

**To: Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board**

**On: 12 March 2019**

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**Report by: Director of Communities, Housing and Planning Services**

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**Heading: Private Sector Housing Grant Investment Programme 2019/20**

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## **1. Summary**

- 1.1 On 28 February 2019 the Council approved a report entitled 'Non Housing Capital Investment Programme 2019/20 – 2021/22' which includes funding provision for capital and revenue Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) expenditure for 2019/20.
  - 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 2019/20 to support owner participation on a range of programmes.
  - 1.3 As noted by the Policy Board on 13 March 2018, there are funds held in reserve to support owners involved in the Orchard Street Housing Renewal Area tenement refurbishment project, and for any increased programme requirements that may be identified.
  - 1.4 There is a requirement to manage PSHG resources 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.
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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 2019/20 as set out in Appendix 1
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### **3. Background**

- 3.1 The Private Sector Housing Grant supports a range of services to private sector owners. This includes Disabled Adaptation grants, support costs for Care & Repair Renfrewshire, support for the pilot project to pay 'Missing Shares' 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 2019/20 showing proposed expenditure of £1.263m based on present resource availability of £0.863m as approved by the Council on 28 February 2019, supplemented with £0.4m which will be drawn down from reserves.

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 the number of referrals for adaptations continuing to put strain on the available budget. An allowance of £737,000 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 increase further.

The Bridgewater Housing Association (Care & Repair Renfrewshire) contract to manage private sector adaptations and small repairs in Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire Councils continues through financial year 2019/20.

#### **(ii) Housing Investment Programme**

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.

Up to 200 private homeowners in the Lochfield area are currently being offered grant assistance to participate in Council external improvement programmes. Energy efficiency grants are also being made available to eligible households through the Scottish Government's HEEPS:ABS (Home Energy Efficiency Programme Scotland: Area Based Schemes) programme.

An allowance of £249,000 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 with this and future years.

(iii) **'Missing Shares' Pilot Project**

On 21 August 2018 the Policy Board approved an allowance of up to £100,000 for the development of a "missing shares" pilot project, initially open to owners of older traditional tenement flats. This pilot will assist owners in a block to get essential common repairs done where they are having difficulty receiving contributions from other owners who are unable or unwilling to pay their share.

The Council is agreeing to pay up to £10,000 per missing share for eligible works and will seek to recover these and associated administrative costs from non paying owners.

The Owner Services Team will be promoting this scheme to factors, landlords and private owners across Renfrewshire to encourage owners to make use of this project and the pilot will be reviewed as to its efficiency and effectiveness, with a report being brought to Board at a later date with recommendations for its future delivery.

(iv) **Salaries**

Salaries for staff engaged on private sector investment within the Owner Services Team are funded through this budget. An annual allowance of £114,000 is included, reflecting the structure within the staff grouping responsible for delivery of the programme and including anticipated pay settlements.

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 2020 and further support for this project is likely to be required going forward.

Private Sector Housing Grant is also funding one of four Energy Advocate posts within the Energy Management Unit, providing information on non Council grants and loans to private homeowners and an allowance of £31,000 has been included for this post.

(v) **Support to the Private Rented Sector /Miscellaneous Fees**

An allowance of £10,000 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. Six training events took place in Paisley and Renfrew during 2018/19 and the Council also hosted a landlord forum on 27 November 2018 attended by over 100 landlords and agents.

- 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 resource available.

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## **Implications of the Report**

1. **Financial** - The PSHG programme for 2019/20 totals £1.263 million
2. **HR & Organisational Development** – None
3. **Community/Council Planning** –
  - **Our Renfrewshire is thriving** – the support offered to private owners will help to improve housing conditions, making Renfrewshire a great place to live
  - **Our Renfrewshire is well** – the support provided to older and disable owners will help enable people to live healthier, for longer, in their own homes
  - **Reshaping our place, our economy and our future** – investment in the refurbishment of housing stock will create jobs and contribute to the economy
4. **Legal** - None
5. **Property/Assets** - None
6. **Information Technology** - None

## **7. Equality & Human Rights**

- (a) The Recommendations contained within this report have been assessed in relation to their impact on equalities and human rights. No negative impacts on equality groups or potential for infringement of individuals' human rights have been identified arising from the recommendations contained in the report. If required following implementation, the actual impact of the recommendations and the mitigating actions will be reviewed and monitored, and the results of the assessment will be published on the Council's website.

## **8. Health & Safety – None**

## **9. Procurement – None**

## **10. Risk - None.**

## **11. Privacy Impact - None.**

## **12. COSLA Policy Position – N/A**

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### **List of Background Papers**

- (a) Report to Housing & Community Safety Policy Board on 21 August 2018 – Scheme of Assistance for private owners and missing shares pilot project
- (b) Report to Housing & Community Safety Policy Board on 13 March 2018 – Private Sector Housing Investment Programme 2018/19
- (c) Report to Housing & Community Safety Policy Board on 14 March 2017 Private Sector Housing Investment Programme 2017/18

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](mailto:ian.mackinnon@renfrewshire.gov.uk)

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## PROPOSED PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING PROGRAMME 2019/2020

Category	2019/2020
<b>Adaptation Grants</b>	£527,000
<b>Care and Repair – Revenue Support - Contracted</b>	£210,000
<b>Capital Programmes – Owners Grants</b>	£249,000
<b>Missing Share Tenement Pilot Scheme</b>	£100,000
<b>Capitalised Salaries</b>	£114,000
<b>Empty Homes initiative</b>	£22,000
<b>Energy Advocate Post</b>	£31,000
<b>Miscellaneous Costs (including support for the private rented sector)</b>	£10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>£1,263,000</b>