



Basingstoke  
and Deane

# **Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy**

**1 April 2016**

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## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy sets out the strategic priorities for improving conditions within private sector housing and details the Council's approach to provide assistance and incentives to improve conditions within the sector and enable residents to remain in their own homes.
- 1.2. The Policy is underpinned by the Council's three strategic priorities:
  - **Preparing for controlled and sustainable growth**  
*By contributing to the availability of a choice of affordable housing within the Borough to facilitate economic vitality and maintain communities*
  - **Improving residents quality of life**  
*By ensuring homes are warm and dry, safe, secure and healthy places to live.*
  - **Supporting those who need it**  
*By ensuring support is available to ensure residents are not put at risk from poor housing conditions and ensuring that the need for adaptations can be met.*
- 1.3. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 provides local authorities with wide ranging powers to provide assistance for the purpose of improving living conditions in their area. This Order requires the Council to adopt a housing renewal policy setting out what forms of assistance they will provide to address local needs.
- 1.4. Evidence regarding the demand for financial assistance relating to disabled facilities adaptations and housing disrepair, as well as knowledge of housing conditions within the Borough has shaped the priorities set out in this Policy.
- 1.5. The Policy flows from the Council's Housing and Homelessness Strategy and should be read in conjunction with the Council's Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy.
- 1.6. The council's Climate Change Strategy and obligations under the Homes Energy Conservation Act underpin the provision in the Policy for a Low Carbon Loans and Grants scheme.

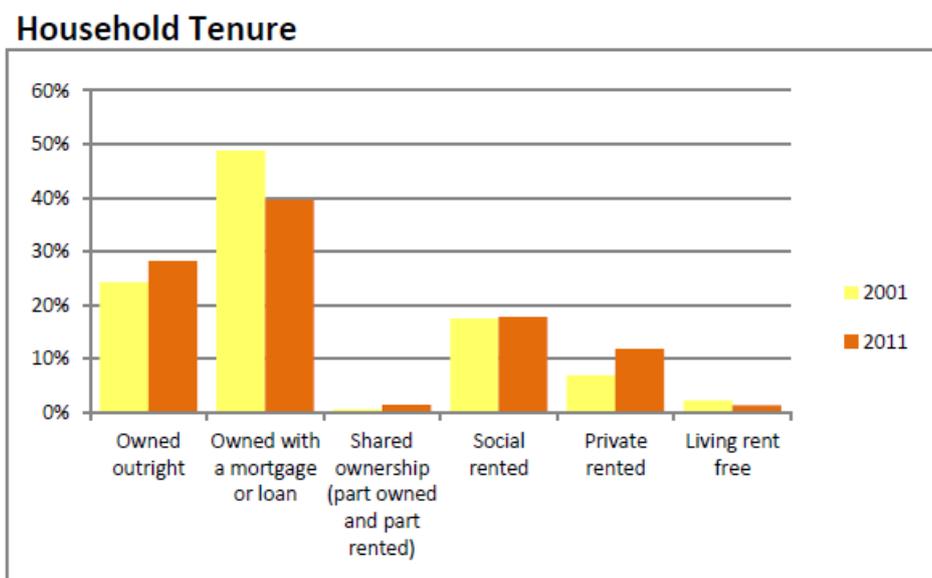
## **2. Local Context**

- 2.1. The Borough of Basingstoke and Deane covers an area of over 245 square miles within northern Hampshire. Less than 8% of the Borough is built up, supporting the majority of the borough's population of approximately 172,000<sup>1</sup> people.
- 2.2. More than 60% of the population (around 105,000) lives within the town of Basingstoke. The second largest settlement in the borough is the Tadley/Baughurst/Pamber Heath area, on the northern borough boundary, with a population approaching 16,000. The western part of the borough is dominated by the sparsely populated North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. On the outskirts of this area are several settlements of 3,000 to 5,000 population, such as Overton and Whitchurch. Elsewhere, numerous small villages and hamlets are scattered throughout the rural parts of the borough.

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<sup>1</sup> 2013 Mid-Year Population Estimates for England and Wales, ONS (June 2014)

- 2.3. In the medium term, on the basis of identified future housing development, together with current trends in life expectancy and migration, the over-60 age group is predicted to increase most rapidly, reaching more than 42,100 people (over 24% of the total population) by 2020<sup>2</sup>. Looking further ahead, by 2029 the borough population is projected to exceed 200,000<sup>3</sup>, of whom about 42,600 (over 21%) are projected to be aged over 65.
- 2.4. Unemployment is relatively low at around 5.0%<sup>4</sup> of the economically active working age population, which is slightly lower than the average rate of 5.7% for South East England, and well below the national rate of 7.5%.
- 2.5. Within the borough, there are 70,936 dwellings<sup>5</sup>. The following chart shows the change in property ownership between the 2001 and 2011 Census in the Borough.



- 2.6. Over the decade, the percentage of households that owned their home with a mortgage declined by 18.8%. Outright ownership increased by 16.3%, whilst private renting grew by 70.7%.
- 2.7. The 2014 median house price for the borough is £240,000. The average mortgage debt in November 2014 for the UK overall was £116,327<sup>6</sup>.
- 2.8. **Local Demand for Financial Assistance**
- 2.9. Recent growth in both demand and approvals for grant assistance has resulted in significant overspends on the capital budget. The following table illustrates the trend over the past three years showing the budget and actual spend on all grants (DFGs, renovation and repair).

