


<b>Agenda Item No:</b>	<b>8</b>	
<b>Committee:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	<b>18 December 2023</b>	
<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Implementation of a Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Service from April 2024</b>	

Cover sheet:

**1 Purpose / Summary**

- 1.1 To award the HIA service following a procurement exercise from April 2024 for three years with possible three years extension option.
- 1.2 The Council has a statutory responsibility to manage a Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) service and commission a Home Improvement Agency to meet the needs of customers requiring adaptations to their homes to meet their needs.

**2 Key Issues**

- 2.1 Until recently, the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) role was undertaken by Kings Lynn & West Norfolk Borough Council.
- 2.2 The Council is required to undertake a procurement exercise and invite organisations to tender for the role from April 2024. This process was carried out with the Council's Procurement team and in accordance with legislation.
- 2.3 The successful tender was submitted by East Cambridgeshire District Council.
- 2.4 The work is funded by the Better Care Fund, administered by Cambridgeshire County Council, with no impact on the council's General fund.

**3 Recommendations**

- 3.1 Cabinet is recommended:
- To approve the award of the tender to East Cambridgeshire District Council

Wards Affected	All
Forward Plan Reference	KEY/15NOV23/01
Portfolio Holder(s)	Cllr Samantha Hoy Portfolio Holder for Housing
Report Originator(s)	Sarah Gove – Housing & Communities Manager <a href="mailto:sgove@fenland.gov.uk">sgove@fenland.gov.uk</a> Dan Horn – Assistant Director <a href="mailto:dhorn@fenland.gov.uk">dhorn@fenland.gov.uk</a>
Contact Officer(s)	Sarah Gove (as above) Dan Horn (as above) Carol Pilson – Corporate Director <a href="mailto:cpilson@fenland.gov.uk">cpilson@fenland.gov.uk</a>
Background Papers	

## **1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1.1 The Council procures a Home Improvement Agency service as part of the Council's statutory responsibilities to facilitate Disabled Facilities Grants to households who qualify for the service as vulnerable.
- 1.2 The work enables residents to maintain independent living in their own home and reduces the risk of a slip, trip or fall that leads to a deterioration in health and a non-elective visit to hospital with the associated costs and pressures on the NHS.
- 1.3 Until recently, the service was run by the Borough Council Kings Lynn & West Norfolk (BCKL&WN).
- 1.4 The Council thanks BCKL&WN for their support in delivering this service over many years.
- 1.5 The Council is required under procurement rules to tender for the HIA role from April 2024.
- 1.6 A tender exercise was undertaken in partnership with the Council's Procurement Team. A three-year contract with the option of a further three years was procured.
- 1.7 The successful tender was submitted by East Cambridgeshire District Council, subject to cabinet approval.

## **2 CONSULTATION**

- 2.1 The Council conducted a pre-market engagement exercise to capture feedback from potential bidders to inform the tender documents.

## **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 3.1 N/A

## **4 IMPLICATIONS**

### **4.1 Legal Implications**

The procurement process was undertaken in accordance with procurement regulations. A contract between ECDC will be signed to commence from April 2024

### **4.2 Financial Implications**

The work is funded by the Better Care Fund which is administered by Cambridgeshire County Council. There is no impact on the Council's General Fund.

### **4.3 Equality Implications**

A Cambridgeshire wide Equality impact Assessment is attached at Appendix A

**4.4 Any Other Relevant Implications**

N/A

**5 SCHEDULES**

**Appendix A Equality Impact Assessment**

# **Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, Fenland, Huntingdonshire & South Cambridgeshire District Councils**

## **Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA)**

This tool helps the Council ensure that we fulfil legal obligations of the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) to have due regard to the need to –

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

**1. Title of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service:**

**Cambridgeshire Housing Adaptations and Repairs Policy**

**2. Webpage link to full details of the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service (if available)**

The Equality Impact Assessment will be available at:

<https://www.cambridge.gov.uk/equality-impact-assessments>

<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/equalities/completed-equality-impact-assessments-eias>

<https://www.fenland.gov.uk/article/13900/Equality-Impact-Assessments>

<http://huntingdonshire.gov.uk/council-democracy/equality/equality-impact-assessments-eias/>

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/the-council/equality-and-diversity/equality-impact-assessments/>

**3. What is the objective or purpose of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?**

The policy outlines the interventions which the five district councils in Cambridgeshire have agreed may be funded through the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) Capital Allocation paid to them through the Department of Health's Better Care Fund, and aims to provide a consistent approach across the county.

The key objectives of the Policy are:

- To support healthy, safe and independent living
- To help prevent hospital, care home or residential school admission
- To facilitate a patient being discharged from hospital and enabling them to live safely and independently at home, including making it easier for carers to provide support
- To prevent the need for higher expenditure elsewhere in the health and/or social care system
- To improve housing conditions and remove hazards in the home (ie Category 1 hazards under the Health & Safety Rating System)

It includes four types of financial assistance which may be available to disabled people and those on low incomes:

1. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to provide disabled adaptations in people's homes
2. Discretionary Top Up Assistance where the cost of works agreed through a Disabled Facilities Grant application is above the statutory maximum amount of £30,000
3. Discretionary Relocation Assistance to help disabled people to move to a more appropriate home; and
4. Discretionary Special Purposes Assistance for capital repairs or other minor works or interventions in the home.

