



FULL COUNCIL REPORT

Date Written	31 st October 2018 **
Report Author	Steve Peters
Service Area	Public Protection and Housing
Exempt/Non Exempt	Non Exempt
Committee Date	19 th December 2018

To: Mayor, Ladies and Gentlemen

Housing Renewal Policy

1.0 SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Legislation requires that local authorities create and publish a Housing Renewal Policy which clearly defines the types of assistance available and who is eligible to apply.
- 1.2 The updated version of the Policy covering the period 19th December 2018 – 31st March 2021 is available via the Background Papers link.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS that

- 2.1 The Housing Renewal Policy (19th December 2018 – 31st March 2021) be approved with immediate effect.

3.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England & Wales) Order 2002 repealed previous prescriptive legislation concerning housing renewal grants and provided local authorities with increased flexibility to address local housing needs and priorities. It required local authorities to create, publish and keep under review Housing Renewal Policies, which clearly define the types of assistance available and who is eligible to apply.

- 3.2 This latest version of the Council's Housing Renewal Policy outlines all of the types of housing grant and loan assistance available to local citizens, who meet the eligibility criteria for each product.
- 3.3 The statutory framework has also been added to by the coming into force of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
- 3.4 This Housing Renewal Policy has been refreshed and replaces the 2015-2018 version to take account of the fact that the Council's third and final Renewal Area – Bedlinog and Trelewis, expired in May 2017. This was as a direct result of changes in capital grant funding provided by Welsh Government, and the cessation of their national housing renewal programme. The Housing Renewal Team was therefore disbanded in summer 2017 and hence why many of the grant products which were previously available within the county borough are no longer available.
- 3.5 This revision of the Housing Renewal Policy has been undertaken in recognition of the changes which have occurred within the County Borough and nationally in recent times. Housing need, stock transfer, global recession and ethnic migration are just some of the variables which have changed significantly in recent years, all of which have a significant impact on the local housing market and wider communities.
- 3.6 This Policy, whilst outlining the broad set of policy tools available, also contains detailed information within the Appendices, relating to the various types of financial assistance which may be available, subject to available funding.

4.0 WHAT'S CHANGED

- 4.1 This new Policy contains a number of changes from the previous Policy. Said changes are summarised below:
- Expiry of Renewal Area funding in 2017 – means that some forms of grant are no longer available locally.
 - References to Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 have been included in the policy document, including the insertion of a section relating to 'Exceptional Circumstances – Well-being Considerations' which aims to clarify what the Council will do in circumstances where a client or carer need has been identified, but where current adaptation products do not address such need(s).
 - References to the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 have been included.
 - The local policy context has been updated.
 - The housing needs section of the Policy has been rewritten using information from the 2016 ORS – Local Housing Market Assessment information.
 - Some of the terms of the loans products have been updated to reflect greater scope provided to local authorities by Welsh Government
 - The Council's Grant Waiver Policy – has been updated and inserted (as Appendix 3) to this Policy, whereas previously it was a stand-alone document.

- A DFG Discretionary Top Up Grant has been inserted into the Policy – at a maximum value of £10,000, to help fund DFG eligible works which exceed the mandatory DFG limit of £36,000 inclusive of fees.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

- 5.1 The DFG Discretionary Top Up Grant, shall be funded within the current DFG capital allocation within the Council’s capital programme.
- 5.2 ‘The Exceptional Circumstances – Well-being Considerations’ is a new policy development and is likely to lead to additional costs to the Council. The financial implications of this additional criteria cannot be quantified at this time.
- 5.3 The Loans funding pot provided to the Council by welsh Government is ring fenced and recyclable. Only available loan funds will be administered, so there is no current financial implication arising from loan products.

6.0 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT

	Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts	Not Applicable
1. Merthyr Tydfil Well-being Objectives	1 of 4	0 of 4	3 of 4
2. Sustainable Development Principles - How have you considered the five ways of working: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term • Prevention • Integration • Collaboration • Involvement 	4 of 5	0 of 5	1 of 5
3. Protected Characteristics (<i>including Welsh Language</i>)	2 of 10	0 of 10	8 of 10
4. Biodiversity	0 of 1	0 of 1	1 of 1

Summary:

The main positive impacts are the Policy provide advice and assistance to those in greatest need, particularly elderly and vulnerable residents; improves the condition of private sector dwellings within the County Borough; promotes independent living, by providing disabled aids and adaptations to the homes of less able residents and ensures more residents (particularly elderly and vulnerable) can live safely, securely and in relative comfort within their homes

The main negative impacts are. None identified

**ALYN OWEN
CHIEF OFFICER COMMUNITY
REGENERATION**

**COUNCILLOR GERAINT THOMAS
CABINET MEMBER FOR
REGENERATION AND PUBLIC
PROTECTION**

BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Title of Document(s)	Document(s) Date	Document Location
Housing Renewal Policy	22 nd November 2018 – 31 st March 2021	MTCBC Website
Does the report contain any issue that may impact the Council's Constitution?		No

Consultation has been undertaken with the Corporate Management Team in respect of each proposal(s) and recommendation(s) set out in this report.