

## CABINET – 3RD AUGUST 2017

### Report of the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing Lead Member: Councillor Paul Mercer

#### Part A

#### ITEM 6 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANTS POLICY

##### Purpose of Report

This report presents the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy (formerly Housing Assistance Policy) for approval. The Policy sets out a clear framework for assessing need for the Private Sector Housing Grants available and awarding financial assistance.

##### Recommendations

1. That the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy, attached as Appendix 1, be approved.
2. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing in consultation with the Lead Member for Strategic and Private Sector Housing to update the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy on an annual basis subject to there being no financial or human resource implications arising from the proposals.
3. That in the event of there being financial implications outside the existing approved budgets or resource implications exceeding the existing approved establishment arising from proposed revisions to the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy, a further report be brought to Cabinet at the appropriate time.
4. That delegated authority be given to the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Strategic and Private Sector Housing to make any minor typographical/graphical amendments to the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy 2017 prior to its publication.

##### Reasons

1. To ensure that the Council can meet its obligations in respect of the strategic housing needs of the most vulnerable people living in the private sector in the Borough.
2. To ensure that the Policy remains relevant and responsive to the residents of the Borough.
3. To ensure appropriate approvals are sought before finalising changes to the Policy that have financial or human resource implications.
4. To enable the timely publication of the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy 2017.

## Policy Justification and Previous Decisions

The Private Sector Housing Grants Policy is designed to help deliver the Council's priorities identified in the Corporate Plan. The aim of the Policy is to provide a framework for assessing need for the Grants available and awarding financial assistance.

## Implementation Timetable including Future Decisions and Scrutiny

The proposed Policy will be implemented once approved and will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis or more frequently as changes in legislation, including benefits entitlement, may dictate. The development of the Policy was considered by the Policy Scrutiny Group on 25th April 2017.

## Report Implications

The following implications have been identified for this report.

### *Financial Implications*

There are no additional financial implications outside existing budget provision associated with this report. Recommendation 3 ensures that any additional financial implications are subject to a further report to the Cabinet.

### *Risk Management*

There are no risks arising from the decisions Cabinet is being asked to make.

### *Equality and Diversity*

An equalities impact assessment of the Policy has been carried out, attached as Appendix 2. No adverse impacts have been identified.

Key Decision:	Yes
Background Papers:	Policy Scrutiny Group, 25th April 2017, item 9 and minute 48
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## Part B

### Background

1. The Housing Assistance Policy has been effective since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004, and was subject to regular reviews with technical and legislative amendments.
2. A review of the Policy has been undertaken and the name of the Policy changed to the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy. The Policy will continue to assist officers of the Council in the interpretation and implementation of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002, Housing Act 2004 and Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 so far as it relates to the improvement of housing stock within the Borough, more specifically in the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants.
3. The Policy will ensure the fair and consistent treatment of residents within the Borough through its application when dealing with requests for grant assistance.
4. There are two types of Grants covered by the Policy:
  - ) mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, and
  - ) a selection of Discretionary Grants for housing renewal and repair.
5. The Policy provides details of the Grants that the Council will provide. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants are awarded according to legislation and guidance issued by Central Government, which determines amongst other things, the type of work that can be funded, the maximum contribution that may be made and the test of financial resources that must be made. This element of the Policy will remain the same.
6. However, changes to the funding of Discretionary Grants, has resulted in changes to the Council's approach. The final Regional Housing Pot Grant from the Department of Communities and Local Government was received in April 2010. The total grant received was £529,000. This annual grant was used to assist vulnerable households living in non-decent homes in the private sector in line with the Government target at that time (PSA 7) 'to increase the proportion living in decent homes in the private sector to 75% by 2020'.
7. The annual Regional Housing Pot funding was replaced with a reduced level of general fund allocated for Private Sector Housing Grant Assistance from 2012/2013 onwards.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Private Sector Housing Grants Budget</b>
2012/2013	£35,000
2013/2014	£40,000
2014/2015	£45,000
2015/2016	£50,000
2016/2017	£55,000
2017/2018	£60,000

8. Since 2013/2014, the Council has made the decisions on how to spend the discretionary Private Sector Housing Grant Assistance and have focused on:
- ) Discretionary grant assistance to vulnerable households to rectify property defects that create a serious risk to the health and/or safety of the occupant.
  - ) Community Alarm Scheme Provision via Home Security Grants.
  - ) Encouraging long term empty home owners to bring their properties back into use.
9. Although the primary responsibility to maintain a property lies with the owner, some owner occupiers are not always able to maintain a safe and liveable home, especially if they are elderly, vulnerable and on a low income and cannot maintain the property.
10. The Policy has been updated to reflect the local context and key strategic and service related aims and objectives; and the removal of reference to grant priority areas and the updating of benefit information. The proposed changes to the grant assistance available are detailed in the table below:

Existing Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy	New Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy
<p><b>Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants</b></p> <p>The type of eligible work fall into the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to and from the dwelling</li> <li>) Making the dwelling safe for the disabled occupant or others living with them</li> <li>) Facilitating access by the disabled occupant to a room used as the principal family room</li> <li>) Providing a room usable for sleeping</li> <li>) Providing a room where there is a bath or shower</li> <li>) Facilitating preparation and cooking of food</li> <li>) Heating lighting and power</li> <li>) Facilitating safe access to and from the garden</li> <li>) Facilitating access and movement by the disabled occupant around</li> </ul>	<p><b>Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)</b></p> <p>No material changes to Mandatory DFGs are proposed.</p>

Existing Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy	New Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy
<p>the dwelling in order to enable them to care for a person who is normally resident in the dwelling and is in need of such care</p> <p>Currently governed by the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 which explicitly covers mandatory DFG assistance in terms of being 'necessary and appropriate' and 'reasonable and practicable' as well as subject to a test of resources (income and savings) which determines whether the applicant will have to contribute toward a grant.</p>	
<p><b>Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants</b></p> <p>Currently for use in exceptional circumstances, where finances are available, as well as, or instead of, Mandatory Grants.</p> <p>These Grants are means tested.</p>	<p><b>Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants (DDFG)</b></p> <p>Further to the expansion of the mandatory grant programme through the Better Care Fund the Policy has been updated to include a more innovative spend of DFG monies on a discretionary basis.</p> <p>Proposals considered included the following two options within the DDFG criteria rather than where they currently sit within the Policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>) The existing discretionary Relocation Grant (up to £5,000) has been included in the DDFG.</li> <li>) The potential to expand the existing Hospital Discharge Grant was reviewed and after discussions with the Senior Hospital Housing Enabler it was established that works being considered for inclusion are already covered by existing arrangements (either via the Integrated Discharge Team or the Community Assessment Team).</li> </ul>

Existing Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy	New Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy
	) This element of the DDFG has therefore been removed from the Policy and the impact of this will be monitored during the annual Policy review.
<p><b>Discretionary Renovation Grants</b></p> <p>Applications considered from owner occupiers and qualifying tenants within grant priority areas to bring the property up to the decent homes standard.</p> <p>There are no maximum limits and the grant is means tested.</p> <p>The Renovation Grants for major works to unfit properties within the grant priority areas were awarded until 2012/2013.</p>	<p><b>Discretionary Renovation Grants (DRG)</b></p> <p>Due to the outdated standard and cessation of Government funding, DRGs have been removed from the Policy.</p>
<p><b>Discretionary Home Repair Assistance Grant</b></p> <p>Available to facilitate hospital discharge, provide central heating or where the occupant has owned the house for 1 year for remedial works under any of the 4 categories:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Wind Weatherproof and Safe (up to £4,500):  For essential repairs to the structure of the dwelling likely to present a significant risk to occupants or passers-by.</li> <li>2. Essential Services (up to £4,000):  For repair to central heating hot water supply, replacement of leaking service pipes e.g. dangerous gas piping, replacing of failed or dangerous electrical</li> </ol>	<p><b>Discretionary Home Repair Assistance Grant (DHRAG)</b></p> <p>The Policy review has resulted in the amalgamation of categories 1 and 2 with a maximum grant limit of £5,000, where there is serious risk to the health and or safety of the occupant.</p> <p>Works to replace a failed and unrepairable installation for the supply of heating for vulnerable qualifying households (defined as low income and with a health condition e.g. cardiovascular or mental health conditions, or over 60s, or those with children under 16) has been added to the Home Repair Grant.</p> <p>This will be used for cases where the applicant is not eligible for a grant under any other available scheme e.g. NPower or ECO.</p>

