



PRCC.48 13/14

**Prosperous Communities
Committee**

4th February 2014

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Subject: Disabled Facilities Grants Alternative and Independent Living

Report by:

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Purpose / Summary:

To provide elected members with information on the DFG alternatives project and request approval for the assisted move scheme policy

RECOMMENDATION(S):

- 1) That Members are asked to note the report and the development of the initiatives.**
- 2) That Members approve the policy for the assisted move scheme to enable it to commence in February 2014.**

IMPLICATIONS

Legal:

There are no legal implications in regards to the initiatives being undertaken. Each initiative will have the relevant policies and procedures in place and no application for a DFG will be jeopardised as a result of this policy.

The funding that has been allocated has been done so for specific purpose and is being used in that manner.

Financial : FIN 79/14

The Council has been awarded £250k in grant funding from LCC to deliver this project and it is being managed via existing resources. Full details on the allocation of this grant are shown in section 3.

These resources are already identified and allocated in the revenue and capital programmes.

The Council currently receives £250k per annum from DCLG to deliver its DFG programme. This budget is also topped up by £100k from the Councils capital reserves.

The overall aim of the DFG alternatives initiatives is to reduce the demand on the DFG budget and as a result reduce the need for the Council to invest its own capital into the project.

For assisted move, the financial costs have been estimated and capped at a specific amount. The offer to each individual person will be related to their specific needs and the discretionary element will only be utilised where it is necessary.

Staffing :

The funding awarded has enabled the appointment of a Housing, Health and Wellbeing Officer for a 12 month period, from November 13 to November 14. They are situated within the Housing and Communities Team.

This officer will lead on the development of the alternative initiatives and work closely with other officers who are responsible locally for DFGs, Home Choices and Health and Wellbeing.

Equality and Diversity including Human Rights :

A full impact assessment has been completed and is attached as Appendix 2. This provision of service is aimed at a specific client group and is offered as a service above and beyond what is already provided. It is not replacing or changing any current element of the service.

Risk Assessment :

The major risks associated with the independent living scheme are as follows:

Lack of take up – the initiatives proposed may not appeal to the client group that they are offered to.

Mitigation: evidence suggests that this client group will want to take up the initiatives available and the equality impact assessment support this in terms of best practice elsewhere. If the initiatives are not taken up then they will be reviewed.

Low level of single storey properties – the level of housing stock that is single story may be lower than then demand therefore finding appropriate suitable accommodation could be challenging.

Mitigation: a review of accommodation will be undertaken as part of the pilot and the level of available stock will be analysed as part of this. The pilot will test whether this is a barrier to delivery.

Financial – applicants may see the scheme as a way to access financial assistance.

Mitigation: all applicants will be fully assessed and will only be offered assistance if they meet the criteria. Discretionary payments will only be made when absolutely necessary.

Climate Related Risks and Opportunities :

None noted

Title and Location of any Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:

Call in and Urgency:

Is the decision one which Rule 14 of the Scrutiny Procedure Rules apply?

Yes

No

Key Decision:

Yes

No

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Alternatives and Independent Living

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Four initiatives have been developed as part of the DFG alternatives pilot project, which is being delivered by the Council through the award of funding from Lincolnshire County Council. The aim of these initiatives is to enable people to live independently for as long as possible and in accommodation that meets their physical and medical needs.
- 1.2 These initiatives are prevention focussed and offer a range of effective and preventative alternatives to DFG's, enabling DFG to be the intervention of last resort. The initiatives proposed are in line with the wider health and wellbeing agenda, and will reduce future demand for DFG's.
- 1.3 It is anticipated that the true benefit of the initiatives will be realised over a longer period of time, demonstrated by reduced demand for hospital admission and for adult social care services.
- 1.4 In November, the Council appointed a Housing, Health and Wellbeing Officer to deliver these initiatives and work to improve services within this area. The officer is on a 12 month fixed term contract, which will be reviewed in Autumn 2014.
- 1.5 These initiatives are being delivered in line with the wider programme for improving DFG services and are operationally linked. The information in this paper should not be confused with the proposals made previously regarding the future delivery of the DFG service.