<sup>2</sup> 2013-based Small Area Population Forecasts, HCC (June 2014)

<sup>3</sup> 2012-based Subnational Population Projections, ONS (May 2014)

<sup>4</sup> Annual Population Survey Jan 2013-Dec 2013, ONS - this Model-based unemployment rate is now considered to be a more realistic measure of unemployment than the Job Seekers Allowance claimant count, which stands at about 1.1% (May 2014)

<sup>5</sup> 2011 Census

<sup>6</sup> <http://themoneycharity.org.uk/media/January-2015-Money-Statistics.pdf>

|  | 2013-14        |                | 2014-15        |                  | 2015-16          |                  |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
|  | Budget         | Actuals        | Budget         | Actuals          | Budget           | Forecast         |
| Overall Housing Grants budget and actual spend | <b>647,000</b> | <b>780,211</b> | <b>850,000</b> | <b>1,314,505</b> | <b>1,140,000</b> | <b>1,442,000</b> |
| Mandatory DFGs                                 |                | 681,201        |                | 1,177,482        |                  | 1,300,000        |
| Discretionary DFGs                             |                | 76,021         |                | 117,500          |                  | 142,000          |
| Housing repairs                                |                | 11,495         |                | 19,523           |                  | 0                |

- 2.10. The Policy has been updated to take into account current practice and legislation; to reflect and respond to the increasing demands and pressures on the sector and the service; to update the supporting data contained in the policy to reflect the current demographic and housing context; and to set out how the council and partners together can support the vulnerable people in need of adaptations to their homes so they may live safely and independently.
- 2.11. The Policy has also been updated to enable the provision of loans and grants to support homeowners, landlords and community organisations to make improvements to their properties with regard to home insulation, renewable energy and energy efficiency measures.

### **3. AIMS AND PRIORITIES**

- 3.1. This policy details how the Council intends to use its discretionary powers and resources to support the Councils strategic priorities and address local need. To support these priorities, the Council aims to maintain and improve the condition of private sector housing through providing support and/or assistance to home owners and ensure residents can adapt and improve their homes to meet their essential needs.
- 3.2. Section 4 and Appendix 1 details the financial assistance schemes that the Council intends to offer and the specific criteria relating to each scheme.

### **4. TYPES OF ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE**

Two types of housing assistance will be available:-

#### **4.1. Education and Encouragement**

- 4.1.1. The Council's officers will, except where statute says otherwise or there is an imminent risk to health or safety, attempt to resolve all issues through processes of education and awareness raising, to enable property owners to undertake their responsibilities in an environment of understanding the needs and benefits of such action.

- 4.1.2. The provision of advice and encouragement may or may not also involve financial assistance.
- 4.1.3. Where owners/occupiers fail to co-operate in keeping their properties safe, the Council may take enforcement action to deal with properties which exhibit serious hazards or are in serious disrepair. Enforcement action will be undertaken in accordance with the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy and the Council's General Enforcement Policy.

## 4.2. Financial Assistance

4.2.1. The following types of financial assistance will be provided:

- Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant, as detailed in the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996.
- Discretionary Home Improvement Loan\*  
Discretionary Home Improvement Grant\*

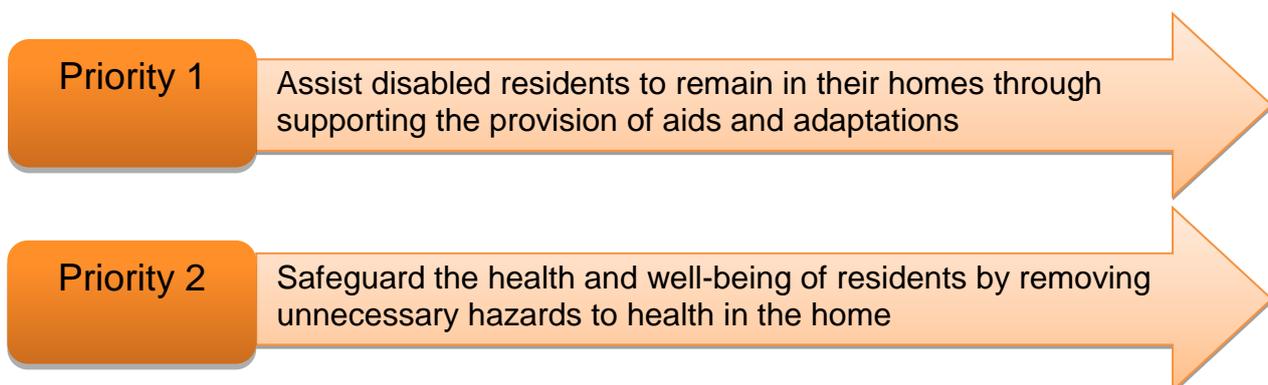
*\* These forms of financial assistance are only available to owner occupiers. The Council will work with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) if a tenant requires a major DFG adaptations costing over £30,000. RSLs will consider providing top-up funding or explore options to move to alternative accommodation that would be more suitable to their needs.*

- Discretionary Low Carbon Loans and Grants Scheme++

*++ Loans are only available to owner occupiers or community organisations; grants are only available to owner occupiers not eligible for a loan and who are in receipt of key forms of benefit; grants are also available to landlords*

4.2.2. All discretionary assistance is provided subject to funds being available. The budget available for DFG and Home Improvements Loans and Grants will be managed as follows:

4.2.3. Where budgetary constraints require some priority to be given to the different forms of assistance the following prioritisation should apply.



## 4.3. Priority 1 - Assist disabled residents to remain in their homes through supporting the provision of aids and adaptations.

4.3.1. The Council has a statutory obligation to administer mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to provide aids and adaptations to enable disabled residents to live independently within their own homes.

