



Ministry of Housing,  
Communities &  
Local Government

# A new deal for social housing

A Consultation



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## **A new deal for social housing**

### **Introduction**

This consultation seeks views on making sure that social housing provides safe and secure homes that help people get on with their lives. The consultation is open to everyone. We are interested to hear from a wide range of interested people including residents, landlords and lenders.

The consultation is divided into 5 parts:

Part 1: Ensuring homes are safe and decent

Part 2: Effective resolution of complaints

Part 3: Empowering residents and strengthening the Regulator

Part 4: Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities

Part 5: Expanding supply and supporting home ownership

Respondents are invited to respond to each specific part and the relevant responses to each part will be considered in taking forward that particular proposal.

This consultation begins on 14 August 2018 and runs for 12 weeks until 11.45pm on 6 November 2018.

The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government will process your personal data in accordance with the law and in the majority of circumstances this will mean that your personal data will not be disclosed to third parties. A full privacy notice is included at Annex A at the end of this survey. Individual responses will not be acknowledged.

## About you

### 1. Are you responding:

**On behalf of an organisation**

As a private individual

If you are responding as an individual, please tell us the following details below. It is not mandatory to answer, but it would help us understand if we need to reach out to all groups to respond to this consultation.

### 2. Do you live in social housing? This includes tenants, leaseholders and shared owners.

Yes

No

### 3. What age category do you belong to?

16-24

45-54

25-34

55-64

35-44

65 and over

### 4. Where do you live?

North East

London

North West

South West

Midlands

**South East**

East of England

Other (please specify)

5. We may want to contact you about your response. If you are willing for us to do this please provide an email address.

**About you - organisation**

**6. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us which sector your organisation is in:**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Local Authority | <input type="checkbox"/> Tenant Management Organisation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Housing Association        | <input type="checkbox"/> Trade Association              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative                | <input type="checkbox"/> Tenant Representation Group    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other                      |   |

**7. If you chose 'other' please tell us the sector which your organisation is in:**

**8. If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please tell us the name of your organisation:**

New Forest District Council

Appletree Court

Lyndhurst

SO43 7PA

In addition to completing these consultation questions have any documents to support your response please attach them to this survey

9. We may want to contact you about your response. If you are willing for us to do this please provide an email address.

[Jill.cleary@newforest.gov.uk](mailto:Jill.cleary@newforest.gov.uk)

Portfolio Holder for Housing Services

## **A new deal for social housing**

### **Chapter one - Ensuring homes are safe and decent**

Dame Judith Hackitt's independent review of building regulation and fire safety states that residents have an important role to play in identifying and reporting issues that may impact on the safety of the building and in meeting their obligations, including co-operating with crucial safety-related works, to ensure their own safety and that of their neighbours.

#### **10. How can residents best be supported in this important role of working with landlords to ensure homes are safe?**

*Residents should be provided with relevant information about their safety within their property and their responsibilities. This should cover such areas as fire and legionella. Information should be provided in arrange of formats to suit.*

There have been recent changes to drive up safety that apply to the private rented sector but not the social sector. For example, in 2015, we introduced a requirement to install smoke alarms on every storey in a private rented sector home, and carbon monoxide alarms in every room containing solid fuel burning appliances. Government has recently announced that there will be a mandatory requirement on landlords in the private rented sector to ensure electrical installations in their property are inspected every five years.

#### **11. Should new safety measures in the private rented sector also apply to social housing?**

**Yes**

No

Not sure

Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.

*There is no reason why social housing landlords should not be required to comply with the new safety measures in the private sector.*

The Decent Homes Standard requires social homes to be free of hazards that pose a risk to residents, to be in a reasonable state of repair, to have reasonably modern facilities and services such as kitchens and bathrooms and efficient heating and effective insulation.

**12. Are there any changes to what constitutes a decent home that we should consider?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.

*Bringing the standards up to date to provide more clarity and uniformity would be advantageous.*

**13. Do we need additional measures to make sure social homes are safe and decent?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If you answered yes, are there measures you would suggest? Please answer below.