Existing Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy	New Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy
<p>wiring, defective drainage/sanitary fittings.</p> <p>3. Hospital Discharge (£1,000):</p> <p>For repairs, improvements/non-DFG adaptations to facilitate return home.</p> <p>4. Central Heating (£2,000):</p> <p>For over 60s, means tested. Where alternative funding is not available. For the supply of boiler, radiators or storage heaters.</p> <p>Available to low income households with a disability, over 60 or with children.</p>	<p>Qualifying households supported by the Home Repair Grant are particularly vulnerable to the effects of cold and this will be a valuable addition to the Grant Category.</p> <p>As detailed above this element has been removed from the Policy and the impact of this will be monitored during the annual Policy review.</p> <p>The central heating category with a maximum grant of £2,000 has been replaced with an 'ECO top up' grant. The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) 'Help to Heat' grant is aimed at providing affordable warmth and reducing fuel poverty through the provision of insulation and central heating boilers.</p> <p>However, due the funding calculations, the client can often have a contribution to make towards the cost of the works and this can prevent the work from going ahead.</p> <p>After liaising with the Warm Homes Officer at First Contact (who receives calls from residents who qualify for ECO, but who cannot afford their contribution), the criteria and maximum grant amount (remaining at £2,000) were confirmed as suitable.</p> <p>By providing a 'top up' grant, we are able to ensure residents are in a position to take advantage of the ECO funding available.</p>
<p><b>Discretionary Landlords Grants</b></p> <p>For properties within a grant priority area, or which have been empty for at least 2 years or to convert existing space above a shop to provide living accommodation.</p>	<p><b>Discretionary Landlords Grants(DLG)</b></p> <p>DLGs have been removed from the Policy.</p> <p>Any adverse property conditions in</p>

Existing Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy	New Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy
<p>Means tested.</p> <p>Cannot be awarded where the landlord has a statutory obligation to carry out the work.</p> <p>Outcome types are listed in the Policy.</p>	<p>privately rented accommodation will be addressed by the Housing Standards Officers.</p>
<p><b>Discretionary Home Safety Grants</b></p> <p>Applicants must be in receipt of a qualifying benefit (income based) and have lived in their home for at least 12 months and have responsibility for repairing and maintaining their home (except for community alarm element).</p> <p>Maximum grant £2,500. Available for work to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>)] Prevent falls or eliminate/reduce risks likely to cause serious harm or injury.</li> <li>)] To connect an elderly or infirm or disabled person to a Community Alarm Service</li> <li>)] To install appropriate home security measures where the applicant is deemed to be at risk.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Discretionary Home Safety Grants (DHSG)</b></p> <p>No proposed changes.</p>
<p><b>Discretionary Relocation Grants</b></p> <p>Available for disabled residents to assist in the coincidental cost of moving to suitable accommodation (e.g. removal costs legal and estate agent fees and stamp duty), when there is no possibility of appropriate modification/adaption to the current home.</p> <p>Maximum grant £5,000.</p> <p>This grant is means tested.</p>	<p><b>Discretionary Relocation Grants</b></p> <p>The Relocation Grant has been included within the DDFG.</p>

Existing Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy	New Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy
<p><b>Discretionary Partnership Grants</b></p> <p>Designed to increase the supply of housing in Charnwood while encouraging empty home owners to bring their empty property back into use, the partnership grant is available for properties that have been empty for 6 months or more.</p> <p>The maximum grant is £15,000 and grant aid is paid at 50% of the eligible cost.</p> <p>The applicant must enter into a maximum 5 year letting agreement with a nomination element.</p>	<p><b>Discretionary Partnership Grants (DPG)</b></p> <p>Grants are available for Empty Homes through the Council's Partnership Grant.</p> <p>The qualifying criteria for the grant has been reviewed and amended in light of the Empty Homes Strategy stakeholder consultation event and changes include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>) The length of time a property has been empty before qualifying for a DPG has been increased from 6 months to 1 year.</li> <li>) A limitation on the number of Grants within this category to be awarded to one grant per individual</li> <li>) An increase in the length of the Nomination Rights Period from 0 to 1 year for grants up to the value of £5,000 (with a further 1 year during which the property must be let or available to let).</li> <li>) The introduction of a minimum time that the property must have been in the ownership of the applicant of 1 year on the date of application.</li> </ul>

### Delivering the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy

11. Funding for DFGs in England is channelled into the Better Care Fund (BCF) which consists of pooled resources from a number of sources. One of the aims of the BCF is to achieve improved integration of care and support services. A proportion of the BCF is transferred to Charnwood Borough Council to fund DFGs, helping to support the national aims for the fund, including the prevention of unnecessary hospital admissions and reducing the delayed transfer of care when people are ready to leave hospital.
12. The Council contributes to the cost of the Discretionary Private Sector Housing Grants from the General Fund. The funding is allocated each year to help to achieve the aims of the Policy and the Empty Homes Strategy.

13. In addition the Council may utilise funding from Central Government or other sources aimed at specific subjects or to target issues of local and national concern in accordance for example replacement of inefficient boilers.

#### Performance Monitoring

14. The Policy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis or more frequently as changes in legislation, including benefits entitlement, may dictate.
15. Minor changes which make no significant difference to service provision will be made to the document under delegated authority by the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing in consultation with the Lead Member.
16. Significant changes or financial implications of the Policy will be brought back to Cabinet for consideration.

#### Appendices

Appendix 1: Private Sector Housing Grants Policy 2017

Appendix 2: Equalities Impact Assessment



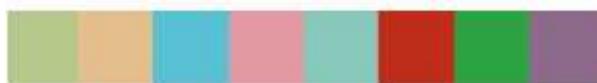
# Private Sector Housing Grants Policy

2017



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This policy is designed to assist the most vulnerable people living in the Private Sector. There are strong links between poor housing conditions and poor health, and poor housing disproportionately affects vulnerable people who do not have the necessary resources to keep their homes in good repair, or who require adaptations or alterations to allow them to continue living at home.

This policy is written in accordance with The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002, the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, and the Housing Act 2004 and details how the grant budget will be used by Charnwood Borough Council to address these issues and meet local needs.

The Policy aims to:

- ) Increase the number of vulnerable people who are able to live independently at home.
- ) Reduce the number of vulnerable households living in homes that pose an imminent risk to their health and safety.
- ) Increase the number of empty homes that are brought into use, particularly accommodation that can be used to reduce homelessness.

Charnwood Borough Council will consider all grant applications on their merits and each case will be assessed to ensure that:

- ) All available options have been fully explored.
- ) Assistance through other means is not reasonably available or practicable.
- ) The Council has the resources required available (excluding applications for Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants).

The policy provides the details of the Private Sector Housing Grants available, eligibility criteria, maximum amount of the grant available and how they will be calculated and the terms and conditions that are applied to each grant and in what circumstances any grant awarded may have to be repaid.

