



North Hertfordshire District Council Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 came into force on 18 July 2002, repealing much of the prescriptive legislation governing the provision of previous housing assistance and replaced it with new wide ranging powers to provide assistance for housing renewal significantly based on local needs and achievement of strategic objectives.

The increased flexibility allows for new and innovative approaches to housing renewal and will require regular review together with the overall Housing Strategy.

This Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy is effective from 17th July 2003 and will be subject to regular review, revised versions will be produced when significant changes occur, eg to the type of assistance available.

The opportunity to influence availability of affordable housing within the Councils' area whether for Key Workers or other special needs groups etc will be processed with partner organisations. This policy document limits itself to consideration of works of repair, improvement, adaptation, relocation etc rather than enabling housing provision in the first place which will be considered through North Hertfordshire Housing Strategy 2003 - 2006.

Extracts from Central Government publication

"Poor quality housing can have an impact on the health of the occupants and on the quality of life in an area. The Government's view is that it is primarily the responsibility of homeowners to maintain their own property. However, the government is committed to improving housing quality across all tenures including the owner occupied sector and fully accepts that some homeowners, particularly the elderly and most vulnerable, do not have the necessary resources to keep their homes in good repair. Local authorities therefore have an important role to provide assistance in these cases".

"It is not intended to bring about the wholesale replacement of housing grants with loans".

"The Government would also consider that an authority was failing in its duty as a housing enabler and in its responsibility to consider the condition of the local private sector stock if it did not make some provision for (private sector housing) assistance."

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
June 2002

It is in this context that the Council has produced its private sector housing renewal policy.

2. ABOUT NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE

North Hertfordshire District Council encompasses the three market towns – Baldock, Hitchin and Royston – and the first Garden City of Letchworth, plus 33 rural parishes and surrounding countryside, extending to over 375 square kilometres in all.

The latest Census for 2001 showed that North Herts has a resident population of some 116,900 people, representing about 11% of the county's population. This is an increase of 4% on the population recorded in the 1991 Census. In common with the country as a whole, the district's population is an ageing one. There are now slightly more people in North Herts who are aged over 60 than aged under 16. Proportionately, both groups of people make up just over 20% of the district's population. There are just under 50,000 households in the district, with an average household size of 2.4 people. Almost 30% of households are single person households whilst 20% contain childless couples.

Minority ethnic groups make up 7% of the district's population (compared to a county average of 6%) and comprise 12% of Hertfordshire's minority ethnic population. The Indian and black Caribbean communities form the largest minority ethnic groups, although the population is culturally diverse, including people from Chinese, Bangladeshi, Pakistani, African, Polish and Italian backgrounds.

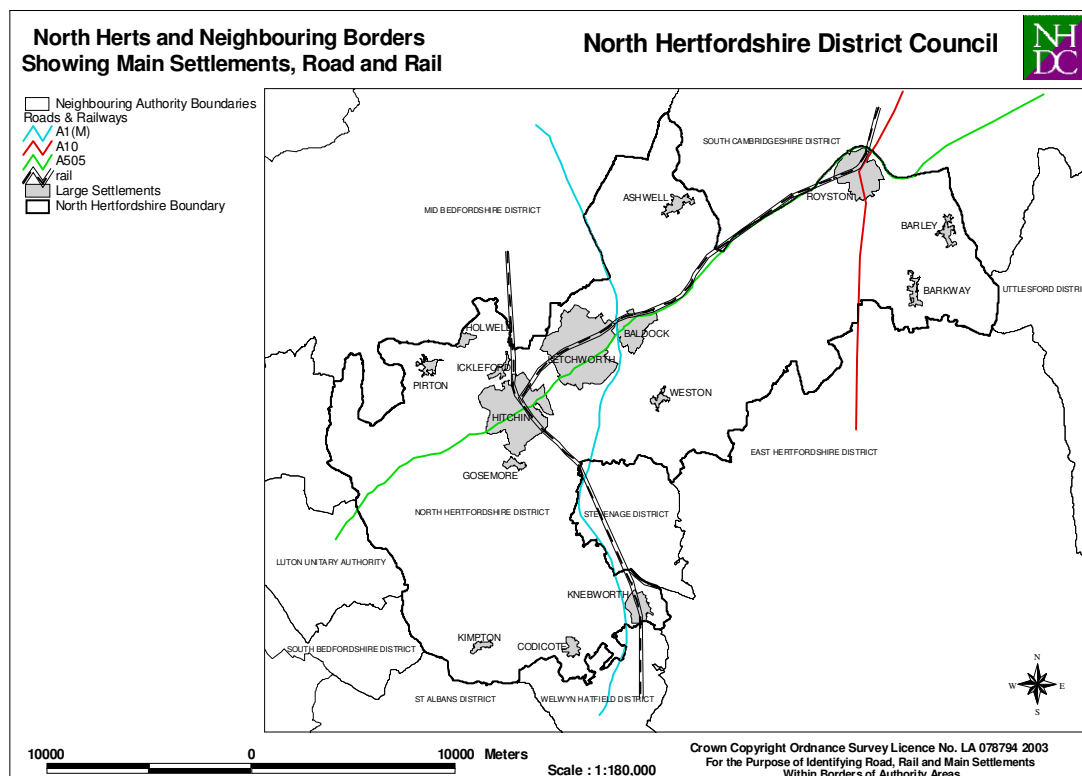
North Hertfordshire is generally regarded as an affluent and prosperous area with high wage levels and a low unemployment rate. At March 2003, the unemployment rate (as measured by the claimant count) stood at 1.6% compared with a national average of 2.6%. However, this overall prosperity masks a number of areas where communities are socially and economically excluded.

Table Key facts from Private Sector Stock Condition Survey (2002)

Key Facts	Number
• Population of the Borough/District	116,900
• Total Housing Stock	50,757
• 71% Owner Occupied	36,037
• 21% Registered Social Landlords	10,659
• 7% Privately Rented	3,553
• Unfitness / Disrepair – North Herts District Council	
• Rate of unfitness - 7.5%	3,040
• Rate of Disrepair - 14%	7,230
• Rate of unfitness in private rented sector – 20%	710
• Projected rate of hazards using proposed Health and Safety Hazard Rating System	7%
• Cost of making unfit property fit – per property	£7,133
• Comprehensive cost of repair over 10 years – per property	£5,915
• Cost of improving houses not unfit but needing substantial repair	£2,136

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of householders where head of household is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) On low income i.e. less than £10,000 household income b) Aged over 60 	33%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demand for disabled facilities adaptations 	4%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of homes with energy efficiency with a SAP rating < 30 	7%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of homes at risk of being in fuel poverty (gross income) i.e. spending more than 10% of their income on heating 	10%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage of private sector vacant dwellings – 0.4% long term vacant 	210
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capital allocated for all grants, including Mandatory DFG's for 2003/4 	£570,000

MAP OF ADMINISTRATIVE AREA



3. **POLICY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN**

This Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy became operational on 17th July 2003 and will be subject, as a minimum, to annual review through the overall Housing Strategy processes whilst regular review of the Council Community Strategy and Best Value Performance Plan will also influence possible future developments.

