

PART 2

IDENTIFYING PRIORITIES & TARGETING ASSISTANCE

6.0

GUIDING PRINCIPLES & MAIN OBJECTIVES

The following guiding principles will govern delivery of our service:

- Responsibility to maintain private sector dwellings 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.
- The Council will continue to offer a safety net of grant assistance to those most in need. Owners with adequate resources or equity available in their property will generally be expected to fund work themselves.
- The determination of direct grant funding by the Council will be considered according to the homeowner's 'ability to afford'. This will be decided using the current test of resources calculation or the eligibility to receive an income related benefit. Priority for assistance will be given to the most vulnerable groups.
- We will encourage a move away from a culture of grant dependency to one of focussed assistance to those most in need. Capital Release Loans will be offered to non vulnerable households as an alternative to grant assistance. The Council will meet the administrative and set up cost of the loan, whilst the equity in the owner's property will fund the capital part of the loan.
- All private sector housing dealt with by the Council will be assessed using the Housing Health & Safety Rating System.

Our programme of housing renewal assistance in the private sector will seek to deliver the following objectives;

- We will seek to reduce the number of homes in the District that pose a risk to the health and safety of the occupant (i.e. classified as suffering from Category 1 hazards under the new Housing Health & Safety Rating System)
- We will seek to reduce the number of vulnerable people living in homes which fail to meet the Decent Home Standard
- We will seek to provide an easily accessed and streamlined service with the minimum amount of bureaucracy

- We will work with partners wherever possible to make the best use of available resources
- We will continuously review the effectiveness of the strategy in consultation with stakeholders.

7.0

IDENTIFICATION OF KEY THEMES & PRIORITIES

We have identified six key themes where we intend to prioritise our actions and focus our resources.

- Older, Disabled and Vulnerable people
- Private Rented Sector
- Rural Homes
- Empty Homes
- Home Energy Efficiency
- Crime/Home Safety

These key themes or priority areas and the scope of our proposed interventions are considered in more detail below:

7.1 Older, Disabled & Vulnerable People

Older, disabled and vulnerable people often live in the worst housing conditions and lack the resources and support to improve their living conditions and quality of life.

The following measures are aimed at assisting this group:-

NB where the need for grant assistance is identified, homes will be brought up to the Decent Homes Standard as a minimum.

Decent Home Grant will be available to vulnerable households for works of repair or improvement to make their home Decent. Works may include repair and renovation, replacement of obsolete kitchens and bathrooms, heating upgrades and thermal insulation measures. Households must be in receipt of an income related benefit to qualify.

Home Repair Assistance Grant will continue to be available to elderly, disabled or otherwise vulnerable households for more minor works of repair, improvement and/or adaptation and will include target hardening and home energy efficiency measures.

Delivery of both these grant schemes will be undertaken by our partner Home Improvement Agency; Walbrook Care & Repair.

A new 'Healthy & Warm Scheme', will target the elderly, disabled and other vulnerable households and will operate in partnership with the local Primary Care Trust and Social Services. The scheme will enabling health and social care professionals to refer vulnerable households to the Council for assistance. Eligible households will receive a home health check and assistance where required through the existing home energy efficiency schemes and the

HRA grant programme. The aim of the scheme will be to help take vulnerable households out of fuel poverty and bring the property up to the Decent Home Standard.

Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant will continue to be available to assist the Disabled live independently in their own homes. From December 2005 families applying for a Disabled Facilities Grant to adapt their home for a disabled child will be exempt from the statutory means test.

Disabled Facilities Grant will be available to all tenures including owner/occupiers, private tenants, RSL tenants and Council tenants.

From February 2006, Disabled applicants will be able to access a new 'in house' agency service providing architect services and support for the service user from application through to completion. The service will be offered as an alternative to the existing Derbyshire County Council Architect Agency. Delivery of the full DFG service at a local level together with an improved suite of user information (including a DFG Guide in DVD format) will provide for a more responsive and user friendly service (new Delivery Targets are set out in section 10).

Capital Release Loans through the 'Houseproud Scheme', will be made available to Disabled Grant applicants with a high contribution towards the cost of the works.

