

**HAMBLETON DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**Report To:** Cabinet  
3 December 2013

**Subject:** REGIONAL MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE LOAN SCHEME

**All Wards**  
**Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Waste Management: Councillor B Phillips**

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**1.0 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the Council's participation in the Regional Mortgage Assistance Loans Scheme, known as "Breathing Space".
- 1.2 The Regional Mortgage Assistance Loan Scheme is operated by Wakefield Metropolitan District Council on behalf of local authorities across the Yorkshire and Humber region, to enable them to offer loans to help home owners experiencing difficulties with their mortgage and/or secured loan payments.
- 1.3 The Regional Housing Board has allocated two million pounds for a regional mortgage assistance scheme. After considering the other options available, the Housing Board agreed that the existing Wakefield Council loan scheme should be rolled out throughout the Yorkshire and Humber region. It is left for individual authorities to decide whether they join the scheme.
- 1.4 Within Hambleton the Housing Options Team are receiving three or four notifications per month from solicitors detailing repossession proceedings for Hambleton District Council residents. Mortgage Rescue is an option for some but not all. Participation in 'Breathing Space' would provide another tool to enable the Council to assist clients to stay in their existing homes and in turn assist in preventing homelessness.
- 1.5 The Housing Board has provided the funding for the loans and therefore there are no capital funding implications for the Council. Participating local authorities are expected to undertake the initial stages of loan applications and forward the applications to Wakefield Council to process and pay and secure a charge on the property in question. Local authorities are also responsible for subsequent support and reviews with the home owner and may be required to assist Wakefield Council in recovery of the loan. There are therefore some resource implications but the resources have been increased in the Housing Section over the next two years to support additional work on homelessness.

**2.0 LINK TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES:**

- 2.1 The scheme links to the Council Plan aim of reducing homelessness by providing direct support to District residents in need.

**3.0 RISK ASSESSMENT:**

- 3.1 There are no risks in approving the recommendation.

3.2 The key risk in not approving the recommendation is shown below.

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Implication</b>	<b>Prob*</b>	<b>Imp*</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Preventative action</b>
Funding from the Regional Housing Board is not available in Hambleton.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some home owners in Hambleton at risk of losing their home.</li> <li>Opportunity to further develop the range of Homelessness Services is lost.</li> </ul>	4	3	12	Participate in the scheme.

**4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS AND EFFICIENCIES:**

4.1 The Regional Housing Board has provided the funding for the scheme for the region and therefore there will be no capital funding implications for the Council. Unrecovered loans are not recharged to the partner authorities so the Council would not have any financial risk.

**5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

5.1 To enable Wakefield Council to act as the Accountable Body for the scheme, formal approval is required to allow Wakefield to discharge these functions on behalf of Hambleton District Council under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 and Local Authorities (Arrangement for the Discharge of Functions) (England) Regulations 2000, in accordance with the Council’s wellbeing powers under Section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000.

**6.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

6.1 It is recommended that the Council participates in “Breathing Space”, the Regional Mortgage Assistance Loan Scheme, operated by Wakefield Metropolitan District Council.

MICK JEWITT

**Background papers:** None

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