**SOFT MARKET TESTING – AFFORADABLE HOMEOWNER IMPROVEMENT LOAN SCHEME ADMINSTRATOR – VULNERABLE HOMEOWNERS.**

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council is undertaking Soft Market Testing to determine the capability and capacity in the market and in order to identify possible suppliers who are interested in involvement in a potential procurement exercise to bid for an Affordable Homeowner Improvement Loan Scheme Administrator Contract, which will implement, assess and manage loans the Council has available for vulnerable homeowners, to help tackle poor housing conditions or to fund repairs to adapt their property in the private sector in a way that is responsible, cost effective and sustainable.

Providing financial assistance to support vulnerable homeowners is a key tool that contributes to the achievement of various housing strategic objectives.  Homes that are unsuitable to live in can have a negative effect on an individual’s health, or their ability to continue living independently, while homes that are poorly maintained, or even left empty can have a much wider detrimental effect on the pride and sustainability of whole neighbourhoods. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 provides local authorities with the flexibility to provide a range of financial assistance types for the purposes of helping vulnerable homeowners thus enabling the local authority to stretch the capacity of public funds dedicated to this purpose.

The following is an outline of the Loan Administration Scheme that is required;

1. It is **essential** that the Loan Administrator:
   1. is FCA (Financial Conduct Authority) registered
   2. has an office presence within the Stockton-on-Tees Borough.
   3. Has experience of working with vulnerable people (providing financial assistance support)
   4. Has experience of/procedures in place for visiting vulnerable people within their homes (which may have disrepair)
2. In **addition** to the above the following would be required:
   1. Provide Clients with application forms, and support with their completion.
   2. Arrange for property valuations and instruct solicitors where appropriate.
   3. Receive and assess completed Applications.
   4. Notify the local authority and request Approval of the Loan.
   5. Following Approval, make the Loan Offer to the Client and once this is signed, for investment in existing housing; place the appropriate charge against the property, and notify the Client that their works can begin.
   6. Collect repayments in accordance with the Loan Offer made and respond to Clients queries in relation to repayment should these be received.
   7. Respond to queries from other lenders wishing to place a further charge against the property should these be received while the loan is in place and providing appropriate response.
   8. Manage instances of repayment default.
   9. Provide a monthly report to the Authority

If your company has the required experience/registration, please contact Sam Dixon, Housing Team Manager on 01642 526686 or via email [sam.dixon@stockton.gov.uk](mailto:sam.dixon@stockton.gov.uk) for an informal discussion.