

NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE COUNCIL

HOUSING AND STRATEGIC PLANNING CABINET MEMBER

SERVICE STANDARDS FOR HOUSING

1. OBJECT AND KEY POINTS IN THIS REPORT

- 1.1 This report is an update to the cabinet report on service standards for the Housing Division approved by the Housing and Strategic Planning Cabinet Member on 28 July 2009.
- 1.2 The key points in this report are:
- The service standards related to energy efficiency and disabled facilities grants and affordable home loans have been further developed to give more challenging and customer focused targets.
 - Following improvements in the IT system used by Housing, it is now possible for the new standards to be actively monitored and for the results to be published.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Following an advice and assistance session with the Audit Commission, service standards were produced by the Housing Division covering all the three teams.
- 2.2 These service standards were approved by the Housing and Strategic Planning Cabinet Member in July 2009 and are currently published on the council's website.
- 2.3 Since then, further work has been undertaken on the grant and loan procedures resulting in amendments to the process and the IT system.
- 2.4 The report last year identified the need to produce more detailed service standards and to present them to the Cabinet Member once complete.
- 2.5 The Key Lines of Enquiry related to housing identify the need for robust, clear and challenging customer-focused service standards which are tailored to meet local needs and which are effectively monitored and the results publicised.
- 2.6 Further consultation is on going to develop service standards with social services and the Occupational Therapy service around disabled

facilities to provide clients with realistic time scales for all elements of the process.

3. OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 Option 1 – continue to apply the service standards as developed and approved in 2009 without incorporating the new revised standards for grants and loans.
- 3.2 Option 2 – incorporate the new standards, as detailed in the appendices, into the existing ones, publish on the website, robustly monitor and publish the results.

4. ANALYSIS OF OPTIONS

- 4.1 Option 1 – This would maintain the current position but not meet the requirements of the key lines of enquiry (KLOE) for housing or satisfy the Audit Commission.
- 4.2 Option 2 – this is the preferred option since it would help meet the requirements of the KLOE and Audit Commission as well as ensuring clients are aware of the time scales involved in the relevant processes, help track the real time experience of customers though more robust monitoring and ensure all members of staff know and understand the targets that they are being asked to work to.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCIAL, STAFFING, PROPERTY, IT)

- 5.1 Financial – there are no additional financial implications.
- 5.2 Staffing - there are no additional staffing implications.
- 5.3 Property - there are no additional property implications.
- 5.4 IT - there are no additional IT implications.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS (STATUTORY, ENVIRONMENTAL, DIVERSITY, SECTION 17 CRIME AND DISORDER, RISK AND OTHER)

- 6.1 Statutory – there are specific Acts, Regulations and guidance which govern how local authorities give financial assistance and these service standards take those procedures, where appropriate, into account.
- 6.2 Environmental – there are no environmental implications resulting from this report.
- 6.3 Diversity - publishing the standards on the website along with performance data will allow all current and future clients to see the time

line for processing and completing their applications thus making the customer experience better.

- 6.4 Section 17 Crime and Disorder - there are no crime and disorder issues that arise from this report.
- 6.5 Risk – if the service standards are not amended to produce more robust and customer orientated targets, there is a risk that the Audit Commission, when they next inspect the Housing service, will find the service standards inadequate and reflective of a poor service.

7. OUTCOMES OF CONSULTATION

- 7.1 These service standards are the product of consultation with the relevant officers.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Cabinet Member for Housing and Strategic Planning approves Option 2 – which is the incorporation of the new service standards for disabled facilities and energy efficiency grants and affordable loans into the existing service standards for housing.
- 8.2 That the Cabinet Members for adults and children's services consider this report and then advise on their service standards for assessment of clients' needs relative to disabled facilities grants.

STRATEGIC DIRECTOR NEIGHBOURHOOD & ENVIRONMENT

Church Square House
Church Square
Scunthorpe
North Lincolnshire, DN15 6XQ

Author: Liz Webster
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Background papers used in the preparation of this report

None

North Lincolnshire Council

Service Standards

Affordable Loans for Homeowners

North Lincolnshire Council will provide information and access to affordable loans for home improvements to homeowners in North Lincolnshire. We will help people who normally have difficulty accessing loans from high street lenders and provide an opportunity to access loans without the fear of repossession.

The stages of the process, which are directly under our control, are detailed below with targets for completion which we aim to meet.

These time scales are monitored and reported on throughout the year but they also **depend on you responding promptly when required.**

	Our Target is to complete each stage within:
Contact you after your initial enquiry to determine eligibility	1 week
Arrange to visit you to discuss options and complete initial paperwork (if you are eligible for a loan and if you wish to proceed to the next stage)	1 week
Allocation of your case to a surveyor who will visit to assess what repairs are necessary	2 weeks
Send out a schedule of work to you for your approval	3 weeks*
If you want us to obtain quotations for the proposed work, we will do this, once you have approved the schedule of works. Alternatively, you can obtain your own quotations, if you prefer, in which case we would ask that you obtain them and return them to us within the same timescale	5 weeks
We will arrange to visit you to complete the final application forms once the contractor has been selected	1 week
Approximate timescale for Homes and Loans at Sheffield City Council to process the application through to funding being available (unless there are circumstances beyond their control)	12 weeks
Once the loan arrangement is in place, ensure the contractor completes the work (the surveyor will monitor progress on site and liaise with contractor to completion)	12 weeks**
Once the work has been completed a surveyor will visit to check the work has been completed satisfactorily	2 weeks

* NB In cases where there are more complex issues that require planning, building control permission and/or provision of a gas supply then the overall times could vary by up to 10 weeks on average.