It is intended that this policy should remain in force for a minimum of two years prior to any major review and that amendment should only be necessary in case of significant change to policy items. Minor changes will be made to the document by the relevant Chief Officer without the need for formal ratification where such changes make no significant difference to service provision. Where amendments produce significant change to service provision those amendments will require Cabinet approval, before the operational policy changes.

The Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy will be amended to reflect any changing needs of the local community and/or its homes, such information will be conveyed to the Council by various means including stock condition surveys, next due for the private sector in 2007/8.

Therefore, the current policy will be subject to major review between one and five years after first commencement dependent upon local conditions and changing demands.

There may be 'external' factors, which require major review earlier than anticipated, e.g.

- Changes to Capital Spending Plans
- Acute changes to local circumstances
- National policy/legislative changes
- Local Strategic Partnership influences

In implementing its own policy, the Council will make reference to all relevant national legislation and guidance currently in place or introduced during the life of this policy. The guidance issued for Housing Renewal will be of particular relevance especially where it deals with Fitness Enforcement, Neighbourhood Renewal Assessment and re-affirms conditions etc relating to Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants.

The change in methodology of assessing statutory fitness of housing to the 'Housing Health and Safety Rating System' will be implemented in the life of this policy as will the introduction of a Houses in Multiple Occupation registration and/or licensing scheme. The new introductions will affect the process behind this policy but will not in themselves alone create significant change in the policy.

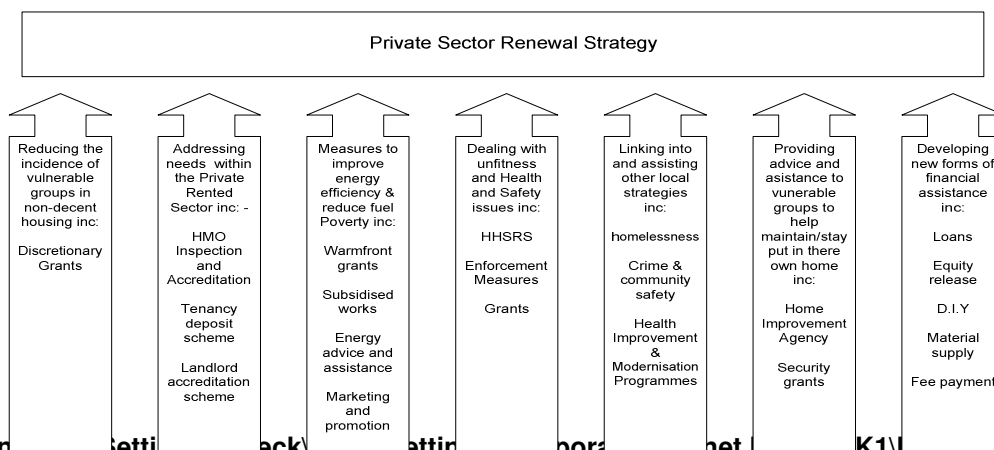
4. **MEETING KEY STRATEGIC AND SERVICE RELATED AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

4.1 The Council carries out its responsibilities using various strategies, plans and policies which must not only serve to inform each other but also inter-relate with and contribute to the implementation of those developed by partner organisations, e.g. Primary Care Trust and ultimately through the Local Strategic Partnership. The Local Strategic Partnership was set up to reflect the needs of the Local Govt Act 2000, requiring statutory agencies to work closely with community and voluntary groups to resource and deliver the aims of the Community Strategy. The Community Strategy itself was developed in response to considerable community consultation, and reflects the way in which our residents would like to see the District develop over the next 10-15 years.

There is a hierarchical arrangement of these strategies and plans, which must not be considered individually but must work together to achieve overall strategic aims and objectives. A simple illustration of this hierarchical arrangement is shown below.



Clearly, there are a number of existing Council service areas (or potential service areas which should be considered subject to resources) which are linked with the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy.



The Council service strategies which would be seen to link to this Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy are:

Housing Strategy
Energy Conservation Strategy
Empty Homes Strategy
Supporting People Strategy
Community Safety Strategy

4.2 The information in this item details the aims and objectives relating to private sector housing to be found in strategies and plans of the council.

<u>Strategy/Plan</u>	<u>Aim/Objective Of Relevance To This Policy</u>
4.2.1. <u>Council Vision</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Making North Hertfordshire a vibrant place to live, work and prosper.
4.2.2 <u>NHDC Strategic objectives 2004/2005 -2006/7</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Promoting sustainable development of the district to ensure we deliver adequate affordable housing, protect the environment and conserve the heritage of our historic towns and rural settlements.- Encouraging responsible citizenship and creating safe communities with less crime and less fear of crime.- Promoting first class leisure and cultural facilities to contribute to healthy living for all of our citizens.- Targeting resources at areas of disadvantage in the district to reduce social exclusion and improve the quality of life for everyone.- Creating opportunity for all by promoting sustainable local economic development.- Ensuring that we listen to our citizens and deliver responsive, high quality, value for money, customer focussed services.
4.2.3 <u>Community Strategy –</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Is a single document which commits the resources, and expertise of several local organisations in North Hertfordshire to address the issues, raised by the local people, which they feel will improve their quality of life.

4.2.4 Best Value Performance Plan 2003

- To provide high quality services which, put people first.
- To provide value for money by running our services more efficiently.
- To promote the economic, environmental and social well being of the district.

4.2.5 Environmental Health Service Plan 2004/2006
(Housing)

- Enforcement of private sector housing standards in the private rented sector, houses in multiple occupation, home improvement and disabled persons adaptation grants.

- Licensing of caravan sites

- Promotion of energy conservation (HECA)

4.2.6 Service Strategies

4.2.6.1 Housing Strategy

- To meet the community's need for affordable housing.

- Improve the quality & choice of home available to those in need of affordable housing.

- To prevent homelessness where possible & make best use of available resources in tackling homelessness.

- To ensure all Social housing in North Herts meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

- To ensure that high quality supported housing is available where needed.

- Deliver services that reflect the diversity of the local community

- To encourage the improvement of substandard housing conditions and home energy efficiency in the private sector housing stock through the promotion of housing grants.

- To improve facilities and access for the disabled within their homes through the promotion of disabled facilities grants.

- To target grant/loan resources in accordance with the housing strategy objectives:

- To take such action as necessary to prevent the private sector housing stock from deteriorating to such an extent that wholesale clearance becomes necessary.