*An up to date homes standard to include more focus on health and safety around the home.*

## A new deal for social housing

### Chapter two - Effective resolution of complaints

We want to understand whether more residents need to be able to access independent advice and potentially advocacy to support them in making a complaint.

Alternative dispute resolution and mediation services can be critical in allowing issues to be resolved swiftly and locally, while sustaining positive relationships between the parties involved. We are considering whether and how we might strengthen the mediation available for residents and landlords after initial attempts at resolution have failed.

#### 14. Are there ways of strengthening the mediation opportunities available for landlords and residents to resolve disputes locally?

- Yes
- No**
- Not sure

If you answered yes, you can provide suggestions below.

*The current process for dispute resolution provides sufficient opportunities for landlords and residents to resolve their disputes locally. This is the clear purpose and objective of the “designated person”.*

Where a complaint is not resolved, a resident should refer their complaint to a “designated person”, such as a local MP, councillor or tenant panel, (known as the democratic filter), but if they do not want to do this or the designated person does not resolve or refer it on themselves, a resident must wait for eight weeks before the complaint can be referred to the Housing Ombudsman. There is a perception that the process of seeking redress took too long, and that the “democratic filter” contributed to delays.

#### 15. Should we reduce the eight week waiting time to four weeks? Or should we remove the requirement for the 'democratic filter' stage altogether?

- Support the option to reduce the waiting time to four weeks
- Support the option to remove the 'democratic filter' stage altogether
- Support no change**
- Not sure

*As explained by the then Local Government Minister, Baroness Hanham in 2011, the “democratic filter” is intended to provide the complainant with sufficient time to*



*approach a “designated person” so that a local resolution to a complaint can be reached. It seeks to strike a balance between the need to promote local resolution to complaints whilst not imposing an unnecessarily onerous delay for the resident. This is still an appropriate objective to promote.*

Reforming the filter stage would require primary legislation. We therefore also want to explore what more could be done in the meantime to help ensure that “designated persons” better understand their role and help to deliver swift, local resolutions for residents.

#### **16. What can we do to ensure that “designated persons” are better able to promote local resolutions?**

*Ensure “designated persons” are aware of the advice and information that can be provided by the Housing Ombudsman to improve the methods and approaches that the “designated persons” can use to resolve disputes.*

We are looking at awareness of housing dispute resolution services more widely as part of our housing redress consultation. We also want to consider if there is a case for an awareness campaign to support social residents in particular to understand their rights to seek redress and to know how to make complaints and escalate them where necessary.

#### **17. How can we ensure that residents understand how best to escalate a complaint and seek redress?**

*At paragraph 2.1.2 of the Regulator of Social Housing’s Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard, registered providers of social housing are required to offer a range of ways for tenants to express a complaint and to set out clear service standards for responding to complaints and details of what to do if a resident is not happy with the outcome of a complaint. It goes on to say that registered providers will publish information about complaints each year. The Regulator should consider providing more specific requirements within its consumer standards for registered providers to publish information on how residents can escalate complaints and seek redress. The consumer standard should also set out the means by which registered providers should inform residents of their ability to seek redress and escalate complaints: for example: that residents should be provided with information at tenancy sign up, that such information should be included as a regular feature in any published tenancy magazine/leaflet and on the Council’s website.*

*As suggested a social awareness campaign may be an appropriate means of ensuring that residents are fully aware of the ways in which to make, and escalate, a complaint, and where necessary to seek redress if they are not happy with the outcome of their complaint.*

We want to understand whether more residents need to be able to access independent advice and potentially advocacy to support them in making a complaint.

**18. How can we ensure that residents can access the right advice and support when making a complaint?**

*We consider that the current advice agencies such as Shelter and Citizens Advice Bureau provide an adequate means for residents to access advice and support about making a complaint. Rather than creating a single advice or advocacy service, it is recommended that publicity of such services be included in a social awareness campaign about making and escalating complaints.*

There are no statutory guidelines setting out time frames within which providers should handle complaints. Dissatisfaction with the length of time it takes to resolve issues was mentioned at our engagement events. We therefore want to consider how to speed up landlord complaints processes.

