

## **Crime Reduction**

For the last 3 years money has been made available to fund crime reduction measures in partnership with the Council's Community Leisure Services and the Police. Vulnerable households and victims of crime have benefited from the installation of security measures including alarm systems funded by the scheme. It is proposed that this scheme will continue to be funded annually.

We will work with the Council Crime and Disorder Partnership to develop more joint working.

Currently we are looking at an expanded home security scheme and increased area improvements.

A handyman scheme is proposed to carry out repairs to make properties more secure.

## **Other Assistance**

### **Help with relocation**

The Council will help with relocation where the existing property is clearly unsuitable for the occupant. An example of this would be in the case of a disabled person where the Council could move them to an existing adapted property. The amount of grant payable shall not exceed the difference between the cost of acquiring the qualifying dwelling and the amount to be paid to acquire the applicants interest in the original dwelling, including reasonable incidental expenses. The relocation grant shall be subject to means test and 5 year condition period.

### **Exceptional cases**

Exceptional cases may arise which are outside the scope of council assistance. It is not possible to cover all exceptions that may arise and each case will therefore be considered on its own merits. As a general principle though, the Council will prioritise assistance to those least able to help themselves.

## **Loans**

The Council is working with Walbrook Care & Repair Agency to develop a suitable Capital release package through the Home Improvement Trust. Capital Release Schemes are intended to assist homeowners who have considerable equity value in their homes but lack sufficient capital to

fund essential repairs and improvements. A range of repayment options are likely to be available to the client. The Council will fund the set up or arrangement fee for the loan.

### **Customer Feedback**

In order to provide an appropriate, high quality service we require feedback from our customers. Customer Satisfaction questionnaires are currently limited to DFG and HRA clients. We intend to extend the scope of our questionnaire feedback forms and issue them to all service users (see draft customer feedback questionnaire at annex 3).

### **Summary**

Our main priorities for assistance will be met through a combination of traditional grant assistance, information and advice, education and enforcement.

The grant assistance that we propose to make available in 2003/2004 is summarised in section 6.

An 'Action Plan' to achieve our priority objectives in is detailed together with target timescales, in section 7.

# 6.0

## Summary Of Grant Assistance Available In 2003/4

| Grant                               | Purpose   | Qualifying Criteria              | Means Tested | Max. Payable                        | Conditional  | Repeat         |
|-------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| <b>Empty Home Grant</b>             | Renovate long term empty property for owner occupation or letting | Empty for min. of 1 year         | No           | 50% cost of eligible work           | Yes (5 yrs)  | 1 per year     |
| <b>Landlord Grant</b>               | Renovate to let   | No enforcement history           | No           | 75% (max. £10k)                     | Yes (5 yrs.) | 1 per year     |
| <b>Home Repair Assistance Grant</b> | Essential Staying put/repairs                                     | Over 60 yrs. disabled on benefit | No           | max. £2500 (exceptionally upto £5k) | No           | 2 per 3 yrs.   |
| <b>Minor Repair Grant</b>           | Essential repairs   | On qualifying benefit            | No           | Max £5000                           | No           | 2 per 3 yrs.   |
| <b>DFG</b>                          | Disabled adaptations  | register/able disabled           | Yes          | Max £25k                            | Yes          | Unlimited      |
| <b>HRG</b>                          | Major Repairs   | Emergency 100 priority points    | Yes          | Max £25k                            | Yes          | Emergency only |