** The time period for completion of works will vary depending on the extent of the work, weather conditions and other unforeseen circumstances. The contractor will be able to give a more detailed time scale for completion once on site.

Please also note that we will send you a satisfaction survey at the end of the process to obtain your thoughts and comments regarding our performance and how we might be able to improve the service we offer. We would very much appreciate it if you could take a few moments to complete and return it to us.

North Lincolnshire Council

Service Standards

Energy Efficiency Grant Assistance Process

North Lincolnshire Council will provide information and access to energy efficiency grants for households in North Lincolnshire.

The stages of the process, which are directly under our control, are detailed below with targets for completion which we aim to meet.

These time scales are monitored and reported on throughout the year but they also **depend on you responding promptly when required.**

	Our target is to complete each stage within:
Grant Application form sent out upon receipt of eligible enquiry	1 week
Allocation of the case to a surveyor who will visit to discuss the proposed work.	2 weeks
Prepare and send out a schedule of works to enable quotations to be obtained.	2 weeks*
If you want us to obtain quotations for the proposed work, we will do this, once you have approved the schedule of works. Alternatively, you can obtain your own quotations, if preferred, in which case we would ask that you obtain them and return them to us within the same timescale.	5 weeks
On receipt of a completed application form and quotations the grant application will be put forward for approval. A letter will be sent to you confirming that the grant application has been approved and who the appointed contractor is.	2 weeks
Contractor to complete on site (surveyor will monitor progress on site and liaise with contractor to completion).	12 weeks**
Once the work has been completed a Surveyor will visit to check the work has been completed satisfactorily.	2 weeks

* In cases where there are more complex issues that require planning, building control permission and/or provision of gas supply then the overall times could vary by up to 10 weeks on average

**The time period for completion of works will vary depending on the extent of the work, weather conditions and other unforeseen circumstances. The contractor will be able to give you a more detailed time scale for completion once on site.

Please also note that we may send you a satisfaction questionnaire at the end of the process to obtain your thoughts and comments regarding our performance and how we might be able to improve the service we offer.

If you are chosen at random to receive our questionnaire, we would very much appreciate it if you could find the time to complete and return it to us so that we can continue to improvement the service we provide.

North Lincolnshire Council

Service Standards

Disabled Facilities Grants

North Lincolnshire Council will provide information and access to disabled facilities grants for eligible households in North Lincolnshire.

The stages of the process, which are directly under our control, are detailed below with targets for completion which we aim to meet.

These time scales are monitored and reported on throughout the year but they also **depend on you responding promptly when required.**

	Our target is to complete each stage within:
Following receipt of the needs assessment from either social services or an Occupational Therapist (OT), you will be sent an application form to complete. For those that we are unable to assist, a letter to be sent stating we are unable to help.	1 week
Allocation of the case to a surveyor who will visit to discuss the proposed work.	2 weeks
Prepare and send out a schedule of works to you and the OT for approval.	2 weeks*
Following approval of the scheme from you and the OT, obtain 3 competitive tenders for the work and the completed application form.	5 weeks
On receipt of a completed application form and tender, the grant application will be put forward for approval. A letter will be sent to you confirming that the grant application has been approved and who the appointed contractor is.	2 weeks
Contractor to complete work on site (surveyor will monitor progress on site and liaise with contractor to completion).	12 weeks**
Final Inspection	2 weeks

* In cases where there are more complex issues that require planning, building control permission and/or provision of gas supply then the overall times could vary by up to 10 weeks on average.

**The time period for completion of works will vary depending on the extent of the work, weather conditions and other unforeseen circumstances. The contractor will be able to give you a more detailed time scale for completion once on site.

Please also note that we may send you a satisfaction survey at the end of the process to obtain your thoughts and comments regarding our performance and how we might be able to improve the service we offer.

If you are chosen at random to receive our questionnaire, we would very much appreciate it if you could find the time to complete and return it to us so that we can continue to improve the service we provide.

North Lincolnshire Council

Service Standards



Initial Enquiry for Financial Assistance to improve or adapt a property

North Lincolnshire Council's service target for responding to initial enquiries regarding requests for assistance to improve, renovate or adapt a property is 35 calendar days. The stages of the enquiry process, from first contact with the council to referral (where appropriate) are set out below.

Enquiry Process	Target is to complete each stage within:
Enquiry form sent out following initial contact	7 days
Return of enquiry form (NB Where an enquiry form is not returned, the service request will be closed within	14 days 28 days)
Consideration of returned enquiry form	7 days
Contact with client either by letter or telephone confirming whether any assistance can be given and by whom	7 days
Total days	35 days

Please also note that we may send you a satisfaction survey at the end of the process to obtain your thoughts and comments regarding our performance and how we might be able to improve the service we offer.

If you are chosen at random to receive our questionnaire, we would very much appreciate it if you could find the time to complete and return it to us so that we can continue to improve the service we provide.