**19. How can we best ensure that landlords' processes for dealing with complaints are fast and effective?**

*Complaints procedures should provide timescales for responses; however, with a clear understanding that extensions can be agreed between the parties as there cannot be a "one size fits all" approach to dispute resolution. It may be of assistance for the Regulator to set out a Code of Practice that provides more specific timescales, but it will be of utmost importance that any such guidance provides sufficient flexibility to ensure that complaints are afforded the appropriate level of time so that complex and multi-faceted issues are adequately investigated and considered.*

**20. How can we best ensure safety concerns are handled swiftly and effectively within the existing redress framework?**

*Safety concerns must be afforded a special route for escalation within any redress framework. Where a resident has raised a safety concern, there must be specific timescales for response and action which can have as a reference the response times for urgent repairing matters. When a resident's safety concern is initially acknowledged the resident should be provided with details of who they can contact to escalate their complaint if they do not receive a response in accordance with the advised timescales.*

## A new deal for social housing

### Chapter three - Empowering residents and strengthening the Regulator

We consider that key performance indicators should be focused on issues of key importance to residents, covering those identified through our engagement, such as:

- Keeping properties in good repair;
- Maintaining the safety of buildings;
- Effective handling of complaints;
- Respectful and helpful engagement with residents; and,
- Responsible neighbourhood management, including tackling anti-social behaviour.

#### 21. Do the proposed key performance indicators cover the right areas?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

*All key performance indicators indicated are already covered within existing service delivery.*

#### 22. Are there any other areas that should be covered?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.

#### 23. Should landlords report performance against these key performance indicators every year?

- Yes**
- No
- Not sure

*In principle yes, however, consideration needs to be given to the fact that not all KPIs are measurable and quantifiable; for example “respectful and helpful engagement with residents”.*

**24. Should landlords report performance against these key performance indicators to the Regulator?**

- Yes
- No**
- Not sure

*No. To achieve a more meaningful customer/provider relationship, accountability and performance should be developed through existing resident involvement groups, with accountability to our customers.*

**25. What more can be done to encourage landlords to be more transparent with their residents?**

*As per question 24 above.*

The Regulator already expects landlords to publish information about complaints each year, but approaches vary. We are considering setting out a consistent approach on how landlords should report their complaint handling outcomes, by asking them to report how many complaints were resolved, and how many were resolved after repeated complaints and how many were referred to the Ombudsman.

**26. Do you think that there should be a better way of reporting the outcomes of landlords' complaint handling? How can this be made as clear and accessible as possible for residents?**

- Yes
- No**
- Not sure

*The Regulator's Tenancy Involvement and Empowerment Standard already requires registered providers of social housing to publish information about complaints on an*

*annual basis. It also requires that registered providers inform residents about how complaints are used to improve services.*

If yes, how can this be made as clear and accessible as possible for residents?.

**27. Is the Regulator best placed to prepare key performance indicators in consultation with residents and landlords?**

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.

*This needs to be set at a local level through the development of the resident's involvement group with landlord services, where the customers identify areas of importance and value to them.*

**28. What would be the best approach to publishing key performance indicators that would allow residents to make the most effective comparison of performance?**

*It is questionable as to the benefit of comparison between housing authorities. Accommodation is provided on the basis of criteria and duty. Therefore local standards need to be set by customers and evaluated locally.*

We want to consider the role of financial incentives and penalties to promote the best practice and deter the worst performance. For example, whether key performance indicators should help inform or influence the extent to which landlords receive funding and link the Affordable Homes Programme funding to the Regulator's governance rating as well as the viability rating.

**29. Should we introduce a new criterion to the Affordable Homes Programme that reflects residents' experience of their landlord?**

- Yes

**No**

Not sure

Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.

