
REPORT TO:	HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 9
DATE OF MEETING:	13th March 2008	CATEGORY: DELEGATED
REPORT FROM:	DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES	OPEN PARAGRAPH NO:
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	Denise Blyde Private Sector Housing Manager	DOC:
SUBJECT:	PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY 2008	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS02

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That Members approve the draft Private Sector Housing Policy 2008
- 1.2 That Members endorse the proposed range of assistance detailed at Section 6 of the policy document.
- 1.3 That Members endorse the proposed Action Plan for 2008/09 as detailed in Section 7 of the policy document.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To seek Members approval of the proposed Private Sector Housing Policy 2008 (attached at Annex 1), which has been revised to maintain step with corporate priorities and a reduced capital programme.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Private Sector Housing Policy forms part of the Council's wider Housing Strategy and guides our actions and interventions in relation to some 33,000 private sector households in the district.
- 3.2 The Council is required by the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England & Wales) Order 2002 to publish the policy, which sets out how we intend to provide assistance for housing renewal and it follows that this must remain relevant and up to date.
- 3.1 The existing Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2006 approved by the Committee on 16th March 2006 and subsequently amended in July 2007 requires revision in order to reflect corporate priorities and tailor a prudent programme of housing assistance within the scaled back capital programme for 2008/09 and beyond.

- 3.2 The proposed revision identifies three priorities to support the private housing sector;
- Improving the quality and supply of housing in the private sector, especially for vulnerable groups
 - Assisting Older, disabled and vulnerable people to live independently in their own homes
 - Reducing fuel poverty and promoting energy efficient homes
- 3.3 Initiatives to support these priorities are largely low cost and rely upon enabling, regulating and partnership working in order to maximise limited resources.
- 3.4 The Disabled Facilities Grant will remain in place because it is a mandatory requirement, however there are several actions to be developed over the coming year to help us meet demand, including new protocols, a prioritisation system and improved relocation grant (subject to funding from external sources).
- 3.8 The proposed types of assistance for the private sector are summarised in Part 3 Delivering Assistance together with an action plan to deliver these proposals.

4.0 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The initiatives proposed utilise the Disabled Facilities Grant allocation but assume no other funding from the capital programme.
- 4.2 A bid has been submitted to the Regional Housing Group through GOEM to fund some of the initiatives such as the Home Repair Plus Grant and Private Sector Leasing Scheme, but it has been made clear that these will not proceed without bid funding.

5.0 Community Implications

- 5.1 Responsibility to maintain private property clearly rests with the owner, however it is recognised that the quality of the housing stock has an impact on health and requires a level of protective investment for the longer term public benefit.
- 5.2 It is recognised that available funds are inadequate to meet all the needs of the private sector and careful targeting of assistance must be undertaken.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The proposed Private Sector Housing Policy 2008 has been drafted using best available stock condition and housing need information together with a review of current national, regional and local policy. The Policy defines a new set of priorities to guide the work of the Private Sector Housing Team ensuring our assistance is relevant and proportionate to the needs of the district and within the scope of the resources available.