- 4.3.2. The eligibility requirements, scope of works, and the general requirements governing mandatory DFGs are prescribed in national legislation<sup>7</sup> and the Council is unable to deviate from these requirements.
- 4.3.3. The Council is required to administer Disabled Facilities Grants to all eligible applicants irrespective of their tenure, and the Council aims to work collaboratively with housing associations to fund aids and adaptations.
- 4.3.4. In some cases the use of Disabled Facilities Grants is able to assist with reducing the length of stay in hospital and facilitating a quick return to home. This also reduces the demand for residential care placements.
- 4.4. **Priority 2 – Safeguard the health and well-being of residents by removing unnecessary hazards to health in the home**
- 4.4.1. There is a direct impact on the health and well-being of residents resulting from the homes in which they live, in essence; poor housing contributes to poor health.
- 4.4.2. Each year hazards in the home result in unnecessary injuries, episodes of ill-health, and harm to mental health, and in many cases the occupiers do not link the poor condition of their homes with a potential negative impact on their health.
- 4.4.3. Residents living in subsidised housing and private rented accommodation are safeguarded through the statutory obligations on their landlords to undertake repairs and maintenance to ensure that their health, safety and well-being is not compromised by hazards in the home.
- 4.4.4. The poorest housing stock can be found in the private sector, and in some cases residents who own their own home are not able to maintain their homes<sup>8</sup> and as a result hazards can develop.
- 4.4.5. Some home owners find themselves to be ‘equity-rich’ but are ‘cash-poor’, i.e. their homes represent a significant capital resource, but they are on a low income, and as a result they lack the funds to carry out repairs and maintenance on their homes. For these home owners, equity release products may provide the ability to finance repairs without impacting on income streams.
- 4.4.6. There are a number of reasons why home owners do not maintain their homes, for example:
- lack of trust in builders;
  - inadequate funds to pay for repairs;
  - lack of awareness of need to take action;
  - belief that repairs will be too expensive to afford, and;
  - lack of experience in property maintenance.
- 4.4.7. Very often older home owners are those most affected by their inability to maintain their homes, as are those on the lowest incomes. The Council aims to target assistance at these homeowners.

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<sup>7</sup> As set out in the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended)

<sup>8</sup> England average, English Housing Survey Annex table 4.8, 2013

- 4.4.8. The Council has wide-ranging powers to intervene and take enforcement action to require private landlords to improve their properties. The Council also supports accreditation for private landlords through the promotion of the National Landlord Association's Accreditation Scheme.
- 4.4.9 The budget available for Low Carbon Loans and Grants will be managed under the following categories
- Loans to Homeowners
  - Loans to Community Organisations
  - Grants to Homeowners
  - Grants to Landlords
- 4.4.10 The criteria and process for each category is set out in Appendix 1.

## **5. APPEALS PROCESS FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE OUTSIDE POLICY**

- 5.1. The Council has a general duty to ensure all dwellings provide a safe and healthy environment for the occupants and any visitors. It is upon this duty that this Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy is based. All initial enquiries for financial assistance will be considered. Any enquiry which falls outside the criteria stated within this policy (Appendix 1) will be referred to the Environmental Health Manager for consideration. Where exceptional circumstances exist, the Environmental Health Manager shall have the discretion to offer financial assistance, subject to the terms and conditions contained within this Policy (Appendix 2), and the Council's allocated budget for Housing Renewal Grants.
- 5.2. In the event of the Environmental Health Manager determining financial assistance is not warranted then this information will be conveyed in writing to the enquirer with the opportunity to make representations to the Head of Street Scene, Parks and Regulatory Services for the decision to be reconsidered. The determination by the Head of Street Scene, Parks and Regulatory Services will be final.
- 5.3. For appeals relating to Low Carbon Loans and Grants, the Environmental Health Manager or the Head of Street Scene, Parks and Regulatory Services will consult with the Head of Borough Development and Implementation prior to making a determination on the appeal.

## **6. POLICY REVIEW**

- 6.1. The Council's first Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy became effective from 19 July 2003 and was reviewed annually. The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy will become effective on 1 April 2016 (replacing the earlier versions of the Policy) and will continue to be reviewed on an annual basis.
- 6.2. To inform this review process, the Council will maintain an awareness of the state of the housing stock in the Borough and how this changes as a result of its action and wider activity. Information on the housing stock will be gathered from the following sources:
- Private sector housing enquiries, applications and approvals for financial assistance;

- Housing conditions complaints and associated enforcement action.

6.3. Minor changes may be made by the Head of Street Scene, Parks and Regulatory Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder without the need for formal ratification where such changes make no significant difference to service provision. Significant changes to service provision will require Cabinet approval.

6.4. The Council will implement this policy in accordance with relevant legislation and guidance.

## **7. COMPLAINTS POLICY**

7.1. Anyone who is dissatisfied with the service they receive can request an explanation from their grant's case officer.

7.2. If a customer is not satisfied with the explanation received, the customer will be advised to follow the Council's corporate complaints procedure.

## Appendix 1 – Housing Assistance Schemes

To deliver the aims and priorities detailed within this policy, we will implement the following assistance schemes. The discretionary schemes detailed below may be withdrawn or offered on a time-limited basis to enable the Council to respond to local market conditions and funding constraints. All offers of financial assistance are subject to the terms and conditions laid out in Appendix 2.

