
To: Communities, Housing and Planning Policy Board

On: 18 May 2021

Report by: Director of Communities & Housing Services

Heading: Private Sector Housing Investment Programme 2021/22

1. Summary

- 1.1 On 4 March 2021 the Council approved a report entitled 'Non Housing Capital Investment Programme 2021/22 – 2023/24' which includes funding provision for capital and revenue Private Sector Housing Grant (PSHG) expenditure for 2021/22.
 - 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 2021/22 to support owner participation on a range of programmes.
 - 1.3 As noted by the Policy Board on 12 March 2019, there are funds held in reserve to support owners involved in the Orchard Street Housing Renewal Area tenement refurbishment project and for future Housing Regeneration areas.
 - 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 and the renewal of the contract for private sector adaptations.
 - 1.5 The contract for Private Sector Adaptations expires on 31 March 2022 and Communities & Housing Services are working closely with Health & Social Care Partnership to procure Care & Repair services for the next few years.
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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 2021/22 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 2021/2022 showing proposed expenditure of £1.39m.
- 3.3 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 annual allowance of £550,000 to support the delivery of private sector adaptations has been the available grants budget over the past few years. Due to Covid pandemic and lockdown last year the number of job completions and grant drawdown slowed in 2020/21 and as a consequence £200,000 has been carried forward into year 2021/22. The total budget proposed in Appendix 1 for financial year 2021/22 is therefore £750,000.

Bridgewater Housing Association (Care & Repair Renfrewshire) currently manage private sector adaptations and small repairs services in Renfrewshire and East Renfrewshire Councils and this contract is due for renewal in April 2022.

(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).

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.

Energy efficiency grants also continue to be made available to eligible households through the Scottish Government's HEEPS: ABS (Home Energy

Efficiency Programme Scotland) programme and the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) scheme.

An allowance of £150,000 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 is to 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 Council identified over 430 tenemental blocks and sent 2,700 Missing Shares leaflets to all private owners in Paisley, Johnstone, Renfrew and factors who had property circa:1919 or earlier to promote the scheme.

Following enquiries, the Council has issued 33 Missing Share application packs. In the last year the Council has approved Missing Share payments for 5 projects. Three projects have now completed and a total of £10,000 has been paid out in missing shares.

This initiative is in the early stages and to date a number of owners have been in contact with the Council to advise that they are trying to progress repairs projects and they will propose to submit applications for support as the project develops.

The Private Sector Housing Programme for 2021/22 includes an allowance of £90,000 for missing shares.

(iv) **Salaries**

Salaries for staff engaged on private sector investment within the Owner Services Team are funded through this budget. An annual allowance of £120,000 is included, reflecting the structure within the staff grouping responsible for delivery of the programme and including agreed 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 £25,000 has been included to part fund the post of Empty Homes Officer until 31 March 2022 and it is noted that 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 £35,000 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 information and training events undertaken in Partnership with Landlord Accreditation Scotland who provide training for private landlords and letting agents throughout the year. These events are currently delivered online.

- 3.3 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.

Implications of the Report

1. **Financial** – The PSHG programme for 2021/22 totals £1.390 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 disabled 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.
13. **Climate Risk** – Grant funding to private homeowners to support their participation in housing investment programme works will help to improve energy efficiency in privately owned properties, which will contribute to residents using less energy, thus reducing emissions.

List of Background Papers

- a) Report to Housing & Community Safety Policy Board on 12 March 2019 – Private Sector Housing Investment Programme 2019/20
- b) Report to Housing & Community Safety Policy Board on 21 August 2018 – Scheme of Assistance for private owners and missing shares pilot project
- c) Report to Housing & Community Safety Policy Board on 13 March 2018 – Private Sector Housing Investment Programme 2018/19

The foregoing background papers will be retained within Communities & 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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PROPOSED PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING PROGRAMME 2021/2022

Category	2021/2022
Adaptation Grants	£750,000
Care and Repair – Revenue Support - Contracted	£210,000
Capital Programmes – Owners Grants	£150,000
Missing Share Tenement Pilot Scheme	£90,000
Capitalised Salaries	£120,000
Empty Homes initiative	£25,000
Energy Advocate Post	£35,000
Miscellaneous Costs (including support for the private rented sector)	£10,000
Total	£1,390,000