

# Nottingham City Council Delegated Decision



**Nottingham**  
**City Council**

Reference Number:

2438

Author:

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Department:

Development

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Subject:

Recycling of Housing Renewal and Repair Repaid Grants

Total Value:

£300,000 (Type: Capital)

Decision Being Taken:

To approve the use of recovered home safety and improvement grant and loan funding for the purpose of continuing the delivery of home safety improvements to old and vulnerable citizens who are owner occupiers. This was the intended purpose of the recovery provisions in grants and the subsequent loan fund from their inception. Whilst vulnerable private tenants have protection through the Council's enforcement procedures, this is the only remaining assistance for vulnerable owner occupiers.

The use of future repayments above the £300,000 will be the subject of further decisions.

**Reasons for the Decision(s)**

Over the last fifteen years the City Council used ring fenced funding from Central Government to assist vulnerable owner occupiers to repair defects in their properties that were assessed as dangerous to health and life under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. Up until 2009 the funding was offered as grants which were repayable in whole or part if the property was sold within ten years of the commencement of the grant. After 2009 the funding was offered as assistance which was repayable on sale or transfer of the property in perpetuity. The purpose of this repayment was to enable the funding to be re used to assist other citizens who fulfilled the above criteria. This assistance is delivered through both the Adaptations and Renewal Agency and the Nottingham Home Safety and Improvement Service, the contract for which was awarded to Age UK Nottingham and Nottinghamshire in June 2015. This funding is a highly cost effective way to improve the health and well being of old and vulnerable people reducing, amongst other issues, hospital admissions, bed blocking and Excess Winter Deaths. An evaluation of the Equity Loan Scheme has been carried out which demonstrates the effectiveness of the scheme from both a customer and council perspective.

This funding mechanism has enabled the Council to respond to a range of situations where vulnerable owner occupiers have needed assistance, for example addressing severe flooding in homes in the Basford area. Any funding delivered using this mechanism will be recovered and will be available to the Council for future investment.

Based on an average loans of £12,000, it is expected that Age UK and the Adaptations and Renewal Agency will be able to help 8 vulnerable citizens through the loan system for the next 3 years. In addition they would be able to assist annually, with repayable assistance averaging £3,000, a further 6 vulnerable citizens who are ineligible for the loan system (often because the costs are below the loan threshold).

**Other Options Considered:**

The funding can be transferred to other projects. This will mean that the Home Safety and Improvement Service will only be able to offer a reduced service, or in the worst case scenario will be forced to close, and the housing conditions of the most vulnerable and elderly home owners will be adversely affected with consequent implications for health and well being of these citizens. The Council will also incur greater care and residential expense for many older and more vulnerable citizens if this option is no longer available. Furthermore the funding is used to address essential repairs, such as dangerous electrical wiring that legally prevent adaptation work for disabled people, for example a stair lift in that property, resulting in the person suffering serious quality of life limitations or require them to be relocated, at greater expense to the Council.

**Background Papers:**

None

**Published Works:**

None

**Affected Wards:**

Citywide

**Colleague / Councillor Interests:**

None

<b>Consultations:</b>	Those not consulted are not directly affected by the decision.
<b>Crime and Disorder Implications:</b>	Not applicable
<b>Equality:</b>	EIA not required. Reasons: Not required as the scheme is to be continued. EIA would be required if funding was used for other purposes and the assistance discontinued.
<b>Decision Type:</b>	Portfolio Holder
<b>Subject to Call In:</b>	Yes
<b>Call In Expiry date:</b>	03/05/2016
<b>Advice Sought:</b>	Legal, Finance, Other: Graham De Max(ghraham.demax@nottinghamcity.gov.uk)
<b>Legal Advice:</b>	The proposals set out in the report raise no significant legal issues and are supported.  Advice provided by Malcolm Townroe (Legal Services Manager) on 10/02/2016.
<b>Finance Advice:</b>	From 2006 onwards the Council provided Regional Housing Group grants to owner-occupiers to undertake repairs to their properties if they lacked the financial resources to carry out the works. The grants are repaid if properties are sold within 10 years of the work being done and these repayments have been set aside for potential reinvestment. This report requests approval to use these resources to establish a fund of £300,000 to continue the delivery of home safety improvements to old and vulnerable citizens who are owner occupiers. Further repayments will continue to be received in succeeding years. Any sums exceeding the £300,000 referred to in this report will be retained by the Council and their use will be subject to decision at that time. It will be necessary to make a provision of £300,000 in the Capital Programme for this scheme, which will be financed from repaid grants.  Advice provided by Julie Dorrington (Finance Analyst (Housing)) on 12/04/2016.
<b>Other Advice:</b>	This proposal is fully supported by the Housing Strategy service. It will enable a very important service to continue to provide advice and assistance to vulnerable homeowners who have disrepair issues and are unable financially to resolve them.  Advice provided by Graham de Max (Partnership and Policy Manager) on 16/02/2016.
<b>Signatures</b>	Jane Urquhart (Portfolio Holder for Planning and Housing) SIGNED and Dated: 21/04/2016 David Bishop (Deputy CE, CD for Development and Growth) SIGNED and Dated: 21/04/2016