

Committee: Community and Housing

Agenda Item

Date: 11 November 2010

7

Title: Mobility Scooter Policy

Author: Natalie Leatham: Housing Programming
and Health and Safety Officer, 01799
510497

Item for decision

Summary

1. This report details the development of the Council's new Mobility Scooter Policy.

Recommendations

2. That Members agree the adoption of the new Mobility Scooter Policy as identified in Appendix A.

Financial Implications

3. None. There are no costs associated with the recommendations. Mobility scooter shelters will be funded by individual tenants.

Background Papers

4. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.
 - Housing Act 1996, Parts VI and VII
 - Equality and Diversity Document 2009
 - Disability Discrimination Act
 - Benchmarking online from LA's and other services. Lewes District Council, Stevenage Homes, Longhurst Homes, Corby Borough Council, Gloucester City Homes, Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents, Age Concern and Disabled Travel advice UK
 - Tenants' Newsletter for consultation

Impact

- 5.

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Communication/Consultation | Disability Forum, Tenant Forum, Sheltered Housing Task Group and shared on internet for consultation and comments |
| Community Safety | n/a |

Mobility Scooter Policy

Community and Housing Committee, 11 November 2010, item 7

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Equalities | The document has had a full equality impact assessment. This will be reviewed in 12 months |
| Health and Safety | Policy needed to ensure scooters are not stored in communal areas causing damage to persons and property and preventing exit from fire escapes. Information in policy on insurance requirement, safe usage and where to obtain advice on training |
| Human Rights/Legal Implications | Legal team have checked the document |
| Sustainability | n/a |
| Ward-specific impacts | All wards |
| Workforce/Workplace | Additional survey work can be carried out within existing resources |

Background

6. Sheltered Housing sites have increasing numbers of mobility scooter users due to an expanding aging population. The Council acknowledges the need for independence of living and encourages the use of scooters to improve the standards of independence and mobility to avoid unnecessary stress and isolation. Damage caused by scooter users to Council property and buildings is currently funded by the Council's repairs department.
7. Scooters are currently being stored and charged in communal areas and under stairwells in the sheltered schemes. This is in breach of the Fire Regulatory Reform Order 2005.
8. To charge a scooter the cost implication is between £2.50 and £3.50 per charge. This can not be monitored in communal areas and is beginning to amount to a considerable cost to the Council as the number of mobility scooter users is rising.
9. The Council has insufficient funds in its budget to pay for the shelter and storage facilities for mobility scooters users and the DDA advises that people can store scooters in their individual properties therefore the policy offers an option of outside storage and charging which is self funded.
10. Individual surveys are required due to the location and individuality of the sites. For example some sites are listed and in conservation areas. Some schemes may not have lifts which accommodate scooters to upper floors therefore the facility would be required.

Current Situation

9. At present the Council has no policy in place regarding the storage and charging of mobility scooters.
10. Demand for mobility scooters is increasing yearly.
11. The damage to property by scooter users is also rising and the need for insurance is required to cover the cost for damage.
12. Tenants are unaware of what is required of them when using a mobility scooter as there is no policy.
13. Tenants are currently charging and storing scooters in communal areas adding further costs to the Council.
14. With no policy in place the Council's position regarding mobility scooter usage, storage and charging in its buildings and grounds is currently unmanaged and potentially hazardous.

Feedback from Consultation

15. Consultation was carried out with the Tenant Forum, Disability Forum and Sheltered Housing Task Group and comments were received via e-mail and discussion. The legal department were consulted and benchmarking with other authorities took place. The policy was placed on the internet for external consultation. The overall feedback received was that a policy needed to be in place so there is an understanding of the Council's requirements for usage of mobility scooters in its schemes and buildings. There was no negative feedback on the overall policy requirements.

Summary

16. The policy is aimed at people with impairments and the aging population who may require the use of a mobility scooter. The policy:
 - Ensures that residents who own a mobility scooter have a clear understanding of their usage in Council properties and buildings
 - Explains the process in applying for storage and charging facilities and why it may not always be possible to provide these
 - Advises on the need for insurance and proof of cover
 - Advises on the importance of training and safety with regard to usage
 - Explains options available for people who can not access their individual property because of the design of the property

Risk Analysis

11.

| Risk | Likelihood | Impact | Mitigating actions |
|---|---|---|--|
| The Council is unable to continue to fund repairs to its buildings and grounds caused by mobility scooters and charging in communal areas | 3 – costs are continuing to rise due to increasing numbers of users | 3 – building fall into disrepair | Ensure scooter users are insured Make sure there is a clear understanding of what is required by mobility scooter users |
| The Council fails to meet the needs of service users who are unable to access their property with mobility scooters due to the design and age of the properties | 3 – scooters will continue to be parked inappropriately without a policy in place | 3 – health and safety implications if scooters left in stairwells | Have a clear policy in place and survey each request on an individual basis |

1 = Little or no risk or impact

2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.

3 = Significant risk or impact – action required

4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.