

# Individual Executive Member Decision

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<b>Title of Report:</b>	<b>Request to go out for Consultation on Draft Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2014-18</b>
<b>Report to be considered by:</b>	Individual Executive Member Decision
<b>Date on which Decision is to be taken:</b>	30 <sup>th</sup> June 2014
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	ID2852

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**Purpose of Report:** To request permission to go out for consultation for the draft Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2014-18.

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**Recommended Action:** That the Portfolio Holder to give consent to go out for consultation on the draft Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2014-18.

**Reason for decision to be taken:** Request to consult on draft Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2014-18 prior to adoption

**Other options considered:** None

**Key background documentation:** None

Portfolio Member Details	
<b>Name &amp; Telephone No.:</b>	Councillor Roger Croft - Tel (01635) 868638
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Contact Officer Details	
<b>Name:</b>	Karen Felgate
<b>Job Title:</b>	Housing Strategy Team Leader
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## Implications

<b>Policy:</b>	The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy sets out the Council's policy in relation to private sector housing in West Berkshire. This includes disabled adaptations and other housing related grants and loans
<b>Financial:</b>	None.
<b>Personnel:</b>	None
<b>Legal/Procurement:</b>	None
<b>Property:</b>	None
<b>Risk Management:</b>	None

Is this item relevant to equality?	Please tick relevant boxes	Yes	No
Does the policy affect service users, employees or the wider community and:			
• Is it likely to affect people with particular protected characteristics differently?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Is it a major policy, significantly affecting how functions are delivered?		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Will the policy have a significant impact on how other organisations operate in terms of equality?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to functions that engagement has identified as being important to people with particular protected characteristics?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
• Does the policy relate to an area with known inequalities?		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Outcome</b> (Where one or more 'Yes' boxes are ticked, the item is relevant to equality)			
Relevant to equality - Complete an EIA available at <a href="http://www.westberks.gov.uk/eia">www.westberks.gov.uk/eia</a>			<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Not relevant to equality			<input type="checkbox"/>

## Consultation Responses

### Members:

<b>Leader of Council:</b>	N/A
<b>Overview &amp; Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman:</b>	N/A
<b>Ward Members:</b>	N/A However the Housing Policy Reference Group (Member led) have reviewed and commented on the draft policy
<b>Opposition Spokesperson:</b>	N/A
<b>Local Stakeholders:</b>	N/A
<b>Officers Consulted:</b>	June Graves Head of Care Commissioning Housing and Safeguarding Mel Brain Service Manager Housing Strategy and

Operations

Maureen Sheridan Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer

Aimee Connor Private Sector Housing Officer

Cathy Dodson Housing Options Team Leader

**Trade Union:**

N/A

<b>Is this item subject to call-in?</b>	Yes: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No: <input type="checkbox"/>
If not subject to call-in please put a cross in the appropriate box:		
The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council		<input type="checkbox"/>
Delays in implementation could compromise the Council's position		<input type="checkbox"/>
Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission or associated Task Groups within preceding six months		<input type="checkbox"/>
Item is Urgent Key Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>
Report is to note only		<input type="checkbox"/>

## Supporting Information

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### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the private sector housing stock is safe and healthy. It sets out the criteria and conditions by which the Council will assist with essential repairs, disabled adaptations and healthy living conditions in the private sector.
- 1.2 The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2014-18 will replace the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2008-11 which set out the Council's policy relating to private sector housing stock.
- 1.3 This report requests permission to consult upon the new policy in preparation for adoption.

### 2. Purpose of Report

- 2.1 This policy sets out how West Berkshire Council will promote the provision of safe and healthy living conditions for all. It sets the criteria and conditions under which West Berkshire Council will assist with the cost of adaptations and essential repairs and improvements to private sector housing.
- 2.2 The eleven key elements of the Council's approach to private sector renewal set out in the draft policy will be:
  - (a) Provision of advice and support to residents, irrespective of tenure, who are dealing with disrepair or who wish to adapt, repair or improve their home. This will be delivered by working closely with the Berkshire Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Aster Living.
  - (b) Provision of financial assistance for home repairs to vulnerable people; particularly older people and those with disabilities through the provision of housing grants and loans such as Disabled Facilities Grants and Flexible Home Improvement Loans.
  - (c) Provision of loan assistance to enable empty properties to be brought back into use. The Empty Homes Officer will work proactively with empty home owners to identify and target suitable properties.
  - (d) Provision of Flexible Home Improvement Loan (FHIL) to owner occupiers over 60 years old (55 years in special circumstances) in order to carry out repairs, improvements and adaptations to their homes.
  - (e) Implementation of Green Deal through a Community Interest Company called Green Deal Together to offer energy efficiency measures such as Green Deal Plans, assistance for low income groups and hard to treat properties.
  - (f) Promotion of energy efficiency measures across the district in partnership with the National Energy Foundation.

- (g) Continued promotion of schemes that improve security and safety of vulnerable people, for example, 'Handyvan' and 'Small Repairs Service' using the services of the HIA.
- (h) Enhanced work and engagement with private sector landlords to ensure a high quality supply of private rented accommodation in the district. A bi-annual landlord's forum will be held to share good practice within the District.
- (i) Closer working between Housing Services and Environmental Health to improve the conditions of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
- (j) The application of enforcement action in conjunction with Environmental Health, where necessary, to bring empty properties back into use and improve the local environment.
- (k) Continued provision of a Home Improvement Agency service within the district to provide assistance to clients seeking grant or loan funding.

### **3. Equalities Impact Assessment Outcomes**

- 3.1 Vulnerability linked with age and disability can be a potential barrier to ensuring a property is in good repair, fit and healthy. The policy is focused towards the qualifying criteria for housing related grants and loans as well as providing advice, assistance and support. It is anticipated that through the process, vulnerable people will be identified and the appropriate support put in place to enable them to deal appropriately with their property.

### **4. Conclusion**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder agrees that the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2014-18 is to be sent out for consultation.

### **Appendices**

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There are no appendices attached to this report.