- To secure the repair, closure or demolition of unfit dwellings.
- To ensure that living conditions in the private rented sector are not prejudicial to the health of, or materially affect the comfort of tenants, and that all privately rented accommodation is in a reasonable state of repair.
- To ensure that all houses in multiple occupation have satisfactory means of escape from fire, fire precautions, cooking and washing facilities, space and management standards and that conditions are not threatening to the health, safety and welfare of tenants.
- To encourage the improvement of unfit and substandard dwellings in the owner-occupied sector through the promotion of renovation grants and home repair assistance grants.
- To encourage the private rented sector to improve standards through an active policy of enforcement and, in appropriate cases, the offering of discretionary grants and the development of effective working relationships with reputable letting agencies and landlords.
- With the assistance of the Staying Put agency to help the elderly, disabled and vulnerable carry out works to their homes.
- To increase public awareness of the availability of grants/loans and other measures to improve energy efficiency in the private sector.
- To target grants/loans towards those who can least afford to carry out works to their homes.
- To target resources and develop policy having regard to the findings of the 2002 district wide house condition survey.
- To create housing conditions which provide affordable warmth.
- To reduce air pollution caused by production and consumption of energy and reduce consumption of non-renewable fuel resources.

4.2.6.2 *Energy Conservation Strategy*

- To foster and facilitate the installation of energy efficiency in private sector properties.
- To encourage the incorporation of energy efficiency measures in new build & refurbishment projects.
- To develop corporate working arrangements within the Council, with landlords and other agencies.

4.2.6.3 *Fuel Poverty Strategy*

- To strive to ensure that every resident in North Herts is able to live in a home which is adequately heated and insulated in order to maintain their comfort levels and reduce the risk to health.
- To ensure that information regarding competitive fuel supplies and relevant grants/awards is freely available to all residents in a suitable format to suit their varying needs.
- To work in partnership with energy providers, the Health Service, the voluntary sector and statutory organisation to improve the quality of housing.
- To ensure that the development of strategies throughout the Council properly consider and reflect the issue of fuel poverty.

4.2.6.4 *Empty Homes Strategy*

- To bring empty properties back into use and thereby help meet housing need.

4.2.6.5 *Supporting People Strategy (Hertfordshire County Council)*

- To ensure high quality Supported Housing is available for those who need it and where it is needed within Hertfordshire.
- To implement the Supporting People Regime to provide effective, inclusive decision making and efficient administration across the County.

4.2.6.6 *Community Safety Strategy*

- Work towards a reduction in crime, disorder and their associated costs in North Hertfordshire.
- Increase the reporting of incidents especially on vulnerable people.
- Act as a forum to run projects and to develop and implement action plans with partner agencies.

- Increase the exchange of useful information between partners.
- Concentrate on the local priorities, identifying needs and address these as cost-effectively and fairly as possible.

4.3 In addition the Government Office for the East of England, Regional Housing Statement 2001-2002 includes the following key regional priorities:

- To ensure that everyone in the East of England can live in a decent home at an affordable price.
- To reduce and remove any ways in which housing contributes to social exclusion.
- To contribute fully to the maintenance and creation of sustainable communities across the region.
- To allow housing to contribute fully in ensuring good health in the region's population and to reduce health inequalities.
- To develop housing as part of the social infrastructure to support sustainable and economic development of the region; and
- To play a full role in the environmental sustainability of the region.

4.4 The Council recognises pockets of deprivation in certain wards with individual properties being unfit or in substantial disrepair. In line with the rest of the country the area has an ageing population with increasing demands to remain independent in their own homes whilst local, national and international issues mean we must try and reduce fuel poverty and global warming.

4.5 A significant proportion of the area's unfit homes are considered to be in the privately rented sector or owned by those on low incomes and/or over 60 years of age. It is on these key findings that this Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy is constructed.

5. **RESOURCING THE PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY**

The operational provision of services from the private sector housing renewal policy will be undertaken through the Private Sector Housing team as part of Housing and Environmental Health.

The revenue costs are substantially salary orientated together with grant support to the Handy Person Scheme.

The capital funding of assistance for approved works substantially comes from the Council's own resources although central government directly reimburses 60% of all capital expenditure on mandatory disabled facilities grants. The capital funding allocated to private sector housing renewal may be spent on initiatives within this policy or other areas specified by statute, e.g. Compulsory Purchase.

The Council recognises the needs and benefits of supporting the private housing sector in a targeted and effective manner and will continue to support such as an integral element of Neighbourhood Renewal Initiatives.

6. TYPES OF ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE

The types of assistance available can be broken down into three broad categories of education and encouragement, financial and enforcement.

6.1 Education and Encouragement

The Councils officers will, except where statute says otherwise or there is an imminent risk to health or safety, attempt to resolve all issues through processes of education and awareness raising. Thus enabling property owners to undertake their responsibilities in an environment of understanding the needs and benefits of such action.

In addition the Council will undertake specific targeted education campaigns in order to achieve certain objectives, eg understanding the need to maintain your home and energy conservation measures. To meet this need the Authority has developed a maintenance manual and various information leaflets for distribution to local homeowners as well as providing energy efficiency advice and supporting discount schemes where applicable.

The Council will advertise and offer those residents, over the age of 60, the availability of the Staying Put and Handy Person schemes.

The provision of advice and encouragement may or may not also involve financial assistance.

6.2 Financial Assistance

The term of financial assistance may involve the award of a grant or a loan.

6.2.1 Grants

The Council may offer the following grants/loans subject to terms and conditions:

- Mandatory Disabled Facility Grants
- Discretionary Renovation Grants/Loans
- Discretionary Home Repair Assistance Grants

7. **ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

Enforcement action will not be the first response to minor contraventions of legislation and will be undertaken in accordance with the enforcement policy.

A copy of which can be found on the Councils website.

The need for formal enforcement may be brought about by various factors such as the severity of a problem, imminent risk to the occupier, previous history, confidence in a landlord, public interest etc.

Note:

North Hertfordshire District Council generic Enforcement Policy.

The Council has adopted an enforcement policy in accordance with the principles outlined in the Enforcement Concordat.

8. **THE GRANT/LOAN APPLICATION PROCESS AND HOW TO ACCESS IT**

The Council's policy on assistance takes into account responsibilities of owners to primarily maintain their own properties but also considers ability to do so and vulnerability of different groups as well as other criteria in determining eligibility criteria and terms and conditions. Those who are able to qualify for assistance will be given every opportunity to access the process through full dissemination of information at the Council Offices and those of partner organisations, i.e. Home Improvement Agencies, Social Services, Herts One Stop Shop, Advice Agencies and the Council's web site.

A summary of the policy will be provided at such outlets and electronically on the Council's website. It is hoped that in the future customers will be able to register an initial enquiry on line through the Authority's website. In addition a summary of the policy will be sent to all partner organisations and stakeholders. A copy of the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy will be available at the Council Offices and all local libraries. Initial access to the process can therefore be via existing points of contact within the Council, its partner organisations or other interested parties or by written or electronic enquiry.

