

COMMISSIONERS' DECISION MAKING MEETING

Wednesday, 30 September 2015 at 6.30 p.m.
C1, 1st Floor, Town Hall, Mulberry Place, 5 Clove Crescent, London,
E14 2BG

SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA
The meeting is open to the public to attend.

Members:

Sir Ken Knight (Chair)	(Commissioner)
Chris Allison (Member)	(Commissioner)
Max Caller (Member)	(Commissioner)
Alan Wood (Member)	(Commissioner)

Public Information:

The public are welcome to attend these meetings.

Contact for further enquiries:

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Public Information

Attendance at meetings.

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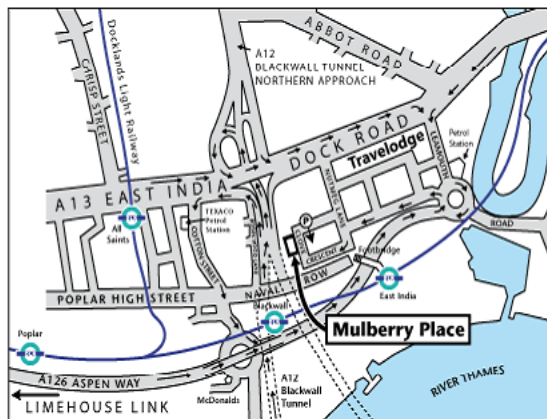
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Blackwall station: Across the bus station then turn right to the back of the Town Hall complex, through the gates and archway to the Town Hall.

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A Guide to Commissioner Decision Making

Commissioner Decision Making at Tower Hamlets

As directed by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, the above Commissioners have been directed to take decision making responsibility for specific areas of work. These include examples such as the disposal of properties, awarding of grants and certain officer employment functions. This decision making body has been set up to enable the Commissioners to take their decisions in public in a similar manner to existing processes.

Key Decisions

Executive decisions are all decisions that are not specifically reserved for other bodies (such as Development or Licensing Committees). Most, but not all, of the decisions to be taken by the Commissioners are Executive decisions. Certain important Executive decisions are classified as **Key Decisions**.

The constitution describes Key Decisions as an executive decision which is likely

- a) to result in the local authority incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant having regard to the local authority's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the borough.

Upcoming Key Decisions are published on the website on the 'Forthcoming Decisions' page through www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/committee. The Commissioners have chosen to broadly follow the Council's definition in classifying their determinations.

Published Decisions

After the meeting, any decisions taken will be published on the Council's website.


- The decisions for this meeting will be published on: **Monday, 5 October 2015**

LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS
COMMISSIONERS' DECISION MAKING MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2015

6.30 p.m.

6 .4	Provision of Home Repairs Grants under the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15, to four individual owner occupiers	1 - 30	Blackwall & Cubitt Town; Bow West; Weavers; Whitechapel
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Commissioner Decision Report 30 September 2015	
Report of: Aman Dalvi Corporate Director, Development and Renewal	Classification: Unrestricted
Provision of Home Repairs Grants under the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15, to four individual owner occupiers	

Originating Officer(s)	Alison Thomas - Head of Housing Strategy, Partnerships and Affordable Housing
Wards affected	1. Blackwall and Cubitt Town 2. Weavers 3. Whitechapel 4. Bow West
Key Decision?	No
Community Plan Theme	A Healthy and Supportive Community: Reducing health inequalities and enabling people to live independently
Reasons for Urgency	Potential adverse impact on individual residents

Executive Summary

This report relates to the provision of Home Repairs Grants under Part 4.2 of the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15.

Under the terms of this policy, these small grants may be made available to eligible owner-occupiers to enable them to remain in their own homes safely and avoid minor accidents.

Eligible home owners are those who are:

- over 60 years of age, or
- disabled or infirm, or the parent or carer of a disabled child and
- in receipt of an income related benefit or eligible tax credits

These grants are for the following types of works:

- minor repairs and improvements
- minor adaptations
- minor hazard removal

Reports detailing the circumstances of the individual home owners are provided in separate reports.

Recommendations:

The Commissioners are recommended to:

1. To consider the four related reports
2. Agree Home Repairs Grants to the four individual home owners in the total sum of £12,534.58.

1. REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 The individual applicants meet the eligibility criteria contained in Part 4.2 of the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15.
- 1.2 The grant aided repair works will improve the health and wellbeing of the individual home owners identified.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The criteria set out in the policy are considered by officers to be met and if the Commissioners are satisfied of this payment should be made. The amounts proposed are those that meet the costs of the items or work assessed as required.
- 2.2 The Commissioners could decide to refuse the grant applications but that would be against the policy and the applicants could appeal the decision.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 Tower Hamlets Council has a duty under Part 1, Chapter 1, Section 3 of the Housing Act 2004, to review the housing conditions in its district and where conditions are found to require improvement, assistance can be provided under the terms of Article 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002.
- 3.2 The Authority has adopted a Private Sector Renewal Policy which sets out how the Council is able to assist in improving the living conditions for residents who live in private sector housing within the Borough.
- 3.3 Under Part 4.2 of the policy, Home Repairs Grants up to a maximum value of £6,000 may be available to qualifying owner-occupiers to enable them to remain living in their own homes safely and avoid minor accidents.
- 3.4 To be eligible for assistance the applicant must be either over the age of 60, or disabled, or the parent of a disabled child and in all cases, be in receipt of qualifying means tested benefit. In addition the applicant must:-
 - be an owner-occupier who lives in the dwelling as their only or main residence

- be aged 18 or over on the date of application (applications for minor adaptations for works to enable a disabled child to be cared for in their own home will be accepted from the parents or carer of that disabled child)
 - have the power or duty to carry out the works (with the appropriate consents where the property is leasehold)
- 3.5 Applications which are for either minor repairs or improvements will only be considered where the applicant has owned the dwelling for the last three years.
- 3.6 The grant will not normally be available to part fund major works costing over £6,000.
- 3.7 These grants are not repayable and details of all grant payments are recorded on a database so that any repeat applications are flagged up.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 A capital estimate of £550,000 was approved as part of the 2015-16 budget process to fund a Private Sector Renewal Grant programme. The scheme is financed from residual ring-fenced resources received from the East London Renewal Partnership. The programme supports the aims and objectives of the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-2015, and includes Home Repairs Grants for minor aids and adaptations, energy efficiency, minor repairs, home security, hazard removal and relocation assistance; Empty Property Grants and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants.
- 4.2 The grants considered in this report form an element of this programme, with the specific qualifying conditions that the Council applies to these grants set out in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.7.
- 4.3 The four proposed grants (totalling £12,534.58) have all have been considered by the Officer Private Housing Grants Panel and are now recommended to the Commissioners for approval,

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1 The power of the Commissioners to make decisions in relation to grants arises from directions made by the Secretary of State on 17 December 2014 pursuant to powers under sections 15(5) and 15(6) of the Local Government Act 1999 (the Directions). Paragraph 4(ii) and Annex B of the Directions together provide that, until 31 March 2017, the Council's functions in relation to grants will be exercised by appointed Commissioners, acting jointly or severally. This is subject to an exception in relation to grants made under section 24 of the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, for the purposes of section 23 of that Act (disabled facilities grant).
- 5.2 To the extent that the Commissioners are exercising powers which would otherwise have been the Council's, there is a need to ensure the Council has power to make the grants in question

- 5.3 The Council has a duty under Part 1, Chapter 1, Section 3 of the Housing Act 2004, to review the housing conditions in its district and where conditions are found to require adaptation, repair or improvement, assistance may be provided by the Council under the terms of Article 3 of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002 ('2002 Order').
- 5.4 The Council may not exercise the powers available under the 2002 Order unless it has adopted a policy for the provision of assistance, given notice of the policy and made it available to the public. The power to provide assistance must be exercised in accordance with the policy. The Council adopted the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15 at the Cabinet of 31st July 2013. Paragraph 4.2 of the policy provides for Home Repair Grants the details of which are set out in this report.
- 5.5 The Council has a duty under Section 3 of the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness (the best value duty). Awards of these grants are subject to eligibility criteria which seek to assist vulnerable persons in housing in disrepair. By doing so the need for other council services or support is likely to be reduced.
- 5.6 When exercising its functions under this legislation by making decisions about grants the Council must comply with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 in that it must have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful conduct under the Act, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between persons who share a protected characteristic and those who do not (the public sector equality duty). The Home Repair Grants policy is designed to provide for those who are elderly or who have disabilities and in doing so it seeks to advance equality of opportunity for persons with those protected characteristics.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 A Private Sector Housing Stock Condition Survey carried out in 2012, highlighted the fact that while property prices in the borough have continued to rise, local average earnings have stayed low and that many owner occupiers, especially amongst the elderly and disabled, are 'asset rich but cash poor'. The survey also established that some of the worst housing conditions are to be found within the private sector and that the poorest quality housing is more likely to be occupied by vulnerable households with 29% of households defined as 'vulnerable' occupying non decent housing.
- 6.2 By targeting assistance to these vulnerable owner occupiers, the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15, seeks to mitigate this problem by having a positive impact on the lives of these residents by reducing health and housing inequalities and thereby contributing to the One Tower Hamlets vision.