| <b>PRIORITY 1 - Assist disabled residents to remain in their homes through supporting the provision of aids and adaptations.</b> |   |  |  |  |   |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Scheme</b>  | <b>Assistance available</b>                                     | <b>Purpose</b>   | <b>Scope of assistance</b>   | <b>Eligibility</b>   | <b>Scheme conditions</b>  |
| <b>Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant</b>   | <i>Maximum assistance</i><br><i>Per application:</i><br>£30,000 | <i>Assistance to:</i><br>Meet the Council's Statutory obligation to assist disabled residents to live independently in their homes | <i>Aids and adaptations to:</i><br>a) be recommended by Hampshire County Council's Occupational Therapist;<br>b) meet the regulations governing eligibility for works, including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adaptations to aid access into and around the property</li> <li>• works to ensure the safety of the applicant</li> <li>• Provision of suitable bathroom or sleeping facilities, heating, and access to lighting and power</li> <li>• Provision of suitable kitchen facilities or adaptation of existing kitchen</li> <li>• Disabled resident to care for dependent residents</li> </ul> | <i>Applications considered from:</i><br>a) disabled home owners;<br>b) disabled tenants (both in the private sector and subsidised housing sector);<br>c) disabled persons living at home with their family;<br>d) parents or guardians of a disabled child. | <i>Applications to include:</i><br>a) completed application form;<br>b) two estimates for the works in the required format<br><br>Applications subject to:<br>a) means test through standard test of resources <sup>9</sup> , except where;<br>b) the grant is approved in respect of a disabled child under the age of 19<br><br>Works to be:<br>a) completed within 12 months of grant approval;<br>b) completed to the satisfaction of the Council<br><br>Grants in excess of £5,000 to be:<br>a) registered as a local land charge against the property, and;<br>b) a maximum of £10,000 be repaid if the property is sold, |

<sup>9</sup> As set out in the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 (as amended)

|  |  |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |  | <p>transferred, or assigned (disregarding the first £5,000), except where;</p> <p>c) the property disposal takes place more than 10 years following the date of the local land charge, and;</p> <p>d) the Council considers that it is reasonable to require repayment having regards to the relevant regulations<sup>10</sup>.</p> |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|

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<sup>10</sup> The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Conditions relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008

| <b>PRIORITY 1 - Assist disabled residents to remain in their homes through supporting the provision of aids and adaptations.</b> |  |  |  |  |   |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Scheme</b>  | <b>Assistance available</b>  | <b>Purpose</b>   | <b>Scope of assistance</b>   | <b>Eligibility</b>   | <b>Scheme conditions</b>  |
| <b>Discretionary Home Improvement Loan</b>   | <p><i>Minimum loans offered:</i><br/>£1,000.</p> <p><i>Maximum loan offered:</i><br/>£20,000</p> <p>Loans will be administered by Parity Trust on behalf of the Council.</p> | <p><i>Assistance to:</i><br/>Meet the need of disabled residents to live independently in their homes.</p> | <p>Aids and adaptations to:</p> <p>a) be recommended by Hampshire County Council's Occupational Therapist;</p> <p>b) meet the regulations governing eligibility for works, including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adaptations to aid access into and around the property</li> <li>• works to ensure the safety of the applicant</li> <li>• Provision of suitable bathroom or sleeping facilities, heating, and access to lighting and power</li> <li>• Provision of suitable kitchen facilities or adaptation of existing kitchen</li> <li>• Disabled resident to care for dependent residents</li> </ul> | <p><i>Applicants must:</i></p> <p>a) own their home, and;</p> <p>b) have occupied the home as their only home for a minimum of 5 years, and;</p> <p>c) intend to continue to occupy the home for a minimum of 5 years following completion of the works,</p> <p>Loans are offered subject to a robust financial review and subject to sufficient equity being available in the property.</p> | <p><i>Applications to include:</i></p> <p>a) completed application form;</p> <p>b) two estimates for the works in the required format</p> <p><i>Works to be:</i></p> <p>a) completed within 12 months of approval;</p> <p>b) completed to the satisfaction of the Council.</p> <p>Duration of loan will be subject to individual circumstances and the sum loaned.</p> <p>Registered as a local land charge against the property (as 1st or 2nd charge) and will be subject to repayment in full if the property is sold or transferred to another owner.</p> |

| <b>PRIORITY 1 - Assist disabled residents to remain in their homes through supporting the provision of aids and adaptations.</b> |                                |                |                            |   |   |
|--|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Scheme</b>  | <b>Assistance available</b>    | <b>Purpose</b> | <b>Scope of assistance</b> | <b>Eligibility</b>  | <b>Scheme conditions</b>  |
| <b>Discretionary Home Improvement Grant</b>  | Maximum grant offered: £20,000 | As above       | As above.                  | <p>Available to home owners.</p> <p>The applicant must have undertaken a financial assessment by the Council's loan scheme provider. If they are not eligible for any of these loans or such funding is not sufficient to cover the full cost of the works consideration will be given to the award of a grant.</p> <p>In addition the council will expect applicants to contribute any savings they have over £6,000 towards the cost of the works.</p> <p>The eligibility criteria, detailed above, for Home Improvement Loans a) to c) (above) also apply.</p> | <p><i>Applications to include:</i></p> <p>a) completed application form;<br/>b) two estimates for the works in the required format</p> <p><i>Works to be:</i></p> <p>a) completed within 12 months of grant approval;<br/>b) completed to the satisfaction of the Council.</p> <p>Registered as a local land charge against the property (as 1st or 2nd charge) and will be subject to repayment in full when the property is sold or transferred to another owner.</p> |

