longer
- The expectations and aspirations of people are higher than before
- Lack of appropriate options e.g. residential care, Extra-Care sheltered housing is delaying transfers from hospitals to more appropriate settings
- New homes being designed should take into account the needs of disabled and older people
- More independent options
- Less waiting time for adaptations and equipment
- More flexibility and choice in housing care and support options and clearer information and advice on what is available.

- 3.2 The Council need to plan housing and the place we live in to reflect the changes that occur over a lifetime, so that people are not excluded by design as they grow older and frailer.

- 3.3 The Government wants every locality to have a single community based support system, which focuses on all aspects of what people need to maximise their health and wellbeing and to participate in family and community life. The right of the individual disabled person to determine the kinds of services and support they need will be at the heart of this reformed system.
- 3.4 Partners and key stakeholders across the County all have a part to play in the delivery of services to the ageing population but are unable to meet this need on their own at a local level and have joined together, in partnership, to formulate the Strategy. All the partners and stakeholders are required to take corporate ownership of the strategy to ensure that the adaptation service both locally and across the County is fit for purpose and is delivered sensitively within a timeframe that is made explicit to our residents.
- 3.5 The Countywide Strategic Advisory Group for Adaptations has overseen the development of this strategy for Adaptations. A Project Board has been set up to implement the strategy, and the Strategic Advisory group will monitor and evaluate the progress of the implementation of the strategy by the Project Board.
- 3.6 The level of resources available to meet the demand is likely to be always below that required. Good joint working relationships will be essential to maximise and make best use of available resources.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTION CONSIDERED

- 4.1 The status quo is unsustainable in terms of service delivery and the supply of suitable housing, so doing nothing is not an option.
- 4.2 The Council consider that costs and value for money are equal in importance to quality when appraising the options for future service delivery. It is recognised that in the current climate that both the Council and its partners are keen to see demonstrable efficiencies in service delivery, but not if this results in a poorer service to customers.
- 4.3 The Government proposes that, from 2010-11, the DFG will be paid to local authorities as part of the Single Capital Pot (SCP) and this in effect means that funding for a number of programmes will be pooled together, it will then be for local authorities to determine, against local priorities, how they best use these funds.
- 4.4 Therefore by not adopting the Strategy and not participating in the partnership to implement and plan for the changes in funding stream will place the Council at a disadvantage when the changes in the funding proposals are introduced.

5. BUDGETARY FRAMEWORK

- 5.1 The Strategy framework integrates both the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) adaptations and the private sector Disabled Facilities Grants.
- 5.2 The HRA is the funding that is spent on adaptations in the social housing sector. Where a Council has its own stock it is required to keep a separate set of accounts for all the income received and expenditure made in relation to that Council housing called the HRA. A person living in Council housing may qualify for a Disabled

Facility Grant (DFG) but the council receives no DFG funding for an HRA property, instead being required to fund that adaptation from its HRA.

- 5.3 The DFG funding is part funded by the Government and the Council, currently a 60% - 40% split.
- 5.4 RSL landlords are expected to fund minor adaptations from within their own resources.
- 5.5 Currently the Housing Revenue Account is ring fenced specifically to be spent on Council housing and therefore it would not be appropriate to consider this for inclusion in a single County pot.
- 5.6 Similarly the money received for Disabled Facilities Grants in the private sector is applied for on a District basis at present, although in the future the funding will be un-ring fenced, so again this is in appropriate at this time.
- 5.7 Some of the projects identified within the Strategy may need additional resources for research and implementation and others could have staffing implications. Where a case can be made for the need for additional resources or a change in staffing requirements a further report will be brought to Executive detailing the proposals.

6. POLICY FRAMEWORK

- 6.1 The adoption of the Strategy and partnership working to improve service delivery are in line with corporate and service priorities as set out in the Corporate Strategy.

7. BACKGROUND

- 7.1 Housing adaptations have the power to transform lives. Outcomes that have been repeatedly observed include improved mental health, improved quality of life, reduced fear of accidents and the prevention or deferral of admission to residential care.
- 7.2 This Strategy has been developed to improve the provision of adaptations and housing. It provides a local framework for the future service delivery and brings together partners who jointly work to provide the adaptations.
- 7.3 The strategy for future developments in Warwickshire has to be based on the population of older people and people with disabilities and the likely changes over the next 5 – 10 years. The 2001 Census Statistics stated that in Warwickshire there were 16.8% people with a limiting long-term illness compared to a national figure of 17.9%, although in Nuneaton and Bedworth it is 19.1% of the population.
- 7.4 The District and County Councils and other agencies need to estimate the likely need for the service and to develop plans that will meet the current and future needs. The demographic projections are important in helping to plan for the rising demands likely to be generated by an ageing population and for increases in the life expectancy of disabled children and adults.
- 7.5 National research demonstrated that the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) system is effectively targeting those in greatest need, but the system faces major challenges from increased costs, increased requests for assistance and limited budgets.

- 7.6 The Audit Commission and other bodies have asserted that increased investment in housing adaptations and equipment would bring significant savings to the National Health Service and to Social Services budgets, but funding and structures, compounded by the lack of clear evidence, have created barriers to such investment (Haywood and Turner 2007).