MANSFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL
PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY 2017-19

CONTENTS

1.0 Introduction .................................. 1

2.0 Background ................................... 1

3.0 Links to other corporate strategies .......... 2

4.0 Links to national and regional policy ........ 2

5.0 Strategy objectives ............................ 3

6.0 Improving the homes of vulnerable households .. 4

7.0 Bringing empty properties back into use .... 11

8.0 Increasing home energy efficiency/reducing fuel poverty .. 12

9.0 Appeals about decisions in individual cases .... 14

10.0 Comments about this strategy ............... 15

Appendix 1 – Grant Eligibility ....................... 16
1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Private Sector Housing service has both statutory duties and discretionary powers to offer help and financial assistance to improve private sector housing conditions in the district. The strategy has been developed with regard to local, regional and national priorities and available funding. This strategy will come into effect from April 2017.

1.2 The strategy will be reviewed annually and minor amendments to the policy can be approved by the delegated powers held by the Director of Communities.

1.3 Should new grant funds or other funding opportunities be secured by the Council for the delivery of housing related assistance during the period of the strategy which are not covered by this document, the assistance criteria and means of delivery can be approved using delegated powers held by the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

1.4 The strategy should be read in combination with relevant assistance policy documents in existence including the Disabled Facilities Grant policy, Decent Home Loan policy, Healthy Housing Grant Policy and other relevant policies in place.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 In July 2003, the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order 2002 came into force and fundamentally changed the legislation relating to grants that Councils could give to improve housing conditions in their areas. Apart from the duty to provide Disabled Facilities Grants, the Order repealed all of the previous legislation relating to grants and gave Councils a wider power to choose how they provide assistance and for what.

2.2 To be able to do this however, the Council must prepare and publish a Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy. Accordingly, this strategy sets out the basis on which the Council will provide assistance for improving private sector housing conditions.

2.3 The strategy also considers the financial limitations facing the authority with the absence of a specific private sector housing funding stream from the Department of Communities and Local Government. Any available resources, both new and existing, must therefore be effectively targeted and prioritised.
3.0 LINKS TO CORPORATE POLICY

3.1 This strategy contributes significantly to the Council’s corporate vision and priorities.

3.2 The Council’s vision is to maintain a safe and caring district where everyone can succeed. Improving the condition and safety of private sector housing stock in the district will help the Council to achieve its vision.

3.3 The Council’s vision will be realised through a set of priority areas around economic prosperity, quality of life and community safety. This strategy links to all three of these priorities:

- A thriving, vibrant and sustainable district
- Strong, safe and resilient communities
- A clean and welcoming environment

4.0 LINKS TO NATIONAL AND REGIONAL POLICY

4.1 This strategy links to the Sustainability and Transformation Plan (STP); a five year plan outlining the future of health and social care in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire with the aim of improving the health and wellbeing of local people and the finances of local services. ‘Housing and Environment’ is a key supporting theme within this plan with links to the Better Care Fund (BCF). The BCF is a programme spanning both the National Health Service and local government aimed at integrating health and social care. Housing has a key role to play in both agendas; through ensuring the provision of safe and suitable housing.

4.2 This strategy also reflects the priorities within the Nottinghamshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the related Nottinghamshire Housing & Health Delivery Plan. The strategy aims to improve health and wellbeing across the County and sets out the ambitions and priorities for the Health and Wellbeing Board. Housing plays a key role in this strategy in terms of housing support, supply, adaptations, standards, affordable warmth, homelessness, child poverty and specialist housing.

4.3 Housing also plays a key role in the Director of Public Health for Nottinghamshire’s Annual Report 2016 in relation to housing conditions, affordable warmth, housing supply, planning policy, Making Every Contact Count and engagement with communities.
5.0 STRATEGY OBJECTIVES

5.1 Housing is a wider determinant of health and wellbeing throughout our life course, and ensuring the population has appropriate housing will prevent many problems well in advance of the need for clinical intervention. Affordable and suitable, warm, safe and secure homes are essential to a good quality of life yet many homes in Nottinghamshire do not meet these criteria. This has a negative impact on health and wellbeing, drives health inequalities and places an unnecessary burden on public resources.

5.2 Some households are disproportionately affected by these housing factors, particularly older people and children, low income households (particularly those living in poverty), physically disabled households, and households living in rural areas. It is the intention of this renewal strategy therefore to target housing interventions and limited resources at those in most need.

5.3 Almost three quarters of the population nationally are owner-occupiers and many of these homes are in a poor condition. There is a higher rate of non-decent homes in the private sector (both owner occupied and private rented) in Nottinghamshire compared to the England average (31.1% compared to 25%). Most of the financial assistance within this policy is therefore targeted at the owner occupied sector however this is complemented by the advice and informal/formal enforcement interventions of the Private Sector Housing Service to address conditions in the private rented sector.

5.4 Generally speaking the health of older people, children and people with long term illnesses or disabilities is at greater risk from poor housing conditions. It is also true that:

- households living in poverty are more likely to live in poor conditions than those not in poverty;
- households in poverty living in the private sector (owner occupied and private rented) are more likely to live in homes in poor condition than those who live in social rented housing.

5.5 The principal source of data on housing conditions in the private sector in Nottinghamshire (and Mansfield) is a DASH 2006 stock condition survey which remains the most comprehensive data available. This suggested that:

- 30.5% of all homes in the private sector are non-decent (87,400);
- 8.2% of all homes have a Category 1 hazard (23,525).
5.6 Whilst there has been continuous improvement in housing conditions across all tenures (36.3% non-decent private homes in 2006 compared to 25% in 2011), conditions in the private rented sector have improved at the slowest rate. Pressure on household incomes, the increasing older population and house-building rates suggest that the rate of improvement will slow down. People are less likely to spend money maintaining or improving their home and government funding to improve housing conditions in the private sector ended in 2010. Most of the housing we live in today will be lived in for decades to come.