All enquiries should be directed to the Private Sector Housing Team (01509) 634651 or email to [private.housing@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:private.housing@charnwood.gov.uk)



The Private Sector Housing Grants eligibility criteria apply to all applications for grant assistance contained within this Policy as follows:

- ) Applicants must be 18 years of age at the date of the application, **and**
- ) Applicants must have an owner's interest in the dwelling (other than an interest by virtue of being a Registered Provider (formerly Housing Association), or be a tenant or licensee of the dwelling with a tenancy or licence permitting occupation of the dwelling for a minimum of 12 months after approval of the Housing Grant (this may differ in respect of disabled facilities grants), **and**
- ) Applicants must have the power or duty to carry out the works and where appropriate have the owner's consent in writing to carry out the works (excluding Home Safety Grants), **and**
- ) Applicants must satisfy such tests of resources as the Council has in place, **and**
- ) Applicants must not be ineligible, by virtue of the Housing, Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, regulations made under the Act, or any other enactment.

Information on the application procedure is available from the Private Sector Housing Team on (01509) 634651 or email to [private.housing@charnwood.gov.uk](mailto:private.housing@charnwood.gov.uk).



The Council is unable to provide assistance to all residents given the limited resources available. In reviewing the Grants provided by the Council, consideration has been given to those residents in most need of assistance, their current situation and financial circumstances.

Details of the Grants that the Council may offer are provided below and are subject to the Terms and Conditions set out in Appendix 1.

## Mandatory Grants

### Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs)

The Council awards Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants in accordance with the legislation (Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 and guidance issued by Government which determines, amongst other things, the type of work that can be funded, the maximum amount of grant, and the test of financial resources that must be made.

## Discretionary Grants

Discretionary Grants are subject to the levels of available funding in each financial year and the Council reserves the right to defer approval, or even consideration of applications, for periods of time in order to award grants within the budgets available.

The Council will offer the following Discretionary Grants:

- ) Discretionary Disabled Facility Grants
  - Relocation
  - Minor Works
- ) Home Repair Grants
- ) Home Safety Grants
- ) Energy Company Obligation (ECO) "Help to Heat" Top up Grant
- ) Partnership Grants



## Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants

The Council will award a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant where applications meet the criteria below and are in accordance with the relevant legislation.

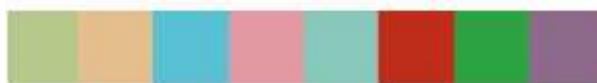
### Who qualifies for a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant?

- ) An owner, tenant, licensee or occupant (see definitions in Appendix 2) where adaptations are required to meet the needs of a disabled occupant living in the property to enable them to continue living there
- ) For those disabled occupants in receipt of:
  - Universal Credit
  - Income Support
  - Income-based Employment and Support Allowance (not contribution based)
  - Income-related Jobseeker's Allowance (not contribution based)
  - Guaranteed Pension Credit (not Savings Pension Credit alone)
  - Working Tax or Child Tax Credit with income of £15,050 or less
  - Housing Benefit

At the time the application is made, their contribution towards the Disabled Facilities Grant will be Nil. Full entitlement is available for eligible works up to the grant maximum.

For those disabled occupants not in receipt of one of the benefits listed above, a test of resources must be carried out in order to assess the amount, if any, that the applicant must contribute towards the cost of the works. Documentary evidence must be provided to support the information provided about all sources of income and all savings.

- ) Parents of disabled children are not means tested for applications for Disabled Facilities Grants. Full entitlement is available for eligible works up to the Grant maximum.



## Eligible Works

The purposes for which a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant may be given are set out in section 23 (1) of the 1996 Act and fall into a number of categories:

- ) Facilitating access to and from the dwelling (which can include a qualifying houseboat, park home or, in the case of a flat, the building in which the flat is located) for example via a ramp or work to the threshold and associated doors.
- ) Facilitating access to a room used or usable as the principle family room.
- ) Facilitating access to a room used or usable for sleeping, or alternatively providing such a room for the disabled occupant, for example, a stairlift.
- ) Facilitating access to a room in which there is a lavatory, a bath or a shower (or both) and a wash basin, or providing a room in which there is such a facility. For example, a level access shower or over bath shower or a washing WC where self- hygiene cannot be achieved satisfactorily. Facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of such facility.
- ) Facilities for the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled occupant where appropriate, for example, lowering worktop or sockets.
- ) Making the dwelling safe, for example, through the provision of an enhanced alarm system for those with hearing difficulties, or where a disabled person has behavioural problems, minimising the risk of harm through appropriate adaptations.
- ) Improving any heating system within the dwelling, or providing a heating system to meet the needs of the disabled occupant, for example, the provision of heating to rooms used by the disabled occupant - the main living room, bedroom and bathroom.
- ) Facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of a source of power, light or heat, for example, by altering the position of one or more means of access to or control of that source or providing additional means of control.
- ) Facilitating access and movement by the disabled occupant around the dwelling in order to care for another person who normally resides there and is in need of such care, for example, to provide access to an area that the disabled occupant would not normally need access to, but which is used by a person to whom they are providing care.
- ) Facilitating access to the garden for a disabled occupant.

In considering an application, the Council must be satisfied that the relevant works are necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled occupant and that it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the relevant works having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling. The Council will consult with Leicestershire County Council Adult or Children's Social Care (Occupational Therapists) when considering the above criteria.



## Amount of Grant

The **maximum** Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant available is **£30,000**.

## Repayment Conditions (see Terms and Conditions in Appendix 1)

In the case of a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant for an owner occupier where the grant exceeds £5,000, the Council will demand repayment of the amount of grant in excess of the first £5,000 (up to a maximum of £10,000 in total) if the property is disposed of in any way or the property is occupied other than by a disabled person within the grant condition period (10 years from the date that the works are certified).

The Council reserves the right to monitor grant commitment and expenditure at all times and will prioritise the provision of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants.

## Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants

The Council will consider applications for Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants subject to the national test of resources used for Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants, for:

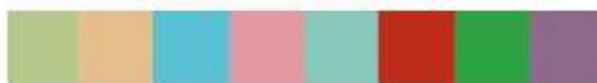
- ) Relocation
- ) Minor Works

## Relocation Grant

The Relocation Grant is to assist people with the costs of moving into suitable accommodation, where there is no possibility of appropriate modification to the existing home through a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant award.

## Who qualifies for a Relocation Grant?

- ) Those who have been assessed for a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant to adapt their current home, where modifications have not been possible
- ) Applicants are subject to the same test of resources used for Disabled Facilities Grant applications (see details on page 5 under 'Who qualifies for a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant').



### Eligible Costs may include:

- ) Removal costs
- ) Stamp Duty
- ) Legal and estate agents fees

### Amount of Grant

- ) The **maximum** Grant available is **£5,000**.

### Repayment Conditions (see Terms and Conditions in Appendix 1)

- ) There will be no repayment conditions.

### Minor Works

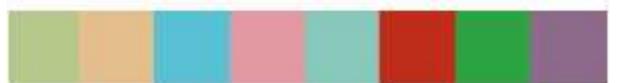
This grant is intended to support a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant to fund non-eligible works that are deemed necessary for the benefit of a disabled person.

### Who qualifies for a Minor Works Grant?

- ) Applicants who have been assessed for a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant, where non-eligible works have been identified and deemed necessary.
- ) Applicants are subject to the same test of resources used for a Disabled Facilities Grant application (see details on page 5 under 'Who qualifies for a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant').

### Eligible Work may include:

- ) Works recommended by an Occupational Therapist deemed at the discretion of the Council to be reasonable and practicable, necessary and appropriate to facilitate independent living, for example, works outside the boundary of the property to provide safe access to and from the home as part of a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant.



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## Amount of Grant

- ) The **maximum** Grant available is **£3,000**.