# 7.0

## Action Plan

| Priority Area                         | Action   | Target                                  |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| Area Improvement                      | 1). Identify a suitable area scheme<br>2). Allocates 106 money to a suitable area improvement scheme   | Sept 2004<br>April 2004                 |
| Individual Property                   | 3). Develop a Capital Release Scheme<br>4). Publish & promote a Home Maintenance Guide   | April 2005<br>Jan 2004                  |
| Empty property                        | 5). Implement Empty Home Grant   | April 2004                              |
| Disabled / vulnerable needs           | 6). Implement Minor Work Grant   | April 2004                              |
| Private Rented Sector                 | 7). Develop Rent Deposit Scheme<br>8). Develop Accreditation Scheme<br>9). Landlord Forum  | April 2004<br>April 2004<br>2 per annum |
| Home Energy Efficiency                | 10). Complete a promotional scheme   | April 2004                              |
| Crime reduction                       | 13). Contribute to Crime and Disorder Partnership Scheme (£10k)  | April 2003                              |
| Customer Care                         | 14). Implement Customer Satisfaction / Feedback Surveys<br>15). Develop private Housing Area on Council Website                              | Nov 2003<br>Dec 2003                    |
| Information/data/strategy development | 16). Complete House Condition Survey<br>17). Complete Housing Needs Survey<br>18). Assess district wide compliance with Decent Home Standard | Nov 2004<br>April 2005<br>April 2005    |
| Capital Programme                     | 19). Achieve 95% budget spend  | April 2004                              |

# 8.0

## Consultation & Review



South Derbyshire Housing Strategy

This strategy has been developed and informed by;

- The results of the South Derbyshire House Condition Survey 1999 and South Derbyshire Housing Market Needs Study 2002

- Strategic Housing Best Value Review 2003
- The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2003

A range of stakeholders were consulted on the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy. The consultation exercise included a presentation at the Housing Strategy Forum, attended by elected members and representatives from the County Council, Health Authority, Government Office, Housing Associations and other partner organisations.

This review of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy has been undertaken primarily to reflect changes in the Council's Policy following the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. Since the Policy was widely consulted on it is not intended to carry out a further consultation exercise for this Strategy revision.

It is anticipated that the Strategy will be fully redrafted in 2004 using up to date stock condition and needs information and will include 'Decent Home' targets.

# 9.0

## Future Aspirations:

2019-2024 A budgetary period

The district of South Derbyshire presents a mixture of urban and rural settlements and is becoming an increasingly popular place to live. Although, originally a mining area it has largely escaped the extreme problems of obsolete housing seen in the north of the county and levels of deprivation seen in neighbouring city areas.

It is anticipated that the forthcoming house condition survey will show an improving picture, largely funded by private investment on the back of the present housing boom. However the Council still has many problems to address;

### Rural Housing

Housing in the rural areas is largely unaffordable to individuals and families on lower incomes. We would like to increase the availability of affordable property for rent, using Landlord Grants, Empty Homes Grant and voluntary leasing schemes in conjunction with RSL partners.

### Funding

In an environment of static or diminishing capital allocation for our work there is a need to actively seek other sources of capital to achieve our objectives. Planning S106 agreements are presently under utilised for housing improvement and we intend to work in partnership with the Planning Department to secure more funds via this route.

Some funding opportunities arising through the Regional Housing Board and Local Strategic Partnership, offer a relatively short time scale in which to bid and because of this the Council is either unsuccessful or fails to bid. It is proposed that ideas for schemes and projects should be worked up in advance and kept 'on the shelf' in readiness for any bidding opportunity which may arise.

### House Condition and Needs Information

House Condition surveys are a costly necessity, which are currently commissioned every five years. There is a need to collate supporting information on an ongoing basis in order to target resources where they are most needed and assess progress towards targets such as the Decent Homes Standard. It is proposed that inspection forms should be redesigned to enable information to be collated on decent homes, energy efficiency and any other information which

may give a clearer, ongoing picture of condition and need in the district.

The House Condition Survey should be supported by targeted mini surveys, which would provide additional information about problem areas, wards or parishes. Such surveys would be conducted 'in house' through questionnaire or physical survey of a sample of properties.

### **Partnership Working**

There is a need for greater engagement with the many RSL's operating in the district in order to address the problem of empty properties. Compulsory or voluntary leasing of empty property in conjunction with an RSL may provide an alternative to compulsory purchase or enforced sale, which is both quicker and more acceptable to the owners of long term or problematic empty property.

