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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 7</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2016</b>	<b>CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>MIKE HAYNES – DIRECTOR OF HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES</b>	<b>EXEMPT PARAGRAPH NO: NOT EXEMPT</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>MATT HOLFORD – ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH MANAGER</b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>ALL</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS14, HCS10</b>

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## **1. Recommendations**

- 1.1 That Members approve the revised Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy.

## **2. Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To advise members of the services available to support private sector housing renewal in South Derbyshire and our future priorities in the event of new funding availability.
- 2.2 To seek approval from Members on the key policy commitments in the revised Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 Good quality housing is one of the primary determinants of health. For many decades one of the key roles of Councils have been to provide both economic and technical assistance to support the maintenance and improvement of private sector housing conditions.
- 3.2 Traditional support for the private sector has consisted of macro scale neighbourhood regeneration programmes; through full renovations of individual properties; and down to providing support for rectifying minor disrepairs.
- 3.3 Evidence from private sector house condition surveys indicate that conditions in the private sector have progressively improved over the long term, and we expect them to continue to do so. Therefore, the need to deliver substantial economic investment of public capital into the private sector has diminished. This reduction in demand along with the need to reduce public spending has led to the cessation of capital financing of private sector renewal other than where it is a statutory requirement, namely for Disabled Facilities Grants.
- 3.4 The emphasis in need has therefore shifted in recent years from the Council directly providing grant funded support to the private sector, to facilitating house owners to access other support or low cost private capital to invest in their properties.

- 3.5 South Derbyshire retains a relatively small capital budget to support private sector housing, consisting of approximately £115,000 in two separate capital budgets. Unless these budgets are managed expeditiously they could be exhausted very quickly and with a return of bringing only a handful of properties back into a suitable condition. Therefore our overarching ethos on the future use of this capital will be to use it as an investment fund to support home owners who cannot readily access capital to support improvements. Our default position will be to use this capital to support housing repair which meets our four policy statements and then seek to recoup this capital at a sustainable rate in order to reinvest in other private sector properties in need.
- 3.6 Ultimately therefore we will aim to keep the existing capital provision roughly balanced over the long term.
- 3.7 The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy provides the strategic detail about how we will prioritise this capital and about how we will seek to use the other forms of intervention available to us to best effect.
- 3.8 We are also conscious that periodic opportunities to bid for funding for project support can emerge. The turnaround time on project bids can often be very tight and the bid criteria frequently require a clear evidence base to justify the proposals. If the policies and priorities within the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy are endorsed by SDDC Members, we will be well placed to provide a strategic justification for any future bid proposals which fit with the Policy.

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Minor beneficial. All of the proposed capital described in the Policy is already committed to investment in private sector housing. If this capital is utilised well, then it will ultimately be returned to the Council. In addition this will ensure that the property remains occupied and therefore contributing Council Tax.
- 4.2 We anticipate that the Policy will leave us better placed to support submissions for bids for housing renewal capital if and when they appear in the future.

#### **5. Corporate Implications**

- 5.1 The proposals align with the “Place – Creating vibrant communities to meet residents’ needs” theme of the 2016-21 draft Corporate Plan and in particular it aligns with the key aim to “Facilitate and deliver a range of integrated and sustainable housing and community infrastructure”.

#### **6. Community Implications**

- 6.1 Beneficial.

#### **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 The reports seeks Member agreement for a new Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy which makes clear the commitments the Council is making towards supporting housing conditions in the private sector. By necessity, the overall tone of the Policy reflects a move from the historical approach of intervention by direct financial support to one which makes greater use of statutory powers, advice and sign-posting. Future operational decisions on our interventions in private sector housing will need to be undertaken in accordance with the four policy statements.