



## **Rochford District Council**

### **Housing Renewal Assistance Policy**

This document sets out the Council's policy for giving financial assistance to repair, improve and adapt private sector homes in the Rochford District Council area. It details those who are eligible, the works for which assistance can and cannot be given, the amount of assistance and the conditions under which it will be given. It also details the mechanism by which people who do not meet the eligibility criteria can ask for assistance.

The policy will operate from 5 September 2006. It will be kept under review and may be subject to change. Any amendments will be dealt with through authority delegated to the Head of Community Services.

Anyone requiring further information should contact the Community Services Department on (01702) 318045 or 318160.

## Housing Renewal Assistance Policy

The Council has agreed to give financial assistance for the repair, improvement and adaptation of private sector property in the Rochford District area in accordance with the following policy:

1. The assistance shall be through a grant known as the Rochford Home Maintenance and Adaptation Grant (RHMAG)

**N.B. The availability of grant is subject to the financial resources made available by the Council and is only available to make a non – decent home decent.**

2. All applications for grant shall be made through Springboard Home Improvement Agency.
3. The grant is available for works to residential properties and to residential mobile homes situated on protected sites within the meaning of the Caravan Sites Act 1968 or the Mobile Homes Act 1983.
4. There is no limit to the number of grant applications that can be made but the maximum amount that can be paid in respect of works to any one property is £10,000 in any period of two years.
5. Except in the case of a mobile home, a grant shall only be provided if the Council is satisfied that the property will meet the Decent Home standard upon completion of the grant- aided works.
6. In the case of a mobile home, grant will only be provided where the Council is satisfied that the home will be in a satisfactory condition on completion of the grant-aided works.
7. The grant is available for the following:
  - (a) Repairs to the structure of a residential property or mobile home and any amenities within it.
  - (b) Improvements to any residential property or mobile home to provide any missing amenities.
  - (c) Measures to provide or improve the security of a residential property or mobile home as recommended by a Crime Reduction Officer of Essex Police or any other competent person.
  - (d) Energy efficiency measures which are not eligible under the Warm Front scheme.
  - (e) To top up a Warm Front grant.

- (f) Adaptations to a residential property to enable an elderly or disabled person or their carer to remain in their home.
  - (g) Adaptations which are subject to a Disabled Facilities Grant application where the cost of the works exceed the mandatory limit.
  - (h) To assist a disabled person with the purchase of alternative accommodation where the Council, in consultation with the Social Services Authority, considers that the existing home is not suitable for adaptation.
  - (i) Works to achieve the Decent Homes standard.
8. With the exception of applications in respect of 7(g) above, grant will only be available to Owner Occupiers in receipt of a qualifying benefit. . A qualifying benefit is one defined under the Government's Decent Homes Standard
9. With the exception of 7(e), 7(f), 7(g) and 7(h) above, grant will only be available to applicants who have lived at the property or mobile home as their only or main residence for at least 2 years prior to the date of application.
10. In order to make a valid application for a Warm Front top-up grant the applicant must submit the following documents:
- (j) A fully completed application form.
  - (k) Proof from Warm Front that a contribution is required.

For other grants the applicant must submit the following documents:

- (a) A fully completed application form.
- (b) Proof of ownership of the property that is the subject of the application.
- (c) Proof of entitlement to a qualifying benefit
- (d) Proof of National Insurance Number.
- (e) Proof of residence at the property for 2 years prior to the application (unless exempted under 9 above).
- (f) 2 estimates for the works for which grant aid is applied except where the works are urgent or of a specialist nature, in which case only one estimate will be required.
- (g) The written consent of any joint owner(s) of the property that is the subject of the application.

(h) Proof of responsibility for a child/proof of pregnancy.

In the case of a tenants application relating to works under 7(g) above the landlords written consent to the works will be required.

11. Any necessary fees incurred in making a grant application or in carrying out the approved works will be eligible for grant aid.
12. The amount of grant approved can be revised by the Council to take into account further necessary works which could not have reasonably been foreseen at the time the grant application was made. Any revised amount will be subject to the maximum amount payable under 4 above.
13. Once the grant is approved 12 months will be allowed in which to satisfactorily complete the relevant works and claim payment. This period may be extended if there are good reasons for not completing the works within the required period. Payment of the grant will be subject to the submission of adequate invoices.
14. If the applicant disposes of the property within a period of 5 years from the date the grant- aided works are certified as being completed then the grant shall be repaid in full. This condition does not apply:
  - (a) Where the grant is given for works for the benefit of a disabled person or their carer.
  - (b) Where an applicant disposes of the property in order to go into a residential care home.
  - (c) Where repayment of the grant would cause undue hardship.
  - (d) Where the grant is for a Warm Front top-up; or
  - (e) In any other case where, having regard to the circumstances, the Council does not consider it appropriate to reclaim the grant.
15. Where an applicant does not meet the criteria under this policy they may appeal in writing to the Head of Community Services giving the reasons they feel they should be given assistance. There is a further right of appeal from the Head of Service to the Appeals Committee.