With the popularity of buy to let mortgages and continued buoyancy of the housing market it is likely that there has been a substantial increase in the numbers of private landlords operating in the area. Many of these may be inexperienced and there is a real need to identify them in order to safeguard the standards of rented accommodation and increase the client base for the Landlords Forum and proposed accreditation scheme and rent deposit scheme.

# ANNEX 1:

## Renovation Grant Points Priority System

### 1). Applicant/Property Details:

Applicant:

Address:

Tel:

Date:

Officer:

### 2). Fitness assessment: (tick appropriate grounds for unfitness)

- i) Lack of stability
- ii) Serious disrepair
- iii) Dampness
- iv) Inadequate ventilation
- v) Inadequate lighting
- vi) Inadequate heating
- vii) Inadequate water supply
- viii) Inadequate facilities for prep/cooking food
- ix) Lack of suitably located WC
- x) Inadequate bath, whb, hot & cold water supply
- xi) Inadequate drainage for foul/surface water

Property is;  fit  unfit  in disrepair (not unfit)

### 3). Is a Home Repair Assistance Grant appropriate?

yes refer for HRA

no proceed to question 4



**4). Condition of property:**

|                              |           |                          |
|------------------------------|-----------|--------------------------|
| No internal WC               | 20 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No bath/shower               | 20 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No wash basin                | 20 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No sink                      | 20 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No hot water                 | 20 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| No space heating             | 20 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Unsafe electrical wiring     | 20 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Serious roof leak            | 20 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Extensive dampness           | 20 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Structural instability       | 20 p      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Dry rot (structural)         | 20 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Extensive disrepair up to    | 20 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other health & safety issues | 20 p      | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**Household details:**

|   |           |                          |
|---|-----------|--------------------------|
| 5). Does anyone in the household have a disability?   | 20 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6). Does anyone in the household suffer serious ill health (Chronic pulmonary or heart condition, housebound) | 20 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7). Are any members of the household:   |           |                          |
| 75yr or over  | 35 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 70yr or over  | 30 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 60yrs or over   | 25 points | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|   |           | <input type="checkbox"/> |



**Tenure:**

- 8). When applicant is known to own another dwelling, which is fit for human habitation:

DEDUCT 100 points

**Applicants contribution:**

- 9) Applicants contribution from initial means test form:

|               |           |
|---------------|-----------|
| Nil           | 20 points |
| £1 - £2000    | 15 points |
| £2002 - £4000 | 10 points |
| £4001 - £6000 | 5 points  |
| over £6000    | 0 points  |

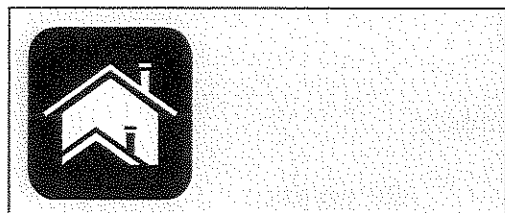
**Total Point Score:**

**NB: Only applicants scoring above 100 points will be considered for Emergency Renovation Grant.**

**Notes:**

# ANNEX 2:

## Draft Landlord Accreditation Scheme



### Assured Landlord Scheme

#### A Guide For Landlords

##### About the Scheme

The Assured Landlord Scheme is essentially a way of recognising that you are a responsible landlord and a provider of good quality accommodation. By joining the scheme you will be able to demonstrate to prospective tenants that your property meets with the standards approved by the District Council.