Summary of the stages of the application process

1. The first stage of the process will commence when a potential applicant makes an initial enquiry as to possible assistance.
 - i, In the case of Disabled Facilities Grants and Renovation Grant/Loans the initial contact will be recorded and an enquiry pack sent with an informal financial means test. The applicant will be required to complete the financial means test form and return this to the Council. The applicant will be informed of the outcome of their informal financial means test
 - ii, In the case of Home Repair Assistance enquiry if the potential applicant is in receipt of an income related benefit they will be advised at the time of the enquiry as to whether they are eligible.
2. If the potential applicant wishes to proceed a home visit by an Officer will be arranged, except where the work obviously would not qualify for any assistance or where the informal financial means test precludes the applicant from proceeding.
3. At the time of the home visit the officer will assess the types of work involved and the most appropriate assistance will be considered.
4. The formal application pack will be sent to the potential applicant. This will include the application form, the schedule of eligible works and other associated paperwork.
5. The applicant returns the completed application form together with other supporting document, certificates, property valuation and mortgage details as well as the required number of estimates. Note: Information provided to the Council by applicants, as part of the application process, will be checked thoroughly. It may be shared with other departments of the Council and other organisations involved in any aspect of handling public funds to prevent and detect fraud or in investigation of other possible criminal activities.

5. When a complete application is received it will be assessed for formal approval of a grant/loan. This will include consideration of the cost of all eligible work and the reasonableness of costed items on estimates/quotations.
 - i In the case of Renovation Grants/Loans the Officer will determine that repair is the most satisfactory course of action having regard to the relevant guidance.
 - ii In the case of Disabled Facilities Grants the officer will determine that the work is reasonable and practicable and that it is supported by an Occupational Therapist.
6. The applicant will be advised of the outcome of the application. In the case of Renovation Grants/Loans and Disabled Facilities Grants the level of any grant/loan approved will be minus any means tested contribution.
7. On completion of works the applicant advises the Council who will arrange a further home visit to inspect the works.
8. On satisfactory completion of works and receipt of invoices the approved Grant/Loan can be paid to the contractor.

9. GRANT/LOAN DETAILS

9.1 Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants

The Council will award mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants according to the governing legislation and guidance issued by central government which determines, amongst other things, the type of work that can be funded, the maximum contribution that may be made, and the test of financial resources that must be made. Our information leaflet is available on request for more detailed information. The maximum grant that can be awarded is £25,000 minus any applicants' contribution. Section 10.2 provides further information on terms and conditions.

All grants in excess of £5000, paid to owner- occupiers for the provision of adaptations for a disabled person, will be subject to a legal charge. An amount of 33% of the value of the grant will be repayable should the property be disposed of (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) within ten years of the certified date of the grant (completion date).

Enquiries/applications by landlords will be subject to an alternative method of assessment. The method to be used is detailed in appendix 4, however, the principles of accessing the process remain the same.

9.2 Discretionary Renovation Grants

The Council will consider applications for discretionary Renovation Grants/Loans (subject to a maximum of £25,000) from owner-occupiers and qualifying tenants, subject to its own terms and conditions (section 10.3) and the financial means test.

GRANT OR LOAN

Where the applicant's contribution is nil the Council may offer a full grant/loan for the total cost of agreed works up to a maximum of £25,000. Where the applicant has a contribution the Council may offer a grant/loan, minus the applicants contribution, for the reasonable cost of works, up to a maximum of £25,000.

- a) In the case of Owner/Occupiers where the difference between the mortgage/loan debt, secured against the property subject to enquiry, and the current capital value of the property is greater than 1.5 times the cost of works (subject to a maximum of £25,000) then the Council may offer a loan which will be repayable and secured by an interest free charge on the property. The charge will be repayable on transfer (on sale, death or otherwise) of the property or part thereof or on grant of a lease on the property or part thereof.
- b) Where the difference between the mortgage/loan debt, secured against the property subject to enquiry, and the current capital value of the property is less than 1.5 times the cost of works (subject to a maximum of £25,000), including any level of negative equity, then the Council will consider providing a grant (up to a maximum of £25,000). The grant is subject to authorisation by the Chief Officer and the Portfolio holder. Grant conditions will apply for 5 years from the certified date.

Applications for discretionary Renovation Grants/Loans will be considered for the following outcomes:

- a) Remedying a deficiency or deficiencies from which a category 1 hazard or hazards arise as defined under Part 1 Housing Act 2004

One or more of the following hazards could arise from a deficiency

- (i) Damp and mould growth
- (ii) Excess cold
- (iii) Excess heat
- (iv) Asbestos
- (v) Biocides
- (vi) Carbon monoxide and fuel combustion products
- (vii) Lead
- (viii) Radiation
- (ix) Uncombusted fuel gas
- (x) Volatile organic compounds
- (xi) Crowding and space
- (xii) Entry by intruders
- (xiii) Lighting
- (xiv) Noise
- (xv) Domestic hygiene, pests and refuse
- (xvi) Food safety
- (xvii) Personal hygiene, sanitation and drainage
- (xviii) Water supply for domestic purposes
- (xix) Falls associated with baths etc
- (xx) Falls on the level
- (xxi) Falls associated with stairs and steps
- (xxii) Falls between levels
- (xxiii) Electrical hazards
- (xxiv) Fire
- (xxv) Hot surfaces and materials
- (xxvi) Collision and entrapment
- (xxvii) Explosions
- (xxviii) Ergonomics
- (xxix) Structural collapse and falling elements

- b) Meeting the Decent Home Standard

Applicants to be in receipt of one of the following benefits and subject to the financial means test.

- Income Support
- Housing Benefit
- Working Tax Credit (which includes a disability element)
- Council Tax Benefit
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Pension Guarantee Credit (not Pension Savings Credit)

- Child Tax Credit (where the relevant income of the person receiving the benefit is less than £14,200)
- Attendance Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- War Disablement Benefit
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit

A decent home meets the following four criteria:

- i) it meets the current statutory minimum for housing as detailed in a).
- ii) it is in reasonable state of repair. Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those where either
 - one or more of the key building components are old and because of their condition need replacing or major repair, or
 - two or more of the other building components are old and because of their condition need replacing or major repair.
- iii) it has reasonably modern facilities and services. Dwellings which fail to meet this criterion are those which lack three or more of the following:
 - a reasonably modern kitchen (20 years or less)
 - a kitchen with adequate space and layout
 - a reasonably modern bathroom (30 years or less)
 - an appropriately located bathroom and w.c.
 - adequate insulation against external noise (where external noise is a problem)
 - adequate size and layout of common areas for blocks of flats.
- iv) it provides a reasonable degree of thermal comfort. This criterion requires dwellings to have both effective insulation and efficient heating.