It also allows funding of wider partnership projects or other services to help to meet the objectives of the policy.

It replaces each of the district councils' existing Regulatory Reform Order policies in relation to home adaptations and repairs.

#### **4. Responsible Service**

Cambridge City Council: Housing Services  
East Cambridgeshire District Council: Environmental Services  
Fenland District Council: Housing & Community Support  
Huntingdonshire District Council: Development Service  
South Cambridgeshire District Council: Affordable Homes

**5. Who will be affected by this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick those that apply)**

- Residents of Cambridgeshire **YES**
- Visitors to Cambridgeshire **NO**
- Staff **NO**

Please state any specific client group or groups (e.g. council tenants, tourists, people who work in the city but do not live here):

Disabled people and people on low incomes living in Cambridgeshire.

**6. What type of strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service is this? (Please tick)**

- New **YES**
- Major change
- Minor change

It introduces a new county-wide policy, replacing each of the district councils' Regulatory Reform Order policies in relation to housing adaptations and repairs.

**7. Are other departments or partners involved in delivering this strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service? (Please tick)**

- No
- YES** (*Please provide details*): Cambridgeshire County Council; Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group; Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency; Cambridgeshire & Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT); East Cambridgeshire Care & Repair; Fenland Home Improvement Agency.

**8. Has the report on your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service gone to Committee? If so, which one?**

No – not yet.

**9. What research methods/ evidence have you used in order to identify equality impacts of your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service?**

Data: Demographic data; national housing occupation and conditions data; poverty data; etc

Involvement of partners:

- Project commissioned and steered by Integrated Commissioning Board (a health led group with responsibility for the Better Care Fund)
- Cambridgeshire County Council Adult Social Care, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group and district Home Improvement Agencies were members of the project team.

**10. Potential impacts**

For each category below, please explain if the strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service could have a positive/ negative impact or no impact. Where an impact has been identified, please explain what it is. Consider impacts on service users, visitors and staff members separately.



**(a) Age - Any group of people of a particular age (e.g. 32 year-olds) , or within a particular age range (e.g. 16-24 year-olds) – in particular, please consider any safeguarding issues for children and vulnerable adults**

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All age groups: POSITIVE IMPACT

The policy provides for adaptations and home repairs and improvements for people of any age group who are disabled or on a low income; but it will particularly benefit those aged 55 and over.

- In Cambridgeshire in 2016 there are estimated to be around 652,000 people living in Cambridgeshire. Made up of: 120,000 children aged 0-15; 413,000 adults aged 16-64; and 119,000 older people 65 & over. <http://opendata.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/dataset/2015-based-population-and-dwelling-stock-forecasts-cambridgeshire-and-peterborough>
- In the next five years to 2021 the population is forecast to grow by an additional 28,800 adults (+7%), 11,200 children (+9%) and 15,900 older people (+13%). The main percentage increase is likely to be amongst the 75 & overs; a 21% increase during that period.
- In the Census 2011 around 15% of Cambridgeshire residents reported a long-term activity limiting health problem or disability. For those aged over 65 the percentage was 45%.

Building Research Establishment research found that, in England:

- Over one fifth of all older household groups (55 – 64, 65 – 74, over 75 and over 80) lived in a home that failed to meet the Decent Homes standard
- 780,000 households aged 55 years and over were in fuel poverty
- 1.3 million households aged 55 years and older lived in a home with at least one Category 1 hazard
- For households aged 55 years or more, the cost of poor housing to the NHS (for first year treatment costs) is £624 million with these costs dominated by excess cold hazards and those associated with falls (on stairs and on the level)
- The proportion of older households living in a home with the four “visitability” accessibility features assessed by the English Housing Survey (level access, flush threshold, WC at entrance level and sufficiently wide doors and circulation space) ranged from 4% (aged 55 – 64 years) to 7% (aged 80 years and over). Around a fifth of homes occupied by all age groups aged 65 years and over had none of these key features and this figure was 24% for households aged 55 – 64 years.

The National House Condition Survey 2015-16 estimated that:

- Around 29% of households where the oldest member was 85 are estimated to live in a non-decent home.
- Older people had less energy efficient homes compared with younger people, and those aged 85 and over had the lowest energy efficiency.

No direct safeguarding issues have been raised as being impacted by the policy, but the policy does include reference to the districts’ own Safeguarding Policies.

The policy states that it will be implemented within the framework of each council’s local safeguarding policy.

