



RECORD OF DELEGATED DECISION (OFFICER)

1. Decision Reference No.	CEX390
2. Name/Title of Officer	Michelle Howard Director for Housing and Communities
3. Email address of Officer	mhoward@melton.gov.uk
4. Title / Subject Matter:	Aids and Adaptations Policy Exemption (Council Properties)
5. Type of Decision:	Public
6. Key Decision?	No
7. Decision Taken: To apply Aids and Adaptations policy exceptions to enable the successful completion of necessary aids and adaptations to a council property and specifically: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. To exceed the usual Aids and Adaptations policy position to enable the completion of necessary work at a cost of more than £15,000 and;2. To exceed the upper limit of £30,000 as set out within the Aids and Adaptations policy for necessary works property.	
8. Reasons for Decision: The Council has received an occupational therapist referral for a property in the housing stock. The referral states that the property requires a ground floor extension to include suitable bathing facilities for the person with a disability that lives in the property. A housing options assessment has been completed and it concluded that the extension would benefit the tenants. Options to move into alternative accommodation are limited as there is a low stock of larger properties and these would need adapting. The tenant has also expressed a desire to stay in the property on a long term basis. The housing options assessment approved a feasibility study to see if the extension could be built for less than the £30K limit set out in the aids and adaptations policy. Our new planned maintenance contract includes for aids and adaptations work, including extensions. An initial feasibility study has been undertaken and an estimate of the cost of each extension has been produced. The budget estimate is £50,000.	

The current aids and adaptations policy requires that any work over £15,000 requires approval from the Director for Housing and Communities and the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services (Section 10.2).

Most extensions will be in excess of this limit and the Housing Options Assessment has indicated that there is a strong justification for this extension.

The policy also states:

The Council will normally only fund major adaptations up to a maximum limit of £30,000. This is set in line with DFG limits, currently £30,000. Anything not being funded by the Council, e.g. over the maximum limit, or having a client contribution, will need to be funded by other means. In such circumstances, the Council will discuss with the tenant the options of self-funding, alternative funding available or re-housing

This policy and limits were introduced at a time where the aids and adaptations budget was significantly overspent and a high volume of extensions was being approved. The policy was intended to introduce controls for this and it has been successful. The final spend in 2021/22 was £212,000 against an original budget of £250,000. Spend, including commitments, for quarter 3 of 2022/23 is £120,000 against an annual budget of £250,000. Both of these statistics indicate that the aids and adaptations budget is underspending and has capacity for larger scale work.

The policy requires that alternative funding should be provided by the tenant where possible. This is in line with DFG guidance, but that applies to private sector housing. The Occupational Therapist has approached a charity to see if they can help fund the amount over £30,000 but they are no longer accepting applications. The Housing Officer has approached the tenants to see if they have the resources to fund the difference, but they do not.

There is strong justification for proceeding with the work. If we do not carry out this work the tenants will need to be re-housed and there is a strong likelihood that similar work will be required there too. The proposed extension is relatively simple and straightforward, i.e. a cost effective solution to create additional space. It is also within the guidelines in the policy which require extensions to be minimised to the ground floor only.

Carrying out adaptation work at a property can also form grounds for exemption from the right to buy scheme. This will protect the investment in this asset.

9. Authority / Legal Power:

The Director for Housing & Communities has delegated powers in accordance with paragraph 12.2 of the Officer Scheme of Delegation.

In line with the Policy, consultation will be needed with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services as the value for these works will be over £15,000.

10. Background Papers attached?

Appendix A - Aids and Adaptations Policy

11. Alternative options available / rejected:

1. To relocate the family to another property. The properties are already four bedroom and there are a limited supply of properties of this size. If the families were to move it is likely that similar adaptation work would be required at the new property.

12. Implications:

<p>Legal</p>	<p>The current aids and adaptations policy requires that any work over £15,000 requires approval from the Director for Housing and Communities and the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services (Section 10.2).</p> <p>The policy also states:</p> <p><i>The Council will normally only fund major adaptations up to a maximum limit of £30,000. This is set in line with DFG limits, currently £30,000. Anything not being funded by the Council, e.g. over the maximum limit, or having a client contribution, will need to be funded by other means. In such circumstances, the Council will discuss with the tenant the options of self-funding, alternative funding available or re-housing</i></p> <p>As the wording is ‘will normally’ this is not prohibitive and good reasons have been set out within this decision notice. The decision needs to be taken in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services.</p> <p>Detailed records should be kept of the work undertaken and consideration should be given as to whether the properties should be designated as exempt under Right to Buy legislation.</p> <p>[Legal Approval – 15 November 2023]</p>
<p>Finance</p>	<p>The 2023/24 budget for aids and adaptations is £350k. The spend to date is £135k leaving £214k available for the remainder of this year. Based on the spend outlined in this decision record this should leave £70k for another other ad hoc work required.</p> <p>[Finance Approval - 15 November 2023]</p>
<p>HR</p>	<p>N/A</p>

13. Signature of Decision Maker with authority to sign

Email approval received
Michelle Howard
Director for Housing and Communities (Deputy Chief Executive)

14. Consultation with:	Email notification received Councillor Pip Allnatt Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Housing and Landlord Services
15. Date:	20 November 2023

Please send all decisions for publication to: Democratic Services at democracy@melton.gov.uk. All decisions with exempt information should be referred to MonitoringOfficer@melton.gov.uk