

**Meeting of the Executive Members for
Housing & Adult Social Services and
Advisory Panel**

26th March 2007

Report of the Director of Housing and Adult Social Services

Creation of A New Security Grant

Summary

1. To revise the grants and assistance policy to include a new security grant for vulnerable residents, which keeps a dwelling secure, against unauthorised entry and enable the maintenance of defensible space.

Background

2. The Safer York Partnership approached the council wanting to promote the use of the York Repair Grant to help vulnerable customers fund security measures in areas, which they had identified as high crime hot spots. However, given that there is often a significant waiting list for this grant it would not have provided a speedy solution for these residents. By working in partnership the provision of this new simple ring fenced grant will help to ensure that vulnerable residents who are in fear of crime are not placed on a waiting list but are assisted quickly.
3. The proposed security grant will provide a small grant of up to £1000 to carry out prescribed measures. £40,000 of funding will be set aside from the York Repair Grants to fund this type of work.
4. The Executive Coordinator for the York Community Watch (Safer York Partnership), a qualified crime prevention officer, will determine the type of works required and provide a written schedule of works for the customers who will then follow the same process as the York Repair Grant.
5. Full details of the new grant are outlined in Annex 1 but Members will note that the criteria for vulnerable persons follow the principles outlined in the existing York Repair Grant.
6. The grant will be available to all residents who meet the criteria however it intended that the Safer York Partnership will promote the grants to residents in high crime hot spots and in particular to victims of repeat burglaries. This will complement interventions in those high crime areas planned by the Safer York Partnership Burglary Task Group, funded through Safer Stronger Communities and Local Public Service Agreement.

7. This will ensure that we are maximising our resources to have the biggest impact in reducing crime and increasing security by targeting properties which are most affected.
8. It should be noted that there would be an implication for residents. We estimate that potentially 7 York Repair grants would be lost but a minimum of about 40 residents will benefit from this new grant.

Consultation

9. Consultation regarding the amendments has taken place with Housing Standards and Adaptations staff and partnering organisations namely Safer York Partnership, York Home Improvement Agency and Age Concern who see this as a very positive move.

Options

10. Option 1 To revise the existing policy in line with the proposal
Option 2 Maintain the current policy with no revisions

Analysis

11. Option 1 - by changing the grant this will benefit vulnerable customers linked into other crime prevention initiatives. However there will be a reduction in the YRG of about 40K, which will affect about 7 customers. This will help contribute to the Home Office target of reducing burglaries by 36% by March 31st 2008 and the mandatory local area agreement outcome to reduce crime.
12. Option 2 - without the changes to the grants and assistance policy the Housing Standards and Adaptations team will not be able to target help at customers who fear or are at risk of crime quickly.

Corporate Priorities

13. The development of a Security grant will support the priority outlined in the Corporate Strategy
 - “Improve the quality and availability of decent, affordable homes in the city”
 - “Improve the actual and perceived condition and appearance of the city’s streets, housing estates and publicly accessible spaces”
 - “Reduce the actual and perceived impact of violent, aggressive and nuisance behaviour on people in York”

Implications

14. The implications arising from this report are:
 - **Financial** - Changes to the policy will be accommodated within the current capital programme
 - **Human Resources (HR)** - *None*

- **Equalities** - None
- **Legal** - None
- **Crime and Disorder** - This will help contribute to the Home Office target of reducing burglaries by 36% by March 31st 2008 and the mandatory local area agreement outcome to reduce crime.
- **Information Technology (IT)** - None
- **Property** -None
- **Other** - None

Risk Management

15. The risks in not implementing the proposed changes outlined in option 1 is that the council will not be able to provide an effective and timely solution for vulnerable residents.

Recommendations

16. The Executive member is ask to:
- Approve option 1 to revise the grants and assistance policy to include a new security grant which will help vulnerable residents.

Reason: To help vulnerable customers in fear of crime more quickly.

Contact Details

Author:

Ruth Abbott
Housing Standards &
Adaptations Manager

Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Steve Waddington
Head of Housing Services

Report Approved

Date 12th March 2007

Specialist Implications Officer(s)

Implication Crime and Disorder
Name Simon Hornsby
Title Improvement Officer
Tel No. 01904 551075

Wards Affected: List wards or tick box to indicate all

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Background Papers:

Grants Policy

Annexes:

Annex 1 – Security Grant

Security grants

Purpose of Grant

To provide a new grant for vulnerable groups, which keep a dwelling, secure against unauthorised entry and the maintenance of defensible space.

Who is eligible for the grant?

To qualify for assistance an applicant must normally: -

- a) Be aged 18 or over
- b) Be an owner or private tenant or an occupant with a right of exclusive occupation for a period of more than five years
- c) Be either 60 or over, disabled, or have a child under 16 living with them **and** be in receipt of one of the following benefits:
 - Council tax benefit
 - Housing benefit
 - Working tax credit, excluding child tax credit
 - Guaranteed pension credit
 - Income based job seekers allowance
- d) Have a power or duty to carry out the works
- e) Have lived in the property for 12 months prior to making the application (or three years if applying under an exclusive right of occupancy). Where an applicant lives in a mobile home (park home) on a licensed site or on a houseboat with mooring rights they must satisfy a three-year qualification period.

What work will the grant cover?

A recommendation is required from The Safer York Partnership that the work is necessary & appropriate.

The types of work which normally can be grant aided include

- Fencing to provide defensible space around a dwelling
- Doors and windows – fitting locks to vulnerable windows
- To provide substantial doors with adequate locks.
- Door viewers
- Burglar alarms
- Security lighting

The Safer York partnership will provide to the applicants a schedule of works, which will be eligible for the grant.

How much grant will be given

The maximum grant will be normally £1000 and restricted to one application within ten years.

There will be a limited budget each year for this assistance and enquiries will be dealt with in date order in a waiting list system.

Fees

For the Security grant local authority administrative fee of £200.00 will be included in all grant applications.