*The Regulator's enforcement powers for registered providers who fail to meet consumer standards is the most appropriate means of addressing underperformance of landlords.*

**30. What other ways could we incentivise best practice and deter the worst, including for those providers that do not use Government funding to build?**

*Existing regulatory requirements are the way to ensure that those providers are meeting standards of performance, irrespective of government funding or not.*

We want to understand more about whether the regulatory framework is setting the right expectations on how landlords should engage with residents, and how effective current resident scrutiny measures are. Landlords are required to consult residents at least once every three years on the best way of involving them in the governance and scrutiny of the housing management service, and demonstrate how they respond to tenants' needs in the way they provide services and how they communicate.

**31. Are current resident engagement and scrutiny measures effective?**

**Yes**

No

Not sure

**32 What more can be done to make residents aware of existing ways to engage with landlords and influence how services are delivered?**

*Paragraph 2.2 of the Regulator's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard adequately sets out the steps that registered providers should take to ensure that residents are aware of ways to engage with and influence how services are delivered. In particular, paragraphs 2.2.2 and 2.2.4.*

A number of national tenant and resident organisations in the sector have been exploring the option of an independent platform for tenants, based on widespread engagement with tenants, to enable them to have their voices heard more effectively at a national level.

**33. Is there a need for a stronger representation for residents at a national level?**

- Yes
- No**
- Not sure

If you answered yes, how should this best be achieved?

We want to offer residents greater opportunity to exercise more choice and influence over the day to day housing services. We are exploring options to demonstrate how community leadership can be embedded in the governance and culture of mainstream landlords.

**34. Would there be interest in a programme to promote the transfer of local authority housing, particularly to community-based housing associations?**

- Yes
- No**
- Don't know

If you answered yes, what would it need to make it work?

**35. Could a programme of trailblazers help to develop and promote options for greater resident-leadership within the sector?**

- Yes

**No**

Not sure

*No, development and leadership needs to operate at a local level and managed by service users.*

**36. Are Tenant Management Organisations delivering positive outcomes for residents and landlords?**

Yes

No

Don't know

Please explain your answer further below if you wish to.

*Not relevant to this authority.*

**37. Are current processes for setting up and disbanding Tenant Management Organisations suitable? Do they achieve the right balance between residents' control and local accountability?**

Yes – the current processes are suitable and achieve the right balance.

Yes – the current processes are suitable but do not achieve the right balance

No – the current processes are not suitable and do not achieve the right balance

Not sure

Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.

*Not relevant to this authority.*

There have been schemes, such as Local Management Agreements and Community Cashback (called Give it a Go grants) which have been designed to support social residents to take responsibility for a service within their local community.

**38. Are there any other innovative ways of giving social housing residents greater choice and control over the services they receive from landlords?**

*See response to question 32 above.*

**39. Do you think there are benefits to models that support residents to take on some of their own services?**



**Yes**

No

Not sure

If yes, what is needed to make these work?

*Further exploration and development of opportunities for residents to be more involved in the management of shared facilities i.e. cleaning of communal areas. Rather than outsource this, consideration could be given to clients managing this service with costs offset through rent reduction or payment. This will provide both ownership and pride in communities whilst also developing employment opportunities and increase in revenue to customers.*

**40. How can landlords ensure residents have more choice over contractor services, while retaining oversight of quality and value for money?**

*See response to question 32 above; particular reference is given to paragraphs 2.2.1 (a), (c), and (d) of the Regulator's Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.*

The Government has recently announced a significant programme of leasehold reform which will benefit all leaseholders, both in the private and social sectors.

**41. What more could we do to help leaseholders of a social housing landlord?**

*Current processes separate tenants from leaseholders i.e. resident involvement groups, landlord support services etc. Where there are issues or concerns between social housing tenant and owner/occupier i.e. leaseholder current processes focus on the relationship between landlord/tenant. Consideration could be given to recognise the needs of leaseholders within social housing complexes or estates.*

## **A new deal for social housing**

### **Chapter three continued - Empowering residents, making sure their voices are heard**

Parliament has set the Regulator of Social Housing a consumer objective, which is:

- to support the provision of social housing that is well-managed and of appropriate quality;
- to ensure that actual or potential tenants of social housing have an appropriate degree of choice and protection;
- to ensure that tenants of social housing have the opportunity to be involved in its management and to hold their landlords to account; and,
- to encourage registered providers of social housing to contribute to the environmental, social and economic well-being of the areas in which the housing is situated.