5.7 The objectives therefore of this strategy are:

- To improve and adapt the homes of vulnerable households;
- To reduce the number of private sector empty homes; and
- To increase home energy efficiency and reduce fuel poverty.

6.0 IMPROVING & ADAPTING HOMES OF VULNERABLE HOUSEHOLDS

6.1 In housing terms, vulnerable people are specifically defined by the Government as people who are in receipt of certain qualifying benefits (for example, income support, housing benefit, council tax benefit, child tax credit, working tax credit, guaranteed pension credit, to name a few).

6.2 Assistance to vulnerable households will be provided in the following ways:

- Disabled Facilities Grants
- Decent Homes Loan Assistance
- Handyperson & Preventative Adaptation Scheme
- Healthy Home Grants
- Child Home Safety assistance
- Hospital Discharge Assistance
- Assistive Technology Assistance
- Dementia Adaptation Grants

6.3 With the reducing availability and level of funds to assist residents, wherever practicable, the Council, with the exception of statutory disabled facilities grants, will generally offer non-statutory assistance as grants/loans that are recoverable through a land/property charge. This charge will be either wholly/partly recoverable on the sale or relevant disposal of the property within a condition period of 5 years from completion (unless stated otherwise). The availability of discretionary assistance will of course be subject to the availability of resources.
DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

6.4 A Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) is provided to adapt the home of a disabled occupant so that it meets their needs. It can include adaptations such as for example the provision of a stair lift and the removal of a bath and its replacement with a level access shower.

6.5 The assessment of whether an adaptation is needed is made by the Occupational Therapy Service at Nottinghamshire County Council. If an adaptation is required, Mansfield District Council will assess whether the work is reasonable and practicable to be carried out having regard to the age and condition of the property. Mansfield District Council will then administer the grant.

6.6 The DFG is a mandatory grant and the maximum amount at the time of writing this policy is £30,000. The Council will provide a discretionary top-up of up to £10,000 where the cost of works exceed £30,000 (including any ancillary charges such as architect costs). For schemes costing over £40,000, the applicant must apply to Nottinghamshire County Council for top-up assistance to make up the difference in costs prior to approval. The Council will cover the costs of any genuinely unforeseen/extra works post approval.

6.7 In line with Government regulations, a limited charge will be placed on adapted owner occupied properties which will be recouped where the property is sold or otherwise disposed of within 10 years of the grant works being completed and where the cost of the DFG exceeds £5,000. The limit of the maximum charge is set by Government and is currently £10,000.

6.8 The table below gives examples of grants and the respective charges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant</th>
<th>Land Charge</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£4,999</td>
<td>No charge</td>
<td>Below statutory level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£5,500</td>
<td>£500</td>
<td>A charge relating to the value above the £5,000 grant level will be placed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£6,000</td>
<td>£1,000</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£8,000</td>
<td>£3,000</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£15,000</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
<td>A maximum charge of £10,000 will be placed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>£30,000</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
<td>As above</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6.9 If the grant is subject to repayment conditions then the Council will take the following into account when asking for repayment:

a) The extent to which the recipient would suffer financial hardship if the grant was reclaimed;
b) Whether the disposal of the property was to enable the recipient to take up employment, or change the location of their employment;
c) Whether the disposal of the property is made for reasons of the recipient’s physical or mental health or wellbeing, or;
d) Whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient to live with, or near any person who will provide care for the recipient by reason of their disability.

6.10 Having considered all of these factors the Council must be satisfied that repayment is reasonable in the circumstances.

6.11 The land charge period will be a maximum of 10 years from the date certified by the Council as being the final completion date for the adaptation works.

DECENT HOMES LOAN ASSISTANCE

6.12 With a view to improving the condition of private properties within the district, the Council will work towards the Decent Homes Standard. Assistance will be made available in targeted areas to help make privately owned homes decent. Assistance in this form will be targeted at those private households affected by the programmed removal of Council-owned district heating schemes with a view to providing a new gas central heating system. In addition, consideration will be given to private owners requiring external wall insulation within areas where the Council are providing external wall insulation to public stock. In both instances, assistance will be subject to the availability of resources and local priorities at the time of application. Where alternative forms of funding for this work is available e.g. from government or other external sources, these should be explored prior to considering decent homes loan assistance.

6.13 A ‘decent home’ should be warm, weatherproof, have reasonably modern facilities and be in a good state of repair. It should also meet the current minimum housing standard and be free of category 1 hazards assessed under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

6.14 Finances do not currently permit tackling all failures under the decent home standard and the Council accepts that in some circumstances when assistance is offered (as per 6.12) it may only be possible to make
MANSFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL
PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY 2017-19

a property partially decent. In these situations priority will be given to works that address certain category 1 hazards.

6.15 Subject to the Council’s available resources, assistance will be given in the form of a non-statutory interest-free loan that is 100% recoverable through a property charge with HM Land Registry. This charge will be recoverable in full on the sale or relevant disposal of the property.

HANDYPERSON & PREVENTATIVE ADAPTATION SERVICE

6.16 The Handyperson & Preventative Adaptation Service (HPAS) is administered by Adult Social Care and Health at Nottinghamshire County Council. The service is designed to assist vulnerable older households with small repairs and to help prevent falls within the home. The scheme also aims to give people extra confidence when moving around the house by installing grab rails, stair rails, half steps. Referrals for this service are directed through the County Council Contact Centre and each district within Nottinghamshire contributes to the costs of the scheme via the Better Care Fund allocation.