**(b) Disability - A person has a disability if she or he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on that person's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities**

**POSITIVE IMPACT**

- In the Census 2011 around 15% of Cambridgeshire residents reported a long-term activity limiting illness.
- Around 31% of households in England are estimated to contain someone with a long-term sickness or Disability. (English Housing Survey - Variations in Housing Circumstances report 2016-17)
- In 2014-15, around 9% of all households in England (around 1.9 million households) had one or more people with a long-term limiting disability that required adaptations to their home. (English House Condition Survey, Adaptations & Accessibility of Homes report 2014-15)

The policy offers:

- Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and Top-Up DFG assistance to disabled people to help them to live safely and independently at home
- Relocation assistance to disabled people where moving to another home is considered the best option.
- Discretionary Special Purposes assistance, including provision to help disabled people to have adaptations carried out more quickly.

Key objectives of the policy include:

- To support healthy, safe and independent living
- To help prevent hospital, care home or residential school admission
- To facilitate a patient being discharged from hospital and enabling them to live safely and independently at home, including making it easier for carers to provide support

**(c) Sex – A man or a woman.**

**POSITIVE IMPACT** on both – particularly on women

With higher levels of long term illness or disability amongst older people, and higher numbers of women than men in the older population, the positive impact is more likely to be felt by women.

Census 2011 data shows 54,700 women and 45,500 men aged 65 and over in Cambridgeshire. Women make up around 55% of the population aged over 65, and 67% of the population over 85.

**(d) Transgender – A person who does not identify with the gender they were assigned to at birth (includes gender reassignment that is the process of transitioning from one gender to another)**

NO IMPACT

**(e) Pregnancy and maternity**

NO IMPACT

**(f) Marriage and civil partnership**

NO IMPACT

**(g) Race - The protected characteristic 'race' refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins.**

NO IMPACT

The policy itself should not disadvantage any particular race or ethnic group. However uptake of grants and loans by different equalities groups will be monitored, and actions put in place to try to redress if any imbalance becomes apparent.

**(h) Religion or belief**

NO IMPACT.

**(i) Sexual orientation**

NO IMPACT

**(j) Other factors that may lead to inequality – in particular – please consider the impact of any changes on low income groups or those experiencing the impacts of poverty**

**Low income groups: POSITIVE IMPACT**

Index of Multiple Deprivation figures show that Cambridgeshire has 16 Lower Super Output Areas in the 20% most deprived nationally. Fenland has the highest levels of deprivation in Cambridgeshire, followed by Cambridge City, East Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire then South Cambridgeshire.

<https://data.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/dataset/indices-deprivation>

[https://data.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/sites/default/files/IMD2015\\_Cambs%26Pet\\_Rank\\_A0\\_v4\\_0.pdf](https://data.cambridgeshireinsight.org.uk/sites/default/files/IMD2015_Cambs%26Pet_Rank_A0_v4_0.pdf)

9.3% of Cambridgeshire households are estimated to be in fuel poverty.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/sub-regional-fuel-poverty-data-2018>

Eligibility for Disabled Facilities Grants & DFG top up for adults, and Special Purposes Assistance (which may include home energy improvements) are based on assessment of financial circumstances of the applicant.

**Carers: POSITIVE IMPACT**

It is likely that a number of people requiring adaptations will be receiving some level care, either professionally or from family and/or friends. One of the objectives of the policy is: To facilitate a patient being discharged from hospital and enabling them to live safely and independently at home, 'including making it easier for carers to provide support'.

**11. Action plan – New equality impacts will be identified in different stages throughout the planning and implementation stages of changes to your strategy, policy, plan, project, contract or major change to your service. How will you monitor these going forward? Also, how will you ensure that any potential negative impacts of the changes will be mitigated? (Please include dates where possible for when you will update this EqlA accordingly.)**

Implementation of the policy will be monitored through the Home Improvement Agencies, which will include monitoring uptake of grants and loans based on protected characteristics.

The EqlA will be updated once the outcome of the government's reviews of Disabled Facilities Grants and Social Care is known.

**12. Do you have any additional comments?**

### 13. Sign off

Name and job title of lead officer for this equality impact assessment:

- Helen Reed, Cambridge City Council, Housing Strategy Manager.

Names and job titles of other assessment team members and people consulted:

- Liz Knox, Environmental Services Manager, East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Marie Beaumont, Senior Caseworker, East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Steve Hammond, Private Sector Housing Officer, Fenland District Council
- Caroline Hannon, Housing Strategy Manager, Huntingdonshire District Council
- Keith Tayler, Private Sector Housing Officer, Huntingdonshire District Council
- Julie Fletcher, Head of Housing Strategy, South Cambridgeshire District Council
- Alasdair Gladman, Grant Validation Officer, South Cambridgeshire District Council#
- Frances Swann, Manager, Cambs Home Improvement Agency
- Debra Barker, Caseworker, Cambs Home Improvement Agency
- Diana Mackay, Commissioner (Adults), People & Communities Directorate  
Cambridgeshire County Council
- Lisa Sparks, Commissioning Manager, Cambridgeshire County Council
- Aleksandra Mecan, Head of Community Services & Integration, Cambridgeshire &  
Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group

Date of EqIA sign off: 15<sup>th</sup> February 2019

Date of next review of the equalities impact assessment: Date of policy review – to be agreed.

Date to be published on websites (if known): March/April 2019