#### **42. Does the Regulator have the right objective on consumer regulation?**

**Yes**

No

Not sure

Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.

The Regulator has published four outcome-based consumer standards to deliver the consumer regulation objective. These are:

1. The Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard (July 2017) which includes a requirement for landlords to provide choices and effective communication of information for residents on the delivery of all standards, and to have a clear, simple and accessible complaints procedure.
2. The Home Standard (April 2012) which requires homes to be safe, decent and kept in a good state of repair.
3. The Tenancy Standard (April 2012) which requires registered providers to let their home in a fair, transparent and efficient way, and enable tenants to gain access to opportunities to exchange their tenancy.
4. The Neighbourhood and Community Standard (April 2012) which requires registered providers to keep the neighbourhood and communal areas associated with the homes that they own clean and safe; help promote social, environmental and economic well-being in areas where they own homes; and work in partnership with others to tackle anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods where they own homes.

**43. Should any of the consumer standards change to ensure that landlords provide a better service for residents in line with the new key performance indicators proposed?**

Yes

**No**

Not sure

If yes, how?

We also want to know whether landlords and residents would benefit from further guidance on what good looks like, without being overly prescriptive.

**44. Should the Regulator be given powers to produce other documents, such as a Code of Practice, to provide further clarity about what is expected from the consumer standards?**

**Yes**

No

Not sure

*An overview of what a “good landlord looks like” whilst not prescriptive would assist informing residents of the services being delivered are to both a high and national standard.*

Where a landlord breaches a consumer standard, the Regulator can only use its regulatory and enforcement powers if there is or may be a “serious detriment” to existing or potential residents. The Regulator interprets this as meaning where there is “serious actual harm or serious potential harm to tenants.”

**45. Is “serious detriment” the appropriate threshold for intervention by the Regulator for a breach of consumer standards?**

Yes

**No**

Not sure

If no, what would be an appropriate threshold for intervention?

*The focus of a preventative and proactive approach in managing consumer standards would be more desirable and effective in preventing serious detriment to our customers.*

To support a more proactive approach to enforcing the consumer standards we are considering arming residents with information through the introduction of a number of key performance indicators and for landlord performance to be published. Our current thinking is that the Regulator should monitor the key performance indicators to identify where there may be issues of concern with performance. The Regulator would then be able to make a risk-based assessment of how and where to intervene, including through more regular or phased interventions.

**46. Should the Regulator adopt a more proactive approach to regulation of consumer standards?**

Yes

No

Not sure

**47. Should the Regulator use key performance indicators and phased interventions as a means to identify and tackle poor performance against these consumer standards?**

Yes

No

Not sure

If yes, how should this be targeted?

We want to make sure that regardless of whether someone is a resident of a housing association or a local authority, the same minimum standards of service apply. The Government respects the democratic mandate of local authorities, but this must be balanced against the need to ensure that residents are protected.

**48. Should the Regulator have greater ability to scrutinise the performance and arrangements of local authority landlords?**

Yes

No

Not sure

*Local authorities and housing authorities already have structures and scrutiny in place to prevent the requirement of further intervention by the Regulator.*

If yes, what measures would be appropriate?

Where a breach of the consumer standards meets the “serious detriment” test, the Regulator will publish a regulatory notice and consider the most appropriate course of action.

