

## DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
DEVELOPMENT SERVICES DIRECTORATE	COUNCIL	17 JULY 2017	18
<b>HOUSING SERVICES PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ASSISTANCE POLICY – HOUSING NEEDS GRANT</b>			

### PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

### SUMMARY

The Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy outlines the Council's policy in relation to the provision of information, advice and action to assist home owners and tenants requiring disabled adaptations, energy efficiency advice and assistance, and other support relating to their home.

This report was considered by Environment Health and Housing on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017. The report set out the scope of services provided by Housing Services under the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy and highlights the main changes in terms of funding and service development since the previous policy produced in 2009 and amended in 2012.

One recommendation was the approval of the creation of a new scheme within the 2017/18 approved Capital Programme to be termed 'Housing Needs Grant', which this report references.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Council are recommended to

1. Approve the creation of a new scheme within the 2017/18 approved Capital Programme to be termed 'Housing Needs Grant' that will be funded from DFG grant repayments (those being in the event of the sale of a property for which a DFG was previously awarded) to be used to fund grants to qualifying persons in respect of affordable warmth measures, boiler servicing and repairs to vulnerable clients.

## SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS:

The previous housing policy which incorporated the grant assistance policy was produced in 2009 and amended 2012. Link to existing policy: <http://www.fylde.gov.uk/resident/housing/grants/privatesectorhousingpolicy/>

The new proposed policy can be found here: [Housing services private sector assistance policy.docx](#)

The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 first further report was approved by a portfolio holder decision in June 2013. The second further report in 2015 was approved by the Policy Development Scrutiny Committee in March 2015.

The third report is pending Environment, Health and Housing committee approval on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017. A link to that document is here: [Item x- Decision item HECA report 2017.doc](#)

Fylde Council's affordable warmth "Green Energy Grant" was approved at Environment, Health and Housing committee on the 10<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and at the Finance and Democracy Committee on the 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2017.

### Minutes of Environment, Health and Housing 20<sup>th</sup> June 2017

It was RESOLVED;

1. To approve the flexible use of its Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) budget during 2017-18 to facilitate the delivery of adaptations which will address Better Care Fund (BCF) priorities more effectively. This will include the removal of the 'test of resources' for adaptations under £6,000;
2. To approve the authorisation of a grant award of up to £10,000 in excess of the DFG mandatory maximum grant of £30,000, to carry out DFG eligible work as recommended by an Occupational Therapist;
3. To review the administration fee which the Council receives for management of DFG works in conjunction with finance officers;
4. To approve a targeted promotion of DFG's be undertaken through partner and third sector agencies to increase referrals;
5. To explore the potential employment on a case-by-case basis of an Occupational Therapist to process the numbers of referrals received by the Council through a targeted promotion of DFG's by our partner, third sector agencies and potentially from county council, and report back to this Committee in due course;
6. To approve the commissioning of additional technical resources on a flexible basis to assist in the increased workload placed on the Housing Services Team to deliver Disabled Facility Grants, to be funded from additional administration fees receivable by the Council;
7. To explore the options to undertake capital projects with the approval of Registered Providers to improve the housing on offer within the boroughs supported housing schemes, and report back to this Committee in due course;
8. To recommend to Council the creation of a new scheme within the 2017/18 approved Capital Programme to be termed 'Housing Needs Grant' that will be funded from DFG grant repayments (those being in the event of the sale of a property for which a DFG was previously awarded) to be used to fund grants to qualifying persons in respect of affordable warmth measures, boiler servicing and repairs to vulnerable clients; and
9. To approve a review of the proposed changes and to report back to the Environment, Health and Housing committee in due course.

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services ( <b>Value for Money</b> )	√
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council ( <b>Clean and Green</b> )	√
Working with all partners ( <b>Vibrant Economy</b> )	√
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live ( <b>A Great Place to Live</b> )	√
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit ( <b>A Great Place to Visit</b> )	

## REPORT

### Creation of a new scheme within the 2017/18 approved Capital Programme to be termed 'Housing Needs Grant'.

1. Grants above £5,000 currently require repayment to the Council if the occupant sells the property within 10 years of a DFG being undertaken at the property. This is only applicable to owner occupied properties and to a maximum amount of £10,000 as prescribed in legislation. Currently grant repayments are returned to the DFG budget and recycled. Whilst in previous years this has provided a useful additional source of income with the large increases in the DFG budget it is no longer necessary.
2. It is recommended that any returned funding from the 1st July 2017 is paid into a new scheme, Housing Needs Grant' which will allow the council greater flexibility with regards to the measures and assistance the Council can offer to vulnerable clients. Such measures could include provision of energy saving products such as loft insulation, emergency remedial work on defective properties actioned by the housing services enforcement work, heating installation, repairs and servicing for properties with vulnerable occupants. This fund could also pay for works which the Council undertake which do not ultimately result in a DFG being undertaken. An example of abortive work could include the Council instructing an architect to provide plans for a DFG however the application ultimately does not produce a DFG and therefore payment for the architect must be made from other Council resources. Another example is when a visit is conducted from the proposed private OT which does not lead to a DFG the cost of the visit could be met from this resource.
3. Grants from this repayment fund would follow the current eligibility criteria set out in our affordable warmth fund provided by LCC and would require the approval of the Housing Services Manager to proceed. Where emergency remedial work is undertaken on private rented properties to protect occupants the funds will be reimbursed by the owner of the property or a charge placed on the property.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	This report request the creation of a new scheme within the 2017/18 approved Capital Programme to be termed 'Housing Needs Grant' that will be funded from DFG grant repayments to be used to fund grants to qualifying persons in respect of affordable warmth measures, boiler servicing and repairs to vulnerable clients.
Legal	None directly from this report.
Community Safety	None directly from this report.
Human Rights and Equalities	None directly from this report.
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	Improvements in energy efficiency through the Affordable Warmth measures will have a beneficial impact on the environment and will contribute positively to sustainability. This will also contribute to lower CO2 emissions. This will assist the council meet its obligations under the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	None directly from this report.

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
Tom Birtwistle	Tom.birtwistle@fylde.gov.uk & Tel 01253 658691	4/7/2017

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Home Energy Conservation Act further report 2013	6/2013	Decision report produced 2013
Home Energy Conservation Act further report 2015	12/3/2015	Decision report produced 2015
Affordable Warmth scheme	10/1/2017	Decision report produced 2017

