



Committee and Date
Cabinet
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Item

Public



Home Adaptations Policy 2024

Responsible Officer:	Mark Barrow		
email:	Mark.Barrow@shropshire.gov.uk	Tel:	01743 258919
Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder):	Dean Carroll, Portfolio Holder for Housing and Assets		

1. Synopsis

- 1.1 The Council’s Home Adaptations Policy sets out guidance on the assistance available for home adaptations in Shropshire. This policy addresses the housing needs of disabled individuals, aiming to promote independent living by adapting their accommodation to enable them to remain in their homes.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory responsibility to provide Major Adaptations Grants to disabled property owners and tenants to facilitate access to, from and around the property to make the property safe for them.
- 2.2 This policy sets out the current position on financial assistance provided by the Council under the powers given by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002¹, which introduced a greater flexibility and discretionary power in providing housing assistance and funding to local authorities and applies to any residents living in owner-occupied homes, and housing association and private rented tenants.
- 2.3 The Housing Grants, Construction, and Regeneration Act 1996ⁱ, with amendments from the Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008, makes it the council’s legal duty to adapt homes for disabled people in

accordance with local, regional and national priorities, while considering available funding.

2.4 Shropshire Council may only use powers identified within the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) if there is a published local Housing Assistance policy (Home Adaptations Policy). This refreshed policy updates the Council's position and ensures that we can continue to operate in line with regulation.

2.5 The relevant Legislation is as follows:

- The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002
- The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- The Housing Act 2004
- The Housing Act 1985

2.6 Central government funding for Major Adaptations Grants in England was set to be £573 million in 2023/24 and to remain at this level in the next financial year and on 4 April 2023, an additional £102 million was announced as a capital top up. The grants are administered by local authorities (in England) and are aimed at enabling eligible disabled individuals to continue to live safely and independently at home through adaptations.

- Funds will be prioritised due to limited resources.
- Financial assistance is only available for properties which are located within the boundaries of Shropshire Council Local Authority.
- The Council will attach specific conditions to funding and tell applicants what these conditions are before it gives an approval for a particular funding stream.

2.7 Where there is a disabled person in a household, in many circumstances local authorities have a mandatory duty to offer financial assistance to help with the cost of adaptation work. This assistance is provided, in accordance with statute. The discretionary adaptations funding is subject to a maximum grant limit of **£100,000**, for adaptations to facilitate better access into and around the home and for essential provisions within it for the disabled applicant and their family. This maximum grant will be reduced by the assessed client contribution. All works will be carried out in the most cost-effective manner to meet the disabled person's needs.

2.8 It aligns with the Shropshire Plan 2022-2025¹ "Healthy People", which centres on priorities promoting healthy living, a robust economy, a sustainable environment, and an efficient organisation and focussing on reducing inequalities, across all areas, all of which are connected to housing initiatives. It focuses on addressing the housing needs of vulnerable populations in Shropshire, to include home adaptations

2.9 The policy seeks to enable the following specific aims:

- i. Increasing the percentage of vulnerable persons in the private sector whose accommodation meets the 'Decent Homes' standard.
- ii. Ensuring adequate conditions in rented accommodation. Meeting the statutory duties of the Council to respond to health and safety issues in housing.

¹ [The Shropshire Plan 2022-2025 | Shropshire Council](#)

- iii. Meeting the statutory duties of the Council in relation to provision of housing adaptations for disabled persons.
- iv. Meeting the recognised local needs and circumstances identified in the current Housing Strategy 2020-2025, Sustainable Affordable Warmth Strategy 2023-2030, The People's Directorate vision and plan 2024 – 2027 and the Independent Living and Specialist Accommodation strategy and the Preventing Homelessness and Rough Sleeping strategy regarding house conditions and their affect upon health, safety and our environment.

2.10 The Home Adaptations Policy replaces all previously published Housing Adaptations and Assistance Policies and will apply to all applications from 2024 implementation.

3. Recommendations

3.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the Home Adaptations Policy 2024 as set out in Appendix I.

