

REPORT TO CABINET OR P.D.G. OR COUNCIL

REPORT OF: David Price, Environmental Health Service Manager

REPORT NO: ENV584

DATE: 16 May 2013

TITLE:	Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy	
KEY DECISION OR POLICY FRAMEWORK PROPOSAL:	Consideration of the broad principles of the policy	
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: NAME AND DESIGNATION:	Cllr Teri Bryant Good Housing	
CONTACT OFFICER:	Anne-Marie Coulthard	
INITIAL IMPACT ANALYSIS: Equality and Diversity	Carried out and Referred to in paragraph (7) below Not applicable at this stage	Full impact assessment Required: Will be required at later stage
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT:	This report is publicly available via the Your Council and Democracy link on the Council's website: www.southkesteven.gov.uk	
BACKGROUND PAPERS	Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-2018 – Policy Outline Proposed Private Sector Enforcement Policy Empty Homes – Policy Considerations	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 That the PDG consider the broad principles for the direction of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy.

2. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 2.1 To provide the PDG with the opportunity to comment on the broad principles proposed for the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy stems from the wider South Kesteven Housing Strategy 2013-18.

This policy sets out the structure of assistance and support that the Council provides to support home owners and private tenants. The aim is to raise housing standards, support and enable independent living and improve the supply and quality of housing in the private sector.

It also includes how we will approach our enforcement activities and the issue of empty homes within the district.

The attached document provides details of the principles of the new policy which is currently under development.

4. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 Authorities have a general power to give financial assistance for home repair, improvement and adaptation. In accordance with the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 authorities are required to give assistance under these powers in accordance with a published policy. The guidance provides that assistance should be a mixture of loans and grants and targeted towards vulnerable households.

South Kesteven District Council must have a Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy in order to be able to provide assistance for private sector renewal. The principles suggested represent the best options to assist in private sector renewal in the foreseeable future.

5. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Budget is currently available for 2013/14 to deliver £300,000 of decent homes grants, £100,000 of empty homes grants and £500,000 (of which £289,717 is Government Grant) to deliver disabled facilities grants in the private sector.

In relation to financial assistance there will be future resource implications depending on the direction of the policy.

6. RISK AND MITIGATION

- 6.1 Risk has been considered as part of this report and any specific high risks are included in the table below:

Category Risk	Action / Controls
<i>Financial</i> – inadequate Capital available for grants/loans. Inability to meet demand for service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budget in place for 2013/14• Government grant provided for Disabled Facilities Grants• Budget monitoring in place• Recycle re-paid grants due to sale of property back into grant funding• Reduction in scope of grant allows more vulnerable customers to benefit
<i>Reputational</i> – increase adverse publicity and complaints.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Clear that grants are discretionary and funding is limited
<i>Strategic</i> – Deterioration in private sector stock condition. Vulnerable residents at risk from poor quality housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Offer financial assistance to the most vulnerable• Undertake enforcement of minimum standards in the private rented sector
<i>Regulatory</i> – Unable to provide assistance in private sector renewal without a policy. Reduction in grant funding could result in increased enforcement activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New policy to be in place• Review of enforcement capability within private sector housing team would be necessary

7. ISSUES ARISING FROM IMPACT ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Not applicable at this stage.

8. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The policy will have an impact on local communities by maximising the number of empty properties that are bought back into use thereby helping to mitigate the blight and antisocial behaviour which can be associated with them.

9. COMMENTS OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

- 9.1 At this stage there are no specific financial implications arising from this report however depending on the final policy agreed there will be financial considerations as a result. The report outlines the budget amounts agreed for 2013/14 of which any spend will need to be maintained within budget framework.

10. COMMENTS OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

- 10.1 Article 3 of the Regulatory reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 provides the power for local authorities to provide financial

assistance for home repair, improvement and adaptation. However, a local housing authority may not exercise the power conferred by Article 3 unless (Article 4):

- (a) they have adopted a policy for the provision of assistance under that article;
- (b) they have given public notice of the adoption of the policy;
- (c) they have secured that—
 - (i) a document in which the policy is set out in full is available for inspection, free of charge, at their principal office at all reasonable times;and
 - (ii) copies of a document containing a summary of the policy may be obtained by post (on payment, where a reasonable charge is made, of the amount of the charge); and
- (d) the power is exercised in that case in accordance with that policy

11. COMMENTS OF OTHER RELEVANT SERVICES

11.1 N/A

12. APPENDICES:

- Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-2018 – Policy Outline
- Proposed Private Sector Enforcement Policy
- Empty Homes – Policy Considerations