- 6.3 A full Equalities Assessment on the Policy has been carried out and there has been no evidence identified to suggest any adverse or negative impact.

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Individual grant costs are scrutinised and challenged at a number of stages of the grant process, from initial receipt by the grant officer through to final consideration by the Housing Grant Panel.

- 7.2 The use of small cost housing grants to purchase extended warranties on equipment such as ceiling track hoists, stair, step and through-floor lifts for vulnerable disabled home owners, reduces costs in the longer term to other Council services when these products go wrong. The use of small cost housing grants to carry out urgent but minor repair works for elderly and vulnerable home owners and those with disabilities, can ensure that resident is able to live healthily and safely in their own home and can reduce longer term repair costs if nothing is done about the problem. It also reduces the risk of reliance on other council services which may be more costly.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 8.1. There are no sustainability implications.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There is a risk that if these small grants are not approved, the health and wellbeing of these elderly and or disabled home owners will deteriorate.

- 9.2 There is a risk that Council may be exposed to much greater costs in the longer term where it has to fund additional care for the individual home owners should their health or physical condition worsen as a result.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no crime and disorder implications.

11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no safeguarding implications.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013 -2015

Appendices

None

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

None


Officer contact details for documents:

Alison Thomas

Head of Housing Strategy and Partnerships

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Commissioner Decision Report 30 September 2015	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Aman Dalvi Corporate Director, Development and Renewal	Classification: Unrestricted
Provision of a Home Repairs Grant in the sum of £4,152.10 to Miss A , under the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15	

Originating Officer(s)	Alison Thomas
Wards affected	Blackwall and Cubitt Town
Key Decision?	No
Community Plan Theme	A Healthy and Supportive Community: Reducing health inequalities and enabling people to live independently
Reasons for Urgency	Potential adverse impact on individual resident

Executive Summary

This report relates to the provision of Home Repairs Grants under Part 4.2 of the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15.

Under the terms of this policy, these small grants of up to a maximum of £6,000 may be made available to eligible owner-occupiers to enable them to remain in their own homes safely and avoid minor accidents.

Eligible home owners are those who are:

- over 60 years of age, or
- disabled or infirm, or the parent or carer of a disabled child and
- in receipt of an income related benefit or eligible tax credits

Recommendations:

The Commissioners are recommended to:

1. Agree Home Repairs Grants to Miss A , in the sum of £4,152.10 to fund urgent repairs to her kitchen and replacement of the central heating combination boiler.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The criteria set out in the adopted policy are considered by officers to be met

and if the Commissioners are satisfied of this then the payment should be made. The sum proposed has been assessed to meet the costs of the works.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 Under Part 4.2 of the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15, Home Repairs Grants up to a maximum value of £6,000 may be available to qualifying owner-occupiers to enable them to remain living in their own homes safely and avoid minor accidents.
- 3.2 To be eligible for assistance the applicant must be either over the age of 60, or disabled, or the parent of a disabled child and in all cases, be in receipt of qualifying means tested benefit. In addition the applicant must:-
- be an owner-occupier who lives in the dwelling as their only or main residence
 - be aged 18 or over on the date of the application (applications for minor adaptations for works to enable a disabled child to be cared for in their own home will be accepted from the parents or carer of that disabled child)
 - have the power or duty to carry out the works (with the appropriate consents where the property is leasehold)
- 3.3 Miss A is the leasehold owner of a third floor maisonette on the Isle of Dogs.
- 3.4 Miss A suffers from arthritis of the pelvis, is a wheelchair user and lives alone.
- 3.5 As Miss A's condition has deteriorated a number of adaptation works have been carried out to her home to allow her to live as safely and independently as possible. These adaptations include a stair-lift and a wet floor shower room. The Council are also currently considering an application for a further Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) for a door intercom and automatic opening system.
- 3.6 During the course of the inspection for DFG, officers noted that there were a number of small repairs required to the kitchen and that her central heating boiler had failed and that she was without hot water.
- 3.7 Estimates were obtained in the sum of £3,541.00 to replace the central heating boiler, the kitchen sink unit and sink mixer taps, which together with the Home Improvement Agency fees of £611.10, gives a total grant figure of £4,152.10.
- 3.8 Miss A meets the eligibility criteria in that she is the leasehold owner of the property, has lived in the dwelling for over fourteen years, is disabled and is in receipt of a means tested benefit.

