

To: Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board

On: 13 March 2018

Report by: Acting Director of Development & Housing Services

Heading: Private Sector Housing Grant Investment Programme 2018/19

1. Summary

- 1.1 On 2 March 2018 the Council approved a report entitled 'Non Housing Capital Investment Programme 2018/19 - 2020/21' which includes funding provision for capital and revenue Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) expenditure for 2018/19.
 - 1.2 Based on the Council budget approval and taking account of the most up to date expenditure projections, this report updates the programme requirements for the period 2018/19 to support owner participation on a range of programmes.
 - 1.3 There is a requirement to manage PSHG capital and revenue resource in a flexible manner in terms of the drawdown of funds, to reflect the timing of the settlement of final accounts associated with owners in the Housing Investment Programme.
 - 1.4 There are funds held in reserve to support owners involved in the Orchard Street Housing Renewal Area tenement refurbishment project, as noted by the Housing and Community Safety Policy Board on 14 March 2017, and for any increased programme requirements that may be identified.
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2. Recommendations

- 2.1. It is recommended that the Policy Board:
 - (i) approve the Private Sector Housing Grant Investment Programme for the period 2018/19 as set out in appendix 1.

3. **Background**

- 3.1 The Private Sector Housing Grant supports a range of services to private sector homeowners. This includes Disabled Adaptation grants, support costs for Care & Repair Renfrewshire and support for homeowners involved in Council Housing Investment Programmes involving common works carried out as part of ongoing external works programmes.
- 3.2 Appendix 1 sets out the proposed programme for 2018/19 showing proposed expenditure based on present resource availability of £1.32M as approved by the Council on 1 March 2018.

The key elements of the proposed programme currently are as follows:-

(i) **Adaptation Grants (Assistance to older and disabled owners)**

The Council provides grant to assist owners with adaptations to make dwellings suitable for a member of the household who is disabled. Responsibility for determining the strategy for support for disabled adaptations across all tenures (excluding Housing Associations) transferred to the Renfrewshire Health & Social Care Integration Joint Board with effect from 1 April 2016.

The Council is required by legislation to provide a minimum of 80% grant support to homeowners referred by HSCP, Occupational Therapy Services. Demand for adaptation grants continues to grow with an increase in referrals noted during 2017/18 which is likely to continue in 2018/19. An allowance of £724,000 to support the delivery of private sector adaptations is proposed in Appendix 1, however, flexibility will be required within the overall Private Sector Housing Budget should demand further increase.

Bridgewater Housing Association (Care & Repair Renfrewshire) have recently successfully tendered to continue to manage private sector adaptations and small repairs from 1 November 2017, for a period of three years with the option to extend for a further two years.

(ii) **Housing Investment Programme and other projects**

Since achieving compliance with the Scottish Housing Quality Standard (SHQS) in April 2015, there has been an ongoing requirement to ensure our housing stock continues to be maintained at this standard. The Council is also required to ensure that all stock achieves the minimum energy rating under the Energy Efficiency Standard for Social Housing (EESH) by the first milestone of 31 December 2020.

The Housing Investment Programme is therefore focussed on common works in blocks of mixed ownership and accordingly the PSHG programme will continue to support future external improvement works in mixed tenure blocks and offer grants to homeowners involved in these programmes.

An allowance of £457,000 is proposed to support grants to homeowners. As noted within this report, uncertainties around the exact timing of projects and the application of grants to owners will require programme flexibility to be maintained within this and future years.

The Local Housing Strategy 2016-2021 sets out the requirement to consider options for a partnership initiative to tackle the issue of disrepair in tenement flats which are in private or multi-tenure ownership. Proposals for such an initiative will be brought to a future meeting of this Board and are likely to require financial support from PSHG, however, it is anticipated this will be accommodated within the existing budget allocation.

(iii) Salaries

Salaries for staff engaged on private sector investment within the Owner Services Team are funded through this budget. An allowance of £107,000 is included, reflecting the structure within the staff grouping responsible for delivery of the programme.

Renfrewshire Council continues to jointly fund a pilot project in partnership with Shelter Scotland and West Dunbartonshire Council to participate in an Empty Homes Initiative which, within Renfrewshire, focuses on making contact with owners who have longer term vacant property to investigate the reasons behind the property lying empty and consider strategies to bring these properties back into use. An allowance of £22,000 has been included to part fund a post of Empty Homes Officer until 31 March 2019, with funding likely to be required in future years to extend the term of this post.

(iv) Support to the Private Rented Sector /Miscellaneous Fees

An allowance is included to fund the Private Landlord Forum and fees associated with the Council's partnership with Landlord Accreditation Scotland who provide training for private landlords and letting agents throughout the year and other related miscellaneous events.

The Council hosted an information event in November 2017 attended by over 150 landlords and agents to advise on pending legislative changes affecting the private rented sector.

- 3.4 The nature of the Private Sector Housing Investment Programme means that flexibility is required to adjust spend between projects during the financial year for a number of reasons, for example because of differences between the estimated and actual grant required once the test of resources is applied to individual owners, slippage in projects, difficulties securing the participation of some owners, increased demand for private sector adaptations to ensure that full spend is achieved and thus best use is made of the resources available.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** The PSHG programme for 2018/19 totals £1.320 million and will be monitored as part of the Council's capital monitoring process.
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None
3. **Community Planning** –
Community Care, Health & Well-being – Improving housing conditions and neighbourhoods

Jobs and the Economy – investment in the refurbishment of housing stock
4. **Legal** - None
5. **Property/Assets** – Improving the condition of private sector housing
6. **Information Technology** - None
7. **Equality & Human Rights** - The recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. The significant investment detailed in Appendix 1 of the report will benefit owners in the long term. Equality implications will continue to be considered and mitigated as part of the implementation of the Investment Plan and these actions will be regularly reviewed and monitored.
8. **Health & Safety** - None
9. **Procurement** –
10. **Risk** - None
11. **Privacy Impact** - None
12. **COSLA Policy Position** – None

List of Background Papers

- (a) Report to Housing & Community Safety Policy Board on 14 March 2017 – Private Sector Housing Investment Programme 2017/18
- (b) Report to Housing & Community Safety Policy Board on 15 March 2016 – Private Sector Housing Investment Programme 2015/18

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Development & Housing Services for inspection by the public for the prescribed period of four years from the date of the meeting. The contact officer within the service is Ian Mackinnon, Mixed Tenure Manager, 0141 618 5842, ian.mackinnon@renfrewshire.gov.uk.

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APPENDIX 1**PROPOSED PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING PROGRAMME 2018/2019**

Category	2018/2019
Adaptation Grants	£514,000
Care and Repair – Revenue Support - Contracted	£210,000
Capital Programmes – Owners Grants	£457,000
Capitalised Salaries	£107,000
Empty Homes initiative	£22,000
Miscellaneous Costs (including support for the private rented sector)	£10,000
Total	£1,320,000