HEALTHY HOME GRANTS

6.17 Healthy Home Grants will be available to remove some of the most serious hazards from owner occupied homes with a view to improving health and wellbeing. To be eligible, the owner of the property must be either over 50 and/or disabled and/or have children under 16 years of age (at the time of approval) living with them in the property as their main home. If applicants are in receipt of a means tested benefit they will not be required to contribute to the grant. If applicants do not receive means tested benefits they will be subject to a test of resources in order to calculate their contribution towards the grant. Grants will be placed as a local land charge and will be recoverable upon sale or relevant disposal of the property within a 5 year condition period on a sliding scale.

6.18 Healthy Homes Grants may be offered in combination with other forms of assistance including a Disabled Facilities Grant, a Warm Homes on Prescription (WHOP) grant, Hospital Discharge Assistance, a Child Home Safety grant or a Dementia Adaptation Grant and will be subject to a property assessment, eligibility checks and the availability of financial resources.

CHILD HOME SAFETY ASSISTANCE (Mansfield Pilot)

6.19 Unintentional injuries in and around the home are a major cause of death and disability among children under 5 years in England and are a source
of long term health issues, including mental health. An average of 62 children died each year between 2008 and 2012 (Office for National Statistics) with these injuries resulting in an estimated 452,200 visits to A&E departments (Department of Trade and Industry, 2002) and approximately 40,000 emergency hospital admissions among children of this age each year. In England, home-related injuries account for 8% of deaths of children aged 1-4 years (Office of National Statistics). The majority of these injuries are preventable.

6.20 In Mansfield, the rate of hospital admissions caused by injuries in children (0-4 years) per 10,000 resident population is 155.3 compared to the England average of 137.5. The highest rates of hospital admissions relate to the most deprived areas of the district with the highest levels of child poverty.

6.21 The National Child and Maternal Health Intelligence Network recommend that child safety interventions should prioritise the reduction of five causes of unintentional injuries among the under-fives. This grouping includes the most severe and preventable injuries including those that result in high death rates and the largest number of emergency hospital admissions:

- Choking, suffocation and strangulation
- Falls
- Poisoning
- Burns and scalds
- Drowning

6.22 To this end, the Council will develop a Child Home Safety pilot offering child home safety equipment to low income households (in receipt of a means tested benefit) with children under the age of 5 (primarily aged up to 2 years old) living in the property as their main home. Equipment will be provided subject to a child home safety risk assessment and eligibility check. A professional referral will also be required. The offer of assistance will be dependent upon the availability of resources.

HOSPITAL DISCHARGE ASSISTANCE

6.23 Unsafe and unhealthy home environments can undermine safe and sustainable hospital discharge. Hospital discharge assistance is available in cases where individuals are currently within a hospital setting and require certain works in relation to their home environment to expedite their safe discharge. Assistance will be offered to Mansfield residents only. Works will be considered on a case by case basis and will be subject to a professional referral and/or Hospital Discharge Coordinator/ASSIST referral and can include limited de-cluttering, deep-
cleaning, clearing of certain areas (e.g. kitchen/bathroom/living area),
gas installation checks/de-commissioning within the home to facilitate
safe access, food preparation, bathing and sleeping. Assistance will be
available to owner occupiers only who are in receipt of a means tested
benefit* and who are in hospital awaiting discharge at the time of the
referral. Assistance will not be means tested and the applicant’s property
must be occupied as their main residence. Works will be determined by
the Council and will be subject to a property assessment, eligibility
checks and the availability of resources.

6.24 Where alternative means of funding the required works are available
these should be explored prior to seeking Hospital Discharge Assistance.
Assistance may be offered in conjunction with other forms of discretionary
assistance including Warm Homes on Prescription assistance/advice,
Healthy Homes Grants and referral to the Handy Person Adaptation
Service (HPAS) where appropriate. Hospital discharge assistance will not
be available where works can be provided by the HPAS scheme e.g.
handyperson jobs and/or minor adaptations.

6.25 Hospital Discharge Assistance will be offered at the Council’s discretion
and will be subject to the availability of resources at the time of referral.

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE

6.27 Assistive technology includes equipment and systems that support
people to live safely and independently at home. Using sensors and
timers, the user and/or a carer is alerted to a potential health or safety
risk. By minimising potential risks the equipment can help people to
remain safe, secure and independent in their own home for longer.

6.28 Assistive technology (also referred to as tele-health and tele-care) can
have a positive impact and make a real difference to the service user’s
life. Some of the benefits include:

- accident prevention and promoting safety
- maintaining independence
- increased confidence and quality of life
- reassurance for users and their carer/family
- supporting carers to minimise stress and emotional demands
- reducing the amount of formal care required
- avoiding 24 hour care
- helping to monitor and identify areas where less/more support is
  required
- reducing length of hospital stay by speeding up hospital discharge
- delaying or removing the need for hospital admission.
6.29 A range of different types of assistive technology will be available through Assistive Technology Assistance, subject to an assessment, including:

- Lifeline units with mobile alarm units
- Falls detectors
- Bed occupancy sensors
- Chair occupancy sensors
- Smoke detectors
- Carbon monoxide detectors
- Natural gas detectors for gas cookers and fires
- Flood detectors for kitchens/bathrooms
- Property exit sensors
- Audible reminders/voice prompt units

6.30 Assistive Technology Assistance will be available to both owner occupiers and Council tenants living within the Mansfield district in order to prevent hospital admission/re-admission and to expedite hospital discharge. Some types of equipment will remain with the service user as their own and other types of technology will need to be returned to the Council if no longer required. Installation costs and monitoring charges apply depending upon the service users’ circumstances (see appendix for further details).

