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**Report of the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods**

**Report to Executive Board**

**Date: 17 October 2007**

**Subject: Home Improvements (Grants/Loans/Housing Maintenance)**  
**Scheme Number 13337 000 000**

<b>Electoral Wards Affected:</b> All Wards
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<b>Specific Implications For:</b>
Equality and Diversity <input type="checkbox"/>
Community Cohesion <input type="checkbox"/>
Narrowing the Gap <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In  
(Details contained in the report)

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Private Decent Homes scheme, which provides assistance to homeowners with essential improvements and repairs, is part of the Single Regional Housing Pot Funding approval of £18.3m which has been secured to deliver the 2006-08 programme together with Housing Market Renewal Funding of £7.02m. The Decent Homes scheme amounts to £2m. This report now seeks authority from Exec Board to spend the remaining £1.3m which was injected into the capital programme in February 2007 to assist vulnerable private residents through grants and loans to repair and /or improve property , assist in achieving decency targets, and enable people to continue to live independently in their homes.

**1.0 Purpose Of This Report**

- To update executive board members on progress of the Decent Homes scheme.
- Request Executive Board to give authority to spend of £1.3m government grant for the remaining elements of this scheme.

**2.0 Background Information**

2.1 Executive Board at its meeting of 17th February, 2007 injected the remaining £1.3m into the capital programme which raised the scheme to £2m.

2.2 This report seeks authority to spend the remaining £1.3m through schemes specifically targeted at vulnerable private sector homeowners in non decent housing.

### **3.0 Main Issues**

- 3.1 There are 3 programmes of grant/loan support activity currently in operation which will draw on this funding.
- 3.2 A mix of financial assistance in the form of Equity Release Loans and Grants to support local regeneration initiatives and Corporate priorities. Equity Release fund support is available to assist vulnerable homeowners unable to fund essential works by other means (subject to a test of resources) and top up grants are available where equity release loans are insufficient to meet the full cost of essential works, or for other top up initiatives such as where Warm Front grant is insufficient to achieve the necessary level of energy efficiency improvements. In 2006/7 approximately 90 homes were brought out of fuel poverty and 35 homes made decent through either loan or grant support.
- 3.3 Grant support for Asbestos Decontamination in the Aviarys area. This is available under an approved scheme to assist eligible home owners in meeting the cost of the removal of asbestos fibres which have contaminated voids such as roof spaces and window cavities. All applicants are subject to a test of resources and with the scheme nearing completion, the deadline for registering an application for assistance has now passed, and final schemes are now being progressed. There are also a small number of grants to complete which relate to a private rented sector initiative in south Leeds regeneration area . In 2006/7 13 private homes schemes were completed with financial assistance bringing the total number of decontaminated properties in the area to 584 ( 73%).
- 3.4 A Home Maintenance Scheme administered on the Council's behalf through Care and Repair ( Leeds) Ltd which offers small ( up to £1000 maximum) grant assistance to vulnerable elderly residents with essential minor works to enable them to continue to live safely and independently. In 2006/7 approximately 500 homeowners were assisted with a range of home improvements including extra security measures, energy efficiency measures and other essential minor works.
- 3.5 Each of the above are continuations of programmes previously approved and which have been developed within the framework of the Private Sector Investment Strategy under the provisions of the Regulatory Reform Order.
- 3.6 A total of £0.7m authority to spend has already been approved on the above schemes and this report is asking Executive Board to give authority to spend for the balance of funding £1.3m to complete the Decent Homes programme for 2006/08.

## **4 Implications for Council Policy and Governance**

The continuation of this project is necessary to meet the objectives of the Vision for Leeds 2004-2020 and the Leeds Housing Strategy.

## 5 Legal And Resource Implications

5.1.1 With HMR/SRHP funding available the anticipated requisite resources are now in place. If costs escalate, due to unforeseen circumstance, savings from other schemes will be utilised to supplement the budget if possible.

## 6 Capital Funding & Cash Flow

Previous total Authority to Spend on this scheme	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2007 £000's	FORECAST			
			2007/08 £000's	2008/09 £000's	2009/10 £000's	2010 on £000's
DESIGN FEES (6)	0.0	0.0				
OTHER COSTS (7)	699.3	631.4	67.9			
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>699.3</b>	<b>631.4</b>	<b>67.9</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Authority to Spend required for this Approval	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2007 £000's	FORECAST			
			2007/08 £000's	2008/09 £000's	2009/10 £000's	2010 on £000's
DESIGN FEES (6)	0.0					
OTHER COSTS (7)	1300.7	284.2	1016.5			
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>1300.7</b>	<b>284.2</b>	<b>1016.5</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Total overall Funding (As per latest Capital Programme)	TOTAL £000's	TO MARCH 2007 £000's	FORECAST			
			2007/08 £000's	2008/09 £000's	2009/10 £000's	2010 on £000's
RHB Funding	2000.0	915.6	1084.4			
Total Funding	2000.0	915.6	1084.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Balance / Shortfall =</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

### Revenue Effects

There are no revenue implications within this scheme.

## 7 Conclusions

Following the injection of £1.3m from Executive Board in February 2007 the authority to spend is now required to allow this project to progress to completion.

## 8 Recommendations

Executive Board are requested to authorise the expenditure of £1.3m of Regional Housing Board Grant Funding.