

## News Update – October 2018

Over the past few months as social housing has moved up the political agenda, discussion has opened up around many housing issues long consigned to obscurity. There is now a lively debate on a number of fronts including regulation, funding, management and accountability of the social housing sector with a number of major policy shifts in prospect.

CWAG has been keen to embrace the opportunities of this more open and consultative environment. Using our contacts at the LGA and Special Interest Group status we are beginning to see real progress. We have made useful contacts at MHCLG which are now bearing fruit in terms of opportunities to engage directly around specific topics of interest to CWAG members.

We are also continuing to work with the NFA and ARCH to develop a sector-wide approach on key issues and have taken initial steps towards joint working with TPAS.

### Social Housing Green Paper

In the next couple of weeks we will be drafting the CWAG response to the social housing Green paper and would like to hear from members on the issues you would like us to include. Please send any comments or submissions to the policy officer.

[Summary of the key points from the Green Paper](#)

### CWAG Annual General Meeting

We were very pleased that two representatives from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) were in attendance at the recent CWAG AGM. Helen Kelly led a discussion around the key themes and challenges in the Green paper whilst Kavneet Jolly gave an overview of the proposals around changes to regulation.

The important role of the Tenant Consultation events in shaping the Green Paper was particularly striking. Ministers were brought face to face with tenants and residents whose testimony and experiences shifted the agenda, opening up the current debate around social housing. Addressing tenant concerns will be central to future policy outcomes.

John Boughton, whose book 'Municipal Dreams' traces the history of social housing from the 1890's to the present day, was our keynote speaker in the afternoon. His presentation provided a timely reminder of the historical context and background to current debates. We were keen to know whether the past can provide pointers on the future prospects for social housing.

John seemed a little underwhelmed by the Social Housing Green Paper; from a historical perspective, the proposed measures are small scale and in his view unlikely to transform the prospects of the sector. In particular he highlighted the ongoing emphasis on revenue subsidies, through housing Benefit; there is no recognition that direct public investment is the surest and most cost effective way of providing social housing. The focus on owner occupation also fails to address the requirements of 100,000 new households each year who cannot afford to buy or to rent privately.

[Papers from AGM including presentation slides and meeting minutes](#)

## **Announcement on Lifting of HRA Borrowing Caps**

The surprise announcement, by the Prime Minister at the Conservative Party Conference, of the lifting of the HRA borrowing caps was widely welcomed by the sector. The focus has now shifted towards the Budget at the end of the month. There are some concerns that the Treasury may seek to delay implementation or introduce other restrictions.

[Popping caps: common questions on the HRA announcement answered – Inside Housing](#)

## **Consultation – Rents for social housing post 2020**

On 13th September 2018 the Government issued a [consultation](#) on the regulation of rents post 2020. The proposed direction would bring local authority providers of social housing within the remit of the Regulator of Social Housing Rent Standard.

Consultation closes 8<sup>th</sup> November.

## **Articles / Publications / New in the Library**

[CWAG Consultation Response – Use of Receipts from Right to Buy Sales](#)

[Article - What the Government can do to show that it really values social housing - by Ken Lee Chair of CIPFA's housing panel](#)

[Papers from AGM including presentation slides and meeting minutes](#)

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