DEMENTIA ADAPTATION GRANT

6.31 Over 850,000 people in the UK are living with dementia, and this is set to rise to over a million people by 2021. In Nottinghamshire, the number of people with dementia is projected to increase considerably over the next 15 years as people live longer. Dementia Adaptation Grants are therefore available to provide minor changes to the home which may help the resident living with dementia to manage their surroundings – for example, from the use of colour and contrast to aid orientation in the home.

6.32 The grant will be available to residents within the Mansfield district with a clinically proven early diagnosis of dementia and is living in their own home. The scheme will provide a grant of up to £750 for minor adaptations designed to help the individual, and their carers, cope with the challenges of living with the condition. We will ask for a letter from your GP or specialist confirming that dementia has been diagnosed.

6.33 The grant may cover adaptations within the home such as:

- Replacing floor coverings that cause confusion or safety issues;
Replacing tiling or bathroom fittings (such as toilet seats and rails) to improve visual perception;

Changing cupboards to glass fronted doors, to enable recognition of where items are in the kitchen;

Changing lighting schemes to improve visibility around the home;

Installing noise reduction measures;

Ensuring gardens and paths are level and free from hazards.

6.34 The specification of works will be subject to a property assessment provided by either a specialist dementia care worker, occupational therapist, or other suitably qualified practitioner.

6.35 Dementia Adaptation Grants will not cover items that could be funded through a Disabled Facilities Grant or through Nottinghamshire Social Care, but can be used in addition to them.

6.36 Dementia Adaptation Grants will not be subject to a financial test of resources.

6.37 The provision of assistance will be dependent on the availability of resources at the time of enquiry.

7.0 BRINGING EMPTY HOMES BACK INTO USE

7.1 There are currently just under 955 private sector empty properties in the Mansfield district. Just over 635 of these have been empty for 6 months or more.

7.2 Empty homes are a wasted resource in a time when there is an affordable housing shortfall and demand for property generally is higher than supply. Additionally empty homes can be a magnet for criminal activity including vandalism and arson.

7.3 The Council’s Empty Property Officer is tasked with bringing private empty homes back to use through both informal and formal enforcement action. The return of empty homes vacant for more than 5 years remains a corporate priority and focus for action for the Council as well as responding to complaints about problematic empty homes having a negative impact upon communities.

7.4 The Council will explore all funding opportunities made available for bringing empty properties back into use. Potential funding sources may include finance made available through the Homes and Communities Agency. We will endeavor to work with our partners, including Registered
Providers, to deliver schemes which bring empty properties back into use and provide affordable housing in the district.

8.0 INCREASING HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY & REDUCING FUEL POVERTY

8.1 Fuel poverty in England is measured by the Low Income High Costs definition, which considers a household to be in fuel poverty if:

- they have required fuel costs that are above average (the national median level) and;
- were they to spend that amount they would be left with a residual income below the official poverty line.

8.2 The key drivers behind fuel poverty are:

- The energy efficiency of the property (and therefore, the energy required to heat and power the home);
- The cost of energy;
- Household income.

8.3 According to Department of Energy & Climate Change (DECC) statistics, 4,395 households in Mansfield are fuel poor which equates to 9.6% of all households in the district. These levels are higher than those for the County (9.4%).

8.4 Nationally, there are clear patterns of fuel poverty by tenure that reflect both the nature of the dwelling stock in each tenure, and household characteristics such as income. Levels of fuel poverty are considerably higher in the private rented sector (19 per cent of all households in this tenure are fuel poor). This tenure is also associated with poor energy efficiency ratings and relatively low incomes which are likely to be key drivers in the levels of fuel poverty.

8.5 Owner occupied households have equivalent levels of energy efficiency to the private rented sector but higher average incomes (approximately eight per cent of owner occupied households are fuel poor). Nationally, local authority homes and Registered Social Landlord (RSL) homes show similar levels of fuel poverty (12% in local authority properties and 10% in RSL properties). This is despite the low incomes of households in the social sector. This can be explained by the relatively high energy efficiency of these properties and smaller floor areas, both of which act to reduce the fuel costs protecting many households from fuel poverty.

8.6 The negative health impact of living in a cold home is widely evidenced and taking action to secure affordable warmth can reduce hospital
admissions, re-admissions and GP visits. Public Health England's 2016 Cold Weather Plan notes that winter weather has a direct effect on the incidence of heart attack, stroke, respiratory disease, flu, falls and injuries and hypothermia. The strongest link is between respiratory deaths and the cold. But because generally more people die from cardiovascular disease, cardiovascular illnesses and deaths account for a greater number of health problems.

8.7 NICE guidelines ‘Excess winter deaths and illness and the health risks associated with cold homes’, March 2015 explain that certain groups are particularly vulnerable to cold homes for example, if they spend a larger part of their time at home (the elderly, disabled, young children), increasing both the likely cost of heating and their potential exposure to an inadequately heated home. Others, such as people with respiratory conditions, or an increased susceptibility to respiratory infections, are also likely to be at increased risk of health problems caused by living in a cold home.