The Regulator is able to use a number of regulatory and enforcement powers where necessary to ensure compliance with the standards. The Regulator has different tools available depending on the landlord, and has published guidance setting out how it will use its powers. The key powers include:

Powers applicable to all landlords :

- Survey to assess the condition of stock
- Inspection to establish compliance with the regulatory requirements
- Hold an Inquiry where it suspects landlord mismanagement
- Issue an Enforcement Notice
- Requirement to tender some or all of its management functions
- Requirement to transfer management of housing to a specified provider

Powers applicable only to private registered providers:

- Issue Fines
- Order payment of compensation to a resident
- Appointment of manager to improve performance of the landlord
- Transfer land to another provider to improve management of land (following an Inquiry)
- Suspension and removal of officers in cases of mismanagement (during or after Inquiry)
- Appoint a new officer to address service failure and improve management of company

Power applicable only to local authority landlords:

- Appoint an adviser to improve performance

**49. Are the existing enforcement measures described above adequate?**

**Yes, see below.**

No

Not sure

*Existing enforcement measures are adequate. Safeguards and processes are in place to protect residents of registered providers i.e. through the ombudsman, corporate complaints, resident involvement, disciplinary processes and special measures etc.*

If you answered no, what other enforcement powers should be considered?

As part of examining the scope of the Regulator's role we want to consider the case for extending its remit to other organisations that manage social housing. The Regulator will hold the local authority landlord to account for the way services are delivered so it is vital that the local authority has good oversight arrangements in place to ensure that management organisations provide a good service.

**50. Is the current framework for local authorities to hold management organisations such as Tenant Management Organisations and Arm's Length Management Organisations to account sufficiently robust?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If you answered no, what more is needed to provide effective oversight of these organisations?

*Not relevant to this local authority.*

We want to be clear and transparent about how the Regulator is accountable to Parliament for meeting its statutory objectives. Upcoming legislative changes will shortly establish it as a standalone Non-Departmental Public Body. As such it will be accountable to Parliament in the same way as other Non-Departmental Bodies.

**51. What further steps, if any, should Government take to make the Regulator more accountable to Parliament?**

*None identified.*

## **A New Deal for Social Housing**

### **Chapter Four - Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities**

We want to celebrate residents' role in shaping fantastic places by recognising the best neighbourhoods.

#### **52. How could we support or deliver a best neighbourhood competition?**

*Tackling stigma is not met through competitions nor will it achieve harmony between owner occupier and tenants of social accommodation. Stigma and social division is deep rooted and supported through stereotypes driven in part through media etc. Highlighting outcomes through competitions only highlights differences within communities. .*

#### **53. In addition to sharing positive stories of social housing residents and their neighbourhoods, what more could be done to tackle stigma?**

*As per above, there needs to be a wider discussion on the foundations and influences of stigma and indifference. It is not felt that this is solely associated on the basis on the person's tenure.*

We want to embed a customer service culture and attract, retain and develop the right people with the right behaviours for the challenging and rewarding range of roles offered by the sector.

#### **54. What is needed to further encourage the professionalisation of housing management to ensure all staff delivers a good quality of service?**

*Improved recognition and accreditation of CIH. Further implementation of positive working practices with KPI's focused on achievement not failure.*

We are minded to introduce a key performance indicator that will capture how well landlords undertake their neighbourhood management responsibilities.

#### **55. What key performance indicator should be used to measure whether landlords are providing good neighbourhood management?**

*Current measurements focus on number of complaints as opposed to the achievements. KPI's based on competence and achievement as opposed to failure reinforce the positive attributes and successes of both landlord and tenant.*

**56. What evidence is there of the impact of the important role that many landlords are playing beyond their key responsibilities?**

*As above.*

**57. Should landlords report on the social value they deliver?**

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

Please explain your answer further below, if you wish to.

*As answered in questions 54 and 55.*

We are proposing to introduce a key performance indicator to help tackle anti-social behaviour, but we will want to consider how this could impact on areas, and whether it could lead to some people feeling more stigmatised.

