

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C-122-2008/09

Date of meeting: 19 April 2009



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Portfolio: Housing.

Subject: Disabled Adaptations to Council Properties – Additional Funding.

Responsible Officer: Paul Pledger (01992 564248).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992 564470).

Recommendations/Decisions Required:

- (1) That an additional one off sum of £200,000 be allocated in 2009/10 funded from the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR); and**
- (2) That the Cabinet recommends to Full Council that a supplementary capital sum be approved in the sum of £200,000 from the MRR in 2009/10**
- (3) That a 6-month progress report be submitted to the Cabinet reviewing progress against the backlog of disabled adaptations.**

Executive Summary:

The Council receives recommendations from Social Care for disabled adaptations to Council properties to enable older and disabled tenants to remain in their home. The annual budget within the Housing Capital Programme, whilst increased on an annual basis in line with inflation, is insufficient to meet the demand. This report seeks to allocate an additional on-off lump-sum of £200,000 to help clear the backlog of adaptations in 2009/10 funded from the Major Repairs Reserve, and using existing framework agreements in place to undertake this specialist work.

Reasons for Proposed Decision:

Whilst the number of recommendations for disabled adaptations received from Social Care has been fairly similar over the last two years, the Council has been unable to fund the backlog of adaptations from the budget provision in the Housing Capital Programme. A one-off lump sum of £200,000 would help to clear the backlog of adaptations held on a waiting list.

Other Options for Action:

- (i) Not to introduce a one-off lump sum, and continue to operate a waiting list for adaptation recommendations using priorities provided by Social Care;**
- (ii) to introduce a greater or lesser lump-sum; or**
- (iii) to tender the work separately, using only local contractors based within the Epping Forest District.**

Report:

1. The budget for disabled adaptations within the Housing Capital Programme currently stands at £380,000 for 2009/10, which is increased on an annual basis by building cost increases to keep up with inflation as agreed by the Housing Portfolio Holder in April 2006.
2. In 2007/08 the Council received 356 recommendations for adaptations from Social Services in addition to 99 recommendations held over from the previous year. Of those, the Council was able to undertake and complete works to 381 properties. This meant 74 adaptations were held on the waiting list and carried forward for 2008/09. During 2008/9 the Council received a further 350 recommendations, added to the 74 cases carried forward. In total the Council has been able to complete 316 adaptations this year, leaving 108 recommendations that are being held over into 2009/10.
3. In order to try and clear the backlog of adaptations it is recommended that an additional one off sum of £200,000 be allocated in 2009/10 funded from the Major Repairs Reserve (MRR) and that the Cabinet recommends to Full Council that a supplementary capital sum be approved accordingly.
4. In August 2007, the Housing Portfolio Holder accepted tenders based on a framework agreement for up to 5 years from specialist contractors, including the Building Maintenance Works Unit, to undertake bathroom adaptations, which make up the majority of all recommendations for adaptations received from Social Services. This not only ensured the Council obtained value for money, but also enabled the Council to have sufficient resources in place to be able to undertake the volume of adaptations received from Social Care.
5. It should be noted that the two contractors appointed to undertake disabled adaptations are VSN Enterprises Ltd, based in Middlesex and Asphaltic Ltd who are based in Bow.
6. In order to monitor the progress of the works, it is recommended that a further report be submitted to the Cabinet after 6-months, setting out the progress towards clearing the backlog of disabled adaptations.

Resource Implications:

A supplementary estimate of £200,000 in 2009/10 funded from the Major Repairs Reserve.

Legal and Governance Implications:

None.

Safer, Cleaner and Greener Implications:

None.

Consultation Undertaken:

The Tenant and Leaseholder Federation.

Background Papers:

Housing Portfolio Holder decision dated 10 August 2007 in relation to acceptance of tender for disabled adaptations, and Cabinet decision dated 10 April 2006 in relation to an increase

in the annual budget for disabled adaptations.

Impact Assessments:

Disabled adaptations are undertaken to any Council dwelling for tenants who qualify based on an assessment by Occupational Therapists employed by Essex County Council Social Care. This enables tenants to remain in their own home.