8.8 The Mansfield ‘Warm Homes on Prescription’ programme targets owner occupiers on low income at the greatest risk of harm in the private sector suffering from certain cold-sensitive health conditions. To this end, the Council is working in partnership with LAEP to deliver a ‘Warm Homes on Prescription’ programme for Mansfield based on a successful LAEP pilot in Derbyshire. LAEP is a non-statutory partnership of 20 Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire councils founded in 1996 of which the Council is a member.

8.9 Assistance offered through the pilot can include the following three elements, depending upon the circumstances of the occupant:

- Heating Improvements:
  - boiler repairs or replacement
  - new heating controls
  - insulation
  - draft proofing

- Make heating affordable:
  - reducing heating costs with tariff switching
  - increasing income using benefits checks
  - using heating efficiently – setting controls and timers

- Advice on the importance of keeping warm:
  - Cold worsens existing health conditions
MANSFIELD DISTRICT COUNCIL
PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY 2017-19

- Increase risk to those with respiratory, circulatory and mobility conditions
- Keep warm and safe
- Heat rooms to healthy temperate (18 – 21°C)

8.10 For the purposes of the programme, the eligible health conditions are:

- Atrial fibrillation/heart flutter
- Angina/coronary heart disease
- Heart Failure
- Peripheral arterial disease (PAD)
- Hypertension/high blood pressure
- Osteoporosis/brittle bones
- Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA)/mini stroke
- Asthma
- COPD
- Rheumatoid arthritis
- Diabetes
- Cancer

8.11 Assistance will be subject to a property assessment and an assessment of income/savings. Private rented properties will not be eligible for WHOP assistance for the physical improvement of properties i.e. new heating systems, however affordable warmth advice will be offered e.g. tariff switching, benefit maximization, heating controls. The Council may use informal/formal enforcement to secure energy efficiency improvements to rented properties through negotiation with the property owner.

8.12 WHOP will be in addition to the energy efficiency improvements the Council delivers through the provision of Decent Home Loans and Healthy Home Grants referred to above (for example, double glazed windows, loft/cavity/external wall insulation) as well as informal/formal enforcement in private rented properties.

8.13 The Council will explore all available funding opportunities, including those funding streams through the STP and BCF, and will endeavor to work with partners, including health partners, to deliver schemes which improve the energy efficiency of housing within the district.

9.0 APPEALS ABOUT DECISIONS IN INDIVIDUAL CASES

9.1 Appeals against the refusal of assistance will be considered in the first instance by the Private Sector Housing Manager. All appeals must be in writing and sent to
9.2 Appeals will only be considered on the following grounds:

- That the strategy has not been applied correctly, for example there has been a mistake in the application of the strategy to the specific case,
- That the case in question is somehow exceptional in a way that justifies an exception to the general strategy.

9.3 Appeals will not be considered on the grounds that the person disagrees with the strategy. However any written comments and complaints about the strategy will be considered by the Private Sector Housing Manager as outlined below in section 10.

10.0 COMMENTS ABOUT THIS STRATEGY

10.1 The Council welcomes comments and suggestions about its strategies as a way of ensuring that we provide the service people need but balanced against the priorities that the Council must deliver.

10.2 Comments and suggestions can be sent to the Private Sector Housing Manager at the address stated in paragraph 9.1 above. All comments will be carefully considered and you will receive a written reply within 14 days.
### APPENDIX 1 - GRANT ELIGIBILITY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance</th>
<th>DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT (DFG) Mandatory assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td>Mandatory DFG’s are provided to adapt the homes of disabled occupants so that it meets their needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligibility</strong></td>
<td>To be eligible for a DFG the work that is required must be necessary and appropriate to meet the needs of the disabled occupant. This is determined by an Occupational Therapist and then referred to the Council. The Council also has to be satisfied that the relevant work is reasonable and practicable to carry out having regard to the age and condition of the dwelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Eligible Work</strong></td>
<td>The work that can be carried out is work to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Facilitate access in and around the dwelling including access to the garden</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Facilitate the preparation and cooking of food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Improving the heating system to meet the need of the disabled occupant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Facilitate the use of a source of power, light or heating</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial Arrangements</strong></td>
<td>The maximum mandatory grant is £30,000. The Council will provide a discretionary top-up of up to £10,000 where the cost of works exceed £30,000 (including any ancillary charges such as architect costs). For schemes costing over £40,000, the applicant must apply to Nottinghamshire County Council for top-up assistance to make up the difference in costs prior to approval. The Council will cover the costs of any unforeseen works post approval. Except for where the grant is for the benefit of a child or young person, the applicant will be means tested and therefore the amount of grant may be less than the cost of work. The contribution must be paid by the client to their contractor direct upon satisfactory completion of work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Application</strong></td>
<td>Application for assistance is made using a DFG application form obtainable from the Private Sector Housing Service, Mansfield District Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Payment</strong></td>
<td>Payment is made directly to the contractor on satisfactory completion of the work. Applicants who have to contribute towards the cost of work will be expected to pay the contractor direct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conditions</strong></td>
<td>There is a five year grant condition period during which the owner must have an owner’s interest in the dwelling and intend to live within the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
dwellings as their only or main residence.

If the applicant receives compensation (related to the cause of the disability) which includes an allowance towards disabled adaptations following the completion of the work, the grant is repayable.