2. Update on initiatives

There are four initiatives being developed, details of which are shown below:

2.1 Assisted Move Scheme

- 2.1.1 **Scope:** The scheme aims to assist people living in unsuitable accommodation to access housing which better meets their needs. Help will be available for all aspects of moving home including finding a new property, arranging the move and financing the move. The initiative will work with tenants moving between or into social housing. Tenants are eligible if they are either non-working age or disabled, and either under occupying or in accommodation that does not meet their physical or medical needs. Homeowners are not eligible for assistance under the scheme at this time.
- 2.1.2 The assistance provided will total no more than £2000, with the majority of this being a discretionary payment. There are around 900 persons in social housing, who are over 61 and are currently under occupying properties, some by up to 3 bedrooms. The scheme will be aimed at those individuals who are wishing to downsize to more suitable accommodation but may not have the means or assistance to do so. No individuals who

are under occupying will be forced to move under this scheme and those that wish to remain in their current property will do so.

2.1.3 Currently the average DFG grant costs the Council £5,500, therefore the use of the funds in this way presents a significant reduction in costs and provides the additional benefit of a larger property becoming available.

2.1.4 Updates:

- Eligibility criteria are relatively broad at this stage so as not to inhibit the pilot. This criteria will be reviewed should the scheme be extended beyond the pilot.
- Contact has been made with some local removal companies and the Gainsborough Furniture Resource Centre to ensure best value.
- Documentation, including policy document, has been developed and finalised. See appendix 1.
- A list of Registered Provider tenants who are over 61 and under occupying has been received. Contact will be made with these households to promote the scheme.
- A local Registered Provider informed us on 25/11/13 that each void costs £1600 in terms of safety checks and inspections, this will be considered within any assisted moves.
- Mutual exchanges via Homeswapper cost less to administer as fewer inspections are required so, subject to agreement by applicants, all those registering for CBL (Choice Based Lettings) as part of the Assisted Move Scheme will also be registered for Homeswapper.

2.2 Planned Maintenance Top Up

2.2.1 Scope: This initiative intends to future proof Registered Provider stock by improving the equipment and utilities that are installed when scheduled planned maintenance takes place. This requires the identification of appropriate properties, followed by their subsequent adaptation. The initiative will be focussed on properties that are deemed more suitable for DFGs (e.g. bungalows and ground floor accommodation) which are generally allocated to those with a need for ground floor, or adapted accommodation and are in locations where DFGs are likely to be required in the future.

2.2.2 The average cost of a DFG is currently circa £5,500. Completion of works via a planned maintenance top up reduces this cost to £1750.

2.2.3 Updates:

- Agreements made with a local Registered Provider at a meeting on 25/11/13. The Registered Provider will focus on bungalow stock and ground floor flats which are age banded over 55yrs. There are currently 35 bungalows in the work program and the inclusion of flats is also being considered. Further properties may be added in

based on refusals. It is agreed that the limit of this initiative, for financial reasons, will be 50 properties.

- There is potential to look at increasing the scope of work to include access ramps as part of wider work, but not until bathrooms are underway and if budget allows. It was agreed that we will work to a flat figure per bathroom so that it is consistent and easy to manage.

2.3 Lower Risk Future Proofing

2.3.1 Scope: It was proposed that a working arrangement be established with the West Lincolnshire Clinical Commissioning Group (WL CCG), in particular the area's Integrated Community Teams (ICTs). These teams would refer patients with a recent history of falls; increase in frailty; or social care input to our Independent Living Service. We would then aim to ensure that housing suitability is considered within any care assessments and from this the provision of minor adaptations or assistive technology can be put in place to reduce the risk of a full DFG being required in the future.

2.3.2 Updates:

- We have learned that a service similar to the future proofing initiative we had planned is to be provided under the new county-wide Health and Wellbeing Contract. To avoid duplication and confusion of referral pathways, we are therefore in the process of considering other possible uses of the Future Proofing budget and are currently exploring the idea of working with local developers via our Housing Enabler to upgrade a number of new build properties to a more accessible build standard.
- We are also looking to complete a review and data exercise to provide information on all of the accommodation that is available across all tenures for older persons and disabled persons.