- 3.9 The application has been considered by the Private Housing Grants Panel and who have made a recommendation that the grant be approved.
- 3.10 This grant is not repayable.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 A capital estimate of £550,000 was approved as part of the 2015-16 budget process to fund a Private Sector Renewal Grant programme. The scheme is financed from residual ring-fenced resources received from the East London Renewal Partnership. The programme supports the aims and objectives of the Council's Private Sector Housing and Empty Properties Framework, and includes Home Repairs Grants for minor aids and adaptations, energy efficiency, minor repairs, home security, hazard removal and relocation assistance; Empty Property Grants and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants.
- 4.2 The specific grant considered in this report forms an element of the programme and can be met from within uncommitted resources. The applicant meets the conditions that the Council applies to these grants.
- 4.3 The applicant has previously received funding under the Council's mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants programme and is now seeking a grant of £3,592 to fund urgent repairs to the kitchen and to replace the central heating combination boiler . The application has been considered by the Officer Private Housing Grants Panel and is recommended to the Commissioners for approval.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1. The legal provisions setting out the Council's duties and powers in respect of this grant payment are set out in non-exempt report titled "Provision of Home Repair Grants under the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-2015, to four individual owner occupiers.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 By targeting the very limited financial assistance which is still available to the most vulnerable owner occupiers, the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15, seeks to mitigate the problems of poor housing conditions and reduce the pressure on social and health care services and at the same time have a positive impact on the lives of these residents by reducing health and housing inequalities and ensuring their independence and inclusion.
- 6.2 A full Equalities Assessment on the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy has been carried out and which found there to be no evidence to suggest any adverse or negative impact.

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Individual grant costs are scrutinised and challenged at a number of stages of the grant process, from initial receipt by the grant officer through to final consideration by the Housing Grant Panel.
- 7.2 The use of small cost housing grants to carry out urgent but minor repair works for elderly and vulnerable home owners and those with disabilities, can ensure that resident is able to live healthily and safely in their own home and can reduce longer term repair costs if nothing is done about the problem. It also reduces the risk of reliance on other council services which may be more costly.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 8.1. There are no sustainability implications.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There is a risk that if this small grant is not approved the health and wellbeing of this disabled home owner would deteriorate as the winter months approached and she was still without heating.
- 9.2 There is also a risk that if the repair works are not be carried out the property will deteriorate and also possibly affected the maisonette below, leading to much great future costs.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no crime and disorder implications.

11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no safeguarding implications.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

Private Sector Housing Strategy 2013-15, Cabinet decision of 31 July 2013.
<http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/documents/g4188/Decisions%2031st-Jul-2013%2017.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=2>

Private Sector Housing Strategy 2013-15.
http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgs/851-900/868_housing_statements/private_sector_housing_renewal.aspx

Appendices

Grant break-down sheet.
Grant Panel check sheet.
Chair of Private Housing Grant Panel's recommendation sheet

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

None

Officer contact details for documents:


Alison Thomas

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Commissioner Decision Report 30 September 2015	
Report of: Aman Dalvi Corporate Director, Development and Renewal	Classification: Unrestricted
Provision of a Home Repairs Grant in the sum of £2,570.04 to Mrs B, under the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15	

Originating Officer(s)	Alison Thomas
Wards affected	Weavers
Key Decision?	No
Community Plan Theme	A Healthy and Supportive Community: Reducing health inequalities and enabling people to live independently
Reasons for Urgency	Potential adverse impact on individual resident

Executive Summary

This report relates to the provision of Home Repairs Grants under Part 4.2 of the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15.

Under the terms of this policy, these small grants of up to a maximum of £6,000 may be made available to eligible owner-occupiers to enable them to remain in their own homes safely and avoid minor accidents.