## Repayment Conditions (see Terms and Conditions in Appendix 1)

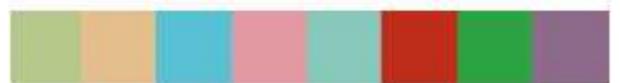
- ) There will be no repayment conditions.

## Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, for example where the cost of works for a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant is in excess of £30,000 and the applicant and or disabled occupant is considered to be in financial hardship with no alternative means of funding (i.e. charitable contributions), the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing under delegated authority will consider providing additional funding through the Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant.

The Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant will not exceed a maximum of £10,000.

Such applications will be considered on a case by case basis.



Homeowners have the primary responsibility for ensuring their homes are properly maintained, but Home Repair Grants are available to vulnerable households where there is an imminent risk to the health or safety of the occupant(s) or passers-by.

## Who qualifies for a Home Repair Grant?

- ) **Vulnerable** (see below) owner-occupiers and qualifying tenants (where the tenant has a duty to carry out the works).

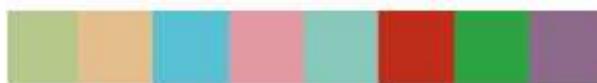
A **vulnerable person for the purposes of the grant is defined as:**

- A person living with a chronic or severe illness, frailty or disability (evidence is likely to be sought); or
- A person over the age of 60; or
- A person with children under 16 (living permanently with them)

And in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Income Support
- Income based Jobseekers Allowance (not contribution based)
- Income related Employment Support Allowance (not contribution based)
- Guaranteed Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit with an income of £16,105 or less
- Child Tax Credit with an income of £16,105 or less
- Universal Credit
- Attendance Allowance (where the applicant has no partner living at the property, or both the applicant and his/her partner receive AA, Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independent Payment)
- Disability Living Allowance or Personal Independence Payment (where the applicant has no partner living at the property, or both the applicant and his/her partner receive DLA, PIP or AA)
- Housing Benefit

- ) The **applicant** must have occupied the property for a minimum of one year prior to the application date and only one Home Repair Grant will normally be awarded within any five year period.
- ) All identified significant risks must be included in the application.



## Eligible Work may include:

- ) Essential repairs to the external structure of the dwelling likely to present a significant risk to the occupant or passers-by.
- ) Other works to the fabric of the building to remove a significant risk to the occupier or passers-by.
- ) Work to replace a failed and unrepairable installation for the supply of hot water or heating ( only in cases where the applicant is not eligible for a grant under any other available scheme)
- ) Replacement or repair of leaking water service pipes for which the applicant is responsible.
- ) Replacement of dangerous gas piping.
- ) Replacement of failed or dangerous electric wiring.
- ) Replacement of defective drains for which the applicant is responsible.
- ) Replacement of unhygienic or unusable sink, WC, bath or wash hand basin.

The Grant will not cover routine maintenance work, for example, replacement windows.

## Amount of Grant

- ) The **maximum** Grant available is **£5,000**.

## Repayment Conditions (see Terms and Conditions in Appendix 1)

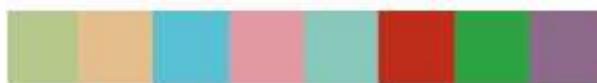
- ) There will be no repayment conditions.

## Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances, where an enquiry for a Discretionary Home Repair Grant falls outside the policy, for example if the costs of the remedial works identified are in excess of the maximum Grant available, the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing under delegated authority will consider whether to provide funding to enable a vulnerable resident to remain living safely in their home.

The Discretionary Home Repair Grant will not exceed a maximum of £10,000.

Such applications will be considered on a case by case basis.



Energy Company Obligation (ECO) “Help to Heat” is a Government scheme aimed at tackling fuel poverty. The scheme focuses on the installation of insulation and replacement boilers. The Top Up Grant will cover the client contribution figure by the Energy Company providing the ECO Grant.

## Who qualifies for an ECO ‘Help to Heat’ Top Up Grant?

- ) Owner occupiers and qualifying tenants (where the tenant has a duty to carry out the works) who have qualified for ECO Help to Heat funding for insulation measures or a replacement boiler (Gas, Oil fired or LPG), but that have a contribution to make towards the cost of the works
- ) Those wishing to apply for an ECO Grant should contact the Energy Savings Trust Service on 0300 123 1234 (Monday-Friday, 9.00am to 5.00pm).

## Eligible Work may include:

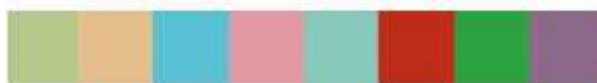
- ) Home Insulation Measures
- ) Replacement Central Heating Boilers
- ) The Top Up Grant will cover the client contribution up to the maximum grant amount.

## Amount of Grant

- ) The **maximum** Grant available is **£2,000**.

## Repayment Conditions (see Terms and Conditions in Appendix 1)

- ) There will be no repayment conditions.



Home Safety Grants are awarded on a discretionary basis to help low income elderly, infirm or disabled residents connect to a Community Alarm Service, or for the installation of appropriate home security measures where the applicant is deemed to be at risk.

## Who qualifies for a Home Safety Grant?

- ) Homeowners, private leaseholders and tenants in receipt of one or more of the following benefits:
  - Income Support
  - Income based Jobseekers Allowance (not contribution based)
  - Income related Employment Support Allowance (not contribution based)
  - Guaranteed Pension Credit
  - Working Tax Credit with an income of £16,105 or less
  - Child Tax Credit with an income of £16,105 or less
  - Universal Credit
  - Housing Benefit
  - Attendance Allowance
  - Disability Living Allowance or;
  - Personal Independence Payment

## Eligible Work may include:

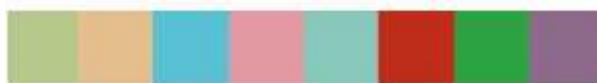
- ) Connection to a Community Alarm Service and or Assistive Technology
- ) Installation of appropriate home security measures where the applicant is deemed to be at risk.

## Amount of Grant

- ) The **maximum** Grant available is **£2,500** in any three year period.

## Repayment Conditions (see Terms and Conditions in Appendix 1)

- ) There will be no repayment conditions.



The Partnership Grant is aimed at encouraging the owners of empty homes to bring their properties back into use and increase the availability of housing for homeless families and those at risk of becoming homeless.

## Who qualifies for a Partnership Grant?

- ) The applicant must have owned the property for a minimum of 1 year prior to the application date and not previously received a Partnership Grant.
- ) The empty home must have been empty for a minimum of one year on the date of application.

Table 1: Terms of Nomination Rights Agreements

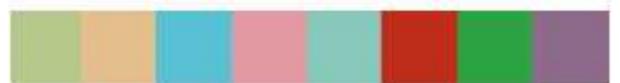
Value of Partnership Grant Awarded	Nomination Rights period (years)	Available for Private Renting (years)	Total number of years property is available for renting
Up to £5,000	1	1	2
£5,001 – £10,000	2	1	3
£10,001 – £15,000	3	2	5

## Eligible Work could include:

- ) The property must be brought up to a lettable standard, free from Category 1 Hazards. The Empty Homes Officer will draw up a schedule of works to be undertaken to achieve this.

## Amount of Grant

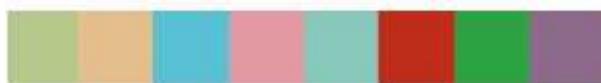
- ) The Grant shall be **50%** of the cost of the works required on the Partnership Grant Schedule of Works up to a **maximum** of **£15,000**.



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## Repayment Conditions (see Terms and Conditions in Appendix 1)

- ) A Nomination Rights Agreement must be agreed and signed prior to grant approval, permitting the Council to nominate tenants to the property for a period of time as shown at Table 1 above.
- ) The property must be available to let in accordance with the Nomination Rights Agreement for a period of time as shown at Table 1 above:
- ) The grant must be repaid in full if the dwelling is not let, or available for letting, for the time specified in Table 1 upon completion of works, in accordance with the Nomination Rights Agreement.



