

Report To:	CABINET	Date:	10TH SEPTEMBER 2018
Heading:	PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWALS POLICY		
Portfolio Holder:	COUNCILLOR JOHN WILMOTT – CABINET MEMBER (OUTWARD)		
Ward/s:	ALL		
Key Decision:	YES		
Subject to Call-In:	YES		

Purpose of Report

To advise Members of the Council's obligation to publish a Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy and to seek approval of the Council's Policy.

Recommendation(s)

- **To approve the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy, attached at Appendix A.**
- **To give delegated authority to the relevant Director and Portfolio Holder to approve any minor changes to the Policy that are needed due to changes in legislation, regulation or good practice.**

Reasons for Recommendation(s)

The Council has both statutory duties and discretionary powers to provide financial assistance to improve private sector housing conditions in the district.

Under the Regulatory Reform Housing Assistance (England and Wales) Order 2002, the Council is required to publish information on the assistance available to improve private sector housing conditions. This policy sets out the assistance available in Ashfield for private sector residents.

The Policy will be reviewed annually and minor changes are likely to be needed to reflect changes to service provision, funding, etc, hence the request for minor changes to be approved without the need for additional Cabinet consent.

Alternative Options Considered

Not publishing information on the assistance available to improve private sector housing conditions – this was not considered as the Council is required by the above Order to publish this information.

Detailed Information

The attached policy sets out in detail the assistance available through the Council to improve private sector housing conditions. The main elements of the Policy can be summarised as follows.

- Providing adaptations for disabled persons

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) are provided to help meet the cost of adapting a property to ensure a disabled adult or child can continue to live independently. Adaptations available through the DFG scheme include stair lifts, wet rooms, level access showers, ramps to main entrance doors.

A mandatory DFG of up to £30,000 is available to eligible clients. An additional discretionary top up of up to £10,000 is available for large scale works that exceed the mandatory limit.

- Affordable Warmth and Preventative Grants

Residents with long term health conditions that are exacerbated by living in a cold home can be considered for an Affordable Warmth Grant. Under the scheme eligible residents benefit from improvements to their heating system, this could range from new thermostatic radiator valves to a full replacement system.

In addition, as part of the assessment process consideration is given to the wider needs of the residents and whether any additional works are needed in order to prevent hospital admissions and help ensure the resident is able to remain independent in their home.

- Handyperson Adaptation Service (HPAS)

The HPAS service helps people to remain safe and secure in their homes through minor adaptations and small practical jobs.

Works up to the value of £1000 are completed and typically include the supply and installation of grab rails, hand rails, half steps, lever taps, key safes, etc. The service is delivered by Nottinghamshire County Council on behalf of the Council.

- Assistive Technology Service

Through the service, older and vulnerable residents are supplied with technology sensors appropriate for their needs. This includes fall detector sensors, smoke/heat detectors and flood detectors. The sensors are monitored through a 24/7 Support Centre, with emergency assistance being requested if the resident is in difficulty.

With the exception of the door replacement service, the other services above are funded through Better Care Funding.

DFG's and Affordable Warmth Grants are both means tested grants.

A separate Aids and Adaptations Policy provides further detail on the DFG process, who is eligible, the range of works undertaken, etc.

Implications

Corporate Plan:

This policy supports the Council's housing vision to: "ensure the population of Ashfield are living in or can access homes that are affordable, warm and within a safe community that promotes the health and wellbeing of residents"

Legal:

Under the Regulatory Reform Housing Assistance (England and Wales) Order 2002, the Council is required to publish information on the assistance available to improve private sector housing conditions.

The provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) is mandatory under the provisions of Section 23 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.

Finance:

The assistance offered through this policy is funded through the Better Care Fund, which is awarded by central government each year. Applications for assistance under this policy will be considered on a first come first served basis and administered under local policies. Once the funding is exhausted, no further applications will be accepted until further funding becomes available.

Budget Area	Implication
General Fund – Revenue Budget	Not applicable
General Fund – Capital Programme	Not applicable
Housing Revenue Account – Revenue Budget	Not applicable
Housing Revenue Account – Capital Programme	Not applicable

Risk:

Risk	Mitigation
There are no risks associated with approving this policy	

Human Resources:

There are no human resource implications associated with approving this policy

Equalities:

This policy has a positive impact for older and/or disabled residents as it provides them with assistance to live independently, feel safe and/or improve the thermal comfort of their home. This policy focuses on owner occupied households, however conditions in the private rented sector are addressed through advice and enforcement by the Private Sector Enforcement Team.

Other Implications:

(if applicable)

Reason(s) for Urgency

(if applicable)

Reason(s) for Exemption

(if applicable)

Background Papers

(if applicable)

Report Author and Contact Officer

Emma Lindley

Housing Strategy Lead Officer

e.lindley@ashfield.gov.uk

01623 457211