Eligible home owners are those who are:

- over 60 years of age, or
- disabled or infirm, or the parent or carer of a disabled child and
- in receipt of an income related benefit or eligible tax credits

Recommendations:

The Commissioners are recommended to:

1. Agree Home Repairs Grants to Mrs B in the sum of £2,570.04 to fund two extended warranties for an internal curved track stair-lift and an external wheelchair step-lift.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The criteria set out in the adopted policy are considered by officers to be met and if the Commissioners are satisfied of this then the payment should be made. The sum proposed has been assessed to meet the costs of the works.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 Under Part 4.2 of the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15, Home Repairs Grants up to a maximum value of £6,000 may be available to qualifying owner-occupiers to enable them to remain living in their own homes safely and avoid minor accidents.
- 3.2 To be eligible for assistance the applicant must be either over the age of 60, or disabled, or the parent of a disabled child and in all cases, be in receipt of qualifying means tested benefit. In addition the applicant must:-
- be an owner-occupier who lives in the dwelling as their only or main residence
 - be aged 18 or over on the date of the application (applications for minor adaptations for works to enable a disabled child to be cared for in their own home will be accepted from the parents or carer of that disabled child)
 - have the power or duty to carry out the works (with the appropriate consents where the property is leasehold)
- 3.3 Mrs B is the leasehold owner of, a ground floor maisonette, together with her husband.
- 3.4 Mrs B has suffered from multiple sclerosis for almost 20 years and is now a full dependent wheelchair user and her husband is her full time carer.
- 3.5 As Mrs B's condition deteriorated adaptation works have been carried out to her home to allow her to live as safely and independently as possible. These adaptations include a wheelchair accessible wet floor shower room, an internal stair-lift to allow access to the upper floor and an external wheelchair step-lift to facilitate entry to and from her home.
- 3.6 These adaptations were provided through a Disabled Facilities Grant and were covered by the manufacturer's warranty but when they expire the disabled resident can be left stranded and isolated in their own home if they do not have the resources to fund repairs. This can lead to increased care costs to the Council as additional resources have to be deployed to cope with the situation.
- 3.7 To ensure against this situation arising, Mrs B has applied to the Private Housing Improvement Team for a Home Repairs Grant to provide an

extended four year warranty and annual service for each of the lifts, which will be provided by the preferred lift supplier.

- 3.8 The cost of these two warranties is £2,178.00 together with the Home Improvement Agency fee of £392.04, gives a total grant amount of £2,570.04.
- 3.9 Mrs B meets the eligibility criteria in that she is the leasehold owner of the property, has lived in the dwelling for over fourteen years, is disabled and is in receipt of a means tested benefit.
- 3.10 The application has been considered by the Private Housing Grants Panel and who have made a recommendation that the grant be approved.
- 3.11 This grant is not repayable.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 A capital estimate of £550,000 was approved as part of the 2015-16 budget process to fund a Private Sector Renewal Grant programme. The scheme is financed from residual ring-fenced resources received from the East London Renewal Partnership. The programme supports the aims and objectives of the Council's Private Sector Housing and Empty Properties Framework, and includes Home Repairs Grants for minor aids and adaptations, energy efficiency, minor repairs, home security, hazard removal and relocation assistance; Empty Property Grants and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants.
- 4.2 The specific grant considered in this report forms an element of the programme and can be met from within uncommitted resources. The applicant meets the conditions that the Council applies to these grants.
- 4.3 The Council has previously funded the installation of an internal stair-lift and an external step-lift at the property under its mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant scheme. The applicant is seeking a further grant of £2,570 to fund the purchase of extended four year warranties and annual service contracts on the lifts. The application has been considered by the Officer Private Housing Grants Panel and is recommended to the Commissioners for approval.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1. The legal provisions setting out the Council's duties and powers in respect of this grant payment are set out in non-exempt report titled "Provision of Home Repair Grants under the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-2015, to four individual owner occupiers.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 By targeting the very limited financial assistance which is still available to the most vulnerable owner occupiers, the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15, seeks to mitigate the problems of poor housing conditions and

reduce the pressure on social and health care services and at the same time have a positive impact on the lives of these residents by reducing health and housing inequalities and ensuring their independence and inclusion.

- 6.2 A full Equalities Assessment on the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy has been carried out and which found there to be no evidence to suggest any adverse or negative impact.

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Individual grant costs are scrutinised and challenged at a number of stages of the grant process, from initial receipt by the grant officer through to final consideration by the Housing Grant Panel.
- 7.2 The use of small cost housing grants to carry out urgent but minor repair works for elderly and vulnerable home owners and those with disabilities, can ensure that resident is able to live healthily and safely in their own home and can reduce longer term repair costs if nothing is done about the problem. It also reduces the risk of reliance on other council services which may be more costly.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 8.1. There are no sustainability implications.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There is a risk that if this small grant is not approved and either of the adaptations fail, the health and wellbeing of this disabled home owner would deteriorate.
- 9.2 There is also the risk that should either of the lifts fail, Mr B could be put at risk of harm as he attempts to physically assist his wife around the home.
- 9.3 There is a further risk that Council may be exposed to much greater costs in the longer term, as there would be additional care funding required for the family to cope with loss of these lifts and Mrs Bs reduced independence.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no crime and disorder implications.