7.2 Private Rented Sector:

The private rented sector offers some of the poorest housing conditions in the District and often houses vulnerable groups such as lone parents, the elderly and those on low incomes or benefits. We aim to promote the Decent Home Standard as a minimum standard through provision of education, enforcement and grant assistance.

The Council will continue its active involvement in the **East Staffordshire & South Derbyshire Landlords Forum** but will seek to improve attendance through liaison with a recognised Landlord Association. It is proposed to arrange a publicity or training event in 2006 to appraise members of the forthcoming changes under the Housing Act 2004.

Landlords will be invited to have accommodation accredited through a **voluntary landlord accreditation scheme**. The accommodation will be required to meet minimum standards set by the Council and will be inspected annually to ensure continued compliance. Accredited accommodation will bring added benefits to the landlord such as access to the Council waiting list and Rent Deposit Scheme.

Poor standards of accommodation will be dealt with through **enforcement action** and irresponsible landlords excluded from any beneficial schemes which may be otherwise available.

Landlord grants will be available to improve property for the benefit of the occupying tenant, priority will be given where the tenant is vulnerable or on a regulated tenancy. Eligible work will include the provision or improvement of standard amenities, heating and energy efficiency measures, fire safety and security measures.

Two tiers of assistance will be available;

- 1) 50% of the cost of the eligible work to a maximum of £10K where the landlord agrees to charge a fair market rent (set by the rent officer).

- 2) 100% of the cost of the eligible work to a maximum of £20K where the landlord agrees to charge an affordable rent (equivalent to average RSL rent).

In all cases grants will be subject to a 5 year grant condition period, requiring the property to be maintained in a decent condition and let at the agreed rent level. Nomination rights will also apply where practicable.

Empty Property Grants will be available to renovate long term empty property for let. Landlords will receive grant for 50% of the cost of the eligible works and will be subject to a 5 year grant condition period. Qualifying property should have been empty for a minimum of 12 months and must meet the Decent Home Standard on completion.

A Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) will be introduced from April 6th 2006. HMO's comprising three or more storeys and occupied by five or more persons (comprising at least two households), with shared facilities such as bathrooms, WC's or kitchens will be required to apply to the Council for a licence to operate. Certain self contained blocks of flats, which have been provided by conversion before 1st June 1992 are also included.

The Licensing Scheme will seek to ensure that:

- Landlords are fit and proper persons or employ agents that are.
- The standards of tenancy relations management and property management employed by the landlord or agent are adequate
- Vulnerable tenants can be protected
- High risk HMO's and their landlords are identified, so that health and safety measures can be targeted at the worst cases.

The Housing Act 2004 provides the Council with measures to ensure landlords cooperate with the licensing scheme. Where landlords are unwilling or unable to meet the required criteria the Council may step in to manage the property.

A Licence fee of £325 will be levied per HMO property, renewable after 5 years.

7.3 Rural Homes

Rural areas of the district are characterised by older housing stock with higher rates of disrepair and poor energy efficiency performance. The availability of property at a reasonable rent is limited and there is similarly a lack of affordable housing to purchase.

We will develop links with existing rural estates, some of which hold substantial portfolios of private rented stock to promote the provision of good quality, affordable, rented accommodation in rural villages. Estates will be encouraged and assisted, where appropriate, to bring property up to the **Decent Home Standard**.

The Council will seek to identify empty or disused rural property, which may be acquired through voluntary or compulsory purchase, for renovation or redevelopment in conjunction with an RSL partner.

Rural private landlords will be encouraged to bring property up to the Decent Home Standard. Financial intervention such as provision of a **Landlord Grant** will be offered where the occupying tenant is classed as vulnerable and/or the tenancy is regulated. Alternatively, an **Empty Home Grant** may be offered to new or existing landlords, to renovate empty property for let on a five year, conditional basis.

The promotional caravan will be used to promote **Home Energy Efficiency Schemes** and provide support and advise to outlying rural villages on a regular basis.

