

SOCIAL JUSTICE AND REGENERATION COMMITTEE

Date: Wednesday 16th March 2005
Venue: National Assembly for Wales
Title: Review of Housing Adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grant

1.0 Purpose

1.1 As the Committee will know I have commissioned a review of housing adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). This report provides the Committee with an update on progress.

2.0 Summary and Recommendations

2.1 The reviewer's report has recently been completed and a copy is at Annex 1. Members will wish to note its contents and recommendations.

3.0 Background

3.1 In summary, the reviewer's terms of reference were to examine and make recommendations on the:

- Effectiveness of the legislative framework
- Adequacy of funding arrangements
- Delays and excessive waiting times
- Means test for disabled children
- Delivery of adaptations in RSL and Council properties, including recycling adapted housing, and the potential impact of stock transfer
- Effectiveness of the Rapid Response Adaptations Programme (RRAP)

3.2 The review commenced in May 2004 and aimed to be as inclusive as possible. It combined the use of written questionnaires with face to face discussions with all key partners, including local authorities, RSLs, voluntary and advocacy groups representing older and disabled persons, as well as DFG clients.

4.0 The Report

4.1 The Report is very extensive and is an independent assessment of the current adaptations and Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) regimes. I believe it is the first full appraisal of its kind in Wales, which details key aspects of the system, notably funding routes, waiting times and delays and cross-tenure comparisons. The means test for disabled children is also given rigorous scrutiny and costing.

4.2 The report makes 37 recommendations covering 9 key areas: legislation, funding, delays, disabled children, council tenants, RSL tenants, adapted housing registers for social housing, minor adaptations and the Rapid Response Adaptations Programme (RRAP).

4.3 I have yet to consider the recommendations, as I wanted to share the report with the Committee at the first available opportunity. I would welcome any comments or observations that members care to make so that I can take these into consideration. I will report further on the Assembly Government's response to the recommendations at the Committee meeting on 27 April.

5.0 Financial Implications

5.1 There are no financial implications in respect of this report at this stage.

6.0 Compliance

6.1 There are no issues of regularity or propriety relating to the provision of this information.

7.0 Recommendation

7.1 Committee is asked to note the contents of the report and the proposed further action.

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