

# BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

## REPORT TO CABINET

7 JUNE 2016

### REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

#### AMENDMENT TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL AND DISABLED ADAPTATIONS POLICY

##### **1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet approval to amend the Private Sector Housing Renewal and Disabled Adaptations Policy (Appendix 1) to reflect the new Corporate Priorities.

##### **2 Connection to Corporate Plan / Other Corporate Priority**

- 2.1 By assisting residents to remain in their own homes as long as possible, this Policy contributes to the following Corporate Priorities;

- Supporting a successful economy;
- Helping people to be more self-reliant; and
- Making smarter use of resources.

##### **3 Background**

- 3.1 The Council's current Private Sector Housing Renewal and Disabled Adaptations Policy together with the Bridgend Standard for Adaptations and Assistance was approved by Cabinet on 1st. September 2015. This was developed having regard to the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002. This legislation gave local authorities a wide ranging power to prescribe the type of assistance they provide, and the terms and conditions associated with that assistance. Local authorities can provide grants, loans, equity release, labour or any form of assistance to maximise improvements in private sector housing to meet local circumstances. However, Councils cannot exercise these powers until the policy is approved and published.
- 3.2 Disabled Facilities Grants to adapt properties for people with disabilities are mandatory. All other types of assistance are discretionary.
- 3.3 As required under Welsh Government guidance, the existing policy is based on local evidence of need, and aligns with wider local and national strategic objectives. The Authority's Local Housing Market Assessment, Stock Condition Survey and

review of adaptation services have identified the need to provide a range of different grants and assistance to tackle identified problems in the County Borough such as housing disrepair, empty properties, area regeneration, poor conditions in the private rented sector and home energy efficiency, as well as targeting vulnerable clients, particularly older and disabled persons.

- 3.4 The need to update the Private Sector Housing Renewal and Adaptation Policy is in recognition of the Authority's need to support the new Corporate Priorities and meet our obligations under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

#### **4 Current situation / proposal.**

- 4.1 Fast Tracked Low Cost Adaptation (Point 5.1.1 of Appendix) – It is proposed that where works are less than £5,000 the Authority deems the cost of the work to be reasonable and practicable and will provide a DFG which will be processed more efficiently. To enable adaptations to be delivered more efficiently the Authority will deem recommendations acceptable from an Authority's appointed Occupational Therapist (OT) or Trusted Assessor.

- 4.2 Healthy Home Assistance and Comfort Safety and Security grant (Point 5.15 of Appendix) - the eligibility criteria for both these grants has been simplified to reflect the needs of applicants and to streamline the process, and meet the aims of the new Corporate Priorities and the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

- 4.3 Domestic Abuse and Domestic Violence Grant (Point 5.1.12 of Appendix) – it is proposed to amend the title of this grant to Target Hardening Grant (THG) and to amend the information on the grant to reflect its intended purpose;

“The purpose of this grant is to assist in meeting the costs of responding to Domestic Abuse and Domestic Violence where ‘target hardening’ of properties has been identified to enable a person experiencing domestic abuse or domestic violence to remain in their home”

- 4.4 Other Assistance – The current Policy highlights other potential areas that Bridgend CBC would seek to assist and signpost potential applicants to. Such assistance is being offered by the Council and therefore, is not something to be included in a Policy.

#### **5 Effect upon Policy Framework and Procedure Rules.**

- 5.1 The proposals described above will implement the Council's Local Housing Strategy, and achieve a balance between meeting mandatory duties, providing services to vulnerable clients, and contributing to Welsh Government and corporate objectives, within available resources.

## **6 Equality Impact Assessment**

- 6.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken on the proposed Private Sector Housing renewal Policy, and in particular, its relevance to the Council's public equality duties and potential impact on protected equality characteristics. It has determined that the Policy will have no negative impact on protected equality characteristics.

## **7 Financial Implications.**

- 7.1 Funding for the existing grants is identified in the Council's capital programme as Housing Renewal / Disabled Facilities Grants. Grants can only be awarded up to the level of available funding within any financial year.

## **8 Recommendation**

- 8.1 Cabinet is recommended to approve the Private Sector Renewal and Disabled Adaptation Policy, as appended at Appendix 1.

**P A JOLLEY**

**CORPORATE DIRECTOR- OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES**

**17 May 2016**

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### **Background documents:**

Equality Impact Assessment for Private Sector Housing Renewal and Disabled Adaptations Policy 2016