

Individual Executive Member Decision

Request to go out to consultation on the Housing Grants and Loans Policy Made under The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance - England and Wales) Order 2002

Committee considering report: Individual Executive Member Decision

Date of Committee: 14 January 2016

Portfolio Member: Councillor Hilary Cole

Forward Plan Ref: ID3072

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To request permission to go out for consultation on the draft Housing Loans and Grants Policy made under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance – England and Wales) Order 2002 prior to adoption.

2. Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 That the Portfolio Holder gives consent to go out for consultation on the Housing Loans and Grants Policy.

3. Implications

- 3.1 **Financial:** The Grants and Loans identified within this draft Policy will be funded using current budget provision.
- 3.2 **Policy:** 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
- 3.3 **Personnel:** n/a
- 3.4 **Legal:** n/a
- 3.5 **Risk Management:** n/a
- 3.6 **Property:** n/a
- 3.7 **Other:** n/a

4. Consultation Responses

Members:

Leader of Council: Councillor Roger Croft will be consulted on the draft policy should the Portfolio Holder approve the report.

Overview & Scrutiny Management Commission Chairman: Councillor Emma Webster will be consulted on the draft policy should the Portfolio Holder approve the report.

Ward Members: All wards are effected and all Members will be consulted on the draft policy should the Portfolio Holder approve the report.

Opposition Spokesperson: Councillor Macro will be consulted on the draft policy should the Portfolio Holder approve the report.

Local Stakeholders: All stakeholders will be consulted on the draft policy should the Portfolio Holder approve the report.

Officers Consulted: June Graves: Head of Care Commissioning Housing and Safeguarding

Mel Brain: Housing Operations and Strategy Service Manager

Trade Union: The Trade Unions will be consulted on the draft policy should the Portfolio Holder approve the report

5. Other options considered

5.1 None

6. Executive Summary

6.1 The Council is committed to ensuring that the private sector housing stock is safe and healthy. This policy sets out the criteria and conditions by which the Council will assist with essential repairs to improve living conditions in the private sector, complete mandatory and discretionary disabled adaptations and provide an overview of the assistance available to bring empty properties back into use.

6.2 The Housing Grants and Loans Policy made in under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance – England and Wales) order 2002 will replace the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2009.

6.3 As the most recent, Private Sector Condition Survey did not identify any specific geographical areas or types of properties that present serious problems, the format of the new policy is client based, rather than theme based and focuses upon vulnerable people.

6.4 The following Grants and Loans form part of the policy:

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (MDFG)

Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant (DDFG)

Discretionary Home Repair Assistance Grant (HRA)

Flexible Home Improvement Loans (FHIL's)

Flexible Empty Homes Loans

Empty Home Private Sector Leasing Scheme

- 6.5 Vulnerability linked with age and disability can be a potential barrier to ensuring a property is in maintained in good repair. The policy is focused towards the qualifying criteria being linked to these vulnerabilities.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder agrees to the Housing Grant and Loans policy being approved for consultation.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A - Supporting Information
- 8.2 Appendix B - Equalities Impact Assessment
- 8.3 Appendix C - Draft Housing Grants and Loans Policy