## Resources

### Delivering the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy

Funding for Disabled Facilities Grants in England is channelled into the Better Care Fund which consists of pooled resources from a number of sources. One of the aims of the Better Care Fund is to achieve improved integration of care and support services. A proportion of the Better Care Fund is transferred to Charnwood Borough Council to fund Disabled Facilities Grants, helping to support the national aims for the fund, including the prevention of unnecessary hospital admissions and reducing the delayed transfer of care when people are ready to leave hospital.

The Council contributes to the cost of the Discretionary Private Sector Housing Grants from the General Fund. The funding is allocated each year to help to achieve the aims of the Policy and the Empty Homes Strategy.

In addition, the Council may utilise funding from Central Government or other sources aimed at specific issues or to target issues of local and national concern in accordance with any special conditions, for example, the replacement of inefficient boilers.

## Monitoring

### Performance Monitoring and Review

The Policy will be monitored and reviewed on an annual basis or more frequently as changes in legislation, including benefits entitlement, may dictate.

Minor changes which make no significant difference to service provision will be made to the document under delegated authority by the Head of Strategic and Private Sector Housing in consultation with the Lead Member for Strategic and Private Sector Housing.

Should the Policy be impacted by significant changes or financial implications, it will be taken to Cabinet for consideration.



The Terms and Conditions will be applicable to all elements of the Private Housing Grants Policy, except where otherwise stated. Legislation applicable to Mandatory Disabled Facilities determined by central government is also followed by the Council.

## Applications

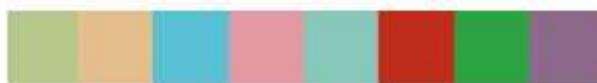
- ) In making an application for a grant, when applicants sign the application form, they are agreeing to all the terms and conditions as detailed by the Council.
- ) In all cases (excluding Partnership Grants), the property must be the usual place of residence of the applicant at the time of application, including dwellings, mobile homes and houseboats.
- ) Information provided to the Council by applicants as part of the application process will be checked thoroughly and may be shared with other departments of the Council and other organisations involved in any aspect of handling public funds to prevent and detect fraud or in investigation of other possible criminal activities.
- ) Applications or enquiries will only be accepted on the prescribed forms of the Council.
- ) Proof of title may be required to enable property ownership to be confirmed, and consent of any mortgagee may be needed.
- ) An application for a Disabled Facilities Grant will only be considered complete and then processed when it is accompanied by an Occupational Therapist's report recommending the necessary works. It would be normal and beneficial for such a report to be provided at the commencement of the enquiry/application process.
- ) An application for a grant towards works that have already been completed will not be processed. Any part of works not commenced, which would otherwise have been considered for a grant may be processed for a possible grant as long as that work is not commenced prior to formal approval.
- ) Applications from tenants for a Discretionary Home Repair Grant must be from qualifying tenants who according to the terms of their lease/tenancy agreement are responsible for the work for which a grant is being sought.
- ) An application for a Partnership Grant will not be approved if the applicant has previously received Partnership Grant funding for any property (including the property to which the application relates) within the Borough.
- ) The Council may refer enquiries for a grant to First Contact Plus or other external agencies where an alternative, appropriate source of funding may be available.
- ) Except in exceptional circumstances, where a Home Repair Grant has been paid, no further grant shall be considered for a period of five years from the date of payment.



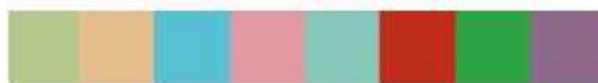
- ) Grants will only be approved for the benefit of applicants who are able to provide evidence of a valid National Insurance Number.
- ) Discretionary Grants are subject to the levels of available funding in each financial year and the Council reserves the right to defer approval, or even consideration of applications, for periods of time in order to award grants within the budgets available.
- ) In considering applications for the benefit of people with disabilities the Council may choose not to grant aid adaptations for which County Council Social Services are responsible under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970.
- ) There is no appeal route against the outcome of 'means testing' although calculations can be rechecked on application to the Private Housing Manager.

### Estimates, Payments and the Works Undertaken

- ) Estimates and or quotations from a family member (includes spouses, persons who live together as husband and wife, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces) of the applicant must be clearly identified as such by the applicant and must be made on the basis of materials only and not include labour costs.
- ) If an applicant submits an estimate and or quote from a member of their family who then carries out the agreed works the grant will only be paid on the basis of the cost of materials and not labour.
- ) It is the applicant who employs the builder to undertake the agreed works and the Council has no contractual liabilities in that relationship as its role is only to administer the grant process.
- ) The applicant is ultimately responsible for ensuring the quality of the completed works; the responsibility can be passed on to an agent of the applicant, e.g. an architect or a Home Improvement Agency.
- ) The Council will not undertake works on behalf of applicants, except where works may be due in default of an owner's, tenant's etc. failure to comply with a statutory notice.
- ) The Council or its agents will hold final authority to determine what works are included on grant schedules although it is acceptable for owners, tenants or their agents etc. to draw up initial schedules of work which may be reduced or added to by the Council in terms of work qualifying for a possible grant.
- ) The responsibility to gain all necessary approvals for works to be undertaken with grant aid rests with the applicant or their agent, such approvals may be Planning Permission or Building Regulation Approval or any of the matters raised within the terms and conditions of the grant.
- ) Ongoing maintenance and repair of completed works and adaptations provided under a grant will become the responsibility of the applicant or landlord as relevant.



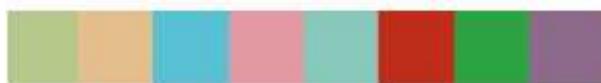
- ) The amount of grant payable shall be the actual cost of undertaking the works plus any reasonable associated fees less any owner's contribution etc. up to the total value of the grant approved. Additional funding will only be provided above the original approval level in the event of unforeseen work being needed to allow completion of eligible works or associated works of a nature to protect the health and safety of occupiers. A formal re-approval will be required before any payment above the originally approved level is paid. The additional work shall not be carried out before the Council's consent has been obtained. Maximum grant limits will still apply.
- ) All payments shall be conditional upon receipt of an acceptable invoice and will be made direct to the appropriate contractor following agreement with the applicant that works to the appropriate stage have been satisfactorily completed.
- ) Where the approved work has not been carried out to the satisfaction of the applicant, the Council may, at the request of the applicant and if it considers it to be reasonable, withhold payment.
- ) The Council will include the cost of preliminary or ancillary services fees and charges within the calculation of the grant, each submission of fees will be individually considered for reasonableness. The payment of any such fees is conditional on a grant being approved and the completion of all specified works, otherwise the Council will not be held responsible for any fees incurred before or after approval.
- ) The Council will consider requests for interim payments such that no interim payment will be for more than 90% of the cost of completed work and in aggregate no more than 90% of the total approved amount before final completion.
- ) The payment of any grant approved will only be considered after any applicants contribution has been accounted for in the value of invoices submitted.
- ) The grant works must be carried out by the contractor on whose estimate/quote, submitted as part of the application process, the grant approval is based (usually the lowest priced estimate/quote). Where previously agreed by the Council and subject to receipt of a satisfactory estimate, the Council may allow the work to be carried out by an alternative contractor.
- ) Where the Council believes that the likely cost of work will be less than £1000, one estimate only will be required, and in other cases a minimum of two must be provided. If one estimate only has been required and the cost significantly exceeds £1,000, a further estimate may be required. The Council reserves the right to ask for more estimates/quotes if it is not happy with those submitted or to accept a single quote where two would normally be required for work from specialist contractors. The Council may seek evidence as to the background and trading practices of any contractor.



