



SOMERSET WEST PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

# LOANS

# ARE THEY THE FUTURE?

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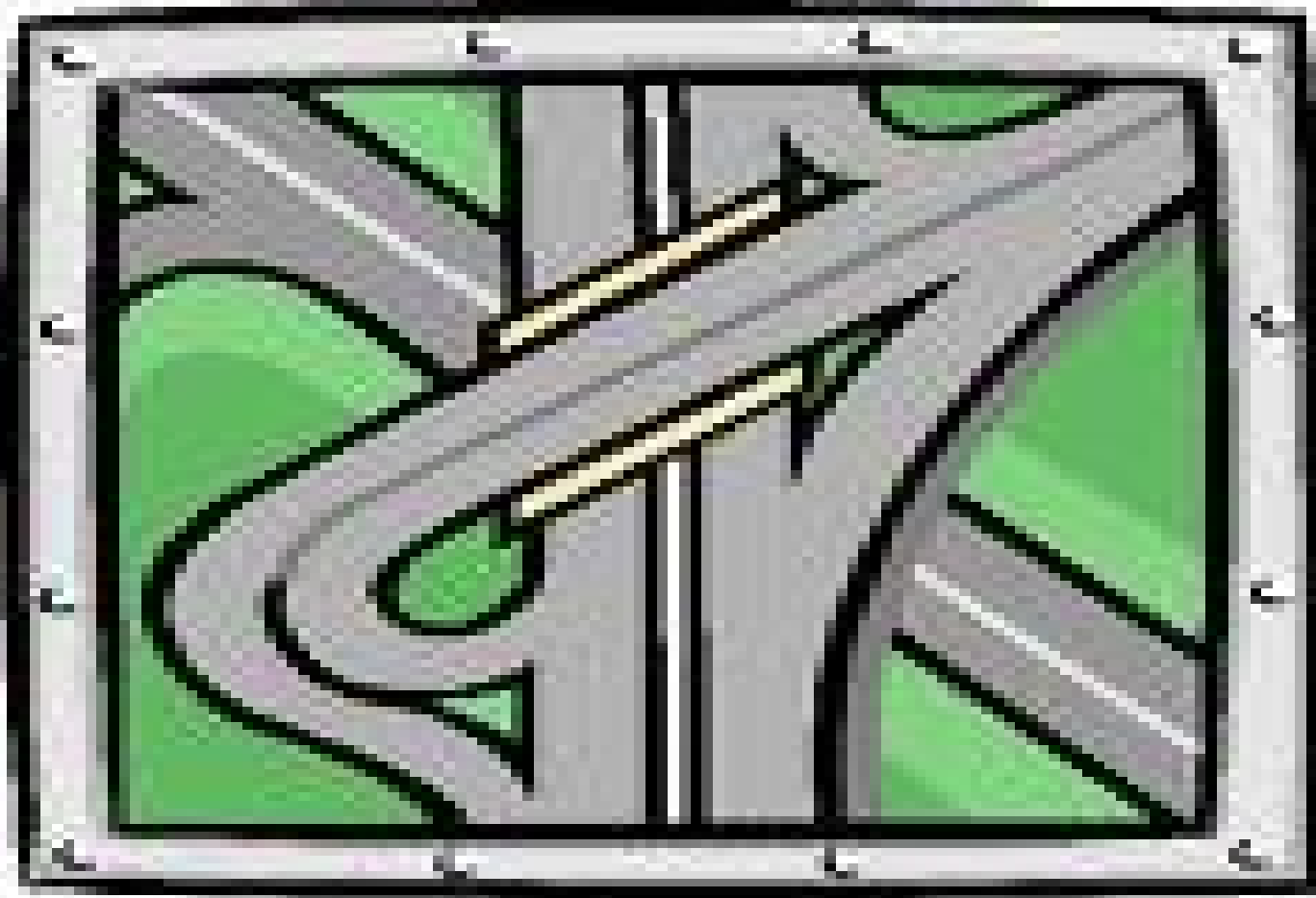
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The answer is yes!

# Policy Direction

- Complete sea change
  - Traditionally both Council's grant Policies focused on grant assistance
  - Sedgemoor and West Somerset's budgets amounted approximately to £300,000
  - Funding solely from Government Office South West
  - Much of grant recycled via a Land Charge
  - Took a long time for Land Charge to be repaid to the Council
  - Grant regime fairly inflexible
  - Not responsive to rapid changes

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# Change in Direction

- New Policy
- Large underinvestment in the private sector
- Large percentage of non decent homes occupied by vulnerable households
- Significant number of DFG's over mandatory limit
- Large number of empty homes
- Continual reduction in capital
- Housing market becoming unbalanced

# New Policy

- Stakeholder meeting
  - General view that owner occupiers should contribute to investing in repairs
  - Loans should be available for disabled people to assist with adaptations
  - Loans should be available for landlords supplemented with nominations
  - A small grant fund should still be made available for special exception cases
  - Loans for overcrowding
  - Overall loans were received favourably

## Where from here

- Both authorities were already offering loans
  - West Somerset 100% loan with £1,000 top-up
  - Sedgemoor 50% loan, 50% grant
- West Somerset take up was popular
- Sedgemoor's uptake was poor due to:-
  - Council still offering grant for major works
  - 50% mix
  - Lack of publicity

## Where from here

- Reconcile RRO Policies following stakeholder meeting
- Replication of successes from West Somerset
- Increased use of the Home Improvement Agency
- Caseworker centred
- Changes to means test
- Further changes to procedures
- Staff training
- Linked to publicity

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# Managing expectations