

Appendix A

Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15 – key amendments to the 2011-13 policy

| Chapter | Title | Amendments | Effect |
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| 1.0 | Introduction | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Updates to Council's Vision, Key priorities and performance indicators. | Updated background information to include the current vision, priorities and performance indicators. |
| 3.0 | Resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To increase the amount of the existing recycled loan fund that is available for empty property loans from £100,000 to £200,000.• Add in the new GLA funding of £791,000 and the additional GLA funding of £420,000 for Empty Property Grants. | Updated key financial information, including the considerable amount of new funding for Empty Property grants that is now available. This will enable the renovation and return to use of a large number of vacant dwellings. The target for the GLA funding alone is 80 units. |
| 4.0 | General Guidance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4.4 Delete "An applicant with council tax arrears may only apply for assistance if they have an agreement set up to repay the outstanding debt, and we have evidence that they are complying" and insert "An applicant with council tax arrears may only apply for assistance once the outstanding debt has been repaid".• Insert new paragraph – "The council is not able to offer or approve a loan where the applicant has been declared bankrupt and that bankruptcy has not been discharged". | Applicants who owe the council any council tax will not be able to apply for a loan until this debt has been repaid in full. The policy is brought in line with the legal requirement not to lend money to a bankrupt |

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| | | This is a legal requirement where money is being lent. | person. |
| 5.0 | Discretionary Home Investment Loan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5.6 Add in to Repairs section of eligible works – “Repairs may include the repair or replacement of minor roof areas (excluding porch roofs or conservatories/temporary lean-to type structures), guttering.....” • 5.13 amended to increase the maximum amount for Home Investment Loan from £15,000 to £20,000 to take account of the increase in VAT from 15% to 20% since the loan scheme came into effect in 2009 and also the increase in building costs over the past four years. | <p>This will ensure that the limited funding available is concentrated on the essential repairs needed to the main construction of a property and not temporary structures.</p> <p>The increase in the maximum amount for a loan will permit the completion of all of the necessary works to make each property decent.</p> |
| 6.0 | Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eligible persons – new paragraph 6.4 “Foster carers in the borough where the child is already in occupation and where the placement is long term (i.e. for the whole or remainder of childhood to 18 years). This applies whether the placement is by Croydon Council or from another local authority. • In 6.21 to amend to state that “Grant will not be given towards alternative works that are not recommended by the Occupational Therapist except in exceptional circumstances. Such cases will be decided by a panel within the Housing Renewal Service”. • Maximum amount for DFG – section 6.27 amended to read | <p>To clarify that foster carers can apply for Disabled Facilities Grants, in accordance with the legislation.</p> <p>The position regarding the amount of disabled facilities grant funding available for a given adaptation scheme will be much clearer to applicants as will the options available for applicants to cover the costs where they are in excess of the</p> |

statutory maximum grant amount.

“It is intended that this grant will provide assistance towards all of the clients’ assessed needs at the time of application. If additional and different needs arise in the future, a further application for Disabled Facilities Grants may be made for these additional needs.

- Section 6.28 amended to read

“Where the cost of works exceeds £30,000 and the mandatory DFG grant fails to cover the full extent of the work, the applicant will be expected to apply for an Equity Release loan (see section 13) or find alternative funding for the costs above the maximum amount.

Alternatively, where the cost of works exceeds £30,000 and the applicant is willing to fund the excess (where the provision of an extension is the only option and the Occupational Therapist (OT) has recommended this) we will approve a grant at £30,000 and the applicant must pay their contribution to the contractor prior to any grant being paid.

Where the OT does not recommend the provision of an extension, but the applicant requests one, we will allow the provision of the facilities via DFG if the applicant constructs their own extension in accordance with planning and building control requirements, the OT’s design and including the provision to first fix stage of all required services (gas, electricity, central heating, hot and cold water and drainage.”

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| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6.29 amended to increase the maximum amounts allowed for relocation purposes under DFG as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ up to a fixed maximum level of £7,000 (previously £5000) for owner-occupiers, irrespective of the size and/or location of the properties being sold and purchased ○ In the case of private tenants moving to another rented property, the fixed maximum level is £3000 (previously £2500) ○ In the case of private tenants moving to and purchasing another property, up to a maximum of £7,000. (previously £5000) | <p>The maximum grant amounts for relocation purposes (where a person with a disability moves to an alternative property that is more suitable for adaptation to meet their needs) will be brought in line with current costs for moving home.</p> |
| 9.0 | Empty Homes Grant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated to match the new South West Sub Region criteria, including: increase from 3 to 5 year letting requirement on completion; change to 1 and 2 bedroom properties; new maximum grant amount of £25,000. | <p>Additional funding is available to refurbish empty residential homes in the borough with an increased 5 year nomination period for the council.</p> |
| 10.0 | Empty Homes Loan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10.14 amended to remove reference to the Home Improvement Trust now that they no longer exist. Now states “The assessment and calculations of the available equity will be carried out by the Council.” • Revised maximum loan amount of £40,000 per unit from the previous £44,000 for 2 bed and £54,000 for 3 bed properties. | <p>Loan to be calculated and offered directly by the council using external solicitors.</p> <p>The maximum loan amount for applicants has been reduced, enabling more properties to be renovated with the same recoverable recycling loan</p> |