A limited charge will be placed on adapted owner occupied properties which will be recouped where the property is sold or otherwise disposed of within 10 years of the grant works being completed and where the cost of the DFG exceeds £5,000. The limit of the maximum charge is set by Government and is currently £10,000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance</th>
<th>DECENT HOMES LOAN ASSISTANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purpose</strong></td>
<td><strong>Discretionary Assistance</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To help bring properties in targeted areas up to the decent homes standard.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Eligibility | A decent homes loan is available to privately owned properties affected by the programmed removal of district heating schemes with a view to providing a new gas central heating system. In addition, consideration will be given to private owners requiring external wall insulation within areas where the Council is providing external wall insulation to public stock. In both instances, assistance will be subject to the availability of resources and local priorities at the time of application. Where alternative forms of funding for this work is available e.g. from government, these should be explored prior to considering decent homes loan assistance. |

| Eligible Work | Eligible work can include any work associated with the provision of a new central heating system or external wall insulation that is deemed necessary to help bring the property up to the decent homes standard. Assistance will be subject to a property assessment and agreed schedule of works provided by the Council. In some circumstances when assistance is offered it may only be possible to make a property partially decent. In these situations priority will be given to works to address category 1 hazards. |

| Financial Arrangements | A loan is available up to a maximum of £10,000 (including VAT and £1,000 contingency sum). Assistance will be offered subject to the availability of resources at the time of application. |

| Application | Application is made on a Decent Homes Loan application form to the Private Sector Housing Service, Mansfield District Council. |

| Payment | Payment is made direct to the contractor on satisfactory completion of |
the works. The Council will specify the contractor and works will be approved on the basis of the lowest quote unless a contract or framework is in place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loans will be placed as a legal charge on the property with HM Land Registry and will be repayable in full on sale or relevant disposal of the property. The property should remain in owner-occupation by the loan applicant until the property is sold or there is a relevant disposal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The loan is fully repayable if the applicant receives compensation relating to the works completed as part of the loan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A ten year period must pass following completion of the works before a subsequent loan application can be made to the Council.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance</th>
<th>HANDYPERSON &amp; PREVENTATIVE ADAPTATIONS SERVICE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td><strong>Discretionary Assistance</strong> To assist vulnerable older households with small repairs and to help prevent falls within the home. The scheme also aims to give people extra confidence when moving around the house by installing grab rails, stair rails and half steps. The scheme is operated by Nottinghamshire County Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>Elderly people aged 60 or over or disabled and who are owner-occupiers or private tenants.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible Work</td>
<td>Minor works of repair/improvement and minor adaptations to prevent negative impacts on health, safety and well-being.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Arrangements</td>
<td>There is no charge for adaptation work and up to £1,000 worth of adaptations can be supplied and fitted in a single job. The basic charge for handyperson jobs is £15 and applicants will be required to supply all material required for the job.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Applications are made via the County Contact Centre at Nottinghamshire County Council on 0300 500 80 80.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment</td>
<td>Payment is made direct to the contractor by Nottinghamshire County Council on completion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditions</td>
<td>None.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Assistance       | HEALTHY HOMES GRANTS  
Discretionary Assistance |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>To remove hazards from the home with a view to improving health and wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>Grants will be available to owner occupiers only. Occupants must be either over 50 and/or disabled and/or have children less than 16 years old living with them as their main residence. If applicants are in receipt of a means tested benefit* they will not be required to contribute to the grant. If applicants do not receive means tested benefits* they will be subject to a test of resources in order to calculate their contribution towards the grant. The applicant must have lived in the property for at least 2 years prior to approval.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible Work</td>
<td>Works will be determined by the Council using the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) during a whole property assessment. A schedule of works will be determined by the Council to remove Category 1 hazards (A-C) as a priority and then certain Category 2 hazards (D-E only, with the exception of the ‘excess cold’ hazard where only Category 1 hazards will be removed). Works to habitable areas of the property can be included only and any works relating to sheds, outbuildings, conservatories and gardens for example will be excluded from eligible work. It may not be possible to remove all hazards from the home due to the limitations of funding however the most serious hazards will be prioritised.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Arrangements</td>
<td>A grant is available up to a maximum of £10,000 (including VAT and £1000 contingency sum). Assistance will be offered subject to the availability of resources at the time of application.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Applications are made to the Private Sector Housing Service at Mansfield District Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment</td>
<td>Payment is made direct to the applicant’s contractor on satisfactory completion of the works and production of invoices. Any assessed client contribution will be payable by the applicant direct to their contractor upon satisfactory completion of works. The contract for the works remains between the applicant and their selected contractor. A minimum of 3 quotes will be required for the scheduled works and the grant will be approved upon the basis of the lowest quote. If the applicant chooses to select a different contractor that is not the cheapest, they can do so providing they pay the difference in price direct to their contractor on satisfactory completion of works. The Council will inspect the works on completion however cannot be involved in any disputes between the applicant and their contractor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditions</td>
<td>Grants will be registered as a local land charge on completion. Repayment of grant will be required within a 5 year condition period.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
where the property is sold, transferred or there is a relevant disposal. A sliding scale of repayment will apply:

- Breach within one year of the certified date, 100% of the grant will be repayable.
- Breach in the second year, 80% of the grant will be repayable.
- Breach in the third year, 60% of the grant will be repayable.
- Breach in the fourth year, 40% of the grant will be repayable.
- Breach in the fifth year, 20% of the grant will be repayable.

Repeat applications will not be considered until after a 5 year period has passed from completion of works.