9.3 Discretionary Home Repair Assistance.

The Council will consider applications for discretionary Home Repair Assistance for owner-occupiers and qualifying tenants. All applications are subject to a maximum of £5,000 for works within categories (a-e) listed below, subject to its own terms and conditions (Section 10.4). Multiple applications can be made as long as the level of assistance does not exceed £5,000 in any three-year period.

Applicants will qualify if they receive one or more of the following means tested benefits.

- Income Support
- Housing Benefit
- Council Tax Benefit
- Income Based Jobseekers Allowance
- Pension Guarantee Credit (not Pension Savings Credit)
- Working Tax credit and Child Tax Credit with relevant income of less than £15,050
- Attendance Allowance

- Disability Living Allowance
- War Disablement Benefit
- Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit.

Applications for discretionary Home Repair Assistance will be considered for the following outcomes:

- a) To remedy essential repairs or conditions that interfere materially with the personal comfort of an elderly, infirm or disabled occupant.
- b) Remedial action to remove Category 1 hazard(s) where cost of works is less than £2,750 and property is occupied by person(s) falling within the defined vulnerable group for that hazard.
- c) Urgent adaptations for the care of the disabled, elderly or infirm will be considered from applicants, including those not in receipt of benefit, in exceptional circumstances only, subject to authorisation by the Head of Housing and Public Protection and the Portfolio Holder.
- d) Improvement to home security for the disabled, elderly or infirm.
- e) Essential and significant repairs to the basic fabric or services of residential mobile homes.

Enquiries for very small items of work may be considered for referral to the Home Improvement Agency "Handy Person Scheme", where appropriate.

10. **TERMS AND CONDITIONS**

These terms and conditions form part of the Council's Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy and will be applicable to all elements of it, except where otherwise stated, and in so much as the terms and conditions applicable to Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants are set by statute determined by central government and followed by Local Authorities.

In making an application for assistance, when applicants sign the application form they are agreeing to all the terms and conditions as detailed by the Council.

10.1 **CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO ALL GRANTS/LOANS**

10.1.1 Applications or enquiries will only be accepted on the prescribed forms of the Council.

10.1.2 Applicants must be 18 years of age or older at the date of application and in the case of joint applications at least one applicant must be 18 years of age or older at the date of application.

10.1.3 It is the applicant who employs the builder to undertake agreed works and the Council have no contractual liabilities in that relationship as their role is only to administer the grant/loan process.

10.1.4 The applicant is ultimately responsible for ensuring the quality of the completed works. The responsibility can be passed to an agent of the applicant, e.g. an architect or Home Improvement Agency.

10.1.5 The Council will not undertake works on behalf of applicants, except where works may be due in default of an owner's, tenant's etc failure to comply with a statutory notice.

10.1.6 The Council, or their agents determine what works are included on work schedules. It is acceptable for owners, tenants or their agents etc to draw up initial schedules of work which may be reduced or added to by the Council in terms of work qualifying for possible assistance.

10.1.7 The agreed works must be carried out by one of the contractors whose estimates/quotes were submitted as part of the application. The grant/loan will usually be calculated using the lowest priced estimates/quote except in exceptional circumstances.

10.1.8 The responsibility to gain all necessary approvals e.g. Planning Permission, Building Regulation Approval etc, rests with the applicant or their agent.

10.1.9 If an applicant submits an estimate/quote from a member of their family, who then carries out the agreed works, the grant/loan will only be paid on the basis of the cost of materials and not labour.

10.1.10 An application for assistance toward works that have already been completed will not be processed. Any part of works not commenced, which would otherwise have been considered for assistance will be processed for possible grant/loan assistance,

as long as this work is not commenced prior to formal approval. This condition does not apply to works required by statutory notice.

- 10.1.11 With regard to mandatory Disabled Facilities grant aid, in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the relevant Chief Officer, works that have been commenced may be considered for grant aid, subject to the Council being satisfied that there was good reason for works commencing prior to grant approval.
- 10.1.12 All payments shall be conditional upon receipt of an acceptable invoice and made direct to the appropriate contractor/agent following agreement by the Council and applicant that works have been satisfactorily completed. In a situation of dispute between the applicant and contractor, which is not resolved in a reasonable time period, the grant/loan, or part thereof, maybe paid directly to the applicant or to the builder at the discretion of the Council.
- 10.1.13 Payment to the applicant will be considered where the applicant submits an invoice and receipt for payment from the contractor.
- 10.1.14 The payment of any grant/loan approved will only be considered after any applicant's financial means tested contribution has been accounted for in the value of invoices submitted.
- 10.1.15 The Council will include the reasonable cost of preliminary or ancillary services, fees and charges within the calculation of assistance. The payment of any such fees is conditional on a grant/loan being approved and the completion of all specified works.
- 10.1.16 The Council will only consider requests for interim payments where the amount of the grant/loan is in excess of £6,000. No interim payment will be for more than 90% of the cost of completed work and in aggregate no more than 90% of the total approved amount before final completion. Where individual contractors have completed their work grant payment will be made.
- 10.1.17 In the event of a successful insurance or compensation claim, action for legal damages, etc which covers the cost of works for which grant/loan was previously paid, the Council will require repayment of the total value of grant/loan paid relating to such works or the value of the insurance payment/legal damages if lower.
- 10.1.18 Grant/loan assistance will only be approved for the benefit of applicants who are able to provide evidence of a valid National Insurance Number.
- 10.1.19 Where an applicant's circumstances change after approval is issued, such that approval would no longer be given, then the grant/loan approval will be cancelled, or no further payments made. Where payments have been made, the Council may demand repayment together with compound interest (at such reasonable rate as the Council may determine) from the date on which payment was made until repayment. In exceptional circumstances, where work has commenced, the Chief Officer may give authority to provide further funding so as to complete the work to a suitable and appropriate stage.
- 10.1.20 In any case where financial circumstances, at the time of application, are later confirmed differently to those submitted, such that a new processing of information would lead to no or reduced assistance, then the original approval will be amended or cancelled. Where it is felt the degree of error in the applicant completing the original financial means test form is such to suggest a deliberate attempt to deceive, the Council may choose to cancel the whole approval or demand repayment of all

monies paid or overpayment, plus compound interest (at such reasonable rate as the Council may determine) from the date on which payment was made until repayment.

