

COMMUNITY & SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

25 JANUARY 2011

REPORT OF HEAD OF COMMUNITIES

IMPROVING HOUSING SERVICES UPDATE

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To update and provide members with a copy of the response made to a recent consultation document issued by Communities and Local Government 'Local Decisions: a fairer future for social housing'.

1.2 Members to note the Housing Improvement Plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 **Members note the response made to the recent consultation 'Local decisions: a fairer future for Social Housing'.**

2.2 **Members note and comment on the HRA Improvement plan update.**

3.0 KEY ISSUES

3.1 Background

Local Issues

3.2 The Government issued a consultation document 'Local decisions: a fairer future for Social Housing' on 22 November 2010, with a closing date of 17 January 2011. An executive summary of the consultation is provided for members in Appendix A.

3.3 The specific changes proposed to the social housing system are around:

- Tenure Reform
- Empty homes
- Allocating social housing
- Mobility
- Homelessness
- Overcrowding

Members are asked to note the response provided to Government in Appendix B, which was formulated following a Housing Landlord task group meeting on 7 January 2011.

The consultation document also refers to the reform of social regulation and the reform of council housing finance.

3.4 Reform of Social Housing regulation

The government has conducted a review of the role and purpose of the Tenant Services Authority and plan to implement the review's recommendation via the Localism Bill.

3.5 Reform of Council Housing Finance

Government will implement through a one-off settlement payment between each local authority and central government self-financing, which will be determined by a valuation of each local authority's social housing business, taking account of income and expenditure needs over 30 years and the level of housing debt.

3.6 The consultation paper refers to self-financing and will:

- End the centralised subsidy system
- Fully devolve local financing to local government - rents are kept and used locally

3.7 Members are also asked to note the HRA Improvement Plan (Appendix C), updated from the plan provided to members in September 2010.

4.0 **POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are clear links into the delivery of affordable and decent homes and other people related priorities against the 5 standards applicable to local authorities.

5.0 **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 No direct financial implications have been identified in relation to the recommendations made in this report.

6.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

6.1 There are no other legal implications directly arising from this report.

7.0 **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

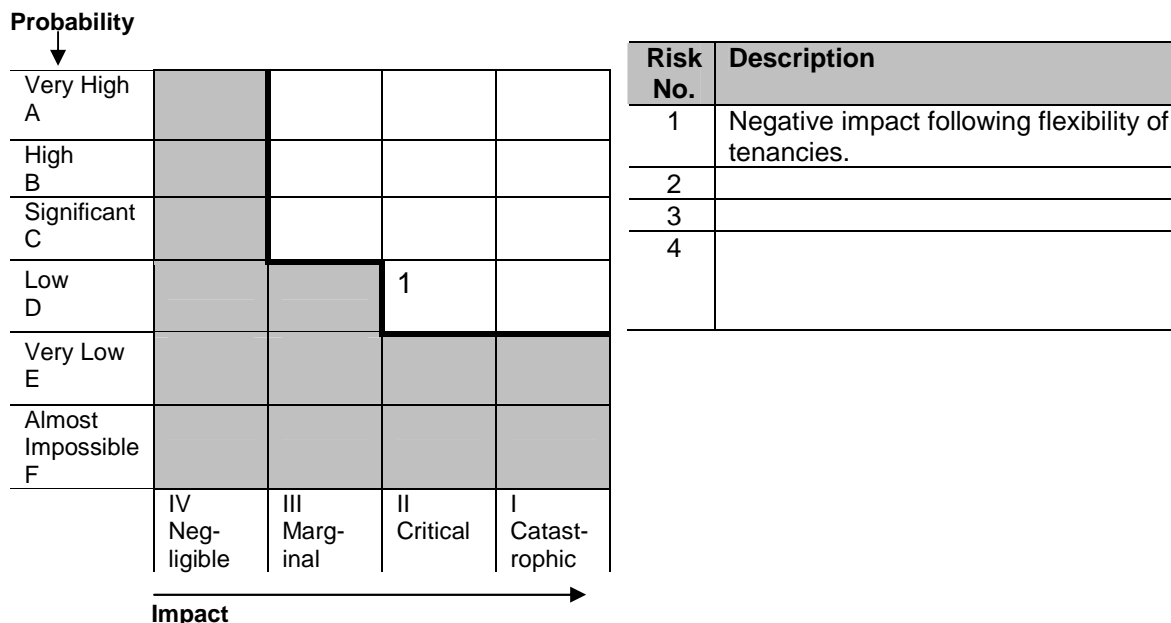
7.1 There are no direct links in this report.

8.0 **EQUALITIES**

8.1 At this stage no direct equality impacts have been identified, however, an initial equalities impact assessment will be completed at the appropriate time.

9.0 **RISKS**

9.1 The risks are considered in the table below:



10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE

10.1 There are no climate change issues directly arising from this report.

11.0 CONSULTATIONS

11.1 The response to the consultation was drafted in consultation with the Housing Landlord Task Group.

12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All wards are affected.

Contact Officers: H Rai

Date: 04 January 2011

Appendices: Appendix A – Executive Summary of consultation
 Appendix B – Response to consultation
 Appendix C – HRA improvement Plan (Jan 2011)

Background Papers: Full consultation document Local Decisions: a fairer future for social housing www.communities.gov.uk

Reference: X: Committees, Council & Sub-Committees/CSA/2010-11/25-1-11/Improving Housing Services Update