



REPORT TO: COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE ON 7 MARCH 2017

SUBJECT: HOUSING FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT REVIEW UPDATE

**BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT,
PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE)**

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks the approval of Communities Committee to replace the current medical assessment process, used to award additional points to people who have applied for housing because their house is not suitable due to their health and/or disability, with a revised functional assessment model. This follows the completion of a wider public consultation on the proposed revised model.
- 1.2 This report is submitted to Committee in terms of Section III (F) (4) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to allocation and letting of houses and homelessness.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 It is recommended that the Communities Committee:-

- (i) considers the feedback received from the public consultation;**
- (ii) agrees to replace the current medical assessment process with a functional assessment model;**
- (iii) agrees to implement the revised model from 3 April 2017; and**
- (iv) agrees that Officers will monitor the new arrangements during 2017/18 and provide a progress update early in 2018/19.**

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The draft functional assessment model is based on clinical reasoning and considers an applicant's ability to maintain essential day to day activities in their own home. The assessment primarily considers:

- if and why the current accommodation is unsuitable, unavailable or inappropriate to adapt, **or**
- if rehousing is essential to maintain longer term health, welfare or independence **and /or**

- if health and welfare or independence could be significantly or moderately improved by re-housing **and/or**
- if reasonable and practical adaptations can be made to the property but rehousing would meet longer term needs more fully and efficiently.

3.2 On 8 November 2016, the Communities Committee approved the draft functional assessment model subject to wider public consultation (paragraph 6 of the Minute refers).

3.3 The public consultation took place from 9 November 2016 to 31 January 2017.

4. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

4.1 The following consultation took place:-

- a web-based survey was developed to seek feedback. This was published information explaining the revised functional assessment process on the Council website and was publicised via the Council's newsroom;
- feedback was sought from the Council's registered interested tenants, the Moray Tenant's Forum and Community Councils and an article was placed in the Tenant's Voice asking tenants to provide feedback;
- a random sample of applicants from the Housing List were asked to provide feedback. This included every applicant who had a current a medical application with the Council; and
- feedback from equalities groups was sought through the Moray Equalities Forum.

4.2 The survey asked five key questions on the proposed changes to the functional assessment process. Does the respondent agree with:-

- i. the proposed changes being introduced by the functional assessment process?
- ii. the functional assessment being carried out by a housing occupational therapist?
- iii. the amendments to the criteria used to award additional points?
- iv. the amendments to the appeals process?
- v. applicants who have medical points will retain these points until there has been a change in their circumstances (as set out in the policy).

Respondents were all invited to provide any additional comments that they may have on each question.

5. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

5.1 A total of 176 responses were received, representing a response rate of 19.5%. 84% of these were in response to the letter and survey sent.

5.2 The feedback received was largely supportive of the functional assessment process and can be summarised as follows:

- The assessment will be a functional based assessment
85% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed with the proposed changes. Only 3.4% of respondents disagreed.
- The assessment will be made a Housing Occupational Therapist
81% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed with the functional assessment being completed by a Housing Occupational Therapist. 5.7% of respondents disagreed.
- The criteria used to award additional points have been amended
82% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed with the revised criteria. 3% of respondents disagreed.
- Amendment to the appeals process
74% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed with the revised appeals process. 8.4% of respondents disagreed.
- Applicants who have medical points at present will retain these points until there has been a change in circumstances (defined in the policy)
86.2% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that the applicants who have medical points will retain these until there has been a change in the applicant's circumstances. 1.4% of respondents disagreed.

5.3 Twenty five respondents provided additional comments and the following key themes were identified:

- the assessment may not fairly take into account mental health, learning disability issues or other factors;

Professionals from other services, including Learning Disability, Mental Health and Children's Services have been consulted and their feedback has been used to develop the revised suite of information that will now be requested from applicants. The Housing Occupational Therapist will, where necessary seek guidance from other professionals where particular needs/issues have been identified.

- some respondents thought that the Housing OT would be making an assessment of the applicant's condition and felt that this would be unfair as conditions may be unseen or fluctuate;

The functional assessment is not about a person's health condition or disability. It is about the way their condition affects how they

manage at home. It considers the ability of a person to perform essential day to day tasks within their home and uses the information provided by the applicant as a basis for the assessment. The new application form will allow applicants to provide greater explanation of their issues and allow them to provide more details in relation to other agencies or health professionals involved in their care.

- other health professionals should have input into the process.

The functional assessment model is a holistic tool to ensure that other health professionals do have the opportunity to have input in the assessment process.

- 5.4 Following completion of the consultation period, it is not proposed to make any changes to the draft functional assessment model. A final draft is provided as **APPENDIX I** for this Committees approval.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A full time Housing Occupational Therapist will carry out functionality assessments. This post will be jointly funded by the Housing Service and the Moray Integrated Joint Board. The full cost of the post is £40k per annum with each partner paying £20k per annum. The housing element of this cost was included in the Housing Revenue Budget Report for 2017/18 and was approved by Full Council on 15 February 2017 (Paragraph 8 of the draft Minute refers.)

7. IMPLEMENTATION

- 7.1 Subject to this Committees approval, the Housing Functional Assessment Model will go live on 3 April 2017. As part of the implementation process, the model will be publicised on the Council's website, through social media and an article on the model will also be included in the next edition of the Tenants' Voice.
- 7.2 Officers will implement monitoring arrangements and a report providing a progress update on the revised assessment model will be presented to this Committee in early 2018/19.

8. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Moray 2026: A Plan for the Future and Moray Corporate Plan 2015 - 2017

Moray 2026, the Corporate Plan and the Housing and Property Service Plan identify the need to make best use of the Council's housing stock. The functional assessment approach for assessing housing priority will assist in adults living healthier, sustainable independent lives safeguarded from harm.

(b) Policy and Legal

The legislative framework for the Council's Allocation Policy is contained within the Housing (Scotland) Act 1987, as amended. The Scottish Social

Housing Charter also sets out standards against which the Scottish Housing Regulator will assess local authorities as part of its inspection regime.

(c) Financial Implications

The financial implications are detailed in Section 6 of this report.

(d) Risk Implications

There are no risks immediately arising from this report.

(e) Staffing Implications

The current temporary Housing Occupational Therapist post, required to carry out functionality assessments, will become permanent, with effect from 1 April 2017.

(f) Property

There are no property implications arising directly from this report.

(g) Equalities

The Equality Act 2010 supersedes all previous equalities legislation. An equality impact assessment for the revised Scheme has been completed. There are no equality implications arising from this report.

(h) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Head of Adult Services, Chief Officer – Health and Social Care, Senior Solicitor – Property and Contracts (Kathryn MacPherson), the Principal Accountant (Deborah O’Shea), OT & Intermediate Care Service Manager, the Committee Services Officer (Lissa Rowan), the Equalities Officer (Don Toonen) and Managers within the Housing Service who agreed the content of this report.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 This report presents the Communities Committee with the outcome of the consultation exercise undertaken on the draft functional assessment model and seeks Committee approval to implement the model from 3 April 2017. A report providing a progress update will be presented to this Committee in early 2018/19.**

Author of Report: Gillian Henly, Senior Housing Officer (Policy)
Background Papers: With author
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