

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 22 February 2018
REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Adult Social Services
PORTFOLIO: Health & Wellbeing
SUBJECT: Stair lifts – Proposed New Model of Provision
WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

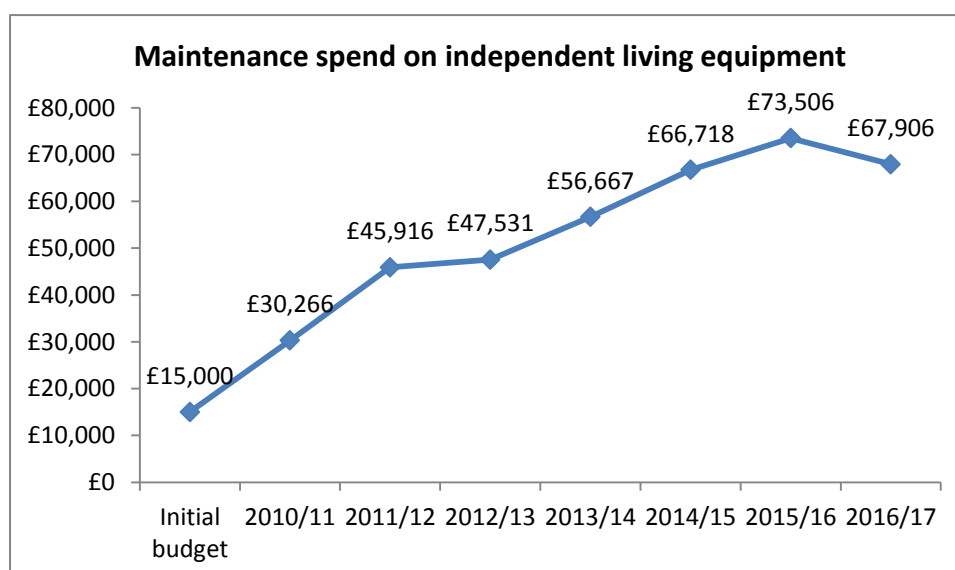
1.1 To present Executive Board with a proposed new model for the installation and maintenance of stair lifts (detailed at 3.6), which will be explored alongside procurement processes to establish the most cost-effective supplier of stair lift installation services ahead of the Council's existing contract with Stannah coming to an end in May 2018.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the Board approves the proposed new model for stair lift installation and maintenance outlined at 3.6.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 A review of current practice in relation to the provision of stair lifts was conducted in response to escalating costs of maintaining independent living equipment (predominantly stair lifts but also including other equipment such as ceiling hoists etc.) – see chart below:



3.2 Traditionally, stair lifts are provided through a Disabled Facilities Grant

(DFG) but in Halton the decision was taken to remove stair lifts from the DFG process in around 2010 due to the complexity of the process and lengthy waiting times.

- 3.3 Since then, stair lifts have been installed for all people with an assessed need, free of charge to the individual with costs being covered from social care budgets under the Procurement for Housing Framework Agreement with Stannah (this contract ends 18.05.18).
- 3.4 In addition, after the initial two-year warranty provided by Stannah; ongoing maintenance, repair and servicing are all provided by HBC via Property Services who have a contract with City Lifts and, again, funding is from social care budgets (this contract is currently 'holding over', as alternative frameworks were found to be more expensive). There is no age limit on a stair lift and maintenance continues until an inspection deems it unfit or parts are no longer available to repair it.
- 3.5 The lifts remain the property of the Council and are therefore subject to the Lifting Operations and Lifting Equipment Regulations (LOLER,1998), which means an annual service is required.
- 3.6 Given the increasing and unsustainable costs of maintaining stair lifts, a new model of provision is proposed, which incorporates two key changes compared to current practice:
- **The introduction of a means testing element so that those who are able to fund/contribute to the cost of their stair lift are identified (as would be the case if the stair lift were to be provided through a DFG); and**
 - **The provision of an extended warranty funded by the Council at the point of installation, after which the stair lift would become the individuals' property meaning they are responsible for ongoing maintenance (as would be the case if the stair lift were provided via DFG). Extended warranty models are common amongst neighbouring authorities and reported to be successful.**
- 3.7 It should be noted that the new model would only apply to owner-occupiers and private renters because the current joint funding agreement for adaptations between the Council and seven of the major Housing Associations operating in Halton would continue as is.
- 3.8 In advance of the existing contract ending in May 2018, the process of benchmarking against available frameworks will begin in February 2018. Information already shared by neighbouring authorities reveals that more competitive prices for extended warranties are available from alternative suppliers:

	Stannah (Halton's current supplier)		AMW (Warrington's supplier)	
	Straight lift	Curved lift	Straight lift	Curved lift
Extended warranty (+3 years giving 5 total)	£387	£432	£250	£300

This compares to the current estimated average spend on maintenance/repair per stair lift over a three year period of £429.

- 3.9 The existing contract for maintenance will be considered alongside processes to procure a supplier of stair lift installation services. If an alternative solution cannot be identified, the maintenance contract will need to continue for the existing stock of stair lifts (detailed at appendix 1).
- 3.10 Whilst it may be necessary to have two schemes operating for a period of time (i.e. existing lifts still being maintained under the City Lifts contract and new ones being installed with an extended warranty), it is suggested that a replacement programme is initiated once the new model is operational, particularly for the stair lifts that are very old (there are 124 that are more than 8 years old – see appendix 1).

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Housing Adaptations Policy & Procedure Manual, which sets out the processes for the provision of stair lifts, is currently under review and this work will continue alongside the procurement processes to deliver the new model.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are considerable costs relating to moving to the extended warranty model; the warranty, which would cover a 5-year period, would be funded at the point of installation. Whereas, currently the maintenance costs are spread over 3 years (after the 2-year warranty). In addition, for a certain period of time the Council would be funding extended warranties and ongoing maintenance for the existing stock. However, this would be balanced by the implementation of a means test and changing to a more cost-effective supplier. Ultimately, implementation of the proposed solution will be more cost-effective than current arrangements – whilst having the two schemes in place will initially be a financial burden; action is required now in order to address the continuing escalation of the costs of stair lift maintenance.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None identified.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None identified.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Stair lifts are an essential part of the provision of care and support services that allow people to retain their independence and quality of life in their own homes.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None identified.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

It is to be expected that this change may result in some dissatisfaction from members of the public, particularly those who may be assessed as able to provide a contribution to or fully fund the cost of their lift.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None identified

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.

Appendix 1: Breakdown of stair lifts maintained via the Council's contract with City Lifts

The following table displays the number of stair lifts that are with Property Services for maintenance, repair and servicing (the year relates to the year the lift transferred to Property Services for maintenance; installation would have been two years prior, as maintenance is only required once the standard two-year warranty has expired):

Calendar year	Number of stair lifts maintained under Property Service's contract with City Lifts
2000-2006	38
2007	8
2008	18
2009	33
2010	27
2011	48
2012	50
2013	38
2014	77
2015	46
2016	29
2017	50
TOTAL	462

Data provided by Property Services