Report

4. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

- 4.1 A clear Home Adaptations Policy directly supports the Council's key strategies including the Housing Strategy. The Policy and its delivery will have a positive impact for residents, particularly vulnerable households. Works facilitated through this Policy will enable residents to remain living in their home longer, reduce the risk of harm and illness as a result of housing conditions.
- 4.2 There are specific risks in not implementing a clear policy. Shropshire Council may only use powers identified within the Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) if there is a published local Housing Assistance policy (Home Adaptations Policy).
- 4.3 Monitoring arrangements will mitigate any risks and involve the following:
 - Continuously reviewing the Major Adaptations Register to track the uptake of services and identify any disparities or trends among different demographic groups. This will ensure that support is equitably distributed and accessible to all who need it.
 - Analyse the consultation feedback to identify any underrepresented groupings and develop targeted engagement strategies. This may involve reaching out through alternative channels or collaborating with community organisations that represent these groups.
 - Seeking out and learning from comparative good practice in other rural local authorities facing similar challenges, such as ageing demographic profiles and access to services. This could involve knowledge-sharing initiatives, networking with other authorities, or participating in relevant workshops.

- By regularly reviewing and incorporating insights from published Government Reviews we can ensure that our policies remain aligned with best practices and evolving standards in the field.
- Performance Reports provide valuable data and insights into the effectiveness and efficiency of home adaptations services. By analysing key metrics such as response times, customer satisfaction levels and outcomes achieved, we can identify areas of strength and areas needing improvement. This ongoing monitoring allows us to make informed decisions and alignments to optimise service delivery and better meet the needs of our community.

4.4 An Equality Impact Assessment (ESHIA) has been produced and is available as Appendix V

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 Shropshire Council is currently managing an unprecedented financial position as budgeted for with the Medium-Term Financial Strategy approved by Council on 29 February 2024 and detailed in our monitoring position presented to Cabinet on a monthly basis. This demonstrates that significant management action is required over the remainder of the financial year to ensure the Council's financial survival. While all Cabinet Reports provide the financial implications of decisions being taken, this may change as officers review the overall financial situation and make decisions aligned to financial survivability. Where non-essential spend is identified within the Council, this will be reduced. This may involve
- scaling down initiatives,
 - changing the scope,
 - delaying implementation, or
 - extending delivery timescales.
- 5.2 The policy document should make no material difference to finances as it is clearer presentation of the current position and does not extend eligibility for assistance, or types of assistance, to new groups or for new purposes.
- 5.3 All assistance provided through this policy is discretionary and is therefore subject to funding availability.
- 5.4 The Home Adaptations Policy enables the Council to effectively manage the housing and financial resources available, particularly in relation to assistance for people with disabilities, targeting funding assistance to those assessed to be in greatest need.
- 5.5 Should new grant funds be secured by the Council for the delivery of housing related assistance that is not covered by this policy the assistance criteria can be approved by the delegated powers held by the Council's Head of Paid Service in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

6. Climate Change Appraisal

- 6.1 The Home Adaptations Policy sets out the financial tools available to the Council for providing assistance to households, therefore there are no climate change implications to consider.

7. Background

- 7.1 Under The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 the Council has a statutory power to offer advice and discretionary financial assistance to owner occupiers, tenants and private sector landlords to improve the quality and availability of housing. Where a Local Authority provides any form of assistance within these powers, for example assistance with relocation, emergency repairs etc, it must have a published Housing (Home) Adaptations Policy
- 7.2 The Housing Renewal Assistance and Adaptations Policy of 2012 reflects approaches that are no longer current practice, and this updated Home Adaptations Policy now supersedes it. In the interim the department has continued to operate in accordance with the principles outlined in the previous policy.
- 7.3 The proposed Home Adaptations Policy 2024 is attached as Appendix I. of this report. The Policy links with national, regional and local strategic priorities. It aims to offer assistance to vulnerable households on an individual basis to help sustain the private sector for long term public benefit.
- 7.4 Under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, where there is a disabled person in a household, in many circumstances local authorities have a mandatory duty to offer a Major Adaptations Grant (MAG) to assist with the cost of adaptation work.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 We seek approval from Cabinet to approve and adopt the Home Adaptations Policy 2024.

List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information)

Local Member: *All Members*

Appendices

Appendix I: Home Adaptations Policy 2024 (pages 3 – 21)

Please note that the appendices referenced in this report, numbered II to IV, are contained within the Home Adaptations Policy document. For easy reference, the appendices can be found on the following pages of the policy.

Appendix II: Policy Framework (pages 23 – 29)

Appendix III: Major Adaptations Grant (MAG) Priority Pointing Information Sheet (pages 30 – 32)

Appendix IV: Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (pages 33 – 34)

Appendix V: Equality Social Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA) (separate document)
