

REPORT TO: Cabinet

MEETING DATE: 12 March 2013

BY: Executive Director (Services for Communities)

SUBJECT: Private Sector Housing Budget – Mandatory and Discretionary Financial Assistance 2013/14

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the Council's detailed policy and budget in relation to the financial assistance provided as part of the Council's Scheme of Assistance.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the Financial Assistance policy for 2013/14 as set out in Section 3.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Financial Assistance provided through the Council's Scheme of Assistance takes the form of a range of mandatory and discretionary grants. A budget of £450,000 has been set to fund Financial Assistance for 2013/14.
- 3.2 It is projected that the Financial Assistance budget will be underspent in 2012/13. The Council is likely to commence the financial year 2013/14 with a small outstanding grant commitment.
- 3.3 During 2012/13 the Council provided mandatory and discretionary grants for disabled adaptations in the private sector and discretionary grants for common repairs and to bring empty homes back into use.
- 3.4 Based on actual and estimated expenditure in 2012/13 it is proposed that all grants other than those for disabled adaptations are ended. This will allow grant commitment carried forward from 2012/13 to be met and ensure that demand for grants for disabled adaptations approved in

2013/14 can be satisfied. The policy on mandatory and discretionary grants for disabled adaptations is set out below.

Table 2: Mandatory and Discretionary Financial Assistance Policy for Disabled Adaptations 2013/14

	Policy
Mandatory	80% universal grant (100% for those households in receipt of 'passporting' benefit)
Discretionary Grant (top up)	Discretionary grant offered to those households receiving 80% mandatory grant. This means tested grant can increase the total grant award to between 80 and 100%.
Discretionary Grant (extension to living area)	A grant can be offered for an extension to the living area of a property where it is recommended that this is the only way to meet the needs of a disabled person subject to a range of conditions being met. The maximum eligible expense of this grant is £20,000 and the grant is means tested.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The report sets out changes in policy in relation to the Discretionary Grants the Council will provide.

5 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was completed for the Scheme of Assistance and negative impacts have been found, these will be addressed through delivery of the Scheme of Assistance.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial – Financial implications will be accommodated within the Council's budget allocation for 2013/14.
- 6.2 Personnel – None
- 6.3 Other – None

7 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 7.1 Cabinet Report 30 March 2010 – Housing (Scotland) Act 2010: Scheme of Assistance
- 7.2 Cabinet Report 13 March 2012– Private Sector Housing Budget – Mandatory and Discretionary Financial Assistance 2012/13

AUTHOR'S NAME	Esther Wilson
DESIGNATION	Housing Strategy and Development Service Manager
CONTACT INFO	Esther Wilson (Ext. 7361)
DATE	27 February 2013