

## Item for Council Bulletin – W/C 29<sup>th</sup> November 2010

### Proposed Reforms to Social Housing Special Housing Scrutiny Panel Meeting and Presentation – 11<sup>th</sup> January 2011

Through the Comprehensive Spending Review, a recent consultation paper, and the impending publication of the Localism Bill, the Coalition Government is proposing wide ranging changes to social housing throughout the country, which have significant implications for the Council and our tenants and housing applicants.

The most fundamental proposed changes have now been set out in a consultation paper published by the CLG on the 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2010, entitled “*Local decisions: a fairer future for social housing*”. The closing date for comments is the 17<sup>th</sup> January 2011.

The Consultation Paper sets out the Government’s proposals to reform social housing by:

- Creating a new local authority flexible tenancy with a minimum fixed term of two years. This will be in addition to, rather than replacing, secure and introductory tenancies;
- Requiring housing associations to charge new “affordable rents” for all newly built affordable properties, and a proportion of re-lets from April 2011, of up to 80% of private rents;
- Investing £100m to bring empty homes into use as affordable housing;
- Giving local authorities the powers to manage their housing waiting lists;
- Introducing a nationwide Social Home Swap Programme for social housing tenants;
- Enabling local authorities to fully discharge a duty to secure accommodation by arranging an offer of suitable accommodation in the private rented sector, without requiring the applicant’s agreement;
- Seeking views on the reforms needed to enable local authorities and landlords to tackle overcrowding;
- Reforming social housing regulation in line with the recommendations of the review of the Tenant Services Authority (TSA) and the Social Housing Regulation Framework; and
- Introducing legislation to replace the Housing Revenue Account subsidy system with “a transparent, self-financing arrangement” from April 2012, instead of the previous Government’s proposal to introduce self-financing on a voluntary basis.

In view of its importance, a Special Meeting of the Housing Scrutiny Panel has been arranged for **6pm on Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2011 in the Council Chamber**, at which the Director of Housing will give a presentation on the main issues (along with other national housing policy announcements) and the Scrutiny Panel will discuss and agree the Council’s response to the Consultation Paper. All members of the Tenants and Leaseholders Federation are also being invited to the meeting.

In view of the wide-ranging issues that the presentation will cover, all Members of Council are invited to the Special Meeting.

**Appendix X** gives a more detailed summary by the Director of Housing on the Government’s proposals.

**Further information: Alan Hall, Director of Housing (01992 564004)**