



BARNLSLEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

Appendix B: Revised Empty Homes Grant Conditions:

Purpose:

To provide grant assistance for improvement works to enable long term empty homes to be brought back into use and thereby help meet housing need in the borough.

Grant amount payable and related issues:

- Maximum grant available per property £15,000
- The cost of any works required to bring the property back into use in accordance with the findings of the Empty Homes inspection, which exceeds the maximum grant level, will be funded by the owner / landlord (or potential landlord) and will be paid for in advance of any works commencing. If this is not possible the empty homes grant may not be approved, if the lack of additional funding from applicant would prevent completion of repair works necessary for safe occupation
- Scheduled works will be based on the assessment of works required to bring the property back into use, prioritised with regard to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System
- For ‘finishing’ of the property: basic wall/floor coverings will be offered as an option. ‘Finishing’ of works are only available to those properties which will then be the subject of the ‘Private Sector Leasing Scheme’ (see appendix C)
- Owners who will be occupying the property on completion of works will need to demonstrate upon application of the grant that they are a first time property owner or that they are purchasing a property as a consequence of divorce or separation. They will also be required to provide an up-front contribution linked to the value of the works to be covered by grant funding as set out below:
 - 5% contribution for the sums up to £10,000
 - 10% for sums £10,001 - £15,000..
- Landlords (and potential landlords) will pay a contribution, up front before works commence equivalent to 15% of the cost of the works to be covered by the grant; in the case of members of the Barnsley Accreditation Scheme the up-front contribution is 10% of the cost of the works covered by the grant.

Eligibility criteria:

Properties will be individually identified and targeted to receive Empty Homes Grants, based on strategic priorities and eligibility criteria. The availability of Empty Homes Grants will not be openly advertised, due to the targeted nature of the programme. Properties will be assessed based on the following factors:

- The property must be a private residential dwelling that has been empty for at least 6 months (Long Term Empty)
- Private ex-commercial properties (e.g. potential flats above shops, shops to houses), may be considered, providing that a 'change of use' has been agreed and finalised by Planning
- Grant monies cannot be paid for works which have been carried out previously through grant funded Council schemes in previous 10 years.
- The property must be owned by the applicant
- Properties with a good life expectancy (this is likely to rule out many non-traditional properties)
- Properties with 2 or 3 bedrooms
- Owners who will be occupying the property on completion of works will need to demonstrate upon application of the grant that they are a first time property owner or that they are purchasing a property as a consequence of divorce or separation.

Priority criteria:

- Properties in existing strategic intervention areas
- Properties causing nuisance where complaints have been made
- Properties where legal notices have been served
- Properties located in areas of affordable housing need and demand (based on Housing Needs, Markets and Affordability Assessment Report 2008 and

Berneslai Homes waiting list data), and are likely to be occupied following intervention.

Other Conditions:

- A charge will be placed on the property for the grant amount for 5 years
- If the property is sold, the grant will be re-paid via the charge
- Certification of intended letting for private landlords / or must be occupied by the owner
- Any breach of grant conditions results in re-payment of grant on a sliding scale:

Period begins following completion of the works	YEARS					Zero after 5 year period
	1	2	3	4	5	
	100%	100%	75%	50%	25%	
	PERCENTAGE REPAYMENT					

- A Periodic check on the property will be carried out to determine continued occupation (via Council tax Academy system), to ensure grant conditions are being met.
- All contractors engaged to carry out empty homes grant works will be CHAS approved. Empty property owners may choose their own preferred contractors for scheduled works, subject to them being CHAS approved. Grant assistance will only be provided to the level of the cost of the best quotation gained through the competitive tendering process by BMBC
- The empty property owner must agree to work with the Empty Homes Officer to bring the property back into use, throughout the process and following completion of works
- Empty property owners wishing to let their property upon completion of scheduled works must agree to sign up to the Private Sector Leasing Scheme for 5-years to ensure that the housing brought back into use will provide affordable accommodation. Barnsley MBC will secure nomination rights on these properties through this arrangement. An overview of private sector leasing can be found at appendix C.
- Landlords who have signed up to the Private Sector Leasing Scheme will also be required to join the Barnsley Accreditation Scheme



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Appendix C: Summary of the Private Sector Leasing (PSL) scheme:

Purpose:

The PSL scheme is designed to help bring long term empty homes back into use, and thereby contribute to meeting demand for affordable housing in Barnsley, in addition to complementing the strategic housing priorities in the borough.

Procedure:

Long term empty homes which are considered to be of strategic priority are identified and their owners specifically targeted by Strategic Housing. Following an inspection of the property, the owners may be offered an Empty Homes Grant, in order to bring the property up to an acceptable standard, to allow re-occupation of the property.

Landlords (and potential landlords) wishing to let their property following improvement works will be required by Barnsley MBC to enter into a Private Sector Leasing Agreement, in respect of their property. All improvement works are arranged by the Strategic Housing, and owners are obliged to abide by the Empty Homes Grant terms and conditions.

PSL: Scheme features:

The 5 year lease agreement is between BMBC and the property owner. During that time all payments for repair responsibilities remain with the owner. Berneslai Homes act as the managing agent for the properties and identify and sign up tenants. The property owner receives quarterly lease payments from Barnsley MBC, which are determined on an individual property basis.

Benefits of the PSL scheme:

- Brings a long term empty home back into use
- Owner receives lease payments generated from the occupation of the property
- Property standard is improved
- Improves the general appearance of the area
- Property is less likely to attract vandalism, fly-tipping, arson, vermin & complaints etc
- Owner has no responsibility regarding managing the tenancy or finding tenants or terminating tenancies
- Provision of a dwelling, reduction in housing need
- Affordable rents
- Barnsley MBC secure nomination rights for a 5 year period