The contract for the works will be between the grant applicant and their chosen contractor and the Council cannot be involved in any disputes between the applicant and their chosen contractor.

| Assistance | CHILD HOME SAFETY ASSISTANCE  
| Discretionary Assistance |
| Purpose | The Mansfield Child Home Safety pilot aims to deliver child home safety interventions that prioritise the reduction of five causes of unintentional injuries among the under-fives. This includes the most severe and preventable injuries including those that result in high death rates and the largest number of emergency hospital admissions:

- Choking, suffocation and strangulation
- Falls
- Poisoning
- Burns and scalds
- Drowning

The pilot will provide and install child home safety equipment to help prevent the above accidents and injuries including stair gates, cupboard locks, blind cleats, window restrictors, bath mats etc., subject to a child home safety risk assessment.

| Eligibility | The Mansfield Child Home Safety pilot is available to low income households (those in receipt of a means tested benefit) with children under the age of 5 living in the property as their main home. The pilot will be available to owner occupiers, council tenants and housing association tenants as well as those living in council-owned temporary accommodation. Equipment will be provided subject to a child home safety risk assessment and financial eligibility check. A professional |
referral will also be required. The offer of assistance will be dependent upon the availability of resources at the time.

Eligible work will be determined by a relevant professional specifically trained to complete a child home safety equipment. Child home safety equipment available as part of the scheme may include stair gates, cupboard locks, window restrictors, blind cleats, bath mats etc. and any other equipment identified as necessary as part of the risk assessment (subject to availability and resources).

Equipment will be provided and installed by the Council by trained operatives and is non-returnable.

Eligible work will be determined by a relevant professional specifically trained to complete a child home safety equipment. Child home safety equipment available as part of the scheme may include stair gates, cupboard locks, window restrictors, blind cleats, bath mats etc. and any other equipment identified as necessary as part of the risk assessment (subject to availability and resources).

Eligible work will be determined by a relevant professional specifically trained to complete a child home safety equipment. Child home safety equipment available as part of the scheme may include stair gates, cupboard locks, window restrictors, blind cleats, bath mats etc. and any other equipment identified as necessary as part of the risk assessment (subject to availability and resources).

Assistance will not be means tested however applicants must be in receipt of a means tested benefit. Proof of receipt will be required before works can begin. Assistance will be offered subject to the availability of resources at the time of application and subject to a child home safety risk assessment. Assistance cannot be offered retrospectively.

Referrals for the pilot will primarily be made to the Council’s Private Sector Housing Service from a professional e.g. Children’s Centre, the Council’s Parenting Practitioner, Environmental Health Officer (Housing), Social Worker. Repeat applications will be considered on a case by case basis subject to a risk assessment and review of any change in circumstances.

Payment of equipment and installation costs will be made by the Council on satisfactory completion of works.

Permission will be required from the property owner prior to provision and installation. On completion, the applicant is responsible for using equipment as per manufacturer’s instructions and as per any recommendations made in the child home safety risk assessment. Items are non-returnable and the applicant will be responsible for removal, making good and disposal when items are no longer required.

Hospital discharge assistance is available in cases where individuals are currently within a hospital setting (acute or community) and require certain works in relation to their home environment to expedite their safe discharge.

Assistance will be offered to Mansfield residents only and will be available to owner occupiers who are in receipt of a means tested benefit* and who are in hospital awaiting discharge at the time of the referral. The applicant’s property must be occupied as their main residence.

Works can include limited de-cluttering, deep-cleaning, clearing of specific areas (e.g. kitchen/bathroom/living area), gas installation checks/de-commissioning within the home to facilitate safe access, food preparation,
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Financial Arrangements</th>
<th>bathing and sleeping. Works will be determined by the Council and will be subject to a property assessment, eligibility checks and the availability of resources.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application</td>
<td>Assistance will not be means tested however applicants must be in receipt of a means tested benefit*.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payment</td>
<td>Works will be considered on a case by case basis and will be subject to a professional referral and/or Hospital Discharge Co-ordinator/ASSIST referral.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conditions</td>
<td>Approval of assistance will be on the basis of competitive quotes and payment will be made upon satisfactory completion of works. Assistance cannot be offered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Where alternative means of funding the required works are available these should be explored prior to seeking Hospital Discharge Assistance. Assistance may be offered in conjunction with other forms of discretionary assistance including Warm Homes on Prescription assistance/advice, Healthy Homes Grants and referral to the Handy Person Adaptation Service (HPAS) where appropriate. Hospital discharge assistance will not be available where works can be provided by the HPAS scheme e.g. handyperson jobs and/or minor adaptations. Repeat applications will be considered on a case by case basis subject to a property assessment and review of circumstances. Hospital Discharge Assistance will be offered at the Council’s discretion and will be subject to the availability of resources at the time of referral.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance</th>
<th>ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>Assistive technology includes equipment and systems that support people to live safely and independently at home. Using sensors and timers, the user and/or a carer is alerted to a potential health or safety risk. By minimising potential risks the equipment can help people to remain safe, secure and independent in their own home for longer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>Assistive Technology Assistance will be available to both owner occupiers and Council tenants living within the Mansfield district in order to prevent hospital admission/re-admission and to expedite hospital discharge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible Work</td>
<td>A range of different types of assistive technology will be available, subject to an assessment, including:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Lifeline units with mobile alarm units</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Assisted Technology Equipment

- Falls detectors
- Bed occupancy sensors
- Chair occupancy sensors
- Smoke detectors
- Carbon monoxide detectors
- Natural gas detectors for gas cookers and fires
- Flood detectors for kitchens/bathrooms
- Property exit sensors
- Audible reminders/voice prompt units

Assistive Technology equipment will be provided and installed by the Council and will also be monitored through the Council’s monitoring service.

