

# **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 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 ..... It will be kept under review and may be subject to change. Any minor amendments will be dealt with through authority delegated to Officers but major changes will be reported and agreed through the Council's Committee process.

Anyone requiring further information should contact the Housing Health and Community Care Division on 01702 318045 or 318160.

# **Rochford District Council**

## **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 ( RHAG). The availability of the grant is subject to the financial resources made available by the Council.
2. All applications for grant shall be made through Springboard Home Improvement Agency.
3. The maximum amount of grant under any single application is £4,000 except in the case of 6(f) and 6(g) below where the maximum amount is £8,000.
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 one property is £8,000 in any period of two years.
5. 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.
6. The grant is available for the following:
  - (a) repairs to the structure of a residential property and any amenities (as defined in the Housing Act 1985) within it
  - (b) improvements to any residential property to provide any missing amenities (as defined in the Housing Act 1985)
  - (c) measures to provide or improve the security of a residential property 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 'Warmfront ' scheme
  - (e) Adaptations to a residential property to enable an elderly or disabled person or their carer to remain in their home.
  - (f) Adaptations which are subject to a Disabled Facilities Grant application where the cost of the works exceed the mandatory limit.
  - (g) 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.

7. With the exception of works under 6(f) above, the grant will only be available to the following residents who have lived at their property for at least 2 years prior to the date of application. The prior residence requirement will not apply in the case of applications under 6(g) above.

- (a) Owner-occupiers who are over the age of 60 and receive a qualifying benefit.
- (b) Owner- occupiers who have children under the age of 16 or who are at least 26 weeks pregnant and receive a qualifying benefit.

A qualifying benefit in respect of 7(a) and 7 (b) above is:

Income support  
Council Tax Benefit  
Housing Benefit  
Income based Job Seekers Allowance

- (c) Owner- occupiers who are disabled (or their carers) or who are on a low income who receive a qualifying benefit

A qualifying benefit in respect of 7(c) is:

Income Support which includes a disability premium  
Council Tax Benefit which includes a disability premium  
Housing Benefit which includes a disability premium  
Disability Living Allowance  
Attendance Allowance  
Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit ( which includes constant attendance allowance)  
War Disablement Pension ( which includes mobility supplement)  
Child Tax Credit ( where household income is less than £14,200)  
Working tax credit ( where household income is less than £14,200)

8. With the exception of works under 6 (f) above, in order to make a valid application for grant the applicant 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
- (f) 2 estimates of the works for which grant aid is applied..
- (g) The written consent of any joint owner(s) of the property that is the subject of the application.
- (h) Proof of receipt of Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit as applicable

In the case of a tenants application relating to works under 6(f) above the landlords written consent to the works will be required.

9. Any necessary fees incurred in making a grant application or in carrying out the approved works will be eligible for grant aid.
10. The amount of grant approved can be revised by the Council to take into account further works which need to be carried out and 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 this policy as detailed in 3 & 4 above.
11. 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 exceptional reasons for not completing the works within the required period. Payment of the grant will be subject to the submission of satisfactory invoices.
12. If the applicant disposes of the property within a period of 3 years from when the grant is paid 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) In any other case where, having regard to the circumstances, the council does not consider it appropriate to reclaim the grant.
13. Where an applicant does not meet the criteria under this policy they may appeal in writing to the Corporate Director (Finance and External Services) giving the reasons they feel they should be given assistance. There is a further right of appeal from the Corporate Director to the Appeals and Licensing Committee whose decision shall be final.