

Full Impact Assessment

1. What is the service area(s) and who is the lead officer?

- List the Executive Director and Service Manager, plus the person completing this assessment if different.
- Summarise the current service levels and availability / means of provision (what, when, where, how, who)

Environmental Health and Housing, Clare Hanna

2. What change are you proposing?

The Revision of the Private Sector Investment Policy to ensure that our financial assistance is aimed at assisting the most vulnerable people within the Borough and the assistance will only be provided to ensure that significant hazards are remedied or to ensure that people are able to live independently within their home.

- Briefly state what the change is.
- State whether the change is as a result of:
 - capital and revenue bid prepared as part of the budget process
 - formal service review report
 - proposal for reduction, enhancement or change in service levels
 - new or amended Council policy
- State whether the change will result in a decision by Management or Members

3. How will this change help the council achieve its corporate objectives (and therefore your service objectives)?

The changes within the policy include the introduction of a new grant that will run alongside the DFG. This new grant will remove unnecessary bureaucracy encountered with the full DFG application for grants that will have a maximum value of £6000.

However we have expanded on the definition of Government Defined Vulnerable for clarification and transparency which will inform us whether somebody is eligible for other forms of assistance including emergency repair grants, home repair assistance and safe and secure.

- Which corporate or community strategy objectives does this change support? (Documents available from Policy & Performance)
- If it doesn't link to the organisation's aims, what justification is there for the change?

4. What is your evidence of need for change?

- State if the requirement for change is statutory or discretionary – is this required under legislation?
- Or is it a response to
 - local issues/conditions
 - customer feedback
 - management issues
 - policy / political issue?
- State your evidence of the need for change. Is it...
 - Quantitative eg DAWN, Management Information, Financial data etc ?
 - Qualitative - research and consultation (see also Q9)?

The DFG application process is burdensome and time consuming. Over the past three years 60 % of the DFGs processed have cost less than £6000. The introduction of the ADAPT grant will enable swifter and more expedient processing of these applications and ultimately large reductions in waiting lists.

The Council Home repair assistance is in the form of a soft loan where no interest is applied unless the applicant fails to meet residency conditions. The Council are not obliged to provide assistance for everybody and using the powers provided to the Council under the RRO 2002 the Borough Council of King's Lynn and West Norfolk seek to ensure that the monies available for private sector disrepair are targeted to the worst hazards and the most vulnerable within the Borough. For this reason it became necessary to provide a clear definition on those persons whom are considered to be the most vulnerable.

5. What is the impact of your proposal?

- What outputs will be achieved as a result?
- What will change?
- How will service users experience the change?
- What does success look like if you tripped over it?
- Have you considered the needs / barriers of those currently using / not using the service?

The implication of the proposed ADAPT grant is that this will have no impact on the equality as this grant is running alongside the DFG and will be offered as a faster alternative to the DFG application process. Both of these grants are only available upon receipt of evidence of a clinical need for an adaptation from the welfare authority.

The definition for Government Defined Vulnerable includes over 60's, families with young children and disabled persons but excludes single persons or families without children. This definition will only have an impact on housing disrepair assistance.

Emergency Repair Grants and Home repair assistance is only available to owner occupiers as repairs for those persons living in rented accommodation are the responsibility of the landlord.

There may be some occasions where there is a person who does not fall within the definition of Government Defined Vulnerable, for example where persons fall on hard times e.g. being in negative equity and being made redundant. In this situation a person may not be able to take advantage of any self financing mechanisms.

Significant hazards are encountered after years of neglect and disrepair. If a person is not able to maintain their home then they may need to consider selling or other alternatives. The Council are working in partnership with Mortgage Rescue schemes where a Registered Provider may take over the property in return for a rental income and any debts incurred will be negotiated by a financial expert. Since the change in policy towards self financing there have been very few occasions where we have encountered this situation however we will signpost as necessary to ensure that this group of people receive the assistance and help required

6. How will you monitor the impact of change?

- What indicators will you use to track the impact of the change when implemented?
- How will you review its implementation?
- How do you intend to monitor service take-up?

This will be monitored buy an evaluation of the enquiries and requests for assistance that are received by the Housing Standards section.

7. How will this change deliver improved value for money and/or release efficiency savings?

- Will service quality be improved?
- Will costs be reduced / savings be generated?
- How does the balance between cost and quality change?
- If efficiency savings are being generated how will these be evidenced?

This will ensure that the money available for Home repair assistance is being spent most effectively and directed at those people who need it the most.

8. What geographical area does this change impact upon?

- State if the change is applied across the Borough or whether it is focused on a geographical area within the Borough, such as a town, facility or ward.
- Also state if there are cross-boundary implications.

The Borough

9. What impact will this change have on different groups of the population?

This will have an impact on decisions upon the provision of financial assistance for individuals who are under 60 or do not have young families or are not classed as disabled i.e. qualify for disability benefits. The impact is not likely to be great based on an analysis of the numbers of enquiries for the provision of assistance. Where this may be a problem the officers will re direct applicants to organisations whom may be able to assist.

Possible consequences are

This group of people continue to live in unsafe homes.

- Have you considered the implications on different segments of the population (see appendix 1), such as:
 - Gender
 - Race
 - Disability
 - Age
 - Religion, Faith or Belief
 - Sexual Orientation
- For all of these consider issues of:
 - access
 - culture
 - language
 - stereotyping
 - rurality / isolation
 - safety & security
 - hate crime / discrimination
 - choice / opportunity
 - income / financial access
 - service take-up, including those not currently using the service (why might this be the case?)
- How might this change remove some of these barriers (if identified) or prevent barriers being created?

10. Are there any implications for other service areas?

- Will any other service areas be affected by your proposals?
- What implications will this have?

No

Assessment Completed By: Clare Hanna

Job Title: Principal Officer (Housing Standards)

Other Staff Involved in Assessment (including Corporate Equality Group Representative):

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