

Report to Portfolio Holder for Public Protection

Subject: Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance Policy 2023

Date: 27th March 2023

Author: Food, Health and Housing Manager

Wards Affected

All wards

Purpose

To approve the amended Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance Policy 2023

Key Decision

Not a key decision

Recommendation(s)

THAT:

- 1) The amended Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance Policy 2023 (**see appendix A**) is approved in order to enhance the services available to eligible residents.
- 2) The new Housing Assistance Grant conditions 2023 are adopted for use to explain the terms of the grants (**see Appendix B**).
- 3) The existing Disabled Facilities Grant 2017 conditions remain unchanged and are retained for use (**see appendix C**)

1 Background

1.1 The Better Care Fund (BCF) has been used by Government since 2013 to distribute funds to Local Authorities and the NHS for health and care related services. The BCF is allocated to upper-tier authorities by

Government and part of the allocation is ring-fenced for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) and passed onto District Councils. Nottinghamshire County Council distributes the BCF upon receipt of a proposed plan of expenditure.

1.2 For 2022/23 Gedling Borough Council was allocated £1,189,210 from the BCF to spend on mandatory disabled facilities grants and associated grants and assistance the Government website advises the same allocation will be received in 2023/24. The Council currently has a Private Sector Housing and Assistance Policy from 2017 which defines the basis of the grant awards to residents in the borough. This report seeks approval to adopt a new updated Private Sector Housing and Assistance Policy 2022

1.3 Key changes to the policy are summarised below:

- Increasing the Top-up to mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant from £10,000 to £20,000 in line with Nottinghamshire borough and district councils
- Inclusion of clause 14.11 in relocation and assistance grants to only fund the physical removal costs if net equity of more than £20,000 is received from the sale of the existing property. This brings the policy in line with Nottinghamshire borough and district councils.
- Introduction of new dementia adaptations grant of up to £2,500 for minor home adaptations for householders living with dementia
- Revised household income thresholds for applicants for the Housing Assistance (discretionary Warm Homes on Prescription Grant) and increasing the grant limit from £5,000 to £8,000.

2 Proposal

That:

2.1 The amended Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance Policy 2023 (**see appendix A**) is approved in order to enhance the services available to eligible residents.

2.2 The new Housing Assistance grant conditions 2023 are adopted for use to explain the terms of the grants (**see appendix B**).

2.3 The Mandatory and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant Conditions 2017 remain unchanged and are retained for use to explain the terms of

the grants (see appendix C).

3 Alternative Options

- 3.1 Retain the existing Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance Policy from 2017, and do not amend the policy to incorporate the changes described in the background section. This will not enhance the services available to eligible residents and will limit the ability to be able to spend the sizeable budget for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants and discretionary assistance.
- 3.2 Develop an alternative Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance policy to incorporate alternative proposals. The proposals outlined in the Policy at Appendix A have been developed in conjunction with other Nottinghamshire Local Authorities with the aim of delivering a consistent service across the County.

4 Financial Implications

- 4.1 The BCF allocation 2023/24 is advised by Government to be as the previous year which is £1,189,210 and the service is fully funded by the BCF allocation from central Government via Nottinghamshire County Council. Expenditure for this service will be accommodated within the approved budgetary provision.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The policy subject to this report sets out the mandatory and discretionary assistance the council is able to provide in accordance with the legal provisions set out in the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002.

6 Equalities Implications

- 6.1 Overall the proposed policy will have a positive impact on disabled residents, older people and families with young children who are deemed eligible for assistance. Further information is available in the Equalities Impact Assessment at Appendix D.

7 Carbon Reduction/Environmental Sustainability Implications

- 7.1 The revisions to the Housing Assistance (discretionary Warm Homes on Prescription Grant) will increase the cost of works that can be assisted and increase access for eligible households through increasing the income thresholds for grant applicants. This has the potential to improve more homes with household measures. The most common hazards that are addressed through this grant include excess cold and dampness and

common remedial works include improved more efficient heating systems, insulation and double glazing. These improvements can lead to some minor reductions in household carbon emissions. The scale of reductions is small due to the limited number of households that can be supported from the funding available.

8 Appendices

- 8.1 **Appendix A** – Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance Policy
- 8.2 **Appendix B** – Mandatory and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant Conditions
- 8.3 **Appendix C** – Housing Assistance Grant Conditions
- 8.4 **Appendix D** – Equalities Impact Assessment of the Private Sector Housing Grants and Assistance Policy 2023

9 Background Papers

- 9.1 None

10 Reasons for Recommendations

- 10.1 To enable the Council to deliver the mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant Service and associated Discretionary Housing Grants and Assistance.

Statutory Officer approval

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Chief Financial Officer

Approved by:

Date:

On behalf of the Monitoring Officer