- 10.1.21 In certain circumstances where the Council believes that actions of applicants may have been taken to deliberately defraud the Council, a file will be passed to the Police for investigation.
- 10.1.22 The Council may refer enquiries for assistance to the externally managed Warm Front Scheme or to the Home Improvement Agency as appropriate.
- 10.1.23 The Council may from time to time utilise special funding from central government, or other sources, aimed at specific subjects to target issues of local and national concern in accordance with any special conditions, e.g. replacement of inefficient boilers. Any special terms and conditions applicable to such initiative will be appended to the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy, as they will not significantly alter the Council's primary approach to the subject.
- 10.1.24 The Council may not consider discretionary applications from persons, organisations etc where there is a possible alternative source of funding for maintaining properties, such as Housing Associations including North Herts Homes, NHS, etc.
- 10.1.25 The discretionary grants/loans the Council awards are all subject to levels of available funding in each financial year and as such the Council reserves the right to defer approval, or consideration of applications for periods of time. The Authority will endeavour to determine an application within 6 months of receiving a full and complete application.
- 10.1.26 The Council reserves the right to refuse discretionary grants/loans, place on a waiting list, or delay payment according to the budgetary constraints appertaining at the time.
- 10.1.27 The Council reserves the right to re-consider any individual application against any of these terms and conditions upon the authority of the Chief Officer.

10.2 **CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO MANDATORY DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS**

Reference should be made to conditions set under statutory legislation Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996

- 10.2.1 Applicants for assistance will be required to complete details of financial circumstances on a form provided by the Council requiring answers to pre-set questions. In completing this form applicants will be required to sign a declaration as to the accuracy of information provided and that of supporting paperwork, e.g. wage slips, accounts and valuations etc. The Council will routinely carry out cross checks on information provided,
- 10.2.2 The details of the financial means testing shall apply to all Disabled Facilities Grants.
- 10.2.3 All applications for assistance from owner/occupiers must provide a certificate of title, or alternative evidence of title, which confirms that the applicant has either a fee simple interest or have a lease for a term of which not less than 5 years remain unexpired, at the date of application. In addition the consent of the mortgagee(s)

shall be obtained for the execution of eligible works if stipulated as a condition of the mortgage contract.

10.2.4 All applications for assistance from owner/occupiers and tenants must be accompanied by either an owner occupation certificate or a certificate of intended letting. The following separate requirements apply for the different certificates:

Owner Occupation Certificate: that throughout a period of 5 years from the certified date of completion the dwelling will be the only or main residence of and will be occupied by the disabled occupant; and

that an amount of 33% of the value of the grant, in excess of £5000, will be repayable should the property be disposed of (whether by sale, assignment, transfer or otherwise) within ten years of the certified date of the grant (completion date).

Intended Letting Certificate: that throughout a period of 5 years from the certified date of completion the dwelling will be let to the disabled occupant.

10.2.5 In the case of tenants applications the Council have discretion to waive the requirements for a certificate of intended letting where such is not forthcoming and the works are required to remove risk to the tenants health and/or safety.

10.2.6 All applications from tenants must be accompanied by a tenants certificate stating that throughout the grant condition period the dwelling will be the only or main residence of the disabled occupant.

10.2.7 All applications from tenants must be accompanied by the owners written authority.

10.2.8 An application for a Disabled Facilities Grant will only be considered complete and then processed when it is accompanied by an Occupational Therapists report recommending the works that are necessary and appropriate.

10.2.9 An application for a Disabled Facilities Grant will only be considered where the Council deems that the work is reasonable and practicable.

10.2.10 The amount of grant payable will be assessed on the basis of the reasonable cost of the eligible works up to the maximum level of grant and will be minus any applicant means tested contribution

10.2.11 Additional funding will only be considered above the original approval level in the event of unforeseen work being needed to allow completion of agreed works or proven increases in costs to the contractor from their suppliers etc. A formal re-approval to a higher level of assistance will be required before any payment above the originally approved level, is paid up to the maximum level.

10.2.12 The Council will determine on each approval document the time period allowed for works to be completed, which will not normally exceed 12 months and may be significantly shorter for small items of work.

- 10.2.13 At least two estimates/quotes must accompany a grant application. The Council reserve the right to ask for more estimates/quotes if they are not happy with those submitted or to accept a single quote, where two would normally be required, for work from specialist contractors.
- 10.2.14 In the 5 year period following certified date of completion the applicant shall, upon written request from the Council, reply in writing, within 21 days of the date of the request stating how she/he is complying with any of the terms and conditions of the grant.
- 10.2.15 In considering applications for the benefit of people with disabilities the Council may choose not to aid adaptations for which County Council Social Services are responsible under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 or subsequent legislation.
- 10.2.16 The Council may specify in approvals, involving the installation of specialised equipment for the benefit of people with disabilities, that the equipment is to be returned to the Council when it is no longer needed. The grant recipient, or a representative, shall notify the Council as soon as the equipment is no longer needed and the Council or their agent may choose to remove it for re-use elsewhere, making good any damage caused by its removal

10.3 **CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO DISCRETIONARY RENOVATION GRANTS/LOANS**

- 10.3.1 Applicants for assistance will be required to complete details of financial circumstances on a form provided by the Council requiring answers to pre-set questions. In completing this form applicants will be required to sign a declaration as to the accuracy of information provided and that of supporting paperwork, e.g. wage slips, accounts and valuations etc. The Council will routinely carry out cross checks on information provided,
- 10.3.2 The financial means testing shall apply to all applications accompanied by an owner-occupier's certificate and tenants certificate. In the case of landlord applications the contribution will be calculated as detailed in Appendix 4.
- 10.3.3 No application shall be accepted for a discretionary Renovation Grant/Loan for a property, which is, by construction or conversion, less than 11 years old (excluding works required by statutory notice or to a house in multiple occupation).
- 10.3.4 Applicants for discretionary Renovation Grants/Loans must have been either owners or qualifying tenants of the property concerned for a period of 1 year prior to the date of application (excluding works required by statutory notice or to a house in multiple occupation).
- 10.3.5 All applications for assistance from owner/occupiers and landlords must provide a certificate of title, or alternative evidence of title, which confirms that the applicant has either a fee simple interest or have a lease for a term of which not less than 5 years remain unexpired, at the date of application. In addition the consent of the mortgagee(s) shall be obtained for the execution of eligible works if stipulated as a condition of the mortgage contract.

