



Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND DECISION MAKING

Executive

9 January 2019

WARDS AFFECTED: ALL WARDS

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY

Report of Director (Community Services)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to adopt the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve the adoption of the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy.
- 2.2 To give delegated authority to the Executive Lead for Housing and Community Safety and Director (Community Services) to make operational changes to the policy.

3. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 gave local authorities the power to provide assistance for the purpose of improving living conditions for residents within the Borough. The Housing Assistance Policy targets households who are on a low income and those who are vulnerable, the scope of this updated policy has broadened in order to be able to assist households where applicants are not necessarily in receipt of benefits but are however living at or below the poverty level. The policy considers the limited resources available for private sector housing and targets those resources to people most in need and to meet local priorities.
- 3.2 The Housing Acts give councils the power to offer informal help and discretionary financial assistance to owner occupiers, tenants and private sector landlords to improve the quality and availability of housing. Where there is a disabled person in a household, in many circumstances local authorities have a mandatory duty to offer a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) to assist with the cost of adaptation work.
- 3.3 As resources are limited and there is substantial demand especially for mandatory DFGs, it is essential to ensure that financial assistance is offered on an equitable and priority needs basis that takes account of competing needs.

- 3.4 The responsibility to maintain private property rests firmly with the owner, but the condition and availability of private sector housing stock does have substantial implications for this Council's housing strategy, especially in terms of access to affordable housing. This policy aims to offer assistance to vulnerable households on an individual basis to help sustain the private sector for long term public benefit. The council expects private property owners to adequately insure and maintain their property.
- 3.5 The Private Sector assistance policy replaces the current housing renewal policy and introduces the following funding schemes:
- Home Support Grant – local discretionary grant scheme aimed at helping applicants to remain safe, well and independent in their home. This scheme has been developed through the Lightbulb project and will use a small amount of the disabled facility grant funding (appendix 1)
 - Renovation Assistance and Home Improvement assistance scheme. These replace the current major and minor works grants. Appendix 2.
 - Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) and discretionary DFG. Appendix 3 and 4.

4. EXEMPTIONS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE ACCESS TO INFORMATION PROCEDURE RULES

- 4.1 This report is suitable for consideration in open session.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (IB)

- 5.1 The revised strategy can be met from existing budgets.
- 5.2 Current approved budgets for 2019/20 are summarised in the table below:-

Current Scheme Name	New Scheme Name	Value £
Major Works Assistance	Renovation Assistance	160,000
Minor Works Assistance	Home Improvement Assistance	40,000
Disabled Facilities Grants	Disabled Facilities Grants	642,680
Gross Cost		842,680
Disabled Facilities Support Grant		(439,680)
Overall Net Budget		403,000

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (FA)

- 6.1 None arising directly from this report.

7. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 This aim of this policy is to help people stay healthy, active and to protect them from harm in their own home as well as creating an attractive place to live. This will be achieved by working to improve the quality of existing homes, specifically the poorest quality homes within the Borough.

Supporting vulnerable individuals and those who are most in need to maintain their homes by providing essential repairs and improvements to their home which will ensure that properties are free from damp and safe from Category 1 hazards and to reduce where possible the weekly expenditure on fuel bills by targeting households that are in fuel poverty.

This Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy allows the council to move to a more integrated way of providing housing support, through partnership working with lightbulb. Additionally by helping people to live more healthily in their own homes the burden on other services is reduced, such as health and social care as we help people to safely remain independent for longer.

8. CONSULTATION

8.1 Housing best practice group and lightbulb delivery group.

9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
1, Risk that needs and demand for service changes.	1, The private sector housing manager will check the policy regularly and will make changes to ensure.	Rosemary Leach
2, Mandatory duty to deliver DFG provision.	2, Provide an efficient and effective delivery service	

10. KNOWING YOUR COMMUNITY – EQUALITY AND RURAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The policy covers the entire Borough and will be able to address some of the inequalities facing the rural community with regard to fuel poverty, particularly the rural areas that are off gas.

10.2 Where there is a proposed new service, change of service, or a new or reviewed policy, consideration must be given to whether an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant. Where it is clear from initial consideration that a policy will not have any effect on equality for any of the protected characteristics, no further analysis or action is necessary. Where an EIA has been undertaken insert a link to it on the website

11. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

11.1 By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Procurement implications
- Human Resources implications
- Planning implications
- Data Protection implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers:

Contact Officer: Rosemary Leach, Private Sector Housing Manager

Executive Member: Councillor M Hall