In order to register for the scheme you should be able to demonstrate compliance with the following basic requirements:

##### Requirements of the Scheme: The Property

1. That the property meets with the required minimum safety standards for gas, electricity and fire protection.
2. That appropriate safety certificates have been obtained and copies made available to the tenant and District Council.
3. That the property meets with the minimum requirements of the Fitness Standard and Decent Homes Standard.
4. That you have an effective emergency repair procedure in place.
5. That the property is maintained in an overall state of good repair
6. That the property complies with the recommended provision of standard amenities, fittings and equipment for the number of occupants.
7. That the property has an effective, safe and economical heating system capable of heating the lounge and bedrooms to a minimum temperature of 18°C when the outside air temperature is - 1°C. Inherent to this is the provision of adequate thermal insulation.
8. That adequate provision is made for:
  - Security
  - Refuse collection (and pest control as necessary)
  - The external upkeep and appearance (including garden maintenance, walls, fences and external decoration)
  - That the house is adequately insured

## Requirements of the Scheme: The Tenant

1. There must be a written tenancy agreement on terms that are fair and reasonable to both tenant and landlord.
2. You should not discriminate on the grounds of race, religion, sex, age, marital status or disability.
3. You should respect the right of your tenant not to be disturbed or harassed while living in your property. Tenancies must therefore be brought to an end, strictly in accordance with the correct legal procedure.
4. You should keep any personal information about your tenant confidential.
5. You should supply your tenants with your name, contact address and telephone number and a rent book.

## How to Register your Property:

If you consider that your property already complies with the recommended minimum standards contained in this leaflet, that you have proper management systems in place and that you are committed to maintaining these overall standards, then you can apply to register your property using the attached 'Form A'. The completed form should be returned to the Private Sector Housing Team, together with a copy of the tenancy agreement, gas safety certificate and periodic inspection report for the electrical installation.

Your property will then become registered, subject to compliance with the criteria previously listed and a satisfactory inspection report by the Private Sector Housing Officer. (An appointment to inspect the property will be arranged once your application is received)

Your previous record as a landlord will also be taken into account. In particular there should be:

- No history of justifiable, ongoing complaint by the occupying tenant.
- No history of harassment or illegal eviction.
- No outstanding debts owing to the Council for work carried out in default of a statutory notice.
- No breach of any conditions relating to any renovation grant which may have been paid within the past five years.

If all of the above requirements are fulfilled, you will be issued with a certificate of approval and a record will be kept on the Council's Private Sector Data base.

The certificate will be valid for twelve months from the date of issue. If any of these conditions are not complied with during the twelve month period, approval will be withdrawn pending further review.

# ANNEX 3:

## Draft Customer Feedback Questionnaire

### overleaf



South Derbyshire District Council

Civic Offices, Civic Way, Swadlincote, Derbyshire, DE11 0AH

Telephone: (01283) 221000 Fax: (01283) 595855 Website: www.south-derbys.gov.uk, Email:

Customer Feedback Opportunity

At South Derbyshire District Council we would welcome your comments on the service we provide so that it can be continuously monitored and improved wherever possible. I would be grateful if you could spend a few minutes answering the questions below, in relation to the service you received by this department, and return it in the envelope provided.

This information will be kept confidential and used only for monitoring and statistical purposes.

- 1).Were you happy with the Council's response when you initially contacted them?  Yes  No
- 2).Did the officer respond to your complaint within 5 working days?  Yes  No
- 3).Was the officer polite and helpful?  Yes  No
- 4).Did the officer fully explain the complaint procedure?  Yes  No
- 5).During the course of the investigation were you kept informed of developments?  Yes  No
- 6).Was the officer easy to contact?  Yes  No
- 7).Was the complaint or request resolved?  Yes  No
- 8).If yes to number 7, do you think that the action by the Council helped?  Yes  No
- 9).How do you feel about the overall level of service you received from the Environmental Health Division in dealing with your complaint?  Excellent  Good  Fair  Poor  Very Poor
- 10).Do you have any other suggestions or comments on ways in which we could improve either this questionnaire or the way in which the service operates?  Yes  No

Comments .....

This questionnaire is confidential and you only have to complete the section below if you so wish.

Name ..... Telephone No. ....

Address .....

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CO-OPERATION

Office use only

Seen by Private Sector Housing Manager ..... Date .....

Comments/Action taken: .....

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