7.4 Empty Homes

Empty property represents a wasted resource and results in lost council tax revenue, which would otherwise benefit the community. We will continue to operate our Empty Homes Strategy and a specific **Empty Home Grant**;

Grant Assistance will be offered to owners purchasing property, which has been empty for a minimum of 1 year, where the property is in such a bad state of repair that it is not financially viable for them to renovate it without assistance. This grant can provide valuable assistance to first time buyers with limited resources and will contribute towards the need to provide affordable housing on the district. The grant is flexible and also permits renovation of the property for letting subject to a 5 year condition period, requiring it to be let at a fair market rent set by the Rent Officer.

A range of enforcement tools such as 'enforced sale', 'compulsory purchase' or 'empty property management orders' will be utilised for problematic long term empty property where it has been abandoned or the owner is unwilling to take reasonable steps to bring the property back into use.

Empty Property Management Orders are to be introduced when Part 4 of the Housing Act 2004 comes into force in April 2006. The order will enable the Council to take over the management and letting of problematic, long term empty or abandoned property where the owner is unwilling to bring the property back into use or where the owner cannot be traced.

7.5 Home Energy Efficiency

The Council is committed to achieving the Government's aims to reduce harmful CO2 emissions and to reduce fuel poverty, which results in potential ill health effects.

The Council will continue to encourage householders to take up the Government funded home energy efficiency '**Warmfront**' scheme, by assisting with distribution of publicity leaflets to potentially eligible households.

We will continue to support and fund one or more home insulation schemes in partnership with the main energy providers. The existing '**Heatstreets**' Scheme is part funded by Powergen and offers home insulation measures to all private sector households within our target parishes. Where successful, the 'Heatstreets' scheme will be extended parish by parish across the district on a three year rolling programme. It is anticipated that 400 households per year will be insulated under the scheme.

We propose to use the promotional caravan throughout the year to provide education, advise and to promote energy saving schemes to the wider district audience. We particularly aim to promote home energy efficiency to households in the more rural and isolated areas of the district.

We will seek to promote energy conservation 'good practise' through the specification of high standards of insulation and energy efficient heating systems in all grant schedules of work.

Further details of the full programme of home energy conservation work is available in the Council's **Affordable Warmth Strategy 2006**.

7.6 Crime/Home Safety

We will continue to support the Crime and Disorder Partnership and help fund initiatives to provide 'target hardening' measures for vulnerable people and victims of crime. The 'Safer Homes' handy person van currently operates in the district, installing security measures in eligible homes, helping to reduce crime and fear of crime.

The **Child Home Safety Project** delivered in partnership with the CVS, provides for the installation of home safety measures in vulnerable households (i.e. stairgates, smoke/CO detectors, window/cupboard locks etc.) The project assisted 51 households in 2005/06 and we intend to continue our support in 2006/07.

Basic target hardening measures will be routinely included in all grant funded work for older, disabled or vulnerable households.

7.7 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 applicant's interest in the original dwelling, including reasonable incidental expenses. The relocation grant shall be subject to means test and 5 year condition period.

House Renovation Grants

Full Home Renovation Grants ceased to be available in 2003 and this will continue to be Council Policy for the foreseeable future with the following exceptions;

Help for First Time Buyers

First time buyers purchasing pre 1980 property, which is unfit or in serious disrepair, may be assisted with the costs for essential repairs/improvements. The level of assistance will be determined by a means test, up to a maximum of £10,000. A five year condition period will apply.

Emergency Renovation Grant: This will be available to make a property fit for habitation in exceptional cases, where there is an element of risk to the health and safety of the owner/occupier. Such cases will be considered on their individual merits and will be subject to a full test of resources.

Other 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.

Information and Advise

We intend to provide an alternative range of support measures for non-vulnerable owner/occupiers as follows:

- A Home Maintenance Guide will be available to homeowners free of charge
- Advise and information on the Council's Website

Loans

Equity Release Loans for home owners are now available through Walbrook Care & Repair and the Home Improvement Trust. Equity 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.

PART 3

IMPLEMENTATION & DELIVERY

8.0

Delivering Assistance

- Our main priorities for assistance will be met through a combination of education, enforcement, loan assistance and traditional grant assistance.
- The grant assistance that we propose to make available in 2006/2009 is set out below and summarised in section 9.
- An 'Implementation Plan' to achieve our objectives is detailed in section 10 together with target timescales.

8.1 HOME REPAIR ASSISTANCE GRANT

Key Outcome: Older, disabled or vulnerable owner/occupiers and private tenants assisted to live independently in their own homes.

Home Repair Assistance Grants are delivered on the Council's behalf by Walbrook Care & Repair our partner Home Improvement Agency.

Qualifying Works:

- Minor internal and external repairs,
- Minor improvements,
- Minor adaptations
- security measures,
- energy efficiency measures

Eligibility:

Over 60 years old or disabled and in receipt of an income related benefit.
(not available to Council or RSL tenants)

Maximum Amount:

Up to £2,500 will be routinely available

(A grant of up to £5,000 may approved in exceptional circumstances subject to agreement by the Agency and the Private Sector Housing Manager).

Fees & Charges

All reasonable fees incurred ie Building Regulation fees may be included in the grant up to the maximum amount.

Grant Conditions:

The grant is non contributory (ie 100% of the costs of the work are funded by the grant)

No more than two separate applications can be made in any three year period.

There is no grant condition period or binding conditions on completion.

8.2 HEALTHY & WARM SCHEME

Key Outcome: Older, disabled or otherwise vulnerable persons assisted to achieve affordable warmth in their homes.

Qualifying Works:

- Package A
- Thermal insulation measures
- Heating provision/upgrade
- Minor repairs, improvements and adaptations (referral for HRA grant)

Package B

- home health check/advise
- Free low energy lightbulbs & thermometer

Eligibility:

All private sector owner occupiers and tenants (excludes council & RSL tenants) will qualify for Package B

Private sector owner occupiers and tenants scoring 50 points or more (see separate eligibility form at annex 2) will qualify for package A & B.

Maximum Amount:

Package A

Up to £5000

Package B

3 low energy lightbulbs and 1 thermometer per household

Fees & Charges

All reasonable fees incurred ie Building Regulation fees may be included in the grant up to the maximum amount.

Grant Conditions

The grant is non contributory (ie 100% of the costs of the work are funded by the grant)

No more than two separate applications can be made in any three year period.

There is no grant condition period or binding conditions on completion.

8.3 EMPTY PROPERTY GRANT:

Key Outcome: long term empty property returned to use and contributes towards providing affordable housing for owner/occupation or letting.

Qualifying Works:

- Major external and internal repairs
- Major & minor improvements
- Energy efficiency measures
- Home security measures
- Any other work to meet the Decent Home Standard

Eligibility:

Property has been empty for a minimum of 1 year prior to application (proof required ie council tax exemption)

Maximum amount:

50% of the cost of the qualifying works to a maximum of £15,000

Fees & Charges:

The Council will levy a fee of 10% of the approval sum

All reasonable fees and charges incurred in the scheme may be included up to the maximum amount.

Grant Conditions:

A 5 year grant condition period will apply (the grant will be registered as a local land charge)

The grant is conditional upon:

- Completion of the work to the satisfaction of the Council within 12 months of approval
- For owner/occupiers the property will be their main or only residence for the duration of the grant condition period
- For landlords the property will be available for letting for the duration of the grant condition period
- The property will be let at a fair market rent as recommended by the rent officer.
- The property will be maintained in a 'decent condition' for the duration of the grant condition period
- The property will be adequately covered by 'Buildings Insurance' for the duration of the grant condition period

8.4 FIRST TIME BUYER ASSISTANCE:

Key Outcome: making unfit property more affordable for first time buyers with limited resources, by assisting with the costs for essential repairs/improvements.

Qualifying Works:

- Major external and internal repairs
- Major & minor improvements
- Energy efficiency measures

- Home security measures
- Any other work to meet the Decent Home Standard

Eligibility:

First time buyer(s) who are/have purchased eligible property within the last 6 months.
(First time buyer status determined by standard credit check)

Eligible property is any property built before 1980.

Maximum Amount:

The provision of grant is subject to a test of resources calculation.

The maximum amount payable is £10,000

Fees & Charges:

A fee of 10% of the approval sum will be levied by the Council

All reasonable fees incurred in the scheme of works will be included.

Grant Condition:

A 5 year grant condition period will apply (the grant will be registered as a local land charge)

The grant is conditional upon:

- Completion of the work to the satisfaction of the Council within 12 months of approval
- the property will be the applicants main or only residence for the duration of the grant condition period
- The property will be maintained in a 'decent condition' for the duration of the grant condition period
- The property will be adequately covered by 'Buildings Insurance' for the duration of the grant condition period

8.5 LANDLORD GRANT:

Key Outcome: Decent, affordable property provided for letting.

Qualifying Works:

Works which benefit the occupying tenant will be included and structural works arising from the failure of the landlord to repair and maintain the property will not. The property must meet the Decent Home Standard on completion. Qualifying works will include:

- Thermal insulation and energy efficiency measures
- Heating provision/upgrades
- Kitchen and /or bathroom replacement
- Fire safety (structural or measures)
- Security measures

Eligibility:

New or existing landlords may apply. Landlords who already own rented property accredited by the Council will receive priority.

Landlords who have been subject to enforcement action with 5 years of application will be refused without reservation.

Maximum amount:

Tier 1) 50% of the cost of the eligible work to a maximum of £10,000 where the landlord

agrees to let the property at a fair market rent set by the rent officer.

Tier 2) 100% of cost of the eligible works to a maximum of £20,000 where the landlord agrees to let the property at an affordable rent (equivalent to average RSL rent)

Fees & Charges:

A fee of 10% of the approval sum will be levied by the Council

All reasonable fees incurred in the scheme of works will be included.

Grant Conditions:

- Completion of all works to make the property decent must be completed to the satisfaction of the Council within 12 months of approval
- the property will be available for letting for the duration of the grant condition period
- The property will be let the agreed rate for the duration of the grant condition period.
- The property will be maintained in a 'decent condition' for the duration of the grant condition period
- The property will be adequately covered by 'Buildings Insurance' for the duration of the grant condition period

8.6 EMERGENCY RENOVATION GRANT:

Key Outcome: Vulnerable owner/occupiers assisted with major repairs and homes made decent where there is a risk to the health and safety of the occupants.

Qualifying Work:

- Major external and internal repairs
- Major & minor improvements
- Energy efficiency measures
- Home security measures
- Any other work to meet the Decent Home Standard

Eligibility:

The applicant must score 100 points or more under the Renovation Grant Priority Points System at annex1.

The applicant must have owned the property and occupied it as their only or main residence for a minimum of 3 years prior to application

Maximum Amount:

The provision of grant is subject to the standard test of resources calculation.

The maximum amount is £20,000

Fees & Charges:

A fee of 10% of the approval sum will be levied by the Council

All reasonable fees incurred in the scheme of works will be included.

Grant Conditions

A 5 year grant condition period will apply (the grant will be registered as a local land charge)

The grant is conditional upon:

- Completion of the work to the satisfaction of the Council within 12 months of approval

- the property will be the applicants main or only residence for the duration of the grant condition period
- The property will be maintained in a 'decent condition' for the duration of the grant condition period
- The property will be adequately covered by 'Buildings Insurance' for the duration of the grant condition period

8.7 DECENT HOME SCHEME: (Availability subject to Regional Housing Board funding)

Key Outcome: Non decent homes occupied by vulnerable private sector households made decent.

Qualifying Works:

- Minor internal and external repairs,
- Major and minor improvements,
- security measures,
- energy efficiency measures
- any other work to meet the Decent Home Standard

Eligibility:

**Vulnerable owner/occupiers or private tenants in receipt of an income related benefit.
(not available to Council or RSL tenants)**

Maximum Amount:

The maximum amount is £5,000

Fees & Charges

All reasonable fees incurred ie Building Regulation fees may be included in the grant up to the maximum amount.

Grant Conditions:

**The grant is non contributory (ie 100% of the costs of the work are funded by the grant)
No more than two separate applications can be made in any three year period.
There is no grant condition period or binding conditions on completion.**

Application Process:

The grant is delivered by our partner Home Improvement Agency; Walbrook Care & Repair

8.8 DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT:

Key Outcome: Homes occupied by disabled people adapted to enable them to continue to live there with carers or independently, with more dignity.

Qualifying Works:

- to facilitate access by the disabled occupant to and from the dwelling,
- making the dwelling safe for the disabled occupant and others residing with him,
- facilitating access by the disabled occupant to a room used as the principal family room,

- facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing a room used for sleeping,
- facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for a room in which there is a lavatory,
- facilitating access by the disabled occupant to, or providing for a room in which there is a bath or shower and wash hand basin,
- facilitating the preparation and cooking of food by the disabled occupant,
- improving any heating system in the dwelling to meet the needs of the disabled occupant,
- facilitating the use by the disabled occupant of a source of power, light or heat by altering the position of, or providing an additional means of control,
- facilitating access and movement by the disabled occupant around the dwelling in order to enable him to care for a person who is normally resident in the dwelling.

Eligibility

Registered or registerable disabled

Max amount:

The grant is subject to a standard test of resources calculation (families of disabled children will be exempt from Dec 2005)

Maximum grant is £25,000

The Council will use discretionary monies to top up mandatory DFG to a maximum of £25K where the applicants contribution is greater than that determined by the test of resources.

Fees & Charges

Mandatory DFG will be subject to a 10% fee

All reasonable fees incurred ie Building Regulation fees may be included in the grant up to the maximum amount.

Grant conditions:

- eligible works are carried out in accordance with any specification the Council decides to impose
- Completion of the work to the satisfaction of the Council within 12 months of approval
- for the duration of the grant condition period, or such shorter period as his/her health and other relevant circumstances permit, the dwelling will be the only or main residence of and will be occupied by the disabled occupant.

OTHER ASSISTANCE:

8.9 HOUSEPROUD EQUITY RELEASE LOAN

The Houseproud Scheme will be operated by Walbrook Care & Repair on behalf of the Council using the Home Improvement Trust as the loan provider. A variety of loans are available the three main options are:

- capital release loan
- interest only loan
- capital and interest repayment loan

Key Outcome: An alternative means of funding (in the absence of grant assistance) to enable older owner/occupiers to carry out major repairs and improvements.

Qualifying Work:

- works of repair or improvement and adaptations where other funding is not available or appropriate

Eligibility:

Private Sector householders (freeholder or leaseholder) who are:

- aged 65 years or over
- under 60 years of age with a disability

Householders who may be eligible are:

- applicants not in receipt of benefit, who cannot otherwise afford the works
- applicants for grant where the cost of the works exceeds the maximum grant allowed
- grant applicants who wish to fund other reasonable, but non eligible works and cannot otherwise afford to do so.

Max Amount

The amount of loan offered will be based on the cost of the agreed works, the applicant's personal circumstances and equity available in their home. Loans typically vary from £3000 to 30% of the value of the property.

Fees & Charges:

- A schedule fee
- Administration costs of the loan provider
- Legal costs in confirming ownership and registering any relevant charges

Cost up to a maximum of £500 will be met by the Council.

Loan Conditions:

These will be attached to the loan by the loan provider, the Home Improvement Trust and may vary according to the type of loan product applied for. Houseproud loans will be secured as first charge on the applicants property

Conditions will be provided to the applicant in writing before any agreement to proceed with the loan is made.

Application Process:

The loan is facilitated by our partner Home Improvement Agency; Walbrook Care & Repair.

8.10 ENFORCEMENT

The Housing Act 2004 introduces a new statutory minimum standard for housing called the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS). This system is a risk based assessment, involving consideration of 29 separate hazards. Where hazards are identified in a property, scores are assigned to the hazards based on the risk they present to the potential occupant. Scores in excess of 1000 points will render a hazard 'category 1' requiring mandatory action. Scores below 1000 will render a hazard 'category 2' where action is discretionary.

A new range of enforcement action to deal with identified hazards under the Housing Act 2004 is available as follows:

- Improvement notice
- Prohibition order
- Hazard awareness notice
- Emergency remedial action*
- Emergency prohibition order*
- Demolition order*
- Clearance area*

(* not available where a property exhibits category 2 hazards only)

The Council will seek to reduce the number of homes in the district that pose a risk to the health and safety of the occupants (ie suffer from category 1 hazards) and will take enforcement action where necessary and appropriate in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy.

9.0

SUMMARY OF GRANT ASSISTANCE 2006/09

Grant	Purpose	Qualifying Criteria	Means Tested	Max Payable	Conditional	Repeat
Empty Property Grant	Renovate long term empty Property For owner Occupation Or letting	Empty for min. 12 mths	no	50% of eligible work (max £15K)	yes (5yrs)	1 per yr
First time Buyer Assistance	essential repair & upgrade	First time buyer/pre 1980	Yes	max £10K	Yes (5yrs)	1 only
Landlord Grant	Renovate to let or Upgrade Existing	no enforcement history	no	50%/100% (max £10K/£20K)	yes (5yrs)	1 per yr
Home Repair Assistance	essential staying put/repairs	over 60 yrs, disabled on benefit	no	max £5000	no	2 per 3yrs
Disabled Facilities Grant	Disabled adaptation	registered disabled	Yes	max £25K	Yes	unlimited
Emergency Renovation Grant	Major Repair	emergency 100 + priority points	Yes	max £20K	yes	emergency only
Healthy & Warm Grant	Energy efficiency measures	50 + priority points	yes	max £5K	no	1 per yr
Decent Home Grant	repairs/upgrade to DHS	vulnerable/ on benefit	yes	max £5K	yes	1 per yr

10.0

Implementation Plan 2006/07

PRIORITY AREA	TARGET DATE
<p>OLDER, DISABLED & VULNERABLE</p>	
<p>Action: 1) Implement Decent Home Grant Scheme in Partnership With Walbrook C & R</p>	<p>MAY 2006</p>
<p>2) Promote Healthy & Warm Scheme with key Health and Social Care workers;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Presentation to promote scheme at team meetings & local offices/surgeries ▪ issue Application leaflets to home help, district nurses, doctors surgeries, CVS, mental health & social workers ▪ Arrange leaflet drop with flu vaccination reminders 	<p>APR 2006</p>
<p>3) produce a video/dvd for disabled applicant providing step by step information on the Disabled Grant application process in partnership with Groundwork Erewash distribute through website/social services/customer support</p>	<p>JUN 2006</p>
<p>HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY</p>	
<p>4) Publish Affordable Warmth Strategy and Implement Action Plan</p>	<p>APR2006</p>

<p>RURAL HOMES</p>	<p>5) Arrange tour of outlying rural villages with Council publicity van to promote private sector housing services and energy efficiency schemes</p> <p>6) Identify one or more suitable rural empty properties to renovate for let to provide affordable rented accommodation or for demolition and redevelopment with RSL</p> <p>7) Arrange a series of meetings with Rural Estate landlords to promote the Decent Home Standard in rented property in rural villages.</p> <p>8) Devise and implement pilot scheme in partnership with one rural estate to achieve the Decent Home Standard in stock occupied by vulnerable tenants.</p>	<p>APR 2007</p> <p>APR 2007</p> <p>APR 2007</p> <p>APR 2007</p> <p>APR 2007</p>
<p>PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR</p>	<p>9) Survey Houses in Multiple Occupation on district and identify 'licensable' and 'non licensable' HMO's as defined by Housing Act 2004. Update database.</p> <p>10) Develop a licensing scheme for mandatory licensing of HMO's</p> <p>11) Publicise and implement scheme.</p>	<p>APR 2006</p> <p>APR 2006</p> <p>APR 2006</p>

12) Work with DASH (Decent & Safe Homes partnership) and Derby City Council to harmonise South Derbyshire Landlord Accreditation Scheme with Derby City Scheme. Relaunch scheme.	NOV 2006
13) Arrange Landlord Conference to engage local landlords and promote Landlord forum and accreditation scheme.	DEC 2006
CRIME REDUCTION/ HOME SAFETY	
14) Review standard grant schedules and upgrade to include a range of target hardening measures as standard	JUN 2006
15) Revise stairgate safety scheme with CVS to include other home safety measures (i.e. CO detectors/smoke detectors)	JUN 2006
EMPTY PROPERTY	
16) Review empty property register identify problematic empty property for operation of empty property management order.	SEPT 2006
17) Implement a programme of action to bring back problem empty property into use where the owner is reluctant or absent/unknown.	SEPT 2006
18) Mail out empty property questionnaire and offer grant assistance where appropriate to respondents	JUN 2006

OTHER ASSISTANCE		
19)	Produce new Home maintenance pack available free to homeowners (Hard copy and website)	NOV 2006
20)	produce an updated suite of information leaflets covering private sector housing services	NOV 2006
21)	update website to provide full information on private sector housing services	NOV 2006

PART 4

MEASURING PERFORMANCE

11.0

KEY STANDARDS

A key element in ensuring delivery of our Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy is performance management. Service delivery is measured by national Best Value Performance Indicators and local performance indicators. Information on housing renewal activity and performance indicators is reported to the Council's Housing & Environmental Services Committee through the service plans, bi annually.

11.1 NATIONAL BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Indicator	Description
BVPI 62**	Proportion of private sector unfit dwellings Made fit or demolished as a result of council action
BVPI 64	Number of private sector vacant dwellings returned Into occupation as a result of council action

** This indicator is currently suspended due to the repeal of the fitness standard by the Housing Act 2004. It is anticipated that a replacement indicator relating to HHSRS or the Decent Home Standard will be introduced in 2006.

11.2 LOCAL PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

EP1	Percentage of Service Requests responded to in 5 working days (%)
PSH13	Percentage of customers rating service as 'good' or 'excellent' (%)
PSH14	Percentage of grant budget spent (%)
PSH15	Number of Non Decent homes occupied by vulnerable, made 'decent' (no. of homes)
PSH 16	Nomination rights secured through grant activity (No. units/)

Disabled Facilities Grant indicators:

PSH1	total number of DFG referrals received in the period
PSH2	Total Number of DFG referrals completed in the period
PHS3	Total number of minor work referrals
PHS4	Average waiting time for minor works completed in the period
PHS5	Average waiting time for DFG completed in the period Private sector (enquiry to completion)
PHS6	Public sector (enquiry to completion)
PHS7	Average waiting time for Social Services Private Sector (enquiry to referral)
PHS8	Public sector (enquiry to referral)
PHS9	Average waiting time for SDDC Private Sector (referral to completion)
PHS10	Public Sector (referral to completion)
PHS11	Average waiting time from enquiry to referral (pending cases)
PHS12	Average waiting time whilst on SDDC books for approved cases

11.3 Service Standards:

- We aim to respond to enquiries and requests for service within 5 working days
- Service standards for grants are contained within each grant procedure.
- Summary procedures and target timescales for grants are contained in our information leaflets and on the council website.

11.4 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 customer feedback questionnaire at annex 3).

12.0

Consultation, Review & Appeals

This strategy has been developed and informed by;

- the South Derbyshire House Condition & Energy Efficiency Survey 2004 and the South Derbyshire Housing Market & Needs Study 2002
- Housing Strategy 2004/09
- Core Strategic Forum Event 2005; where several of the priority areas for the Strategy were explored with a range of stakeholders including elected members and representatives from the PCT and Health Authority, Voluntary Organisations, Private Landlords, Housing Associations and other partner organisations.

Further consultation will include;

- Briefing to all Councillors
- General public consultation via the website
- Specific detailed consultation with Southern Derbyshire & Derbyshire Dales PCT, partner Housing Association, Social Services, CVS, Age Concern, Local Landlords and letting Agents.

Responses will be sought on whether the basis of the strategy is sound and the proposed interventions relevant, appropriate and proportionate to the needs of the district.

We will review the strategy annually to ensure its continued relevance and publish any significant revisions.

It is anticipated that the strategy will be fully redrafted in the third year to incorporate the findings of the subsequent house condition and energy survey.

APPEALS

Appeals concerning the operation of this strategy document shall be considered by an appeal panel consisting of the Head of Environmental Services and Private Sector Housing Manager. The purpose of the panel is to ensure consistency of decisions and consider the merits of individual or unique cases.

Appeals must be submitted in writing and detail the circumstances and specific ground on which the appeal is based. Appeals will only be permitted on the following grounds:

- The strategy has been incorrectly applied
- The case in question is exceptional and justifies an exception to the rules or parameters set out in the strategy document.

Appeals will not be considered on the grounds that the appellant disagrees with the spirit or meaning of the rules or parameters set out in the strategy document and the Council's Formal Complaint procedure should be followed in such cases.

Appeal submissions will be considered within 14 days of receipt and the appellant will receive a written response, giving reason(s) for the decision made.