11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no safeguarding implications.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

Private Sector Housing Strategy 2013-15, Cabinet decision of 31 July 2013.
<http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/documents/g4188/Decisions%2031st-Jul-2013%2017.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=2>
Private Sector Housing Strategy 2013-15.
http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgsi/851-900/868_housing_statements/private_sector_housing_renewal.aspx

Appendices

Grant break-down sheet.
Grant Panel check sheet.
Chair of Private Housing Grant Panel's recommendation sheet

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

None

Officer contact details for documents:


Alison Thomas

Head of Housing Strategy and Partnerships

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Commissioner Decision Report 30 September 2015	
Report of: Aman Dalvi Corporate Director, Development and Renewal	Classification: Unrestricted
Provision of a Home Repairs Grant in the sum of £1,012.44 to Mr C under the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15	

Originating Officer(s)	Alison Thomas
Wards affected	Whitechapel
Key Decision?	No
Community Plan Theme	A Healthy and Supportive Community: Reducing health inequalities and enabling people to live independently
Reasons for Urgency	Potential adverse impact on individual resident

Executive Summary

This report relates to the provision of Home Repairs Grants under Part 4.2 of the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15.

Under the terms of this policy, these small grants of up to a maximum of £6,000 may be made available to eligible owner-occupiers to enable them to remain in their own homes safely and avoid minor accidents.

Eligible home owners are those who are:

- over 60 years of age, or
- disabled or infirm, or the parent or carer of a disabled child and
- in receipt of an income related benefit or eligible tax credits

Recommendations:

The Commissioners are recommended to:

1. Agree Home Repairs Grants to Mr C , in the sum of £1,012.44 to fund urgent minor adaptations to his home to ensure his safety and independence.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The criteria set out in the adopted policy are considered by officers to be met and if the Commissioners are satisfied of this then the payment should be made. The sum proposed has been assessed to meet the costs of the works.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 Under Part 4.2 of the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15, Home Repairs Grants up to a maximum value of £6,000 may be available to qualifying owner-occupiers to enable them to remain living in their own homes safely and avoid minor accidents.
- 3.2 To be eligible for assistance the applicant must be either over the age of 60, or disabled, or the parent of a disabled child and in all cases, be in receipt of qualifying means tested benefit. In addition the applicant must:-
- be an owner-occupier who lives in the dwelling as their only or main residence
 - be aged 18 or over on the date of the application (applications for minor adaptations for works to enable a disabled child to be cared for in their own home will be accepted from the parents or carer of that disabled child)
 - have the power or duty to carry out the works (with the appropriate consents where the property is leasehold)
- 3.3 Mr C is the leasehold owner of a third floor flat.
- 3.4 Mr C is 86 years old, partially sighted, has arthritis in his hands, suffers from leg tremors and is prone to falls and lives alone.
- 3.5 Due to the difficulties Mr C was experiencing turning the taps in his kitchen and bathroom, he approached the Council for assistance with providing easier operable lever taps.
- 3.7 Estimates have been obtained in the sum of £1,012.44 which including fees, for the provision of lever taps in the kitchen and bathroom, an additional grab-rail in the bathroom and alterations to the washing machine plumbing as a result of changing the taps.
- 3.8 Mr C meets the eligibility criteria in that he is the leasehold owner of the property, has lived in the dwelling for over twenty five years, is over 60 years old, disabled and is in receipt of a means tested benefit.
- 3.9 The application has been considered by the Private Housing Grants Panel and who have made a recommendation that the grant be approved.
- 3.10 This grant is not repayable.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 A capital estimate of £550,000 was approved as part of the 2015-16 budget process to fund a Private Sector Renewal Grant programme. The scheme is financed from residual ring-fenced resources received from the East London Renewal Partnership. The programme supports the aims and objectives of the Council's Private Sector Housing and Empty Properties Framework, and includes Home Repairs Grants for minor aids and adaptations, energy efficiency, minor repairs, home security, hazard removal and relocation assistance; Empty Property Grants and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants.
- 4.2 The specific grant considered in this report forms an element of the programme and can be met from within uncommitted resources. The applicant meets the conditions that the Council applies to these grants.
- 4.3 The applicant is seeking a grant of £1,012 to provide lever taps and other urgent minor adaptations to his home. The application has been considered by the Officer Private Housing Grants Panel and is recommended to the Commissioners for approval.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1. The legal provisions setting out the Council's duties and powers in respect of this grant payment are set out in non-exempt report titled "Provision of Home Repair Grants under the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-2015, to four individual owner occupiers.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 By targeting the very limited financial assistance which is still available to the most vulnerable owner occupiers, the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15, seeks to mitigate the problems of poor housing conditions and reduce the pressure on social and health care services and at the same time have a positive impact on the lives of these residents by reducing health and housing inequalities and ensuring their independence and inclusion.
- 6.2 A full Equalities Assessment on the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy has been carried out and which found there to be no evidence to suggest any adverse or negative impact.

