

## REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER FOR DECISION

<b>Open</b>		Would any decisions proposed :		
<b>Any especially affected Wards</b>	Mandatory/	(a) Be entirely within cabinet's powers to decide YES/NO		
	Discretionary /	(b) Need to be recommendations to Council		YES/NO
	Operational	(c) Be partly for recommendations to Council and partly within Cabinets powers –		YES/NO
Lead Member: E-mail: <b>Cllr Adrian Lawrence</b>		Other Cabinet Members consulted:		
		Other Members consulted:		
Lead Officer: <b>Duncan Hall</b> E-mail: Direct Dial: 01553 6445		Other Officers consulted:		
Financial Implications YES/NO	Policy/Personnel Implications YES/NO	Statutory Implications YES/NO	Equal Impact Assessment YES/NO	Risk Management Implications YES/NO
If not for publication, the paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A of the 1972 Local Government Act considered to justify that is (are) paragraph(s)				
Date advertised: 4 <sup>th</sup> July 2013		Date decision to be taken: 11 <sup>th</sup> July 2013		
Deadline for Call-In: 18 <sup>th</sup> July 2013				

## AMENDMENTS TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING INVESTMENT POLICY

### Summary

Amendments are proposed to elements of the discretionary assistance offered via the Private Sector Housing Investment Policy to efficiently target resources and to reflect changes in government legislation.

### Recommendation

Approve amendments as detailed below in order that capital resources can be more efficiently targeted and to ensure that the eligibility is consistent with current legislation.

### Reason for Decision

To approve adjustments to the Private Sector Housing Investment Policy.

The Private Sector Housing Investment policy (PSHIP), prepared to meet the requirements of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 was amended and approved by Cabinet in July 2012. This policy brings together all forms of grant and other assistance and determines the approach the Council takes to the provision of all mandatory and discretionary assistance offered.

The PSHIP should be reviewed on a regular basis and Appendix 1 (page 19) provides the mechanism for reviewing and amending the policy in order to target funding or resources more appropriately.

In order to target such resources more efficiently and appropriately the following amendments are proposed:

Amendment 1 – Safety & Security Grant - to help fund measures that improve the safety and security of the eligible household.

Amendment 2 – Careline Grant - to help vulnerable households live safely and independently in their own homes.

Amendment 3 – Amendment to Appeals and Exceptional Cases page 18.

Amendment 4 – Amendment to Appendix 1, changing Council Tax Benefit to Council Tax Support.

#### **Amendment 1 – Safety & Security Grant (PSHIP 12.0)**

It is proposed that the eligibility and scope of assistance is altered in order to provide a more targeted approach to grant provision including a reduction in the overall grant limit from £250 per to £200 per household.

At present the assistance offered covers both labour and materials. It is proposed that the assistance will be offered in support of a reduced labour rate for vulnerable households and will no longer include the cost of materials. We will continue to offer assistance to vulnerable households as defined within Appendix 1 of the PSHIP and this reduction will ensure that a competitive handyperson service can still be offered but that the capital allowance for this assistance can be used to help a greater number of households in need.

It is also proposed to open up the eligibility to tenants as well as owner occupiers as this will facilitate the installation of falls prevention related measures in rented properties also. Any works or provision deemed to be an obligation of the landlord, either social or private, will need to be funded by the landlord.

#### **Amendment 2 – Careline Grant (PSHIP 13.0)**

It is proposed that the scope of assistance is altered in order to provide a more targeted approach to grant provision including a reduction in the overall grant limit from £300 per to £200 per household.

Assistance will still be offered to vulnerable households where the applicant is 60yrs or over (or under 60yrs and suffering from long term ill health or disability) and are in receipt of one of the means tested benefits listed within the 'government defined vulnerable' benefits (Appendix 1).

It is proposed that assistance will be offered in respect to the purchase and installation of a Careline Alarm Unit and that this will no longer cover subsidised rental. The scope of assistance will also include the provision and installation of smoke alarms and/or the provision of a key safe which are activities currently undertaken by Careline installation staff and are interrelated.

This amendment will not reduce the discretionary capital available but will allow the funding to more efficiently targeted and will allow a greater number of vulnerable households to be helped.

#### **Amendment 3 – Appeals & Exceptional Cases (PSHIP Page 18)**

It is proposed to update the text within this section to reflect directorate changes within the Council.

#### **Amendment 4 – Appendix 1 (PSHIP Page 19)**

It is proposed that Council Tax Benefit be replaced with Council Tax Support to reflect changes which took effect in April 2013 and to remove reference to (Careline only) so as to make Safety & Security assistance open to tenants, subject to the limitations described above.

## **Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications and these amendments will allow existing capital funding to be targeted more efficiently and assist an increased number of households.

## **Staffing Implications**

No staffing implications arise.

## **Statutory Considerations**

The ability for the Council to provide discretionary assistance is provided via the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002.

Signed

Cllr Adrian Lawrence  
Portfolio Holder for Community

Date