

# Individual Executive Decision Notice

<b>Report title</b>	Request to Complete Small Works Assistance Grant Works (IEDN: 03/2020)	
<b>Decision designation</b>	GREEN	
<b>Cabinet member with lead responsibility</b>	Councillor Louise Miles, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Resources	
<b>Wards affected</b>	East Park;	
<b>Accountable Director</b>	Ross Cook, Director of City Environment	
<b>Originating service</b>	Housing Services	
<b>Accountable employee</b>	Lynda Eyton	Client Relationship Manager - Housing Management Agents Tel: 01902 555706 Email: <a href="mailto:lynda.eyton@wolverhampton.gov.uk">lynda.eyton@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a>
<b>Report to be/has been considered by</b>	Cabinet Member Briefing Resources	

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## Summary

Approval is sought to utilise the Council's discretion to depart from its Housing Assistance Policy under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002, in order to complete a second grant for a vulnerable household.

The client qualifies under the Housing Assistance Policy, but as this will be a second grant for this household express consent is required from the Council.

## Recommendation for decision:

That the Cabinet Member for Resources, in consultation with the Director of City Environment:

1. authorise a Small Works Assistance Grant under imminent risk to resident health and safety and approve that a land charge be applied to the property in respect of the value of the works to enable the Council to recover the costs incurred upon sale or change of ownership.

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Signature

Date:

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Signature

Date:

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 City of Wolverhampton Council's (CWC) Private Sector Housing Assistance (PSHA) Policy sets out the circumstances under which vulnerable or disabled households living in private tenure homes within the City can access assistance from the Council to make improvements to their home so that they are safe to live in. Where these circumstances have not been met, but circumstances are exceptional, the Council can apply further discretion in order for assistance to be provided.
- 1.2 The owner of this property is a paraplegic with 24-hour care in her own residence. She received an initial grant in 2014 for a new rear door at a cost of £710 as it was insecure and was not weathertight. A local land charge was placed on the property for value of the grant.
- 1.3 The applicant is in receipt of an income assessed benefit and their savings are minimal. They would not be able to self-fund this work.
- 1.4 Whilst the applicant meets the qualifying criteria for a grant, as they received a grant in 2014, this makes the applicant no longer eligible for assistance under the current terms of the policy. Recent damage to the roof at the property means the resident would benefit from a second grant for repairs to the roof in the room that she sleeps in. Whilst the roof is in fair condition and does not require a full replacement Roofstyle have attended and are able to complete repairs to the roof for £1,488.00. The damage to the roof was unforeseen and was not part of the original assessment in 2014.

## **2.0 Evaluation of alternative options**

- 2.1 Options
- 2.2 Option 1: Complete the work requested as a second grant, which will add a second charge to the property. This will provide a long-term solution to the hazards identified within the property and prevent any further deterioration.
- 2.3 Option 2: Not provide financial assistance to the vulnerable homeowner meaning repairs to the roof cannot be completed. This would leave them at risk of harm due to deterioration of the roof leak causing more damage to the property over the longer term and any risks to their health and safety associated with this.

## **3.0 Reasons for decision**

- 3.1 By agreeing to the recommendation of option 1 outlined above, the client will be able to remain in their own property without the continued detrimental impact to her health the current housing conditions pose.

## **4.0 Financial implications**

- 4.1 The amount identified for the works of £1,488 can be met from the existing General Fund capital budget for repayable grants, with the previous grant paid for from 2014/2015

budget allocation. It is intended that a charge will be put onto the property for the full amount.

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## **5.0 Legal implications**

5.1 The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 confers a power on local authorities to improve living conditions in their area. It provides that assistance can be given for a range of matters including repairing living accommodation and the adaptation or improvement of living accommodation. Housing assistance can be provided in any form i.e. grant or loan and can be made subject to conditions. This power to provide assistance can only be exercised once a policy has been adopted and published. Thereafter the local authority can only provide assistance in accordance with that policy. However, there is a requirement that the Council does not fetter its discretion with respect to considering requests for assistance which fall outside of the published policy. The recommendations within this report are consistent with the Council's strategic objectives in operating the housing assistance policy.

6.1 Assistance can be provided in any form i.e. grant or loan and can be made subject to conditions. The current Housing Assistance Policy allows for the council to utilise its discretion to impose additional safeguards or exceptions where considered necessary.

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## **6.0 Equalities implications**

6.1 An initial screening was completed for the housing assistance policy and that showed that a full analysis was not required. Equalities monitoring is in place and this will allow for the process of allocating support to pay "due regard" to Public Sector Equality Duty.

6.2 All work completed under WHIS is also compliant with Care Act 2014 preventative measures relating to suitable housing conditions.

## **7.0 Climate change and environmental implications**

7.1 Small works assistance grants enable housing services to improve the standard of housing in the City, reduce inequalities and potentially reduce carbon emissions in line with the Council's sustainability strategy; in turn this will improve the function, amenity and visual impact of the City neighbourhoods.

## **8.0 Human resources implications**

8.1 There are no human resources implications.

## **9.0 Corporate Landlord implications**

9.1 Small works assistance grants are delivered to owner occupiers only and have no direct corporate landlord implications.

## **10.0 Covid-19 implications**

10.1 Work to be undertaken to the property in accordance with Government guidelines for Working Safely during Coronavirus.

## **11.0 Health and Wellbeing implications**

11.1 Completing the works to the property will contribute to the health and wellbeing of the residents.

## **12.0 Schedule of background papers**

12.1 Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy, Cabinet, 12 September 2018.