2.4 Improved Pathways

2.4.1 Scope: This initiative will alter the current pathway for DFG referrals to improve the service for the applicant and ensure that they are provided with the appropriate pathway at the earliest possible stage. It is believed that this improvement to the pathway will reduce the eventual DFG applicants by between 10 and 20%. As a result this will see a reduction in the demand placed on the OTs.

2.4.2 Updates:

- A meeting was held on 11/11/13 at LCC Customer Service Centre. Individuals enquiring about DFGs via the Customer Service Centre who are not already suitably housed, for example because their physical or medical condition means they would benefit from ground floor accommodation, will be referred to WLDC to discuss alternative options. A DFG will then be considered as the intervention of last resort.

- An online form was proposed by LCC as the method for referrals to WLDC. LCC to develop online referral form to capture initial information and allow WLDC to make contact with applicants.
- Referrals will be dealt with at joint meetings held regularly between Home Choices, the Assisted Move Scheme and the DFG team.
- Applicants will then be placed into the appropriate pathway, which will provide a more effective service for them, but also minimise abortive officer resource.

2.5 General Updates

2.5.1 It was agreed at the 25/11/13 meeting with a local Registered Provider that a procedure/policy statement will be produced and approved to be used to determine property suitability for DFGs.

2.5.2 Except in extreme circumstances, it has been agreed that a local Registered Provider will not approve adaptations to properties that they consider unsuitable, for example a third floor flat or large family home.

2.5.3 It was agreed that cases where disabled or older persons have had previous adaptations but now cannot afford to stay at the property will be addressed on a case by case basis and that a thorough assessment of their situation needs to be undertaken before any moves are agreed or progressed. It may cost less to resolve the financial issues at the current property than to adapt a second property to facilitate a move.

3. Financial Information

The funding available for the project has been allocated as shown in the table below:

Initiative	Detail	Cost	Lead
Appointment of Early Intervention Officer	- Initially a 12 month contract to deliver the pilot initiatives.	Circa £25k per annum inc. on costs	WLDC
Assisted Move Scheme	- Provision of costs for assisting with move and resettlement. - Assistance provided to circa 20 households - Maximum available of £2k per household	£40k (20 households at max £2k each)	WLDC/ Acis
Planned Maintenance Top Up	- Exact number of properties to be identified (potentially 50) - Costs circa £1750 per property	£75k	WLDC/ Acis
Lower Risk Future Proofing	- Assistance provided to 20 households - Maximum available of £2500 per property	£50k	CCGs/ WLDC/ LCC

Improved Pathways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Change of approach rather than “capital” spend - Initial set up may require systems alterations - Training may be required depending on any system and process change required 	£10k	LCC/ WLDC
Total	- Budget £250k	£200k	

4. Governance

A steering group containing officers from all of the key partners is in place and meets on a bi-monthly basis. This group ensure that the initiatives are monitored and that the relevant actions are progressing.

Locally officers report to the Communities Board on a regular basis, which is followed by reports to Core Management Team and elected Members.

5. Recommendations

- a) **That Members are asked to note the report and the development of the initiatives.**
- b) **That Members approve the policy for the assisted move scheme to enable it to commence in February 2014.**

Appendix 1

Assisted Move Scheme – Draft Policy

a) Introduction

As part of the alternatives to Disabled Facilities Grant programme an assisted move scheme pilot is being developed to provide a service, which encourages people who are in accommodation that does not meet their physical / medical needs or who are under occupying their properties to move to more suitable accommodation. This scheme is currently open to those aged over 61 and those with a disability. The scheme covers the financial cost of the move and offers assistance with the following:

- Finding a suitable property
- Assisting with bidding on properties
- Arranging the move
- Packing up the home
- Setting up in the new home
- Contacting utilities providers and other agencies
- Change of address
- Signposting to other support agencies

Those eligible for the scheme can access as much or as little of this support as they require.

There are currently 930 known households of non-working age that are under occupying social housing in West Lindsey.