**58. How are landlords working with local partners to tackle anti-social behaviour?**

*See answer to 59. Below.*

**59. What key performance indicator could be used to measure this work?**

*Crime and disorder partnerships already convene statutory assessments and strategies in monitoring ASB which includes housing data. There is a statutory requirement on the local authority to convene and participate within Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act. Accordingly, a KPI to monitor this is not considered necessary.*

We want to ensure that the revised National Planning Policy Framework is applied to social housing in the right way. In particular we will:

- Strengthen planning guidance to take into account the principles of Secured by Design: to ensure that external spaces, parks, streets and courts are well-lit and well maintained so they are safe from crime and the fear of crime.
- Strengthen guidance to encourage healthy and active communities: building on the NPPF's healthy and safe communities chapter.
- Strengthen guidance to encourage new affordable homes to be designed to the same high-quality as other tenures and well-integrated within developments.
- Encourage design that reflects changing needs: for example, inclusive design for an ageing population and family housing at higher densities for effective use of land.



**60. What other ways can planning guidance support good design in the social sector?**

*Improve consultation and involvement with both current and future residents in the planning and development stage. Residents are likely to take more ownership and pride where they have participated throughout and had their voices both heard and valued.*

Neighbourhood planning gives communities power to agree and implement a shared vision for their neighbourhood. However, we are aware that too often local people hear about schemes after a planning application has been submitted.

**61. How can we encourage social housing residents to be involved in the planning and design of new developments?**

*As above.*

## A new deal for social housing

### Chapter Five: Expanding supply and supporting home ownership

#### **62. Recognising the need for fiscal responsibility, this Green Paper seeks views on whether the government's current arrangements strike the right balance between providing grant funding for Housing Associations and Housing Revenue Account borrowing for Local Authorities**

Yes, current arrangements strike the right balance

No, they don't strike the right balance

**Not sure**

Please explain your answer further below if you wish to.

*Given recent borrowing-cap policy announcements, and the ability for all registered providers of social housing to secure grants from Homes England - for all models of affordable housing - it is felt that an improved balance has been achieved between developing councils and housing associations. However in the case of New Forest District Council it should be noted that the benefits of these improvements continue to be offset by the loss of stock due to the Right to Buy.,*

#### **63. How we can boost community led housing and overcome the barriers communities experience to developing new community owned homes?**

*Whilst the scope to embed community leadership is being achieved through Neighbourhood Plans to some extent, greater onus and direction could be put onto Parish and Town councils themselves to recognise and address the needs of all groups of people within their communities.*

We want to give housing associations and others the certainty they require to develop ambitious plans to deliver the affordable homes this country desperately needs

#### **64. What level of additional affordable housing, over existing investment plans, could be delivered by social housing providers if they were given longer term certainty over funding?**

*Having moved beyond a period of great uncertainty and change relating to funding, financing and rent policies for affordable housing development, increased emphasis is rightly being placed on finding and delivering sites. However when seeking to understand today's context it is fair to say that over the last 10 to 15 years the landscape for viable and attractive affordable housing development has dramatically altered. Margins have significantly tightened as a result of new risks around rental income, whilst planning has become more challenging and protracted. In our district all residential housing sites are in high demand with commensurately increased*

*landowner expectations. Factors that have combined to make it ever more difficult to make smaller brownfield sites work (sites that were once within the easier grasp of housing associations and affordable housing providers), and to achieve programmes that have a diverse and sustainable pipeline from a mixed variety of sources.*

*Within the New Forest district, our own focus at the present time has turned to finding sites and in addition to S106 opportunities we are scrutinising our own land (both Housing and non-Housing); we are looking to locate and compete against developers for smaller brownfield sites; and we are becoming prepared to optimise viability through different forms of affordable housing. In addition to this we continue to support exception sites, and embrace what other RPs are delivering in our area.*

*We are determined to remove the barriers that many shared owners face. We want everyone who enters shared ownership to have the opportunity to increase equity in their home.*

**65. How can we best support providers to develop new shared ownership products that enable people to build up more equity in their homes?**

*As a council which is looking at developing and delivering shared-ownership in the future, more positive publicity and marketing would be welcomed. We already know that many households in our district are likely to be limited to shared-ownership and stronger acceptance and education would attract even more. And where privately rented occupiers buy into shared-ownership, their own homes are released to help meet housing need in our district.*

**THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS**