
REPORT TO:	HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 7
DATE OF MEETING:	16 th MARCH 2006	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 2006	REF:
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: CS02

1.0 Recommendations

- 1.1 That Members approve the draft Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2006.
- 1.2 That Members agree the proposed range of grant assistance detailed at section 8 of the strategy document.
- 1.3 That Members approve the proposed Implementation Plan for 2006/07 as detailed in section 10 of the strategy document.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To seek Members approval of the proposed Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2006 (attached at Annex 1), which supersedes and consolidates two previous documents; the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2003 and the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2004 and reflects forthcoming changes arising from the Housing Act 2004.

3.0 Detail

- 3.1 The Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 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 existing Private Sector Renewal Policy 2003 approved by the Committee on 13th March 2003 and related strategy document, agreed on 8th January 2004 require revision to reflect recent House Condition and Energy Efficiency Survey information and the significant legislative changes arising from the new Housing Act 2004.

3.3 The Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2006 identifies our priorities to promote and support good quality, affordable housing in the private sector, in the following key areas:

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

3.4 It is proposed to target these priority areas with a range of interventions, including better information and advice, licensing and enforcement, Capital Release Loans and specific grant assistance.

3.5 The proposed package of grant assistance is particularly aimed at providing 'decent' housing conditions for the vulnerable and promoting affordability.

3.6 A new Decent Home Grant will compliment the existing Home Repair Assistance Grant, Emergency Renovation Grant and Healthy & Warm Referral Scheme and secure 'Decent Home' standards and affordable warmth for our most vulnerable residents across the district.

3.7 The introduction of a new two tier system for Landlords Grants is intended to promote affordable rented accommodation. Landlords will have the opportunity to access a higher level of assistance in return for setting rent at RSL level for the duration of the grant condition period.

3.8 Similarly, the introduction of 'First time buyer's assistance' will, subject to means test, provide funding for major repairs which may otherwise make a property too costly for young people, trying to access the lower end of the housing market.

3.9 The proposed range of grant and loan assistance is described in Section 8.0 and summarised at section 9.0 of the strategy document.

3.10 Planned actions to implement the strategy are detailed at Section 10.0.

4.0 Financial Implications

4.1 The interventions proposed will utilise the existing Housing Renewal Capital Programme (£800,000 per annum including the Disabled Facilities Grant allocation).

4.2 A bid for additional capital (up to £600K) to fund additional specified initiatives to deliver 'decent Homes' for vulnerable people has been submitted to the Regional Housing Board. The outcome of the bid will be announced in February 2006.

4.3 A fee income of 10% will be returned on all grants delivered in house.

5.0 Community Implications

5.1 The purpose of this range of measures is to provide targeted assistance where it is most needed in the private sector, based on the best information available at this time and consultation with a range of stakeholders. The strategy document will be subject to annual review and will be open to public comment and consultation

through the Council's website, to ensure it remain appropriate and relevant to the needs of South Derbyshire residents.

6.0 Conclusions

6.1 Members are requested to approve the draft strategy document and proposed work programme with a view to commencing activities from 1st April 2006. Progress will be tracked and reported to members quarterly via an improved range of local performance indicators.

7.0 Background Papers

Draft Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2006.