The provision of an assisted move scheme will provide a resource to encourage eligible people to review their current housing circumstance and help them to move from one property to another.

There is not currently a scheme of this type on offer for social housing tenants in West Lindsey and similar schemes deployed in other areas have worked successfully.

b) Eligibility

The assisted move scheme would be available to existing social housing tenants or tenants in the private rented sector who are:

- Over 61 OR Disabled
- AND
- In housing that is unsuitable because it does not meet their physical / medical needs OR Under occupying their current property

The suitability of an applicant's current property will be assessed as part of the approval process.

In the case of properties with bespoke adaptations our policy is to encourage individuals / households to stay in their adapted home and resolve any issues of under occupancy / affordability in partnership with their landlord and other support agencies.

c) Referrals

The scheme will operate on a referral basis and partners will actively attempt to seek applicants from the housing register and other agencies. There will also be publicity material for residents on display at Council premises and other organisations and events. This can be provided on request. Residents can self-refer if they fit the criteria above. Anyone who comes forward with housing needs and is not eligible for the scheme will be signposted to more appropriate support, for example from the Home Choices team.

d) Prioritisation of Cases

When applications are received, initially they will be worked on in date order. If the scheme has high demand, we will then look at prioritising cases.

e) Process

Stage 1: Application or referral received. If this is an expression of interest only, more information will be provided. Should the individual / household wish to go ahead they will be asked to complete an application form. Assistance to complete the form can be provided if required. The Independent Living team will acknowledge receipt of applications within 5 days of receipt.

Stage 2: Application reviewed by Independent Living team. Suitability of current property will be assessed. This includes looking at the property type, its layout, location, number of bedrooms and access into the property. A site visit may be required at this stage in some cases and supporting evidence, for example proof of age or disability, may be requested. Applicants will be informed of the outcome regarding their eligibility for the scheme within 21 days of receipt of application. Cases will be logged in Flare and Excel.

Stage 3: Home visit by Housing, Health and Wellbeing officer. Needs of the individual / household discussed and level of Assisted Move Scheme support agreed. Housing Register (Choice Based Lettings - CBL) application and Homeswapper registration completed. If the individual / household prefers, this stage can be completed by telephone rather than a home visit.

In the case of households with rent arrears, arrears will need to be cleared before the case can progress. Individuals / households in this situation will be encouraged to work with their landlord and relevant support agencies to agree a repayment plan.

Stage 4: Search for suitable properties. Tenants will be allocated a CBL band to indicate their level of priority in the bidding process. Some tenants will prefer to search for and bid on properties themselves, others will request that this is done on their behalf by the Housing, Health and Wellbeing officer. If a client wins the bidding cycle for a property they will then be able to view the property. Access costs / support can be provided to attend viewings and the Housing, Health and Wellbeing officer can help individuals / households to assess the location in terms of local amenities, transport links, etc. Individuals / households have the opportunity to decline the property after viewing. However, if clients have been offered 3 properties and refused them all, a review of their circumstances will be undertaken and it may result in them not being eligible for further help under the Assisted Move Scheme.

Stage 5: The move. Once a suitable property has been found clients must give notice at their current property. They can arrange as much or as little of the move as they want, the rest will be done by the Housing, Health and Wellbeing officer. Contracting removal companies and other suppliers will be done on a case by case basis. A minimum of three quotes will be obtained for any service. Removal companies and other providers are to be paid directly by the Council and the scheme will not pay family members to assist with the move. The Housing, Health and Wellbeing officer will discuss where the household intend to go on move day, what other concerns they have around the move and what support they require setting up in the new home. The officer can also offer assistance in packing and unpacking and provide support on the move day if this is required. Any clearance of unwanted items will be offered to the Gainsborough Furniture Resource Centre and any further clearance work required will be arranged by the Housing, Health and Wellbeing officer or the household themselves. Clients will be encouraged to think beforehand about which items they will / can bring with them to the new home.