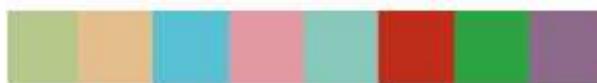
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## Cancellation, Withdrawal and Repayment

- ) The time allowed for the Grant works to be completed will be 12 months from the date of the approval document. In exceptional circumstances, this may be extended at the discretion of the Council. Such agreement must be requested in writing no later than 11 months from the approval date.
- ) If the applicant should die before the grant is approved, the application shall be treated as withdrawn.
- ) If after approval is issued but before the Grant works are certified by the Council as being complete, your circumstances change or are found to be different from those stated in your grant application to such an extent that approval of the Grant would no longer be given, then the Council reserves the right to cancel the Grant and in such event no further payments will be made. Where payments have been made, the Council may demand repayment together with compound interest from the date on which payment was made until repayment, at such reasonable rate as the Council may determine. If your circumstances do change from those originally stated you must notify the Council immediately in writing.
- ) In any case where financial circumstances at the time of application are later confirmed to be different from those submitted by the applicant/s such that after approval a new processing of information would lead to a reduced grant or denial of a grant then the original approval will be amended/cancelled and the Council may demand repayment together with compound interest from the date on which payment was made until repayment, at such reasonable rate as the Council may determine to recover any over payment. In such circumstances the Council may choose to cancel the whole approval or demand repayment of all monies paid, plus compound interest, despite the fact that a reduced level of grant would have been approved, where it is felt the degree of error in the applicant completing the original means test form is such to suggest a deliberate attempt to deceive.
- ) If the applicant should die after approval of the grant whilst the approved works are in progress, the council may at its discretion agree to the making good of the works undertaken to that point and pay an appropriate portion of the grant.
- ) In circumstances where the Council believe that actions of applicants may have been taken to deliberately defraud the Council, at any stage, a file will be passed to the Police for investigation.
- ) In cases where a condition applies (that is a condition of the grant where the recipient will be required to repay a proportion of the grant), the Council will place a local land charge against the property for the repayment.



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- ) Where a repayment condition is in force, the Council may require the person responsible to provide information in writing to satisfy the Council that the condition is being complied with. It is a condition that this information is provided in a reasonable time period, specified by the Council. Failure to comply with this requirement is a breach of the conditions in itself and the repayment amount must then be repaid to the Council.
  - ) In the case of a Partnership Grant, if the applicant fails to comply with the terms of the Nomination Rights Agreement then they will repay on demand to the Council the total amount of grant paid out.
  - ) In the case of a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant for an owner occupier, where the grant exceeded £5,000, the Council will demand repayment of the amount of grant in excess of the first £5,000 (up to a maximum of £10,000 in total) if within the grant condition period (10 years from the date that the works are certified);
    - The property is disposed of in any way
    - The property is occupied other than by the disabled person
  - ) Where an applicant dies after completion of the works, but before the expiry of the local land charge on the property, the council will seek repayment of the housing grant from the applicant's estate if a disposal by sale or change in ownership takes place.
  - ) The Council may determine not to demand repayment of the Grant, or to demand a lesser amount where extenuating circumstances exist (for example if the recipient would suffer financial hardship if required to make the repayment). This will be at the discretion of the Council and on a case by case basis.
  - ) If in any situation whereby repayment of grant is required and the applicant fails to make the necessary arrangements, the Council will commence legal action to recover the amount due. This may result in a court order for the amount due which will be registered as a charge against the property. This will incur compound interest at a reasonable rate as determined by the Council.
  - ) Applicants will be required to pursue all available insurance or other damages claims that might be available to offset the cost of the works
  - ) In the event of a recipient of a grant pursuing a successful insurance claim, action for legal damages etc. which covers any part of the cost of works for which grant was previously paid, the applicant will on demand repay the total value of grant paid relating to such works or the value of the insurance payment/legal damages if lower.

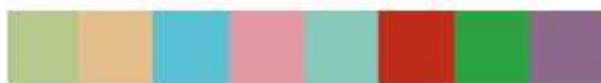


Agreed Works	Are those works appearing on a schedule produced or authorised by the Council.
Application	To be valid an application must include the completed application form and (where necessary) certificate of occupation, the requisite number of estimates in the form required and plans if needed.
Charge on a Property	Is where the local authority legally places a debt on the record of a house and recovers the debt, plus interest, upon its sale if not settled beforehand.
Consent of Mortgagee	Is given by the building society, bank etc with whom the applicant has their mortgage in the case of freeholders and leaseholders.
Disabled Occupant	The disabled person for whose benefit it is proposed to carry out any of the relevant works.
Household Income	Means the amount of money the financial markets will consider available from a household to fund a loan, but will not include income from children etc. residing in the home, but purely from owner/s and any spouse or partner living in the property.
Licensee	A person having a licence to occupy.
Member of the family	Includes spouses, persons who live together as husband and wife, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces.
Occupier	A person who occupies (jointly or with others) a qualifying houseboat or park home.
Owner's Interest	<p>Where the applicant has, or proposes to acquire, an owner's interest in every parcel of land on which the relevant works are to be carried out.</p> <p>The Council may treat this condition as met by a person who has, or proposes to acquire, an owner's interest in only part of the land concerned.</p> <p>NB The Council will not approve an owner's application by a person who proposes to acquire a qualifying owner's interest until they are satisfied that s/he has done so.</p>
Person with a disability / people with disabilities	She/he is registered as a person with a disability or, in the opinion of the Social Services Authority is registerable as a person with a disability. This definition recognises the fact that the majority of people will not be on a register.



