



**Housing and Regeneration Scrutiny Board  
25 March 2019**

**ITEM 10**

Report sponsor: Greg Jennings, Director of City, Development and Growth.  
Report author: Angelina Novakovic, Housing Strategy Development Officer

**Response to Consultation: Housing Green Paper**

**Purpose**

- 1.1 This report sets out our response to the recent Government Consultation on its Housing Green Paper. The Consultation, which is now closed, invited views on a number of proposals relating to the future of social housing.
- 1.2 The response focuses on the 5 core themes; tackling stigma and celebrating diverse communities, expanding supply and supporting home ownership, effective resolution of complaints, empowering residents and strengthening the regulator and ensuring homes are safe and decent. Our response to these areas is discussed in more detail in the 'Supporting Information Section.'

**Recommendation**

- 2.1 To note the contents of this report and make any further comments on the response that has been submitted.

**Reason**

- 3.1 To make members aware of our response to the Housing Green Paper and to give members an opportunity to discuss, with officers, any issues arising out of the response.

**Supporting information**

- 4.1 The Housing Green paper was published on 14<sup>th</sup> August 2018 with responses required by 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018. Both the Council and Derby Homes responded to the Consultation.

- 4.2 The Council welcomes the broad thrust of all of the proposals, and in particular the proposals to lift the borrowing cap, (which more recently has been announced as a scrapping of the borrowing cap), which could result in significantly more homes being built.
- 4.3 The response focuses on the 5 core themes; tackling stigma and celebrating diverse communities, expanding supply and supporting home ownership, effective resolution of complaints, empowering residents and strengthening the regulator and ensuring homes are safe and decent. Our response to these areas is discussed in more detail below:
- 4.4 *Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities.* The green paper aims to break down inequalities in social housing and ensure tenants feel at home in their community rather than seeing it as just a place to live. The design and quality of homes and their surrounding area are at the heart of this paper, which highlights the importance, of good design ideas in newly built social housing.
- 4.5 *Expanding supply and supporting home ownership.* In line with their commitment to deliver 300,000 homes per year by the mid-2020s, the government are putting in place processes to support the building of more social housing. The paper outlines plans to build on the new borrowing capacity granted to local authorities by exploring new flexibilities on how they spend the money from homes sold under the Right to Buy scheme, and not requiring them to sell off vacant, higher value stock. There are also plans to build on 'partnerships' with housing associations to boost the supply of new affordable homes by considering the benefits of providing funding certainty to some housing associations over a longer period. Since the launch of the Green Paper a number of these partnerships between Homes England and major Housing Associations have been established.
- 4.6 *Effective resolution of complaints.* The Green Paper wants residents to have a stronger voice to influence decisions and challenge their landlord to improve living standards. The paper asks how the current complaints process can be reformed so that it is quicker and easier; especially important when dealing with safety concerns. The consultation asks how residents can access the right advice to make a complaint and have it resolved quickly and effectively.
- 4.7 *Empower residents and strengthen the regulator.* Delivering good quality and safe social homes with the right services from landlords relies on a robust regulatory framework. It has been almost eight years since the last review of social housing regulation and the proposals in the green paper present the opportunity for a fresh look at the regulatory framework. Alongside this, the paper launched a call for evidence which seeks views on how the current regulatory framework is operating.

- 4.8 *Ensuring homes are safe and decent.* In the aftermath of the Grenfell Tower tragedy, the government took immediate steps to ensure residents safety. Remediation work to make buildings safe began and the Government set aside £400 million to cover the costs of this across the social housing sector. An independent review of building regulations and fire safety has been commissioned. The review's final report called for fundamental reform and the government are committed to bringing forward legislation that delivers an overhaul of the system and gives residents a much stronger voice in an improved system of fire safety. Progress has also been made on improving standards of decency. The green paper considers how the Decent Homes Standard should be reviewed to ensure it delivers the right standards for social housing residents and reflects the Government's current and forthcoming priorities. A full copy of the Council's response is attached at Appendix 1.

### **Public/stakeholder engagement**

- 5.1 In drafting its response, the council have consulted with Derby Homes Senior Management Team, who have responsibility for delivering the housing management role on behalf of the council and its tenants. Their response reflects the position of the council, in that there is broad support for all five proposals.
- 5.2 Engagement over the consultation response has now been completed and it is unlikely at this stage that any further consultation will be necessary.

### **Other options**

- 6.1 The council could have not submitted a response, but this option would not have been beneficial or helpful to both the government seeking views, nor the council who have chosen to share their views on the proposals.

### **Financial and value for money issues**

- 7.1 As this is only a report for information purposes, there are none arising.

### **Legal implications**

- 8.1 As this is only an information report outlining our consultation feedback, there are none directly arising.

### **Other significant implications**

- 9.1 None arising directly.

**This report has been approved by the following people:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of sign-off</b>
<b>Legal</b>	Olu Idowu	30/01/2019
<b>Finance</b>	Amanda Fletcher	29/01/2019
<b>Service Director(s)</b>	Greg Jennings	
<b>Report sponsor</b>	Ian Fullagar	15/01/2019
<b>Other(s)</b>		