Stage 6: Evaluation and ongoing support. The individual / household will be contacted shortly after the move to see how they are settling in and whether they require any further assistance such as signposting to local agencies / social activities. They will be asked to complete a customer satisfaction survey and return this to West Lindsey District Council. Those who are interested and able will be asked to join a peer support network to offer advice to those considering / worried about moving.

Complaints Procedure:

Clients are first asked to attempt to resolve their complaint directly with the officer who is dealing with their case. If this is not possible or does not resolve the issue complaints can be made via the West Lindsey District Council website or in writing. This team which deals with complaints is not involved with running the Assisted Move Scheme so has the appropriate independence to assess complaints. The Independent Living team will be notified of any action required in response to a complaint.

f) Benefits

An assisted move scheme will deliver multiple benefits:

Better usage of existing housing stock – bedrooms made available to meet current demand on waiting list. Current occupants rehoused into more suitable properties, which meet their needs. Less likelihood of future moves for the individuals, resulting in more sustained tenancies and fewer risks of homelessness.

Reduction of numbers of individuals on the Disabled Facilities Grant waiting list – individuals more suitably housed (and in adapted properties, where appropriate) are less likely to require a grant from the Council in the future for the provision of a DFG.

Reduction in level of adaptations carried out in unsuitable properties – assisted moves will ensure that properties under occupied and unsuitable for adaptation (e.g. 3 or 4 bed family homes) remain available to the general needs applicants on the housing register.

Provision of assistance to potentially vulnerable persons – increased contact and direct liaison with vulnerable individuals will allow other care issues to be identified and potentially resolved. Support and guidance will also ensure that stress during any moves is as minimal as possible.

Increased financial sustainability for individuals. For those downsizing this will potentially decrease rental and utility costs for the individual as well as providing them with a more manageable living environment.

Support to the local economy – the pilot will utilise local removal companies and local suppliers of carpets / furnishings where these are being provided.

Recycling and re use of unwanted furniture – local organisations such as the Gainsborough Furniture Resource Centre will be utilised for any house clearances and recycle any old and unwanted furniture that the individuals may have.

g) Target

The Council will aim to move at least 20 households under the pilot. The scheme is scheduled to be operational from January 2014 to 03/11/2014 and the final date for applications is Friday 1st August.

h) Performance Measures

The following measures will be monitored during the period of the pilot:

- Number of persons more adequately housed
- Number of referrals
- Number of bedrooms made available
- Moving costs vs provision of care/DFG costs (to include respite/health/hospital/social care)
- Customer satisfaction data
- Estimated income through the scheme to local economy

In addition to the ongoing monitoring of the pilot there will be a review and evaluation period from October 2014.

i) Costs

The Council will look to cover the following as part of an assisted move. These costs are estimated and will be reviewed during the pilot.

Estimated costs include:

		From 4 bed	From 3 bed	From 2 bed
Combination 1	Arrange and fund move and packing. Assist with set up of home, including utilities, change of addresses, benefits etc	£850 + Officer time	£700 + Officer time	£500 + Officer time
Combination 2	Arrange and fund move and packing of home	£850	£700	£500
Combination 3	Arrange and fund move	£455	£350	£300
Combination 4	Assistance finding a property. (To include if needed, arrangement of move and set up of home including utilities, change of address, benefits etc)	Officer time	Officer time	Officer time

*costs are based on averages of quotes received from 3 local removal companies

The above combinations are for illustrative purposes and do not constitute an exhaustive list of the possible combinations of support that could be provided. The level of assistance that an applicant requires will be determined as part of the assessment process.

Other costs:

The Council will endeavour to remove any additional barriers, which are preventing any individual from moving. It is expected that other costs may need to be incurred in order to ensure that moves are as successful as possible. This provision will be made on a case by case basis and be capped at £1000 per property.

The Council will not spend more than £2000 in total on any given move including removal costs and discretionary costs.

In cases where potential moves may be impacted by the need for an adaptation, the Council will consider this as part of its wider budget for independent living and disabled facilities grants and where possible offer assistance. This will be linked to an appropriate adult social care referral and the relevant grant funding criteria

Once the allocated budget limit is reached, no more funding will be available and this policy will be suspended.

j) Review

This policy will be reviewed at the end of the pilot scheme. Once the allocated budget limit is reached within the pilot and no more funding is available this policy will be withdraw for review.

