

STROUD DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING COMMITTEE

TUESDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2023

Report Title	Extension of Private Sector Housing Renewal 2018-23 Policy			
Purpose of Report	To recommend to Committee the adoption of the current Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2018-23 for a further 12 months.			
Decision(s)	The Committee RESOLVES to adopt the current policy for a further 12 months to enable the results of the Gloucestershire Private Sector Housing Stock Condition survey to be considered in a new policy.			
Consultation and Feedback	None			
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Options	Not to adopt the existing policy for a further 12 months. This would mean that the Council would be unable to deliver improvements to the private sector housing in the district. This would include being unable to approve Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)			
Background Papers	None			
Appendices	Appendix A - Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2018-2023			
Implications (further details at the end of the report)	Financial	Legal	Equality	Environmental
	Yes	Yes	No	No

1. INTRODUCTION / BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 places a duty on a Local Authority to publish a Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy and to review that Policy regularly.
- 1.2 The policy must detail any financial assistance the Local Authority will make available under article 3 of the Order for housing renewal in the private sector. This includes assistance for homeowners and tenants living in the private rented sector and social housing but does not include tenants living in council owned stock.
- 1.3 A copy of the current policy can be found at Appendix A.
- 1.4 The current policy was adopted in September 2018 for a 5 year period and is therefore now due for review.

2. MAIN POINTS

- 2.1 The Council along with the other Gloucestershire district councils is currently undertaking a private stock condition survey of 1,000 properties per district selected at random from the Council tax data base.
- 2.2 This work is being undertaken by external contractors.

- 2.3 Unfortunately, the start of the Countywide survey was delayed due to several factors including the Gloucester City Council Cyber-attack and the introduction of the Homes for Ukraine accommodation scheme.
- 2.4 The result of which is that the data gathered by the survey which is required to undertake a proper review of the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy will not now be available until December 2023.
- 2.5 If the Council does not have an adopted policy in place, then it cannot undertake any financial activities in the private sector under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002.
- 2.6 This means that the Council cannot offer any grants or loans to assist householders, which would include Mandatory and Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants to provide disabled adaptations and Healthy Homes Loans to householders on low incomes for urgent repairs which if not carried out could affect the occupant's health.
- 2.7 Adopting the current policy for a further 12 months will enable a full thorough review and consultation to be carried out based on the revised data from the Private Sector Housing Survey.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 That the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy 2018-23 contained in Appendix A be adopted for a further 12 months to enable a proper review to be carried out once the results of the Private Sector Housing Survey are available.

4. IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Financial Implications

The implications of not extending the Private Sector Housing Renewal policy would mean financial activities in the private sector under the Regulatory Reform Order 2002 would be curtailed.

This would result in the council being unable to offer grants or loans to disabled or low-income householders.

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4.2 Legal Implications

Before a local authority can provide any assistance under the regulatory reform order, the authority must have adopted a policy for the provision of assistance and have given public notice of the policy. In addition, it must ensure that a full copy of the policy is available for inspection free of charge at its principal office at all reasonable times, and a that summary document is available by post on payment of a reasonable charge. Any assistance must then be provided in accordance with the policy.

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4.3 Equality Implications

There are not any specific changes to service delivery proposed within this decision.

4.4 Environmental Implications

There are no significant implications within this category.