

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **CABINET**

DATE: **TUESDAY, 21 MAY 2013**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

SUBJECT: **IN-HOUSE DISABLED ADAPTATIONS TEAM**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 Establishment of an in-house team to complete adaptations on Council stock.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 An in-house adaptations team was established and a pilot scheme was undertaken for a 12 month period to determine the cost effectiveness of undertaking this work in-house as opposed to using external contractors. The following report details the findings from the first 12 months of the new team.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 Provision of disabled adaptations is a statutory duty placed upon Council's and housing providers. On 1st February 2012 a proposal was presented to Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the establishment a dedicated team for the delivery of adaptations within Council properties. This was a move away from the existing system of tendering the work to a pool of local subcontractors.

3.02 The Committee supported the request within the report to pilot the team for a period of 12 months. This would allow the Service to evaluate the timeliness and cost effectiveness of the team, against the previous arrangements. It would also identify whether there are further benefits to closer integrated working.

3.03 Council house adaptations are funded via the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and £1M per annum is allocated for this purpose. However, as you will be aware the service is in Year 2 of a six year asset management strategy to bring its properties towards the Welsh Housing Quality Standard, (WHQS). Therefore, the more cost effective the provision of disabled adaptations is; the more money that can be made available for WHQS works.

3.04 ➤ Evaluation

It was envisaged that the in house team would provide: -

- Improved timescales
- A more cost effective service
- A more efficient service through improved communication and opportunities for adding value.

3.05 ➤ Improved Timescales

3.06 In order to evaluate the impact of the in-house team on the delivery of major adaptations, a direct comparison of the 6 months before and after the pilot has been carried out. The following are the average timescales by most popular work type.

Work Type	Average Timescale Before	Average Timescale After
Level Access Shower	128 Days	52 Days
Shower over Bath	58 Days	25 Days
Mixed work combinations	152 Days	43 Days

3.07 Stairlifts have been excluded from the above figures, as they are provided under a framework agreement which contains target timescales.

3.08 As can be seen from the figures to date, adaptations are being delivered much more quickly by the in house team than through the existing subcontractor arrangements. This is due to the effectiveness of the team, who have worked with Travis Perkins on a standard stock of items. It is also due to the removal of the need to tender each job on an individual basis.

3.09 ➤ Cost effective Service

3.10 In order to make a comparison between the cost per job, information has been considered over two six month periods. The two data sets are under the old subcontractor system and a second six month period under the new in house system. The in house team has completed 33 major disabled adaptations over the last 6 months. These jobs have been costed with an average value of £4646.18. This compares favourably with the subcontractor rate previously, where an average job was valued at £5,238.08. Therefore, the saving on an average major adaptation is £591.90 under the new arrangements. These figures are robust on the basis that the majority of major adaptations fall in to the three work types identified above.

3.11 This lower figure is largely as a result of stripping out the subcontractor profit element and the cost of materials was below the 35% originally anticipated, due to all materials (with the exception of stairlifts) being accessed through the Travis Perkins Stores Facility,

under the favourable terms of the Council's contract.

3.12 ➤ **Added value**

3.13 There have been a number of additional benefits to bringing the Service in house, in addition to improved timescales and reduced cost. The Disabled Adaptations Team reports to the same Operations Manager as the Void Team. This has provided collaborative opportunities for both teams. The result of which is that where properties have become void and there is an identified disabled tenant, adaptations can now be carried out at void stage. As well as improving timescales for adaptations, this also assists with property letting times and the 7 day housing management target. Previously adaptation work would have taken place after the property had been made available for letting.

3.14 Given that the majority of works are bathroom adaptations, the Disabled Adaptations Team have been in discussion with the Capital Works Team to secure additional funding to ensure that all adapted bathrooms meet WHQS. Previously, the adaptation would have been provided, e.g. a Level Access Shower installed and the remainder of the bathroom, if there were no repair issues, would not be improved. However, subject to formal agreement all bathroom adaptations will meet WHQS, further assisting the 6 Year Housing Asset Management Strategy and contributing to an earlier completion date for WHQS compliance.

3.15 Finally the team has further promoted communication between Housing Asset Management, Housing Renewal and Neighbourhood Housing Management. It allows the Housing Service to offer our tenants and future tenants a timely, cost effective and person centred service. It is our intention to introduce customer feedback for this element of the Service, to ensure it continues to meet our tenant's expectations.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 Cabinet agrees the permanent establishment of the in-house disabled adaptations team.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 The in-house team will be funded from the Capital Disabled Facilities Grant budget.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None as a direct result of this report, though works to maintain and improve the stock and repair and maintenance services provide a

direct benefit to the lives and living conditions for some of the poorest Flintshire residents.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None as a direct result of this report

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 None as a direct result of this report

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 The permanent establishment of the in-house adaptations team will create an additional 7 establishment positions (6 trades staff and one team leader). These positions will be incorporated into the Housing Asset Management structure as has been the case for the temporary 12 month pilot.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 No further consultation required.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 Fully consulted with Housing Overview Scrutiny who strongly support the proposal.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

None

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