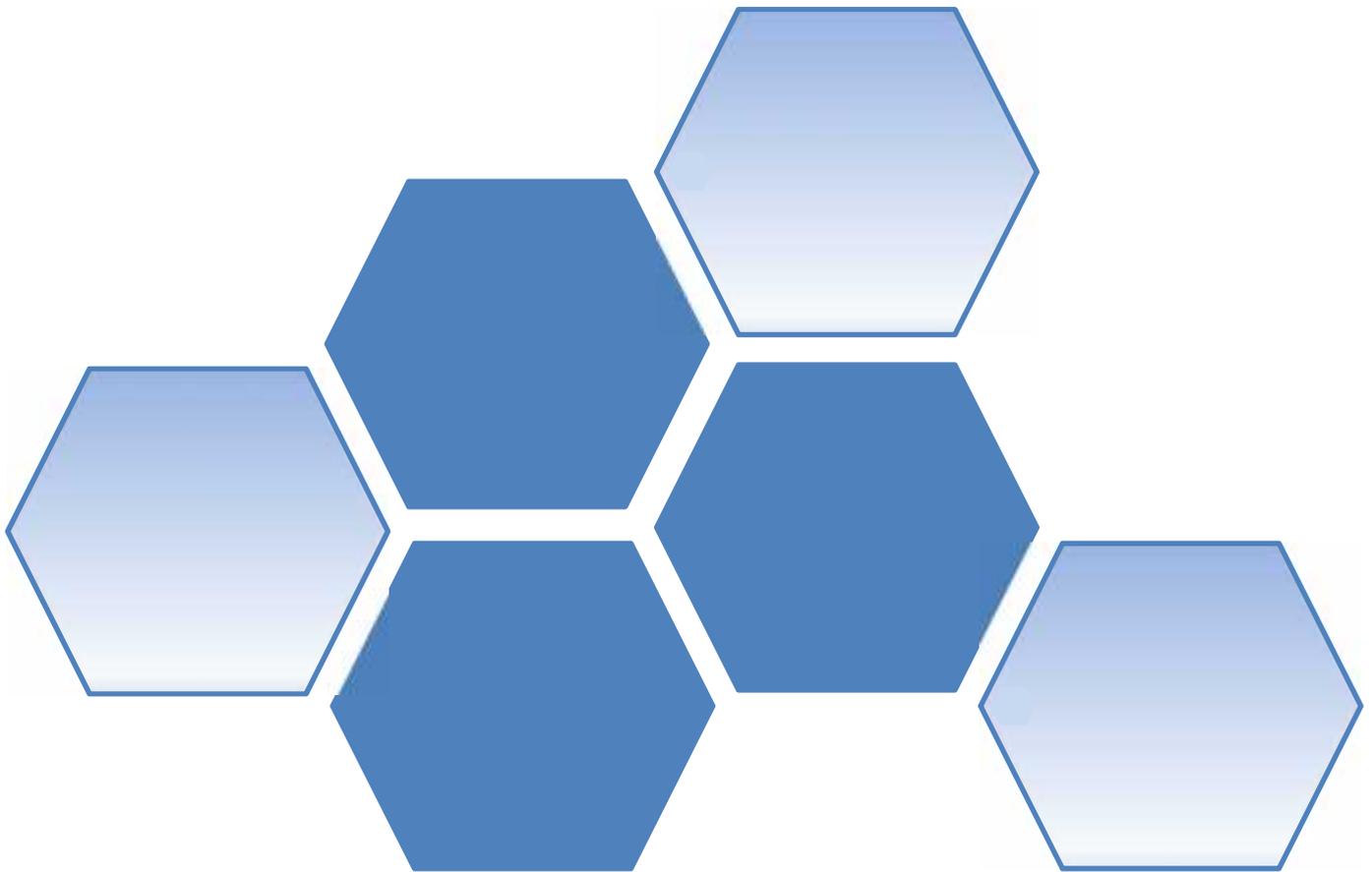
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Proof of Title	A copy of the current Land Registry title document showing the applicant as an owner. If the property is not registered, a letter from a Solicitor, Building Society or bank on an applicant's behalf in the case of freeholders or leaseholders to confirm ownership.
Qualifying Tenant	Means a tenant who within their tenancy agreement has the responsibility to repair or maintain the element of a structure for which they are seeking a grant.
Works in Default	Means works that the Council organises and possibly carries out as a result of the recipient of a statutory notice failing to comply with its requirements within a reasonable period of time.



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## Charnwood Borough Council

### Equality Impact Assessment 'Knowing the needs of your customers and employees'

#### ■ Background

An Equality Impact Assessment is an improvement tool. It will assist you in ensuring that you have thought about the needs and impacts of your service/policy/function in relation to the protected characteristics. It enables a systematic approach to identifying and recording gaps and actions.

#### ■ Legislation- Equality Duty

As a local authority that provides services to the public, Charnwood Borough Council has a legal responsibility to ensure that we can demonstrate having paid due regard to the need to:

- ✓ Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation
- ✓ Advance Equality of Opportunity
- ✓ Foster good relations

For the following protected characteristics:

1. Age
2. Disability
3. Gender reassignment
4. Marriage and civil partnership
5. Pregnancy and maternity
6. Race
7. Religion and belief
8. Sex (Gender)
9. Sexual orientation

What is prohibited?

1. Direct Discrimination
2. Indirect Discrimination
3. Harassment
4. Victimisation
5. Discrimination by association
6. Discrimination by perception
7. Pregnancy and maternity discrimination
8. Discrimination arising from disability
9. Failing to make reasonable adjustments

**Note: Complete the action plan as you go through the questions**

■ **Step 1 – Introductory information**

Title of the policy	Private Sector Housing Grants Policy 2017
Name of lead officer and others undertaking this assessment	Rebecca Short
Date EIA started	July 2017
Date EIA completed	July 2017

■ **Step 2 – Overview of policy/function being assessed:**

Outline: What is the purpose of this policy? (Specify aims and objectives)
<p>This Policy sets out our approach when considering private sector housing grant applications, including Disabled Facilities Grants, Home Repair Grants, Home Safety Grants, ECO Top Up Grants and Partnership Grants.</p> <p>The Policy aims to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>⌋ Increase the number of vulnerable people who are able to live independently at home.</li> <li>⌋ Reduce the number of vulnerable households living in homes that pose an imminent risk to their health and safety.</li> <li>⌋ Increase the number of empty homes that are brought into use, particularly accommodation that can be used to reduce homelessness.</li> </ul> <p>It is the Councils aim to ensure the approach taken is inclusive across the range of protected characteristics, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.</p>
What specific group/s is the policy designed to affect/impact and what is the intended change or outcome for them?
<p>The Policy is designed to assist the most vulnerable people living in the private sector. It is widely accepted that there are strong links between poor housing conditions and poor health and that poor housing disproportionately affects vulnerable people who do not have the necessary resources to keep their homes in good repair.</p> <p>Although homeowners have the primary responsibility for ensuring their homes are properly maintained, Home Repair Grants will be awarded on a discretionary basis to help vulnerable households where there is an imminent risk to the health or safety of the occupant(s).</p> <p>The Policy also aims to assist those who require adaptations or alterations to allow them to continue living at home, through the award of both Mandatory and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants and Home Safety Grants.</p> <p>In addition, and in conjunction with the Empty Homes Strategy, the Partnership Grant is aimed at encouraging the owners of empty homes to bring their properties back into use and increase the availability of housing for homeless families and those at risk of becoming homeless.</p>

The award of a Partnership Grant is designed to impact positively on communities and individuals who are affected by the presence of a long term empty home in their neighbourhood. Improvements in property condition and occupation of the property will enhance the appearance of the home and remove the risk of crime and ASB associated with vacant homes.

The Grants will also impact positively on the owners of long term empty homes, encouraging and enabling them to return the home back into use, generating rental income (or sale value) and minimising Council Tax (including 150% premium charged for homes empty for 2 years or more).

Finally, those in housing need will benefit from the Partnership Grants through the increased availability of housing.

Which groups have been consulted as part of the creation or review of the policy?

Whilst preparing the Policy, Stakeholders including the Community Safety Policy Officer, the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Hospital Discharge Senior Housing Enabler and Renewal Officers were consulted and their views and comments helped to shape the final document.

### ■ **Step 3 – What we already know and where there are gaps**

List any existing information/data do you have/monitor about different diverse groups in relation to this policy? Such as in relation to age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation etc.

Data/information such as:

- Consultation
- Previous Equality Impact Assessments
- Demographic information
- Anecdotal and other evidence

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants are awarded in accordance with legislation (Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 as amended by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002 and guidance issued by Government which determines, amongst other things, the type of work that can be funded, the maximum amount of grant and the test of financial resources that must be made.

The Housing Act 2004 contains the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), which is an approach to evaluating the potential risks to health and safety from any deficiencies identified within a dwelling. The hazards assessed, of which there are 29, include; excess cold, damp and mould growth, falls, fire and structural collapse. For some hazards, a 'vulnerable group' (a range of people for whom the risks arising from the hazard is greater than for any other age group in the population) is identified e.g. children, the elderly. The vulnerable groups have been taken into consideration in respect of the qualifying criteria for the Home Repair Grant.

Empty Homes Strategy Stakeholder Consultation Event (May 2017).

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for Leicester and Leicestershire (2014) – used to inform the Housing Strategy on how Charnwood will increase the supply of suitable housing within the Borough.

What does this information / data tell you about diverse groups? If you do not hold or have access to any data/information on diverse groups, what do you need to begin collating / monitoring? (Please list)

The underlying principle of the HHSRS is that any residential premises should provide a safe and healthy environment for any potential occupier or visitor. The vulnerable groups (those over 60 and children) identified for certain hazards, for example excess cold and damp and mould verifies that the qualifying criteria for the Home Repair Grant correctly targets the most vulnerable groups.