- 10.3.6 Applications from tenants must be from qualifying tenants who, according to the terms of their lease, are responsible for the work for which assistance is being sought.
- 10.3.7 Applications from qualifying tenants must be accompanied by a tenants certificate stating that the applicant is a qualifying tenant of the dwelling and that she/he or a member of the family intends to live in the dwelling as their only or main residence.
- 10.3.8 All applications for assistance from owner/occupiers, landlords and qualifying tenants must be accompanied by either an owner occupation certificate or a certificate of intended letting. The following separate requirements apply for the different certificates:
- Owner Occupation Certificate: that throughout a period of 5 years from the certified date of completion she/he or a member of the family intends to live in the dwelling as their only or main residence.
- Intended Letting Certificate: that throughout a period of 5 years from the certified date of completion the property will be let or available for letting as a residence, not a holiday home, to a person/s not related or connected with the owner of the dwelling for which assistance is being received.
- 10.3.9 In the case of tenants applications the Council have discretion to waive the requirements for a certificate of intended letting where the works are required to remove risk to the tenants health and/or safety.
- 10.3.10 All applications from tenants must be accompanied by the owners written authority.
- 10.3.11 Upon conclusion of discretionary Renovation Grants it will be expected that the property is left free from Category 1 hazard(s), any exception to this will require the authority of the relevant Chief Officer.
- 10.3.12 The Council may offer a loan where the difference between the mortgage/loan debt, secured against the property and the current capital value of the property is greater than 1.5 times the cost of works.
- 10.3.13 Any loan approved will be a set amount interest free. The loan will not be subject to any regular repayments, monthly or otherwise, nor will roll up/compound interest be added to the amount. The loan will be secured by an interest free charge on the property. The cost of registering the charge is payable by the applicant. The charge will be repayable on first transfer (through sale, death or otherwise) of the property or part thereof or on grant of a lease on the property or part thereof or upon the original applicant's voluntary decision to repay. Repayment may be postponed at the discretion of the Council in exceptional Circumstances.
- 10.3.14 The amount of grant or loan payable will be assessed on the basis of the reasonable cost of the eligible works up to the maximum level of grant and will be minus any applicant means tested contribution
- 10.3.15 Additional funding will only be considered above the original approval level in the event of unforeseen work being needed to allow completion of agreed works or

proven increases in costs to the contractor from their suppliers etc. A formal re-approval to a higher level of assistance will be required before any payment above the originally approved level is paid up to the maximum level.

10.3.16 The Council will determine on each approval document the time period allowed for works to be completed, which will not normally exceed 12 months and may be significantly shorter for small items of work.

10.3.17 At least two estimates/quotes must accompany a grant/loan application. The Council reserves the right to ask for more estimates/quotes if they are not happy with those submitted or to accept a single quote for work from specialist contractors.

10.3.18 In the case of a grant, for which part or complete payment has been made, where the **applicant** disposes of the property, or ceases to make it available for letting as the case may be, before the conclusion of a 5 year period following the certified date of completion she/he shall repay to the Council on demand on a pro rata basis an amount of the assistance that has been paid.

If the property is disposed of within 12 months from final payment of the grant then the full amount of the grant/loan is repayable.

If sold within 13 – 24 months - 80% of the grant will be repayable

If sold within 25 – 36 months - 60% of the grant will be repayable

If sold within 37 – 48 months - 40% of the grant will be repayable

If sold within 49 – 60 months - 20% of the grant will be repayable

10.3.19 In cases where a property is disposed of within the 5 year period and recipients wish to make representations as to why assistance should not be repaid they will be considered by the Chief Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, who will determine whether to waive repayment or not.

10.3.20 If in any position whereby repayment of grant/loan is required and the applicant fails to make the necessary arrangements, the Council will place a charge on the property, which will incur compound interest at a reasonable rate as determined by the Council.

10.3.21 In the 5 year period following final payment of monies the applicant shall upon, written request from the Council, reply in writing, within 21 days of the date of the request stating how she/he is complying with any of the terms and conditions of the grant/loan enquired about.

10.3.22 Failure to comply with this item will be deemed a failure of grant/loan/loan conditions requiring total repayment of grant plus compound interest at a reasonable rate determined by the Council.

10.3.23 The conditions relating to repayment of grant apply equally to whichever certificate was signed for a five year period from the date of final payment of grant/loan.

10.4 **CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO DISCRETIONARY HOME REPAIR ASSISTANCE GRANTS**

10.4.1 Applicants for assistance will be required to provide paperwork supporting their declaration as to receipt of benefit and to sign a declaration as to the accuracy of information provided and that of supporting paperwork, e.g. wage slips, accounts and valuations etc. The Council will routinely carry out cross checks on information provided.

10.4.2 All applications for assistance from owner/occupiers must provide a certificate of title, or alternative evidence of title, which confirms that the applicant has either a fee simple interest or have a lease for a term of which not less than 5 years remain unexpired, at the date hereof. In addition the consent of the mortgagee(s) shall be obtained for the execution of eligible works if stipulated as a condition of the mortgage contract.

10.4.3 All applications for assistance from owner/occupiers and tenants must be accompanied by either an owner occupation certificate or a certificate of intended letting. The following separate requirements apply for the different certificates:

Owner Occupation Certificate: that throughout a period of 3 years from the certified date of completion she/he or a member of the family intends to live in the dwelling as their only or main residence.

Intended Letting Certificate: that throughout a period of 3 years from the certified date of completion the property will be let or available for letting as a residence, not a holiday home, to a person/s not related or connected with the owner of the dwelling for which assistance is being received.

10.4.4 In the case of tenants applications the Council have discretion to waive the requirements for a certificate of intended letting where such is not forthcoming and the works are required to remove risk to the tenants health and/or safety.

10.4.5 All applications from tenants must be accompanied by a tenants certificate stating that throughout the grant condition period she/he or a member of the family intends to live in the dwelling as their only or main residence.

10.4.6 All applications from tenants must be accompanied by the owners written authority.

10.4.7 Applications from tenants for works other than energy efficiency works must be from qualifying tenants who according to the terms of their lease are responsible for the work for which assistance is being sought.

10.4.8 The Council will determine on each approval document the time period allowed for works to be completed, which will not normally exceed 4 months and may be significantly shorter for small items of work.

10.4.9 One estimate/quote must accompany a grant application. The Council reserves the right to ask for more estimates/quotes if they are not happy with those submitted.

10.4.10 In the case of any Home Repair Assistance, for which part or complete payment has been made, and where the **applicant** disposes of the property before the conclusion of a 3 year period following the date of final payment, she/he shall repay to the Council on demand on a pro rata basis an amount of assistance that has been paid unless the works were minor in nature, the cost of which was less than £1,000.

If the property is disposed of within 12 months from final payment of the grant then the full amount of the grant is repayable. If sold within 13 – 24 months of the final payment, 66% of the grant will be repayable and if sold within 25 – 36 months of the final payment, 33% of the grant will be repayable

10.4.11 If in any position whereby repayment of grant/loan is required and the applicant fails to make the necessary arrangements the Council will place a charge on the property, which will incur compound interest at a reasonable rate as determined by the Council.

10.4.12 In the 3 year period following certified date of completion the applicant shall upon, written request from the Council, reply in writing, within 21 days of the date of the request stating how she/he is complying with any of the terms and conditions of the grant.

10.4.13 The conditions relating to repayment of the grant shall apply equally to whichever certificate was signed for a 3 year period from the date of final payment of grant/loan.