| <b>PRIORITY 2 - Safeguard the health and well-being of residents by removing unnecessary hazards to health in the home</b> |   |   |  |  |   |
|--|---|---|--|--|---|
| <b>Scheme</b>  | <b>Assistance available</b>   | <b>Purpose</b>  | <b>Scope of assistance</b>   | <b>Eligibility</b>   | <b>Scheme conditions</b>  |
| <b>Discretionary Home Improvement Loan</b>   | <p><i>Minimum loans offered: £1,000.</i></p> <p><i>Maximum loan offered: £10,000.</i></p> <p>Loans will be administered by Parity Trust on behalf of the Council.</p> | <p><i>Assistance to remedy Category 1 hazards and serious Category 2 hazards (bands D-F) as defined within the Housing Health and Rating Safety System (HHSRS).</i></p> <p>(All hazards and eligible works are assessed by the Council through a HHSRS inspection).</p> | <p><i>Category 1 and 2 hazards to impact directly on the health of a member of the current household, and include one or more of the following hazards;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damp and mould;</li> <li>• Electrical;</li> <li>• Excess heat;</li> <li>• Falls associated with baths etc;</li> <li>• Falls between levels;</li> <li>• Falls on stairs;</li> <li>• Falls on the level;</li> <li>• Fire, and;</li> <li>• Structural collapse and falling elements</li> </ul> | <p>Loans are offered subject to a robust financial review and subject to sufficient equity being available in the property.</p> <p><i>Applicants must:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) own their home, and;</li> <li>b) have occupied the home as their only home for a minimum of 5 years, and;</li> <li>c) intend to continue to occupy the home for a minimum of 5 years following completion of the works, and;</li> <li>d) not have received assistance from the Council for the same hazard/s within the preceding 5 years.</li> </ul> | <p><i>Applications to include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) completed application form;</li> <li>b) two estimates for the works in the required format</li> </ul> <p><i>Works to be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) completed within 12 months of grant approval; and</li> <li>b) completed to the satisfaction of the Council.</li> </ul> <p>Duration of loan will be subject to individual circumstances and the sum loaned.</p> <p>Registered as a local land charge against the property (as 1st or 2nd charge) and will be subject to repayment in full if the property is sold or transferred to another owner.</p> |

| <b>PRIORITY 2 - Safeguard the health and well-being of residents by removing unnecessary hazards to health in the home</b> |   |                |                            |   |  |
|--|---|----------------|----------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Scheme</b>  | <b>Assistance available</b>   | <b>Purpose</b> | <b>Scope of assistance</b> | <b>Eligibility</b>  | <b>Scheme conditions</b>   |
| <b>Discretionary Home Improvement Grant</b>  | <p>Minimum grant offered: £500.</p> <p>Maximum grant offered: £10,000</p> | As above.      | As above.                  | <p>The applicant must have undertaken a financial assessment by the Council's loan scheme provider. If they are not eligible for any of these loans or such funding is not sufficient to cover the full cost of the works.</p> <p>In addition any savings in excess of £6,000 would also be payable towards the cost of the works.</p> <p>The eligibility criteria, detailed above, for Home Improvement Loans a) to d) also apply.</p> | <p>The grant will be secured as a local land charge and is repayable on the sale or transfer of the property.</p> <p><i>Applications to include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) completed application form;</li> <li>b) two estimates for the works in the required format</li> </ul> <p><i>Works to be:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) completed within 12 months of grant approval;</li> <li>b) completed to the satisfaction of the Council.</li> </ul> |

## Low Carbon Loan and Grant Scheme

The discretionary schemes detailed below may be withdrawn or offered on a time-limited basis to enable the Council to respond to local market conditions and funding constraints. All offers of financial assistance are subject to the terms and conditions laid out in Appendix 2.

| <b>LOANS TO HOMEOWNERS</b>   |   |  |  |   |   |
|--|---|--|--|---|---|
| <b>Assist homeowners with home insulation, heating and renewable energy improvements</b> |   |  |  |   |   |
| <b>Scheme</b>  | <b>Assistance available</b>                                     | <b>Purpose</b>   | <b>Scope of assistance</b>   | <b>Eligibility</b>  | <b>Scheme conditions</b>  |
| <b>Low Carbon Loans</b>  | <i>Maximum assistance</i><br><i>Per application:</i><br>£10,000 | <i>Assistance to:</i><br>Meet the Council's commitment in the Climate Change Strategy to encourage and support residents, community groups and businesses to reduce their carbon emissions across the borough<br><br>Deliver HECA report action: 'Help households make energy efficiency improvements to their properties and benefit from renewable energy systems' | <i>Improvements to homes including;</i><br><br><ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insulation</li> <li>• Heating systems</li> <li>• Double glazing</li> <li>• Draught proofing and any measures that will reduce energy consumption</li> <li>• Renewable energy measures</li> </ul> | <i>Applications considered from:</i><br><br>Owner-occupiers | <i>Application process to be followed</i><br><br>a) Initial enquiry<br>b) Financial assessment by Parity Trust<br>c) Loan application checked against loan criteria<br>d) Parity make recommendation to Council<br>e) Council approves loan (officer delegation)<br><br><i>Conditions to include:</i><br>a) Loan issued on receipt of evidence of work completed<br>b) Three repayment options will be offered.<br>c) Loans to be repaid over a maximum of 15 years.<br>d) All loans will be secured against the property |

| <b>LOANS TO ORGANISATIONS</b>   |  |  |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| <b>Assist organisations with insulation, heating and renewable energy improvements to community buildings</b> |  |  |   |  |  |
| <b>Scheme</b>   | <b>Assistance available</b>                                | <b>Purpose</b>   | <b>Scope of assistance</b>  | <b>Eligibility</b>   | <b>Scheme conditions</b>   |
| <b>Low Carbon Loans</b>   | <i>Maximum assistance<br/>Per application:<br/>£25,000</i> | <i>Assistance to:<br/>Meet the Council's commitment in the Climate Change Strategy to encourage and support residents, community groups and businesses to reduce their carbon emissions across the borough</i> | <i>Improvements to community buildings including;</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insulation</li> <li>• Heating systems</li> <li>• Double glazing and draft proofing</li> <li>• Any measures that will improve the energy efficiency</li> <li>• Renewable energy measures</li> </ul> | <i>Applications considered from:</i><br><br>Properly constituted community organisations | <i>Application process to be followed:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Initial enquiry</li> <li>b) Financial assessment by Parity Trust</li> <li>c) Loan application checked against loan criteria</li> <li>d) Parity make recommendation to Council</li> <li>e) Council approves loan (officer delegation)</li> </ol><br><i>Conditions to include:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) 3% arrangement fee payable by organisation</li> <li>b) Company due diligence and credit check of trustees</li> <li>c) Loan funds issued on receipt of evidence of work completed</li> <li>d) All loans will be secured against the premises</li> </ol> |

