

# **Social Housing Green Paper**

**Housing Scrutiny Sub Committee  
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# What is the Social Housing Green Paper (SHGP)?

- Governments vision - **“A new deal for social housing”** by a “top-to-bottom” review
- Proposals to rebalance tenant landlord relationships, tackle stigma, ensure homes are safe and a spring board to home ownership
- Developed through engagement events nationally and online consultations
- The SHGP has 5 key priorities: (1) decent homes, (2) effective resolution of complaints, (3) strengthening regulation and empowering residents, (4) tackling stigma and celebrating communities, (5) housing supply and home ownership.

# Key Messages

- The SHGP is only a small step towards delivering more social homes against a need for more affordable homes.
- Limited measures announced so far - housing borrowing cap and use of Right to Buy receipts.
- The scrapping of mandatory fixed term tenancies and sale of high value council homes is welcomed.
- The green paper is focussed on social tenants – key partners will be engaged in drawing up the Council's response to the consultation.

# 1: ENSURING HOMES ARE SAFE AND DECENT

## Ensuring resident safety:

- Hackitt Review & tenant involvement – to engage landlords on building safety.
- New approaches to engage residents on safety issues.

## Decent Homes (DH) standard:

- Review of current DH standard - exploring adding energy efficiency and fire safety.

## Initial view from Tower Hamlets Council:

- Changes to regulations of building control awaited.
- Implementation of recommendations from Fire Safety scrutiny review.
- £26.8m committed for fire safety improvements to Council housing stock.
- Proposals to improve communication with residents welcomed.
- Upholds existing Decent Homes Standards. 12.80% (April 17) of homes were non decent. Better Neighbourhoods programme in delivery. Un programmed works would results in budget implications.
- Calls for long term freedoms and flexibilities which allows councils to invest in their housing stock.

## 2: EFFECTIVE REGULATION OF COMPLAINTS

- Raising awareness of complaints processes, tenants rights and providing access to advice and support.
- Speeding up the complaints processes with an effective route for raising safety concerns.
- Complaints resolved swiftly and effectively and handling improved.
- Speeding up landlords' internal complaints processes – a code of practice.

### **Initial view from Tower Hamlets Council:**

- A more simplified redress scheme is welcomed.
- The Council has recently reduced its complaints procedure from 3 to 2 stages.

### 3: EMPOWERING RESIDENTS AND STRENGTHENING THE REGULATOR

- New performance indicators and proposals to publish comparative ratings for landlords.
- Rewarding good performance through the allocation of Government funds.
- A stronger regulator and more powers to scrutinise the performance of local authority landlords
- Ensuring residents voices are heard; incl. through a representative body.
- Strengthening choice - more community ownership or community leadership of social landlords.
- Leasehold reforms including transparency and value for money.

#### **Initial view from Tower Hamlets**

- Supports the scrutiny of and publishing performance.
- Funding for new homes linked to league tables not welcomed, given housing need.
- Regulation changes are not likely to make RPs more accountable to Local Councils.
- Nation wide call on tenant voice welcomed.
- Appetite for stock transfer amongst council tenants expected to be limited.
- The Council supports TMO's and community land trusts - robust management structures, transparency and equality crucial.

## 4: TACKLING STIGMA AND CELEBRATING THRIVING COMMUNITIES

- Celebrating thriving communities by investing in community initiatives and events.
- Professionalism and a 'customer service culture' with neighbourhood management and Pls.
- New affordable homes designed to the same standard as other tenures with resident involvement.

### **Initial view from Tower Hamlets**

- A call for community events and initiatives to be supported with funding.
- Encouraging professionalism should be linked to the professional standards by the Chartered Institute of Housing.
- Design standards are not subject to tenure; planning policy, design guide and wheelchair brief supports.
- SHGP and the NPPF/London Plan working to different timetables and agendas.
- Tower Hamlets Draft New Local Plan at Examination in Public stage.

## 5: EXPANDING SUPPLY AND SUPPORTING HOME OWNERSHIP

- Supporting councils to build more – reforming Right to Buy, enabling housing companies, and repealing the Higher Value Assets policy.
- Longer term funding for Housing Associations.
- Delivering more affordable homes - supporting housing associations, community owned homes and resident-led estate regeneration.
- Social housing a springboard to homeownership – supporting shared ownership products (incl. increasing stake in home) and Right to Buy pilots.
- Understanding social housing allocations – fixed-term tenancies offered at discretion.
- Lifetime tenancies retained for victims of domestic abuse (DV) that relocate.

### Initial view from Tower Hamlets

- Proposals to encourage housing delivery welcomed although limited proposals allowing councils to invest or in properties to be let at social rents..
- Reference to social housing as an option of last resort or ‘springboard’ not helpful.
- No additional grants or proposals to replace £400m diverted for works post-Grenfell.
- A change to full housing ownership will reduce affordable housing supply, high rents (PRS) with low community benefits.
- Review of housing allocations welcomed; Council delivers Choice Based Lettings and updates register to incorporate new legislation and case law.
- Longer term funding for refuge and support services needed.



## NEXT STEPS – CONSULTATION RESPONSES

### DEADLINES:

**16 October 2018**

- **Social Housing Green Paper (Appendix [1](#))** -  
“A new deal for social housing”
- is the Government’s vision for social housing.
- **Social housing regulation – (Appendix [2](#))**  
call for evidence - Seeks information to support  
the review of the regulatory regime for social  
housing.

Return responses by email to  
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