

**HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD  
THURSDAY, 1 MARCH 2018 AT 10:00AM**

**HERTFORDSHIRE HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY UPDATE**

Report of Director of Adult Care Services

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**1. Purpose of report**

- 1.1 To update the Board on the progress made to establish a shared service between Hertfordshire County Council and a number of boroughs and districts in order to undertake home improvements using a Home Improvement Agency approach. The service provides grants to enable residents to remain independent in their own home.

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 The Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency (HHIA) was formerly established on the 2 October 2017 with a new team hosted by Hertfordshire County Council established on the partners' behalf to undertake the assessment and delivery of disabled facilities grants. The founding partners are: Hertfordshire County Council, Broxbourne Borough Council, East Herts District Council, North Hertfordshire District Council, and Watford Borough Council.
- 2.2 Following the operational mobilisation period the HHIA team is developing a three-year business plan to deliver the partners' aspirations for the service. In order to support this, work is underway to review existing grant policy and activity, assess ways of widening the use of grants to include discretionary and other works, and improving timescales and reducing waiting times for works.
- 2.3 The HHIA has four founding member local authorities and as such the remaining local authorities in Hertfordshire remain responsible for their own disabled facilities grant activities and do not benefit from the HHIA shared service model. Two additional authorities have expressed an interest in the HHIA model and it is hoped they will join the partnership during 2018.

### **3. Recommendation**

- 3.1 That the Board note the progress made in establishing the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency.
- 3.2 That the Board comment on the proposed focus for the Hertfordshire Home Improvement Agency's work.

### **4. Background**

- 4.1. The aims of the HHIA are set out below.
  - To ensure that all individuals in Hertfordshire who need housing adaptations to support independent living will have access to an appropriate service that is timely, accessible, equitable and fit for purpose to address rising demographic pressures.
  - To deliver a fully standardised service, enhancing operational efficiency, customer satisfaction and improving value for money.
  - To implement robust monitoring arrangements against key performance indicators.
  - To improve service resilience through joined up working, adopting common methodology and service standards, sharing staff knowledge, skills and expertise.
  - To open up future opportunities to expand into private sector adaptations and align to wider Clinical Commissioning Group activity in order to maximise income generation, efficiency and value, and impact of the DFG element of the Better Care Fund.
- 4.2 The HHIA is overseen by a board comprising the member authorities and the HHIA board has agreed to review the current policy for mandatory grants in their areas with a view to adopting an approach that will enable the HHIA to provide a wider range of imaginative services to enable residents to remain in their own home. This was one of the founding principles of the HHIA alongside improvements to the service residents receive and better co-work with occupational health colleagues and other professionals.
- 4.3 There are a wide range of potential innovations that will be looked at to ensure older people and residents with disabilities are supported to remain independent longer. Both the Care Act 2014 and the Better Care Fund (BCF) advocate integrated services between health, housing, and social care and the delivery of preventative services via the HHIA will help reduce pressures on both health and social care.
- 4.4 The value of investment in adaptations by the four HHIA founding member authorities in 2017/18 is £2,504,630. There is some scope to increase the range and type of assistance available and thereby increase the prevention impact of the service. Some of the areas the

HHIA board are looking into include co-ordinating equipment – including technology - and adaptations, minor works, working more closely with Registered Providers (housing associations) to co-ordinate proactive adaptations, undertaking more services for residents who are not eligible for grants, and offering advice and agency services for self-funders.

- 4.5 For now the HHIA team is concentrating on ensuring a smooth transition to the new service. An integrated database is now being used to ensure a smooth workflow between case work assessments and technical staff, and referrals can now be handled in a seamless way within the single service model. A website is being developed to promote the HHIA and a wide range of meetings have been completed with stakeholders to ensure awareness of the service.
- 4.6 It is hoped that more local authorities will join the service. This will not only mean they have access to the same benefits as the founding members (i.e. economies of scale, single service centre, shared staff resources, etc), but also that they can work with the existing partners to help increase the impact of the service across health, housing and social care across the County.