| <b>GRANTS TO HOMEOWNERS</b>  |   |  |  |  |   |
|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Assist homeowners with home insulation, heating and renewable energy improvements</b> |   |  |  |  |   |
| <b>Scheme</b>  | <b>Assistance available</b>                               | <b>Purpose</b>   | <b>Scope of assistance</b>   | <b>Eligibility</b>   | <b>Scheme conditions</b>  |
| <b>Low Carbon Grants</b>   | <i>Maximum assistance<br/>Per application:<br/>£3,000</i> | <p><i>Assistance to:</i><br/>Meet the Council's commitment in the Climate Change Strategy to encourage and support residents, community groups and businesses to reduce their carbon emissions across the borough</p> <p>Commitment in HECA report 2015 to undertake actions to help reduce fuel poverty levels in the borough</p> | <p><i>Improvements to homes including;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insulation</li> <li>• Heating systems</li> <li>• Double glazing</li> <li>• Draught proofing</li> <li>• Any measures that improve the energy efficiency of the property</li> <li>• Renewable energy measures</li> </ul> | <p><i>Applications considered from:</i></p> <p>Owner-occupiers eligible for a loan and in receipt of means tested benefits</p> | <p><i>Application process to be followed:</i></p> <p>a) Initial enquiry<br/>b) Financial assessment by Parity Trust. If there is sufficient equity in the property to be eligible for a loan, the homeowner cannot qualify for grant<br/>c) completed application form</p> <p><i>Conditions to include:</i></p> <p>a) Property must be within council tax bands A to E<br/>b) two estimates for the works in the required format.<br/>c) Homeowner must go with cheapest quote unless they wish to make up the difference<br/>d) Contractor must be member of professional body<br/>e) Evidence of work carried out and completed to the satisfaction of the Council<br/>f) Grants in excess of £2,500 to be: registered as a local land charge against the property, and the grant to be repaid if the property is sold within 3 years</p> |

| <b>GRANTS TO LANDLORDS</b>  |  |  |   |  |   |
|---|--|--|---|--|---|
| <b>Assist landlords with home insulation, heating and renewable energy improvements</b> |  |  |   |  |   |
| <b>Scheme</b>   | <b>Assistance available</b>                          | <b>Purpose</b>   | <b>Scope of assistance</b>  | <b>Eligibility</b>   | <b>Scheme conditions</b>  |
| <b>Low Carbon Grants</b>  | <i>Maximum assistance<br/>Per landlord:<br/>£500</i> | <p><i>Assistance to:</i><br/>Meet the Council's commitment in the Climate Change Strategy to encourage and support residents, community groups and businesses to reduce their carbon emissions across the borough</p> <p>Commitment in HECA report 2015 to undertake actions to help reduce fuel poverty levels in the borough</p> | <p><i>Improvements to homes including;</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insulation</li> <li>• Heating systems</li> <li>• Double glazing and draught proofing</li> <li>• Any improvements that reduce the energy consumption of the property</li> <li>• Renewable energy measures</li> </ul> | <p><i>Applications considered from:</i></p> <p>Landlords</p> | <p><i>Application process to be followed:</i></p> <p>a) Initial enquiry with evidence of work required (including photographs)<br/>b) completed application form</p> <p><i>Conditions to include:</i></p> <p>a) One grant offer only per landlord, not available for multiple properties<br/>b) Evidence of work carried out and completed to the satisfaction of the Council before funds released.</p> <p>The grant is not repayable on the sale of the property.</p> |

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **GRANT TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

A Discretionary Home Repair Loan or Grant shall be subject to the following terms and conditions. Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants are subject to terms and conditions prescribed by Government.

#### **General Conditions**

1. Applicants, when signing a grant/loan application form are agreeing to all the terms and conditions as detailed by the Council.
  2. 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 the investigation of other possible criminal activities.
  3. The Council may not consider applications for financial assistance from persons, organisations etc where there is a possible alternative source of funding.
  4. No application shall be accepted for a financial assistance where the proposals include works previously carried out and covered by builders' warranties.
  5. An application for financial assistance towards works that have already been completed will not be processed, except where urgent repairs were necessary and were identified as such by a Council officer before the work was completed. Where the relevant works have been begun but have not been completed, the Council may approve the application for financial assistance if they are satisfied that there were good reasons for beginning the works before the application was approved. In this case the relevant works may be varied to include only those works not completed.
  6. Applicants must be 18 years of age or over at the date of application and in the case of joint applications one must be 18 years of age or over at the date of application.
  7. Applications for financial assistance will only be accepted on the prescribed forms of the Council, and must contain all of the requirements referred to in this section.
  8. Proof of Title shall be provided to enable property ownership to be confirmed.
  9. The Council may accept applications where there is an owner's interest in only part of the land to which an application for financial assistance relates if:
    - a) the applicant has the power to carry out the works; and
    - b) the specified works are to be carried out on land, which is not the applicants' land.
- Specified works means:
- i) Works to connect the applicants' property to gas, electricity and/or water supplies or a drainage system so as to provide suitable and sufficient lighting, heating, and water or an effective foul and/or surface water drainage system.
  - ii) Work to repair or renew any of the above.
10. The Council or their agents will hold final authority to determine what works are included on grant/loan schedules.