11. **APPEALS PROCESS FOR APPLICATIONS OUTSIDE POLICY**

- 11.1 The Council has a general duty to consider the condition of the private sector housing stock upon which the Private Sector Housing Renewal Policy is based. All initial enquiries for assistance about the condition of private sector housing will be considered. Where any enquiry falls outside the policy for assistance a Senior Officer will consider whether it warrants special attention outside of normal policy, in accordance with the appropriate scheme of delegation.

In the event of the Senior Officer determining assistance is not warranted then this information will be conveyed in writing with the opportunity of appealing that decision to the Chief Officer whose decision will be considered final in respect of discretionary grants. In appropriate circumstances the Chief Officer will consult with the relevant Portfolio Holder.

- 11.2 The Council's adopted complaints procedure will apply should any applicant be dissatisfied with the service provided or the way in which the policy is applied.

12. DEFINITIONS WITHIN THIS POLICY

“Administration Charge”	Will be imposed by the Council to cover the cost (plus VAT) of its officers organising works in default of an owner, e.g. after a statutory notice has not been complied with or when a responsible person requests the Council to organise works.
“Agreed Works”	Are those works appearing on a schedule produced or authorised by the Council
“Certified date of completion”	Means the date certified by the local housing authority as the date on which the execution of the eligible works is completed to their satisfaction.
“Charge on a Property”	Is where the local authority legally places a debt on the record of a house and recovers the debt, plus interest where applicable, upon first transfer either through sale, death or otherwise, if not settled beforehand.
“Common Parts”	In relation to a building, includes the structure and exterior of the building and common facilities provided, whether in the building or elsewhere, for persons who include the occupiers of one or more flats in the building.
“Consent of Mortgagee”	Is given by the building society, bank etc with whom the applicant has their mortgage in the case of freeholders and leaseholders.
“Conversion Application”	Means an application in respect of works to provide one or more dwellings by the conversion of a house or other building, or for the provision of a House in Multiple Occupation by the conversion of a house or other building.
“Date of final payment of grant/loan monies”	Is the date of the final cheque from the Council, which completes payment of the grant/loan assistance.
“Disposal”	Means the transfer (by sale, death or otherwise) of the property or part thereof or on grant of a lease on the property or part thereof.
“Household Income”	Means the amount of money the financial markets will consider available from a household to fund a loan, but will not include income from children etc residing in the home, but purely from owner/s and any spouse or partner living in the property.
“House in Multiple Occupation”	And references to the owner of or person managing such a house shall have the same meaning as in Part XI of the Housing Act 1985 or any successor

	statutory definition.
“Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant”	Is defined as per in the Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, as amended, or as in any successor statutory definition.
“Means Tested Benefits”	Is any income based benefit received by an applicant, as defined and listed in a separate information sheet.
“Member of the family”	Includes spouses, persons who live together as husband and wife, parents, grandparents, children, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, uncles, aunts, nephews and nieces.
“Person with a disability/people with disabilities”	She/he is registered as a person with a disability or, in the opinion of the Social Services Authority is registerable as a person with a disability. This definition recognises the fact that the majority of people will not be on a register.
“Persons not related or connected with the owner of a dwelling”	Means not being a member of the owner’s family in accordance with the definition of ‘Member of the family’.
“Preliminary or Ancillary Services, Fees and Charges”	<p>Which may be included in a grant/loan application are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • technical and structural surveys; • design and preparation of plans and drawings; and preparation of schedules of works; • obtaining of estimates and valuations; • applications for building regulations approval and planning permission; • supervision of works; • disconnection and reconnection of electricity, gas, water and drainage utilities made necessary by the works (but no charges arising out of non-payment of bills); • advice on contracts and on financing the cost of works. <p>Including such services given by or through home improvement agencies.</p>
“Proof of Title”	Is completed by a Solicitor or Building Society on an applicant’s behalf in the case of freeholders or leaseholders to confirm ownership. Alternatively if the title is registered, up to date office copies of the title can be supplied.
“Qualifying Tenant”	Means a tenant who within their tenancy agreement has the responsibility to repair or maintain the element of a structure for which they are seeking assistance.

“Reasonable Repair”	Means the Council shall have due regard to the age and character of a dwelling and the locality in which it is situated, but not its state of internal decoration, when considering its condition.
“Safe Home Income Plan Scheme”	(SHIP) members are committed to providing opportunities for older persons to generate cash from the value of their homes and offer important guarantees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) That you have the right to remain in your home for life. b) That you retain the right to move home if you want to. c) No negative equity will be caused by a scheme.
SAP “ Standard Assessment Procedure”	The SAP is the governments standard system for home energy rating. It provides a simple means of reliably estimating the energy performance of dwellings. The rating is from 1 to 100 and the higher the number the more energy efficient the home.
“Statutory Notice”	Is a notice requiring owners/responsible persons to carry out work or some other action with regard to their property. The notice is served using the power of a national law and failure to comply may result in prosecution through the courts or works being carried out at the responsible persons expense.
“Substantial Disrepair”	Means repairs to a single property, being required to put it in reasonable repair, which will cost over £1,000.
“Works in Default”	Means works that the Council organises and possibly carry out as a result of the recipient of a statutory notice failing to comply with its requirements within a reasonable period of time.
“Working Days”	Means days excluding Saturday and Sundays.

APPENDIX 1

Key Service Standards

The Environment & Planning Department is committed to providing a fair responsive and cost effective service. The service that is provided will be measured against a number of performance standards.

- First response to a grant enquiry within 4 working days of receipt.
- All Home Repair Assistance enquiries to be processed to a point of initial inspection within 10 working days of receipt of enquiry.
- All Renovation Grant/Loan enquiries to be processed to a point of initial inspection within 10 working days of proof of eligibility.
- All Disabled Facilities Grants enquiries to be processed to a point of initial inspection within 10 working days of proof of eligibility and referral from Occupational Therapist.
- Schedule of works for Home Repair Assistance and Renovation Grant/Loan to be prepared within 3 weeks of initial inspection.
- Schedule of works for Disabled Facilities Grant to be prepared within 3 weeks of initial inspection and Occupational Therapist recommendations.
- Full application pack sent to applicant within 10 working days of agreed works being scheduled, or, in the case of disabled facilities grants, of the Occupational Therapists written agreement of schedule.
- Renovation and Disabled Facilities Grant approvals to be issued within 6 months of a complete application being received.
- Home Repair Assistance approvals to be issued within 6 weeks of a complete application being received.
- Payments to be made within 28 days of receipt of invoices, satisfactory completion of works and subject to the Authority finances being available.

FURTHER INFORMATION

If you require any further information regarding this Policy or Grants/Loans in general, please contact:

Private Sector Housing Team
Environmental Health
North Hertfordshire District Council
Council Offices
Gernon Road
Letchworth
Herts SG6 3JF

Tel: 01462 474267

E-mail: env.health@north-herts.gov.uk