

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of Development and Regeneration  (Introduced by the Executive Member for Economic Development & Regeneration)	Executive Cabinet	24 May 2007

## VARIATION OF THE HOME REPAIR AND ADAPTATION GRANTS SCHEMES IN CHORLEY

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To seek approval for arrangements for the delivery of home repair grants for the next three years.

### 1. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The proposal fits well with the priorities set out in the Local Area Agreement. In particular it supports the Healthy Communities and older people block and the Enterprise and growth block. It also contributes substantially to reducing the carbon footprint of the borough.

### 2. RISK ISSUES

The report contains no risk issues for consideration by Members.

### 3. BACKGROUND

In mid 2003 government introduced the Regulatory Reform Order, which allowed for local discretion and choice in the allocation and application of grants to assist the private sector in maintaining and improving property. The Council is obliged to publish a policy to set out the grants available. The document attached to this report is intended to replace the current policy and to guide the work of officers for the next three years.

This new policy statement reflects the conclusions of the stock condition survey carried out in 2004; the priorities identified under the Unfitness, Housing Health & Safety Rating System; the Decent Homes criteria; the findings of the government's English House Condition Survey published in September 2006; the establishment of a Home Improvement Agency as a delivery mechanism and experience gained over the last three years

### 4. Proposals.

The prime responsibility for maintaining private sector property rests with the owner, but the Council will wish to ensure that the stock as a whole is maintained and improved to meet modern standards. In particular, elderly or vulnerable households may need assistance in order to keep property at an acceptable standard or to meet special needs. In addition it is vital to improve the energy efficiency of older housing particularly when occupied by less well off households.

4.1 The following schemes are proposed to deal with these issues over the next three years. With immediate effect, there will be four schemes available to residents of Chorley as follows:

1. **Home Repair Assistance (Energy) Grants**. These grants are aimed at households who fail to qualify for the government funded Warm Front grants and give a more basic standard of insulation than is delivered through the Warm Front scheme. Nevertheless, these grants have delivered substantial reductions in carbon usage and made a real difference to the lives of many local people. The grants are delivered through a private sector partner – Quality Services Group – and administered by the Home Improvement Agency.
2. **Home Repair Assistance (Repairs) Grant**. These grants will be available to vulnerable households (defined in the attached policy statement) to assist with the cost of repairs affecting the health and safety of the occupants. The grant is a maximum of £8,000 and the grants are delivered through the Council's Home Improvement Agency – Staying Put South Lancashire.
3. **Disabled Facilities Grant**. These statutorily available grants are for the adaptation and improvement of housing to meet the needs of disabled persons. The terms of the grant are dictated nationally and the work required is specified by Occupational Therapists. The local administration and delivery of the grant is carried out by Staying Put South Lancashire on behalf of the Council.
4. **Handyperson Scheme**. This scheme is administered by Staying Put South Lancashire on behalf of the Council and is available to elderly homeowners for minor repair work. The homeowner makes a small (£10) contribution towards the costs. It is primarily concerned with safety issues and with repairs that, if neglected, may lead to serious disrepair.

4.2 These proposals maintain a wide range of assistance, particularly targeted to the most vulnerable individuals in the community and encourage energy efficiency. They protect the interests of those households who are most at risk and recognise the changed financial climate in which the Council must operate.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES**

5. There are no HR implications to these proposals.

#### **COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE**

6. There are no financial implications to these proposals beyond the capital budgets already approved.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

7. That the draft Housing Renewal Grant Policy for 2007 – 2010, which sets out proposals for the next three years in respect of discretionary and mandatory grants to assist vulnerable households to maintain, adapt and improve their homes, be approved for consultation purposes.

## REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

8. To ensure that an effective spectrum of House Renovation and Improvement grants is maintained, protecting vulnerable groups, assisting in maintaining the housing stock and promoting energy efficiency.

**JANE MEEK**  
**DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION**

There are no background papers to this report.

<b>Report Author</b>	<b>Ext</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Doc ID</b>
Roger Bailey	5711	08.01.07	ADMINREP/REPORT