Appendix 2

Part 1: Equality Impact Screening/Pre-Assessment¹

Name of Policy/Function/Strategy to be assessed: Assisted Move Scheme Pilot	Section/Directorate: Housing and Communities, Strategic Growth
Name of person responsible for assessment: Heather Jackson	Date of Screening: 03/12/2013 Initial Screening 15/01/2014 In Depth Screening
Policy Aims	
What is the purpose of the policy/function/strategy? What are its intended outcomes?	
<p>The purpose of the Assisted Move Scheme Pilot is to help older / disabled people living in unsuitable housing, either because the property does not meet their physical / medical needs or because they are under-occupying the property, move to more suitable accommodation. Individuals / households can be assisted to search for suitable properties and take part in the bidding process, book removal companies, deal with other agencies such as utilities suppliers, pack up their home, set up in their new home and work together to address any concerns / barriers to moving. The cost of the move will be covered by the scheme.</p> <p>Desired Outcomes are: Vulnerable people suitably housed. Better use made of existing housing stock. Reduction in spend to general public purse. Pilot information to be used to inform future policy development for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's).</p>	
Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the policy/function/strategy?	
<p>Older and disabled tenants in social housing and privately rented housing Housing Register Applicants Registered Providers (Landlords) Home Choices Team West Lindsey District Council Independent Living Service, including DFG Occupational Therapists Lincolnshire County Council Elected Members</p>	
Do the identified stakeholders stand to be positively or negatively affected by the policy/function/strategy?	
<p>Stakeholders largely stand to be positively affected. Tenants who move under the scheme will be suitably housed. No tenant would be asked to move against their will. The scheme provides greater choice of services and assistance to tenants.</p>	

¹ Part 1 should be completed by the Lead Officer and signed by the Service Manager. Refer to the [Internal EIA Guidance](#) for more information on what EIAs are, why they are important, when they should be completed, who should be involved, and how they should be done.

In the case of downsizing, family properties will be freed up which is of benefit both to families waiting to be housed, to Registered Providers and to the Home Choices team. The scheme aims to reduce demand on Disabled Facilities Grants and Occupational Therapists as more people should be in housing that meets their needs. This would benefit the teams and those on waiting lists for these services.

Lincolnshire County Council will benefit because we are piloting a new model of service delivery that will inform their strategic planning.

One possible adverse effect for Registered Providers is that the more people that move over a period, the greater number of void records and charges for that period.

A possible adverse effect on those on the Housing Register is that by increasing the numbers of people on the housing register by encouraging households to move, particularly those in higher bands as we will be working with Older / Disabled people, we may slightly disadvantage those already on the housing register by increasing competition for properties. However, we will not be adding anyone to the register who is ineligible and we only anticipate moving approximately 20 households as part of the pilot so we do not expect this effect to be significant. .

Does this policy/function/strategy support the Council’s stated equality objectives? (see overleaf.) Does it serve to impede them? Please explain.

Yes, this policy supports the Equality Objectives, particularly Equality Objective 1.

1. Improve access to public services and basic amenities for elderly and disabled people through more efficient provision of Council services to sustain and improve their quality of life

Preliminary Impact Assessment

	Yes	No	Unsure
1. Will this policy or function have an impact on:			
a. How services are delivered to the public?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Human Resources Policies?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Have any aspects of your policy/strategy already been covered by other EIAs?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
a. If yes, please indicate which ones and the dates. Also indicate which new/additional aspects would be covered under this EIA.			

Registering people on the housing register, searching for properties, and the assistance available with this are already included in the Choice Based Lettings policy and EIA.

Some elements may have been covered in the Private Sector Housing Assistance policy and EIA as this includes our policy on Disabled Facilities Grants.

Offering individuals assistance with the practical and financial elements of moving home are new aspects. They are also discretionary aspects whereas the previous

policies referred to mandatory assistance.

If you answered Yes or Unsure for question 1 please proceed to Part 2 of the EIA, which is to be completed with a small team of people.