The SHMA identifies an overall housing requirement for Charnwood of 20,202 new homes over the 25 years from 2011-2036, to meet current and future need. Affordable housing needs equates to 21.5% of all the new housing planned over the period. Data modelling identifies that 46% of the overall housing need is for 1 bedroom units and that 72% of the 1 bedroom need is for older people.

Future demand is likely to come from single person households and child free couples although the greatest immediate need is for 2 bedroom houses and 2 bedroom bungalows. This information has been fed into the enforcement matrix, used to prioritise empty homes considered for enforcement action and it is also considered when determining discretionary Partnership Grant applications. Partnership Grant approvals include a nomination rights agreement, which contain a condition that the rental level for the property is set at no more than the Housing Allowance rate, making the property affordable. In addition, the tenants are nominated by the Homelessness Prevention Team – prioritising those families who are most in need.

#### ■ **Step 4 – Do we need to seek the views of others? If so, who?**

In light of the answers you have given in Step 2, do you need to consult with specific groups to identify needs / issues? If not please explain why.

Unfortunately, our existing Customer Satisfaction and Equalities Monitoring data, obtained from previous grant recipients, which contains equalities monitoring information, is not statistically significant.

Although Customer Satisfaction and Equalities Monitoring return rates for grants is the highest within the service at 44% in 2015/16 and 48% in 2016/17, to be reliable and 'statistically significant' the return rate would need to be in the region 78% based on the number of surveys issued each year.

Further equalities monitoring may be required, to determine any barriers to the grant application process. A review of customer feedback rates has been undertaken across the Strategic and Private Sector Housing Service to further consider this issue.

#### ■ **Step 5 – Assessing the impact**

In light of any data/consultation/information and your own knowledge and awareness, please identify whether the policy has a positive or negative impact on the individuals or community groups (including

what barriers these individuals or groups may face) who identify with any 'protected characteristics' and provide an explanation for your decision (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Age</b>	<p>Mandatory and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants are not age specific.</p> <p>Limited discretionary Home Repair Grant funding has been targeted at those identified as the most vulnerable groups, defined by age (children and those over the age of 60), to assist them in maintaining healthy homes in a safe condition.</p> <p>By returning accessible homes e.g. bungalows, into use through Partnership Grants, residents with age related mobility issues will benefit from a general increase in the availability of this type of accommodation.</p>
<b>Disability</b> (Physical, visual, hearing, learning disabilities, mental health)	<p>Mandatory and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants are specifically aimed at assisting disabled residents to remain living at home through the provision of adaptations and alterations deemed necessary and appropriate with the guidance of Adult and Child Social Care Services.</p> <p>Limited discretionary Home Repair Grant funding has been targeted at those living with a chronic or severe illness, frailty or disability, to assist them in maintaining healthy homes in a safe condition.</p> <p>By returning accessible homes e.g. bungalows, into use, residents with a physical disability leading to mobility issues will benefit from a general increase in the availability of this type of accommodation.</p>
<b>Gender Reassignment</b> (Transgender)	No Impact
<b>Race</b>	Potential barrier for any grant applicants that do not speak a sufficient level of English to understand the process and/ or what is being asked of them. Written and verbal communication may need to be translated or interpreted, as an equalities consideration, in order to mitigate any adverse impact.
<b>Religion or Belief</b> (Includes no belief)	Neutral impact. However it is acknowledged that some faiths/ religions require worship on particular days and therefore may not be able to attend meetings/ appointments due to this. Due consideration will be given to this and flexibility will be applied, if required, in order to mitigate any adverse impact.
<b>Sex</b>	No Impact

<b>(Gender)</b>	
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	No Impact
<b>Other protected groups (Pregnancy &amp; maternity, marriage &amp; civil partnership)</b>	No Impact
<b>Other socially excluded groups (carers, low literacy, priority neighbourhoods, health inequalities, rural isolation, asylum seeker and refugee communities etc.)</b>	<p>Availability of assistance is focused on low income households (identified through the receipt of certain income related benefits and through means testing), the elderly, infirm and those with children.</p> <p>General increase in availability of affordable accommodation, including affordable housing for people experiencing financial hardship.</p>

Where there are potential barriers, negative impacts identified and/ or barriers or impacts are unknown, please outline how you propose to minimise all negative impact or discrimination.

Please note:

- a) If you have identified adverse impact or discrimination that is illegal, you are required to take action to remedy this immediately.
- b) Additionally, if you have identified adverse impact that is justifiable or legitimate, you will need to consider what actions can be taken to mitigate its effect on those groups of people.

**Race:** Make interpretation and translation available in different languages, as and when required, so all applicants are able to understand the process and what is being asked of them.

**Religion or Belief:** As individuals of some faiths/ religions require worship on particular days they therefore may not be able to attend meetings/ appointments due to this. Due consideration will be given to this and flexibility will be applied, if required, in these circumstances.

Summarise your findings and give an overview as to whether the policy will meet Charnwood Borough Council's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity (please refer to the general duties on the front page).

By removing any potential barriers that may occur with regards to race & religion or belief, and therefore mitigating adverse impact, the Private Sector Housing Grants Policy fully meets Charnwood's responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity. More so, the Policy has the potential to create a greater positive impact across a range of community groups through improvements in housing standards and the suitability of homes via adaptations designed to meet the needs of the occupants and the general increase in availability of affordable accommodation, including affordable housing for people experiencing financial hardship.

**Step 6- Monitoring, evaluation and review**

Are there processes in place to review the findings of this Assessment and make appropriate changes? In particular, how will you monitor potential barriers and any positive/ negative impact?

The outcomes of this EIA will be monitored and reviewed alongside the Policy.

How will the recommendations of this assessment be built into wider planning and review processes?

e.g. policy reviews, annual plans and use of performance management systems.

Recommendations will be built into service planning, as appropriate. Additionally, there will be the consideration of improvements to Customer Satisfaction and Equalities Monitoring to increase return rates and enable the isolation and monitoring of statistically significant equalities information.

■ **Step 7- Action Plan**

**Please include any identified concerns/actions/issues in this action plan:**

**The issues identified should inform your Service Plan and, if appropriate, your Consultation Plan**

Reference Number	Action	Responsible Officer	Target Date
001	Consideration of improvements to Customer Satisfaction and Equalities Monitoring to increase return rates and enable the isolation and monitoring of statistically significant equalities information.	Strategic and Private Sector Housing Management Team	1 <sup>st</sup> August 2018
003	Provide written and verbal communication in an appropriate language, if and when required.	Strategic and Private Sector Housing Management Team.	1 <sup>st</sup> August 2017

■ **Step 8- Who needs to know about the outcomes of this assessment and how will they be informed?**

	Who needs to know (Please tick)	How they will be informed (we have a legal duty to publish EIA's)
<b>Employees</b>	Yes	Private Sector Housing Manager – for dissemination to team – in particular the Housing Standards and Renewal Officers
<b>Service users</b>	Yes	Publication of the Policy online and referral to the Policy of all grant applicants
<b>Partners and stakeholders</b>	Yes	Links to the online Policy to be sent to CAB
<b>Others</b>		
<b>To ensure ease of access, what other communication needs/concerns are there?</b>		

■ **Step 9- Conclusion (to be completed and signed by the [Service Head](#))**

<b>Please delete as appropriate</b>
<b>I agree / disagree with this assessment / action plan</b>
<b>If <i>disagree</i>, state action/s required, reasons and details of who is to carry them out with timescales:</b>
<b>Signed (Service Head):</b>
<b>Date:</b>

**[Please send completed & signed assessment to Suzanne Kinder for publishing.](#)**