11. At least two estimates/quotations shall accompany an application for financial assistance. The Council reserve the right to ask for further particulars and/or further estimates/quotations or to accept a single estimate/quotation where the work is of a specialist nature or the value of the work is less than £1,000.
12. If an applicant submits an estimate/quotation from a member of their family (as defined in Appendix 4), the grant will only be approved on the basis of the cost of materials and not labour.
13. It is the applicant who employs the builder to undertake agreed works and the Council have no contractual liabilities in that relationship as their role is only to administer the grant process.
14. The responsibility to obtain necessary approvals for grant aided works e.g. Planning Permission or Building Regulation Approval and compliance with the terms and conditions of the grant rests with the applicant or his appointed agent.
15. The grant applicant is ultimately responsible for ensuring the quality of the completed works.
16. Where it is believed there may have been an attempt to deliberately defraud the Council, the matter will be investigated and appropriate formal action taken. This may involve other agencies, e.g. the Police and may result in prosecution proceedings.
17. The Council reserves the right to defer consideration or approval of applications for discretionary grants/loans in order to properly manage its budgets.

### **Grant Conditions**

18. Upon completion of any financial-assisted works the property is to be free from any Category 1 hazard (or the hazard is moderated as far as is practicable) as defined by the Housing Act 2004. Any exception to this requirement will require the authority of the Environmental Health Manager.
19. Applications for financial assistance must be accompanied by an owner-occupation certificate stating the applicant has or proposes to acquire a qualifying owner's interest in the property the subject of the application for financial assistance, and that throughout a period of 5 years from the completion date of works the applicant, or a member of his/her family, will live in the dwelling as their only or main residence.
20. In the case of any financial assistance for which part or complete payment has been made and applicant disposes of the property, or the property ceases to be occupied in accordance with the intention stated in the owner-occupation certificate, before the completion date she/he shall repay to the Council on demand the amount of grant that has been paid.
21. Where the applicant disposes of the property, or the property ceases to be occupied in accordance with the intention stated in the owner-occupation certificate following the completion date of the grant, then she/he shall repay to the Council on demand the amount of grant that has been paid.

In cases where a property is disposed of, the grant recipients may make representations to the Environmental Health Manager as to why the grant should not be repaid. Before enforcing a grant condition requiring repayment of all the grant the

Environmental Health Manager shall have regard to Appendix 3 and to the ability of the person concerned to make that payment.

22. The Council may, at any time, make a written request to the current owner of the premises concerned to determine how she/he is complying with any of the terms and conditions of the grant/loan.

Failure to comply with this request will constitute a deemed failure of the grant/loan conditions requiring total repayment of grant together with compound interest at a reasonable rate determined by the Council.

23. If at any time:

- a) the amount of grant/loan is repaid to the Council, or
- b) the Council determine not to demand repayment on a breach of a grant condition,

the conditions shall cease to be in force with respect to that building.

24. In the event of a recipient of grant aid pursuing a successful insurance claim, action for legal damages etc which covers the cost of works for which a 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.
25. Any condition under this section is a Local Land Charge and is binding on any person who is for the time being an owner of the premises concerned.

### **Financial Assistance Approvals and Payments**

26. The amount of grant/loan payable shall be the actual cost of undertaking the works plus any associated fees less any applicant's contribution. 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 or the Council is satisfied that there have been increases in costs beyond the control of the applicant. A formal re-approval to a higher level of financial assistance will be required before any funding above the originally approved level is paid.
27. The Council may from time to time utilise other streams of funding from external sources aimed at specific subjects to target issues of local and national concern. Any special terms and conditions applicable to such initiatives will be appended to the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy as they will not significantly alter the Council's primary approach. Applicants for financial assistance will be required to apply for other sources of funding, where appropriate, to support the proposed grant-assisted work. Grant assistance awarded by the Council will take account of other funding to which the grant applicant is entitled.
28. The Council will include the cost of preliminary or ancillary services, fees and charges within the calculation for financial assistance; each submission of fees will be individually considered for reasonableness. The payment of any such fees is conditional on a grant/loan being approved and the completion of all specified works, otherwise the Council will not be held responsible for any fees incurred before or after grant/loan approval.

29. The Council shall notify the applicant in writing as soon as reasonably practicable, being not later than six months after a complete application is received, whether the application for financial assistance is approved or refused. In approving an application the Council shall determine the works that are eligible for financial assistance, the amount of expenses that in their opinion are properly to be incurred in the execution of these works, the amount of the cost with respect to preliminary or ancillary services and charges, and the amount of financial assistance the Council has awarded.
30. Where the Council decide to refuse an application, the applicant will be notified of the reasons for the refusal, and be given the opportunity to make representations to the Environmental Health Manager.
31. The Council will determine on each approval document the time period allowed for works to be completed, which will not normally exceed 12 months and may be significantly shorter for small items of work. The Council may allow further time where they are satisfied that the delay in completing the works is beyond the control of the applicant.
32. The works must be carried out by one of the contractors whose estimates/quotation were submitted as part of the application process, the grant/loan having been calculated using the lowest priced estimate/quotation.
33. All grant/loan payments shall be conditional upon receipt of an acceptable invoice and that works to the appropriate stage have been satisfactorily completed. Grant/loan payments shall be made direct to the appropriate contractor following agreement with the applicant. In a situation of dispute between the applicant and contractor, which is not resolved in a reasonable time period, the grant/loan, or part thereof, may be paid to the applicant at the discretion of the Council.
34. The Council will consider requests for interim payments; the aggregate of all interim payments shall be no more than 90% of the total approved amount before final completion.
35. Where an application for a grant/loan has been approved; and
  - a) the grant/loan assisted works are not completed to the satisfaction of the Council; or
  - b) the Council determine that the final cost of completing the work, together with any preliminary or ancillary services and charges, is lower than the amount upon which the grant/loan was based; or
  - c) the Council determine that the assisted works were carried out by a contractor who did not submit an estimate which accompanied the grant/loan application the Council may refuse to pay the grant or any further instalments, or make a proportionate reduction in the grant. The Council may also demand repayment of any grant paid from the applicant, together with interest at such reasonable rate as the Council may determine from the date of payment until repayment.
36. Where during the period up to payment of a grant/loan the Council becomes aware that the financial circumstances of the applicant are at variance with the particulars submitted at the time of application, the original grant/loan approval may be amended or cancelled and the Council may demand repayment of any payments made together with compound interest from the date on which payment was made until repayment. In such circumstances the Council may choose to cancel the whole

grant/loan or demand repayment of all grant/loan monies paid, plus compound interest, despite the fact that a reduced level of grant/loan would have been approved.