Otherwise, if you are satisfied that there would be no additional benefit to completing a full impact assessment (noting that many issues with no apparent relevance may have hidden impacts) then please have your Service Manager sign and date this sheet to indicate that the EIA has been fully completed at this stage.

Manager's Signature: A. Gray

This document may be published on the website

Equality Objectives

2. Improve access to public services and basic amenities for elderly and disabled people through more efficient provision of Council services to sustain and improve their quality of life
3. Improve opportunities for youth to effectively engage in the community and to develop employment skills
4. Reduce mental and physical health inequalities within the district by providing support and promoting an active and healthy population
5. Promote safe and secure communities by fostering good relations between different groups of people.
6. Ensure participation and community engagement from all sectors of society for an accessible and connected district

Part 2: Equality Impact Assessment²

Identifying Potential Equality Issues

Use the information in Part 1, any other supporting documents, and the questions below to aid the group's discussion on the presence of potential equality issues.

- What do you know already about equality impact or need?
- Is there any indication that particular features of this policy/function will create problems for specific groups?
- Is there any indication that particular features of this policy/function will benefit specific groups or advance equality between different groups of people?

Evidence³

It is difficult to achieve an effective EIA without good evidence. Answer the questions below about the evidence relating to the project/policy/function.

² Part 2 should be completed by the Policy/Project Lead with the help of a team of people invited to assist.

³ See the "Evidence Collection and Data Use" section of the [Internal EIA Guidance](#).

What are the existing sources of evidence and mechanisms for gathering data?

A local Registered Provider (RP) have provided data indicating that there are approximately 930 of their households in West Lindsey whose occupants are over 61 and under occupying their homes. (Data provided October 2013)

Statistics and population forecasts on the aging population across the UK and in the district are available, for example the estimated population increase between 2012 and 2030 for people aged 65+ in Lincolnshire is 50% with West Lindsey having a greater estimated increase than other areas.

Households which are under-occupying are more likely to struggle with fuel bills, household maintenance, mobility in the home and other issues. This is referenced in a number of local and national reports.

We have contacted other authorities running assisted move / downsizing schemes to collect best practice recommendations. Those involved with running assisted move / downsizing schemes elsewhere have reported that the vast majority of those who move to more suitable accommodation are happier for it.

As the pilot progresses data will be collected on:

- Number of persons more adequately housed

- Number of referrals

- Number of bedrooms made available

- Moving costs vs provision of care/DFG costs (to include respite / health / hospital / social care)

- Customer satisfaction data

- Level of donations to Gainsborough Furniture Resource Centre

- Income through the scheme to local economy

Although eligibility for support under the Assisted Move Scheme is not means tested, some basic data on whether individuals would have passed a means test, such as whether they are in receipt of 'passporting benefits' will be recorded to indicate what the effect on take up of the scheme would have been should means testing have been included. This will inform discussions on the outcomes of the pilot.

We intend to gather data on the number of people waiting for DFGs at the start and end of the pilot to see if there has been any reduction on demand. We intend to gather data on the number of older / disabled people moving / downsizing in the district to see if there is any difference in the numbers after offering additional support.

Is there any evidence that different groups have different needs, experiences, issues and priorities in relation to the particular policy or function?

It is precisely because different groups have different needs and issues that we are running the pilot. Vulnerable people, including older and disabled people are likely to find moving house more daunting than the general population because of the struggles they already experience in day to day life, because they may be settled in their current locality and worry about the unfamiliarity of a new home and in the case of older people particularly because much of the application, bidding process and searching for

properties is done online nowadays and uses systems which they may not have experienced before. This is why we have developed a pilot Assisted Move Scheme to work with these groups and give them extra support.

The needs of those in more rural locations such as the smaller villages in the district will be a challenge in this scheme as many will want to remain in their current villages and we will have limited / no housing solutions to offer in some of these cases.

An extra level of vulnerability applies to those outside areas where internet connection is available as they are excluded from access to a common source of information and the main way to get on the housing register and search for properties. Although the digital inclusion programme is working hard to extend internet access across the district, internet access is currently unavailable in some of our more rural areas.