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| | | | fund. |
| 11.0 | Special Projects Loan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The purpose of this loan has been expanded to make the criteria more flexible as follows: <p>11.1 This loan is available to assist with funding special projects, for example;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the renovation of residential properties as part of large scale projects on mixed tenure developments the renovation of accommodation above shopping parades the conversion of residential or commercial properties to provide temporary accommodation for council tenants terraced properties in need of external works such as over-cladding situations where responsibility for repairs is complex and or split. It is also available to support accredited landlords who are in need of assistance. | There is increased flexibility in the situations we can offer this loan in to refurbish vacant properties and return them to residential use. |
| 12.0 | Agencies & Projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change Creative Environmental Networks details to Climate Energy and add in details of new Coldbusters Affordable Warmth Grant that is administered by them as follows: <p>“Climate Energy is a not-for-profit company formed under a joint initiative between the Council and the charity Projects in Partnership. Among the initiatives operated by Climate Energy is the "Coldbusters Affordable Warmth" project which is available to home owners or those renting</p> | A new Coldbusters Affordable Warmth grant is available with the contact details being provided for referral purposes. |

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| | | <p>privately. This scheme involves the promotion of energy efficiency and provides the elderly, vulnerable and those on low incomes with access to energy grants. A fee is charged for each energy loan approved. This fee can be included in the loan.</p> <p>The types of works that can be carried out under the coldbusters affordable warmth scheme are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solid Wall Insulation • Boiler repair/ replacement - existing boiler has a efficiency of less than 86% or boiler is not working or not working efficiently • Loft Insulation - where property has an un-insulated loft • Cavity Wall Insulation - where property has un-insulated cavity walls <p>Clients can be referred by emailing coldbusters@climateenergy.org.uk or calling Coldbusters on 0800 358 6668.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update the Staying Put in the Garden scheme fee to £20 per hour. | <p>The Gardening Scheme fee is in line with Care Management Group (who operate the service) costs.</p> |
| 13.0 | Other forms of assistance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add in Just Retirement Solutions (Equity Release) Scheme information as follows: | <p>A new Equity Release Scheme is now available for clients who are in need of additional funds</p> |

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| | | <p>13.01 Just Retirement Solutions work in partnership with Foundations who have been appointed by the Department for Communities and Local Government to act as the National body for home improvement agencies (HIA's). HIA's help people remain independent at home by carrying out essential repairs and adaptations to their properties.</p> <p>13.02 Equity release is a way of funding works for homeowners who are ineligible for a housing renewal loan or need additional funding to cover eligible costs that are over the maximum loan or disabled facilities grant amount.</p> <p>13.03 Equity release is way of unlocking a proportion of the value – or equity you have in your home in exchange for a tax free lump sum. The equity is the difference between the property's value and any outstanding loans such as a mortgage secured on it.</p> <p>13.04 Equity release can be used to help with any home improvements, repairs or adaptations that are needed and is available to home owners who are 55 years or over.</p> <p>13.05 All loans have an absolute guarantee that the property will not be repossessed while the applicant(s) live there and come with a no negative equity guarantee.</p> | <p>for repairs/adaptations.</p> |
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| | | <p>Full details can be obtained by contacting the Just Retirement Solutions Equity Release Advice Service on 0800 028 7371. The Council always advises that clients take independent financial advice before proceeding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discretionary funding –a new form of assistance has been added as follows: <p><u>Discretionary Loan Funding</u></p> <p>13.07 In exceptional circumstances, the council may consider giving a discretionary loan towards the provision of an adaptation for a person with a disability. This would only apply where the applicant:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is an owner occupier and - has no access to alternative funding and - has applied for and been refused an Equity Release Loan and - where a Disabled Facilities Grants has been approved but does not cover the whole costs of the required works and. - Where there is sufficient equity remaining in the property. <p>A legal charge is placed on the property and the loan amount will be dependent on costs but the maximum will</p> | <p>A brand new form of loan assistance is available for persons with disabilities to adapt their homes.</p> <p>This new form of discretionary loan funding will be available through the council under the Regulatory Reform Order for vulnerable clients in exceptional circumstances. To assist where the cost of the adaptation is in excess of the DFG maximum amount and funding is not available from other recognised sources.</p> <p>This will be placed as a charge on the property and will be recoverable on the sale of the property and will bring us into</p> |
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| | | <p>be £15,000.</p> <p>Such cases will be considered by a panel within the Housing Renewal Service and the loan will be subject to the same conditions as a Home Investment Loan.</p> | <p>line with the legal requirement to use our discretion where adaptations are concerned and not have a blanket policy of only offering DFG funding.</p> |
| <p>14.0</p> <p>15.0</p> <p>16.0</p> | <p>Complaints</p> <p>Operative date & Implementation</p> <p>Transitional Arrangements</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updates to key dates on which the policy comes into force and appropriate Directors title. | |
| Appendix A | Loan Conditions- All Loans | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To include that these apply to the new Discretionary Loan | To make the existing set of conditions for loans apply to the new Discretionary Loan. |
| Appendix D | Grants Conditions- Empty Property Grant | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updated to match new South West Sub Region criteria, including: increasing the grant condition period from 3 to 5 years; confirming the requirement for the property to be managed by Croydon Council or another registered Provider throughout that period; adding a new condition that the works must be started within 3 months of approval being given and completed within 6 months. | To bring the conditions in line with the SW Sub Region policy and to tighten up the condition on completion of works so that properties are refurbished and re-occupied more quickly. |
| Appendix E | Loan Conditions - Empty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We have added in the structure of the 3 stage payments that was agreed as follows: | To make applicants aware of the stage payments they will receive once the loan is |

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| | Property Loan | The loan will be paid in stage payments, 25% on completion of the registration of the loan, up to 50% based on the value of works carried out and the remaining 25% on satisfactory completion of the works. | approved. |
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