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Individual grant costs are scrutinised and challenged at a number of stages of the grant process, from initial receipt by the grant officer through to final consideration by the Housing Grant Panel.

- 7.2 The use of small cost housing grants to carry out urgent but minor repair works for elderly and vulnerable home owners and those with disabilities, can ensure that resident is able to live healthily and safely in their own home and can reduce longer term repair costs if nothing is done about the problem. It also reduces the risk of reliance on other council services which may be more costly.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 8.1. There are no sustainability implications.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There is a risk that if this small grant is not approved the health and wellbeing of this disabled home owner could deteriorate as he becomes less and less able to operate the taps in his home and personal hygiene suffer as a result.
- 9.2 There is also a risk of electrocution as the washing machine electrical connection is adjacent to the kitchen sink.
- 9.3 Mr C is at risk of falling in his bathroom which could expose the Council and Health service to greater costs, through hospitalisation and additional funding for personal care.
- 9.4 There is also the risk of the loss of Mr C's independence.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no crime and disorder implications.

11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no safeguarding implications.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

Private Sector Housing Strategy 2013-15, Cabinet decision of 31 July 2013.
<http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/documents/g4188/Decisions%2031st-Jul-2013%2017.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=2>
Private Sector Housing Strategy 2013-15.
http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgsi/851-900/868_housing_statements/private_sector_housing_renewal.aspx

Appendices

Grant break-down sheet.

Grant Panel check sheet.

Chair of Private Housing Grant Panel's recommendation sheet

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

None

Officer contact details for documents:


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Commissioner Decision Report 30 September 2015	 TOWER HAMLETS
Report of: Aman Dalvi Corporate Director, Development and Renewal	Classification: Unrestricted
Provision of a Home Repairs Grant in the sum of £4,800.00 to Mr D, under the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15	

Originating Officer(s)	Alison Thomas
Wards affected	Bow West
Key Decision?	No
Community Plan Theme	A Healthy and Supportive Community: Reducing health inequalities and enabling people to live independently
Reasons for Urgency	Potential adverse impact on individual resident

Executive Summary

This report relates to the provision of Home Repairs Grants under Part 4.2 of the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15.

Under the terms of this policy, these small grants of up to a maximum of £6,000 may be made available to eligible owner-occupiers to enable them to remain in their own homes safely and avoid minor accidents.

Eligible home owners are those who are:

- over 60 years of age, or
- disabled or infirm, or the parent or carer of a disabled child and
- in receipt of an income related benefit or eligible tax credits

Recommendations:

The Commissioners are recommended to:

1. Agree Home Repairs Grants to Mr D in the sum of £4,800.00 to fund urgent repair works to the leaking main roof of the property.

2. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 The criteria set out in the adopted policy are considered by officers to be met and if the Commissioners are satisfied of this then the payment should be made. The sum proposed has been assessed to meet the costs of the works.

3. DETAILS OF REPORT

- 3.1 Under Part 4.2 of the Tower Hamlets Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15, Home Repairs Grants up to a maximum value of £6,000 may be available to qualifying owner-occupiers to enable them to remain living in their own homes safely and avoid minor accidents.
- 3.2 To be eligible for assistance the applicant must be either over the age of 60, or disabled, or the parent of a disabled child and in all cases, be in receipt of qualifying means tested benefit. In addition the applicant must:-
- be an owner-occupier who lives in the dwelling as their only or main residence
 - be aged 18 or over on the date of the application (applications for minor adaptations for works to enable a disabled child to be cared for in their own home will be accepted from the parents or carer of that disabled child)
 - have the power or duty to carry out the works (with the appropriate consents where the property is leasehold)
- 3.3 Mr D is the freehold owner of, a two storey terraced Victorian house, with a rear addition which is contemporary with the main building.
- 3.4 In November 2012 Mr D's kitchen suffered from water damage due to a leak in the rear addition roof covering.
- 3.5 In July 2013 the leak was repaired with the aid of a Home Repairs Grant in the sum of £1,159.20 from the Council.
- 3.6 Earlier this year Mr D's house once again suffered from a leaking roof but this time from the main roof covering.
- 3.7 Mr D has submitted an application for a Home Repairs Grant together with an estimate for repairs to the main roof in the sum of £4,800.00.
- 3.8 Mr D meets the grant eligibility criteria in that he is the freehold owner of the property, has lived in the dwelling for over thirty years, is over sixty years of age and is in receipt of a means tested benefit.
- 3.9 The application has been considered by the Private Housing Grants Panel and who have made a recommendation that the grant be approved.
- 3.10 This grant is not repayable.

4. COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

- 4.1 A capital estimate of £550,000 was approved as part of the 2015-16 budget process to fund a Private Sector Renewal Grant programme. The scheme is financed from residual ring-fenced resources received from the East London Renewal Partnership. The programme supports the aims and objectives of the Council's Private Sector Housing and Empty Properties Framework, and includes Home Repairs Grants for minor aids and adaptations, energy efficiency, minor repairs, home security, hazard removal and relocation assistance; Empty Property Grants and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants.
- 4.2 The specific grant considered in this report forms an element of the programme and can be met from within uncommitted resources. The applicant meets the conditions that the Council applies to these grants.
- 4.3 The Council has previously financed repairs to the roof of the rear addition to this property via a Home Repairs Grant of £1,159. This application is now seeking funding to undertake urgent repair works to the leaking main roof, with a grant of £4,800 requested. If approved, this would bring total funding to £5,959. The application has been considered by the Officer Private Housing Grants Panel and is recommended to the Commissioners for approval.

5. LEGAL COMMENTS

- 5.1. The legal provisions setting out the Council's duties and powers in respect of this grant payment are set out in non-exempt report titled "Provision of Home Repair Grants under the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-2015, to four individual owner occupiers.

6. ONE TOWER HAMLETS CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 A private sector housing stock condition survey carried out in 2012, highlighted the fact that while property prices in the borough have continued to rise, local average earnings have stayed low and that many owner occupiers, especially amongst the elderly and disabled, are 'asset rich but cash poor'. The survey also established that some of the worst housing conditions are to be found within the private sector and that the poorest quality housing is more likely to be occupied by vulnerable households with 29% of households defined as 'vulnerable' occupying non decent housing.
- 6.2 By targeting the very limited financial assistance which is still available to the most vulnerable owner occupiers, the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2013-15, seeks to mitigate the problems of poor housing conditions and reduce the pressure on social and health care services and at the same time have a positive impact on the lives of these residents by reducing health and housing inequalities.

- 6.2 A full Equalities Assessment on the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy has been carried out and which found there to be no evidence to suggest any adverse or negative impact.

7. BEST VALUE (BV) IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Individual grant costs are scrutinised and challenged at a number of stages of the grant process, from initial receipt by the grant officer through to final consideration by the Housing Grant Panel.
- 7.2 The use of small cost housing grants to carry out urgent but minor repair works for elderly and vulnerable home owners and those with disabilities, can ensure that resident is able to live healthily and safely in their own home and can reduce longer term repair costs if nothing is done about the problem. It also reduces the risk of reliance on other council services which may be more costly.

8. SUSTAINABLE ACTION FOR A GREENER ENVIRONMENT

- 8.1. There are no sustainability implications.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There is a risk that if this small grant is not approved the repair works will not be carried out and the property will continue to deteriorate, leading to much great future costs.
- 9.2 There is also the risk that if water penetration continues into the fabric of Mr D's home, both his and his disabled wife's health will suffer. If this situation were to continue during the winter months there is the possibility of serious health conditions and even hospitalisation.
- 9.3 There is the further risk that repair costs will significantly increase in the longer term as the structural integrity of the building is affected.

10. CRIME AND DISORDER REDUCTION IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 There are no crime and disorder implications.

11. SAFEGUARDING IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 There are no safeguarding implications.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

Private Sector Housing Strategy 2013-15, Cabinet decision of 31 July 2013.
<http://moderngov.towerhamlets.gov.uk/documents/g4188/Decisions%2031st-Jul-2013%2017.30%20Cabinet.pdf?T=2>
Private Sector Housing Strategy 2013-15.
http://www.towerhamlets.gov.uk/lgsi/851-900/868_housing_statements/private_sector_housing_renewal.aspx

Appendices

Photographs of the main roof covering
Grant break-down sheet.
Grant Panel check sheet.
Chair of Private Housing Grant Panel's recommendation sheet

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012

None

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