Is there any evidence, or other reason to believe, that there is a higher or lower level of participation or uptake among different groups?

Older people are less likely to move house than other population groups. Over half of all 16 to 24 year olds move in a year; whereas only 3% of 65 to 74 year olds do and only 2% of those aged 75 plus (Housing markets and independence in old age: expanding the opportunities Professor Michael Ball | May 2011). However, as the Assisted Move Scheme pilot is only open to older people and disabled people we will hopefully see a higher percentage of older people moving under the scheme than move in the wider population in general.

Does this policy/project impact a particular area of the District? Have there been any demographic changes or trends locally?

This policy will only affect particular areas of the district insofar as we are currently only working with those who rent their property, either socially or privately, so we are likely to have less involvement in areas with higher than average home ownership.

Also, insofar as we are only working with older / disabled people if there are areas with a particularly high older population we would be more likely to be working with people in these areas.

We will be working more in areas with higher than average amounts of social housing as we will only be moving applicants into social housing. We would also be working more in areas with a higher than average ratio of renters to homeowners as we are not working with homeowners under the scheme. We will probably be working more in the residential centres in the district – Gainsborough, Market Rasen and Caistor as it is more likely that properties will be available in these areas and also because in order to plan for the future some households wish to move away from more isolated locations to be closer to towns for the amenity and transport value.

Is there any informal feedback from managers, staff or voluntary organisations?

Feedback from a Registered Provider tenants board, West Lindsey staff and a local residents group was used in developing the pilot.

Regular steering group meetings are planned for multi-disciplinary follow up.

We have spoken to 11 other authorities so far to hear how their schemes work and to gather best practice recommendations.

We feel that there will be benefits to public health as our aims contribute towards some of the planned public health outcomes for the district.

Some contact has made with removal companies to introduce the project and get estimates of removal costs.

Are there gaps in the data or our knowledge? What further evidence is needed to understand the impact upon equality?

An element of the pilot will be to collect data and understand the impact of it.

Impact

Based on the identification of potential equality issues and the supporting evidence, the team can try to determine the impact of the policy/project/service/function on different groups.

Does the data show different impact upon different groups?

Yes No

If yes, which groups are affected?

Group	May particularly benefit	May adversely impact	No impact anticipated
People from different ethnic groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Women	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Men	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Maternity/pregnancy impact	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disabled people or carers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People from different faith groups	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Lesbian, gay or bisexual people	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Older or younger people	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
People in rural locations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Married people or people in civil partnerships	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Group cont'd	May particularly benefit	May adversely impact	No impact anticipated
Other	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Please explain the potential benefits or adverse impacts listed above.

The Assisted Move Scheme Pilot is targeted at supporting Older / Disabled people financially, physically and emotionally to move to housing that better meets their needs in cases where their current property is unsuitable. We therefore expect these groups to benefit from the scheme.

It may also benefit those on the housing register waiting for family properties as some of the older / disabled people we move will be downsizing and freeing up these types of properties.

One possible adverse effect is that by increasing the numbers of people on the housing register by encouraging households to move, particularly those in higher bands as we will be working with Older / Disabled people, we may slightly disadvantage those already on the housing register by increasing competition for properties. However, we will not be adding anyone to the register who is ineligible and we only anticipate moving approximately 20 households as part of the pilot so we do not expect this effect to be significant.

Recommendations

Please select a recommended course of action and, where appropriate, explain your choice.

No major change needed

Adjust the policy

Adverse impact but continue

Stop and remove the policy

Future actions:

The pilot will run until November 3rd 2014 with applications accepted until Friday 1st August.

At this point there will be a review of the outcomes. This will inform future plans. Equality impacts of the pilot and any longer term Assisted Move Scheme will be reviewed at this stage also. Additional data and evidence will be collected as part of the pilot and presented in a final report.

Lead Signature: A. Gray
Date ⁴ : 14 th January 2014

⁴ What happens next? – See the “Understanding the EIA process” section of the [Internal EIA Guidance](#).