

Gateway, Strategy & Engagement  
Housing Renewal  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Zone B  
Bernard Weatherill House  
8 Mint Walk  
Croydon, CR0 1EA

Telephone: 020 8760 5470

Contact:  
E-mail: HSG-EMPTYPROPERTY@croydon.gov.uk

Your ref:  
Our Ref:

Date: 2019-2020

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Empty Property Grant Enquiry**

I refer to your enquiry about our Empty Property Grant scheme.

The Empty Property Grant is available to owners of residential premises in the borough which have been empty for at least 6 months and which require essential repairs and improvements. The works eligible for grant include, for example, works to put a dwelling or building into reasonable repair and to make it suitable for occupation and/or works to provide additional dwellings by conversion.

The Council are currently looking for 2 and 3 bedroom properties to refurbish via the grant, if you have a larger property please contact the Empty Property Officer to discuss the ways in which the Council may be able to assist you.

The additional document **Guidance Note (GN.H175)** for Empty Property Grant provides full details on the eligible works, how the grant is determined and the conditions under which the grant is paid. Please read it in full.

A maximum grant of £25,000 is currently available per dwelling.

This is funded at the rate of 100% towards the reasonable cost of eligible works. Please note that we cannot consider works for grant assistance which have already been carried out.

In return for providing grant assistance the Council reserves the right to nominate tenants for the property for 5 years. A formal nominations agreement has to be signed by the owner. If there is a mortgage we recommend that the mortgagee is advised.

Regardless of the amount of grant the dwelling must be let or available for letting for the full five years.

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The Nominations Agreement is a contract which states that the property must be rented out to a tenant of the Council's choice for the full 5 year period. This may be a number of shorter tenancies or you may choose to lease the property to the Council or approved Private Sector Leasing provider. The Nominations Agreement also states that you cannot charge more than the maximum rate of Housing Benefit that could be claimed. The actual rent you will receive is dependent upon the way you wish to rent the property and the amount of involvement that you have in the management of that property. For the latest rents and choice of rental schemes please contact the Empty Property Officer.

If you proceed with a Grant application we will contact the Council's Housing Initiatives Team (responsible for private sector lettings) and/or approved Private Sector Leasing provider and they may visit to confirm that your property is acceptable to them. If the rental teams do not wish to enter into a contract to rent your property we cannot offer you a grant.

In considering the merits of each application, priority will be given to the following:

- owners able to complete works in a short space of time
- owners with planning consents (where necessary)
- owners with the necessary funding over and above any grant amount
- those schemes giving rise to the greatest number of nominations
- schemes representing the greatest overall financial benefit to the Council

The application form can be downloaded for completion and return.

Please attach to your form any documents to support your application. For example, details of the proposed works, their approximate cost, finance already secured, etc., to enable me to consider your application.

You must be the legal owner of the property at the time of application in order to apply.

When we have received your application we will check that the works proposed are feasible and eligible. We will then contact you to let you know and if your proposals are acceptable in principle, we will make an appointment with you to visit the property with a surveyor.

Subject to funds being available, you will then be asked to provide at least three estimates from separate builders based on a schedule of work that we will provide you with.

The grant amount is calculated based on the reasonable cost of eligible works. Grants cannot be paid in respect of works that have been carried out before a grant is approved, so you are advised not to start any works at the property.

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Before the grant can be approved you will be asked to provide 'proof of title', which is a current copy of the Land Registry entry for the property. You will also be asked to sign a 'Certificate of Intended Letting and Nominations Rights' for each unit of accommodation. The documents for this can be downloaded and completed.

Should your application be successful, we will be able to pay the grant when:

- works have been satisfactorily completed
- acceptable invoices received
- all necessary approvals obtained (Building Control; Thames Water; NICEIC Certificate; GasSafe, Fensa, etc.) and
- a tenancy, approved by Croydon Council, has commenced

If a grant is offered the owner must complete the refurbishment as soon as possible. The grant offer letter will contain an expiry date for that offer which will be based on the scale of the works being undertaken. Officers from the Council will monitor the progress of any grants offered and if an appropriate progress is not being made by the contractors then the grant offer will be withdrawn. In most circumstances we would expect the property to have been refurbished and occupied within 6 months of the grant offer.

If you have any queries regarding the above please let me know.

Yours sincerely

## **Empty Property Officer**

Enclosures:

### **For completion and return**

Application form (SF.H295)  
Certificate of Intended Letting (SF.H3000)  
Energy Survey Form

### **Additional Information available on Request**

Advice for Applicants re Layout of Estimates  
Advice on Qualifying Works