### Financial Arrangements

Installation costs and monitoring charges apply depending upon the service users’ circumstances:

- **If applicants are in receipt of a means tested benefit**, provision of equipment and installation will be free of charge however ongoing monitoring charges will apply.
- **If applicants do not receive a means tested benefit**, there may be a charge for the provision of equipment and its installation and there will also be ongoing monitoring charges.
- For those people in a hospital setting in need of an urgent discharge, a charge for the unit and fitting will not be made, ongoing monitoring will be chargeable however.

### Application

Works will be considered on a case by case basis by the Housing Needs Service following an Assistive Technology assessment and referrals will be accepted either via self-referral or a professional referral including Hospital Discharge Co-ordinator, ASSIST/Housing Needs, Housing Officer or Environmental Health Officer (Housing) referral.

### Payment

See financial arrangements above in respect of provision, installation and monitoring. All payment terms and conditions will be outlined prior to installation.

### Conditions

- Some types of equipment will remain with the service user as their own and other types of technology will need to be returned to the Council if no longer required.
- Service users must use the equipment as per the manufacturer’s instructions and as per the assistive technology assessment recommendations.
Service users are responsible for payment of ongoing monitoring costs of any assistive technology provided.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assistance Purpose</th>
<th>MANSFIELD ‘WARM HOMES ON PRESCRIPTION’ Discretionary Assistance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eligibility</td>
<td>To make properties more energy efficient which in turn will lead to a reduction in carbon emissions and to reduce fuel poverty for those living with long term health conditions exacerbated by living in a cold home.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eligible Work</td>
<td>Grants are available to owner occupiers only with certain long term health conditions exacerbated by the cold and who are living in fuel poverty. For the purposes of the programme, the eligible health conditions are:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Atrial fibrillation/heart flutter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Angina/coronary heart disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Heart Failure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Peripheral arterial disease (PAD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Hypertension/high blood pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Osteoporosis/brittle bones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Transient Ischaemic Attack (TIA)/mini stroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Asthma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• COPD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Rheumatoid arthritis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Diabetes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Cancer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Applicants must be in receipt of a means tested benefit* or on a low household income of less than £16,105 (excluding housing costs, DLA and attendance allowance) with less than £16,000 in household savings. Applicants will need to have lived in the property as their main residence for a minimum of 1 year prior to application.

Emergency intervention - In exceptional circumstances grant support can be considered for eligible individuals who meet the criteria but fail the income eligibility test ONLY where they are at imminent risk of cold-related ill health or potential death due to a lack of a working central heating system (incl. oil, gas, LPG, solid fuel or electric storage heaters). Applications will be considered on a case by case basis.

Works will be specified and scheduled by the Council following a property assessment and can include replacement heating systems including boilers, radiators and associated pipework. In addition, works can include heating system repairs where appropriate, loft and cavity wall insulation and works to facilitate the grant such as providing a gas connection,
### Financial Arrangements

Enlarging the loft hatch etc. Works will be in addition to the provision of affordable warmth advice to the householder. A grant maximum of £6,000 will apply. The Council will appoint a contractor on the basis of either lowest quotes or via a framework agreement. Evidence of income/savings will be required prior to approval e.g. previous bank statements.

### Application

Applications are made to the Private Sector Housing Service at Mansfield District Council. Applications for retrospective works will not be accepted.

### Payment

The Council will make payment direct to the contractor on satisfactory completion of the works and production of invoices. Assistance includes the contractor’s standard warranty period only and does not include any ongoing repairs, servicing or maintenance costs; these are the responsibility of the applicant.

### Conditions

None.

---

### Assistance Purpose

**DEMENTIA ADAPTATION GRANT**

Discretionary Assistance

Dementia Adaptation Grants are available to provide minor changes to the home which may help the resident living with dementia to manage their surroundings – for example, from the use of colour and contrast to aid orientation in the home. This will help ensure that those with dementia are able to remain safe and independent at home for as long as possible.

### Eligibility

Grants are available to owner occupiers, private tenants, council tenants and registered provider tenants with a clinically diagnosed dementia diagnosis. Eligibility will be subject to receiving a professional referral only and will be subject to a home assessment.

### Eligible Work

Works will be specified by a professional dementia specialist and scheduled by the Council following a property assessment and can include:

- Replacing floor coverings that cause confusion or safety issues;
- Replacing tiling or bathroom fittings (such as toilet seats and rails) to improve visual perception;
- Changing cupboards to glass fronted doors, to enable recognition of where items are in the kitchen;
- Changing lighting schemes to improve visibility around the home;
- Installing noise reduction measures;
- Ensuring gardens and paths are level and free from hazards.

Works cannot be included where a Disabled Facilities Grant could apply...
or social care provision is available for the works.

Financial Arrangements

A grant maximum of £750 will apply (including VAT). The Council will appoint a contractor on the basis of lowest quotes.

Application

Applications are made to the Private Sector Housing Service at Mansfield District Council via a professional referral. Applications for retrospective works will not be accepted. Availability will be subject to the availability of resources.

Payment

The Council will make payment direct to the contractor on satisfactory completion of the works and production of invoices. Assistance includes the contractor’s standard warranty period only and does not include any ongoing repairs, servicing or maintenance costs; these are the responsibility of the applicant.

Conditions

None. The Council will not be responsible for ongoing maintenance and repair of any adaptations provided.

**MEANS TESTED BENEFITS**

For the purposes of this policy, means tested benefits include:

- Income based Job Seekers allowance
- Income related employment and support allowance
- Income support
- Guaranteed pension credit
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit
- Universal Credit
- Child Tax Credit – where your annual income is treated as less than £15,050 for the purposes of your tax credit assessment.
- Working tax credit - where your annual income is treated as less than £15,050 for the purposes of your tax credit assessment.