

Information/Discussion Paper

Overview & Scrutiny – 5th September 2022

Social Housing White Paper

This note contains the information to keep Members informed of matters relating to the work of the Committee, but where no decisions from Members are needed

1. Why has this come to scrutiny?

- 1.1** The Social Housing White Paper, published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government in November 2020 seeks to provide transformational change in the way social housing is run, regulated and the influence tenants have on services, establishing a new Charter for social housing residents. The failure of CBH to respond to the paper, adopt and deliver the step change in approach would breach Legislation, not serve CBH customers, result in significant challenge and ultimately non-compliance. This report provides a summary of the activity CBH has in place to ensure compliance with the paper and demonstrates the positive direction of travel through self-assessments completed against the framework in 2021 and 2022.

2. Summary of the Issue

- 2.1** The paper establishes a new Charter for social housing residents realigning the relationship between landlord and tenant, through greater transparency and accountability, and driving a more consumer focussed social housing regulatory regime. The sector provides homes to 4 million households, with many landlords providing a good service to their residents. They provide a decent and safe home, support thriving neighbourhoods and communities and are open with their customers,

listen to them and treat them with respect. But this is not true of all landlords. The paper is part of the government response to the tragedy at Grenfell Tower in June 2017 which raised critical questions for everyone involved in social housing, including residents, landlords, developers, and local and national government.

2.2 The Tenants Charter sets out what every social housing resident should be able to expect through seven key commitments:

- **To be safe in your home** - Government will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure
- **To know how your landlord is performing** - including on repairs, complaints, and safety, and how it spends its money, so residents can hold it to account
- **To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly**, with access to a strong Ombudsman who will give residents swift and fair redress when needed
- **To be treated with respect**, backed by a strong consumer Regulator, and improved consumer standards for tenants
- **To have your voice heard by your landlord**, for example through regular meetings, scrutiny panels or being on its Board. The Government will provide help, if residents want it, to give them the tools to ensure their landlord listens
- **To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in**, with landlords keeping homes in good repair
- **To be supported to take your first step to ownership**, so it is a ladder to other opportunities, should residents circumstances allow

3. Summary of evidence/information

- 3.1** There is no specified timetable attached to delivering the measures set out in the paper. The paper provides a framework for reform, but the detail of many of the proposals requires development and engagement with the sector. Some reforms require primary legislation before they can be implemented. It is acknowledged that responding to the paper will require continued change over a significant number of years through response to new regulatory requirements and the cultural change widely recognised by the sector.
- 3.2** Using the ARK Consultancy White Paper Action Planning toolkit CBH have self-assessed all plans, services and processes against the paper in June 2021 and June 2022 and reported the outcome to CBH Board. Leadership Teams considered the tool kit and provided a RAG status with the status based on 'red' - where it is considered that activities are awaiting Government or Social Housing Regulator action and have not commenced and are required, 'amber' - where it is considered that activities are underway or that enhancement to existing services are required and 'green' - where services have been delivered and/or meet the requirement, and no action is required.
- 3.3** The assessments highlight the breadth of change being adopted and positive direction of travel over the two-year period as set out below. The assessment in 2021 reported 40% of the suggested activity complete and a further 35% in progress. This has increased to 60% of the suggested activity complete and a further 30% in progress in 2022. The change activities are programmed and monitored through CBH's Business planning and monitoring software with progress reported to CBH Board and Audit & Risk committee. CBH Board will continue to receive annual reports against the paper.

| | June 2021 | | | | | July 2022 | | | |
|--|-----------|-------|-------|-----|--|-----------|-------|-------|-----|
| | Red | Amber | Green | N/A | | Red | Amber | Green | N/A |
| To be safe in your home | 2 | 8 | 1 | 1 | | 2 | 6 | 3 | 1 |
| To know how your landlord is performing | 3 | 3 | 3 | 1 | | 0 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| To have your complaints dealt with promptly and fairly | 0 | 2 | 3 | 0 | | 0 | 1 | 4 | 0 |
| To be treated with respect | 7 | 1 | 4 | 2 | | 3 | 1 | 8 | 2 |
| To have your voice heard by your landlord | 1 | 3 | 3 | 0 | | 0 | 3 | 4 | 0 |
| To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in | 1 | 2 | 11 | 0 | | 0 | 2 | 12 | 0 |
| To be supported to take your first step to ownership | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 |
| Total | 14 | 22 | 26 | 4 | | 5 | 18 | 38 | 5 |

- 3.4** During the last 12 months key highlights include responding to a range of regulatory changes, increased requirements for property compliance, responding to the Regulator for Social Housing consultation, new requirements from the Housing Ombudsman, working collaboratively with CBC on the Management Agreement, preparing for an enhanced proactive regulation and developing the strength of customer voice and breadth of customer engagement.

4. Next Steps

- 4.1** Key deliverables during the next twelve months include the annual review of the consumer standards, approval of a new Fire Policy, enhanced engagement with customers on building and fire safety, demonstrating compliance with the Smoke and carbon monoxide alarms (amendment) Regulations, continued delivery of the 5-year EICR electrical safety programme and responding to forthcoming Regulatory accountabilities through the CBC/CBH Management Agreement.
- 4.2** Delivery against the framework is monitored to ensure appropriate priority, resource, and budget, adopting the timescales set by government for any regulatory requirements. Where possible, the change activities are being delivered using

existing resource, with the timescales for delivery balanced against delivery of the financial savings committed as part of the CBC/CBH stronger working partnership. Where regulatory change requires additional resource e.g. additional property compliance checks, additional budget is being identified through the annual budget cycle.

Background Papers

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Accountability

Councillor Victoria Atherstone, Cabinet Member
Housing

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