37. Where the applicant dies after a grant application has been approved and liability has been incurred for any preliminary or ancillary services or charges, the Council may pay grant/loan in respect of some or all of these costs.
38. Where the applicant dies after the grant application has been approved but before the relevant works have been completed, the Council may pay grant in respect of some or all of the works already carried out and other relevant works covered by the application.

## **APPENDIX 3**

### **Relevant Disposals and conditions where it may be reasonable not to demand full or any repayment of grant, and Exempt Disposals.**

It is a condition of a grant that if an owner of the dwelling to which the grant relates makes a 'relevant disposal' (other than an 'exempt disposal') of the dwelling he shall repay to the Council on demand the amount of the grant.

The Council may determine not to demand repayment or to demand a lesser amount, where they are satisfied that the disposal falls within one or more of the following cases and that it would not be reasonable, in the circumstances of the case, to demand repayment of all or part of the amount of grant.

1. A disposal of premises where the disposal proceeds, less the amount of any expenses incurred by the relevant person in connection with the disposal and the amount of any advanced secured by a charge on the premises which has been repaid by the relevant person, are less than the amount of grant which a relevant person would be liable to repay.
2. A disposal of premises to which an application for grant relates where the value of the premises at the date of disposal, after deducting the amount of grant that has been paid, is less than the value of the premises at the date of the grant approval.
3. A disposal made to a registered social landlord.

A '**relevant person**' in relation to a disposal means a person who would be liable to repay the amount of grant that has been paid, and includes any other person who normally resides, or who might reasonably be expected to reside with him.

A "**relevant disposal**" is:

- a) a conveyance of the freehold or an assignment of the lease, or
- b) the grant of a lease (other than a mortgage term) for a term of more than 21 years otherwise than at a rack rent.

An "**exempt disposal**" of the whole or part of the premises is:

1. A conveyance of the freehold or an assignment of the lease and the person or each of the persons to whom it is made is:-
  - a) the person, or one of the persons, by whom the disposal is made;
  - b) the spouse, or former spouse, of that person or one of those persons; or
  - c) a member of the family of that person or one of those persons; or
  - d) in the case of a company it is an associated company of the company by whom the disposal is made.
2. A vesting in a person taking under a will or on an intestacy;
3. a compulsory disposal of property which is acquired compulsorily;

4. a conveyance of part of the freehold or an assignment of the lease where
  - a) the person making the disposal is aged at least 70, and
  - b) the disposal is to provide an annuity income, and
  - c) the person concerned is entitled to continue to occupy the premises as his only or main residence.

Any grant condition shall cease to be in force with respect to any premises if there is a relevant disposal of the premises that is an exempt disposal. The only exceptions to this is an exempt disposal under paragraphs 1 and 2 above where the grant recovery conditions remain in force for any subsequent disposal.

## **APPENDIX 4**

### **DEFINITIONS**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| “Agreed Works”  | are those works appearing on a grants schedule produced or authorised by the Council.   |
| “Category 1 and 2 hazards”                            | Are those defined in the Housing Act 2004   |
| “Charge on a Property”                                | is where the Council legally places a debt on the record of a house and recovers the debt upon its sale if not settled beforehand.  |
| “Completion Date”                                     | the date certified by the Council as the date on which the execution of the grant/loan-assisted works is completed to their satisfaction.   |
| “Equity Release”                                      | is a means by which persons can raise money against the value of their home where the difference between any outstanding mortgage/loan and its current market value is significant, also applicable where there is no outstanding mortgage/loan. The method of repayment can vary but generally the value of the loan, with or without interest, is repaid upon sale of the property.   |
| “Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant”                 | is defined as per in the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, as amended, or as in any successor statutory definition.  |
| “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.  |
| “Preliminary or Ancillary Services, Fees and Charges” | which may be included in a grant application are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• confirmation that the applicant has an owner’s interest</li><li>• technical and structural surveys;</li><li>• design and preparation of plans and drawings; and preparation of schedules of works;</li><li>• obtaining of estimates and valuations;</li><li>• applications for building regulations approval and planning permission;</li><li>• supervision of works;</li></ul> |

- disconnection and reconnection of electricity, gas, water and drainage utilities made necessary by the works (but no charges arising out of non-payment of bills);
- advice on contracts and on financing the cost of works.
- any fees charged by a private sector lending organisation in arranging a loan to contribute towards the agreed works.
- any fees charged by an Independent Financial Advisor to offer advice on the availability of commercial loans.
- obtaining specialist advice on property valuations. Including such services given by or through home improvement agencies.

“Proof of Title”

is completed by a Solicitor or Building Society on an applicants’ behalf in the case of freeholders or leaseholders to confirm ownership.

“Qualifying Owner’s interest”

that the applicant has a freehold interest or a leasehold interest where there is at least ten years of the lease left to run on every parcel of land on which the relevant works are to be carried out.

“Relevant works”

the works in respect of which financial assistance is sought.