

## COMMUNITY & SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

21 SEPTEMBER 2011

### HEAD OF COMMUNITIES & NEIGHBOURHOODS

#### IMPLEMENTING SOCIAL HOUSING REFORM: DIRECTIONS TO THE SOCIAL HOUSING REGULATOR- CONSULTATION PAPER

##### 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek members views on the 'Implementing Social Housing Reform: Directions to the Social Housing Regulator' consultation paper.

##### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1.1 Members comment and delegate to the Head of Communities & Neighbourhoods in consultation with the Chair of Community & Social Affairs Committee to respond to the consultation paper.

##### 3.0 KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 The Housing and Regeneration Act 2008 introduced powers to direct the Social Housing Regulator to set standards and about the content of standards. Once formally issued, the directions will be binding on the Regulator when it consults on and sets standards. Standards set by the Regulator will apply to registered providers of social housing (registered providers).

- 3.2 On 7 July 2011 the government issued the consultation document 'Implementing social housing reform: directions to the Social Housing Regulator', which has been designed to bring about regulatory changes to make the reforms, coming out of the Localism Bill, work in practice. The consultation document is attached as appendix A.

- 3.3 The main areas that the consultation covers is

- **Tenure reform:** to allow social landlords to issue flexible tenancies, subject to conditions, to make better use of existing and future stock.
- **Mutual exchange:** to require landlords to enable access to internet-based mutual exchange schemes allowing tenants who want to move the best possible opportunity to finding a match, making the scheme truly national for the first time.
- **Tenant involvement:** to strengthen landlord accountability to tenants and support the Tenant Cashback model, providing new opportunities for social housing tenants to get involved in commissioning repair and maintenance services for their homes.
- **Rent:** to make changes to reflect the introduction of the Affordable Rent model.
- **Quality of accommodation:** to clarify that providers are expected to maintain their stock at a decent level

- 3.4 Central government has invited views on 'specific questions, which are listed in the 'commentary' section of the consultation document.

3.5 On 28<sup>th</sup> July 2011, the Minister for Housing and Local Government, Grant Shapps MP wrote to all consultees to the consultation document, outlining an important change to their proposed direction to the Social Housing regulator on tenure. The letter and its details are attached in Appendix B and refer to the minimum tenancy term (2 years) and that they expect the vast majority of tenancies to be provided on longer terms.

#### 4.0 **POLICY AND CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The consultation specifically covers the following priorities within the council's corporate plan:

- Improving the well-being of vulnerable people
- Improve quality of life for people living in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods
- Help provide a stock of housing accommodation that meets the needs of the community

#### 5.0 **FINANCIAL AND OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 No direct financial implications have been identified in this report.

#### 6.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS/POWERS**

6.1 No legal direct legal implications have been identified in this report.

#### 7.0 **COMMUNITY SAFETY**

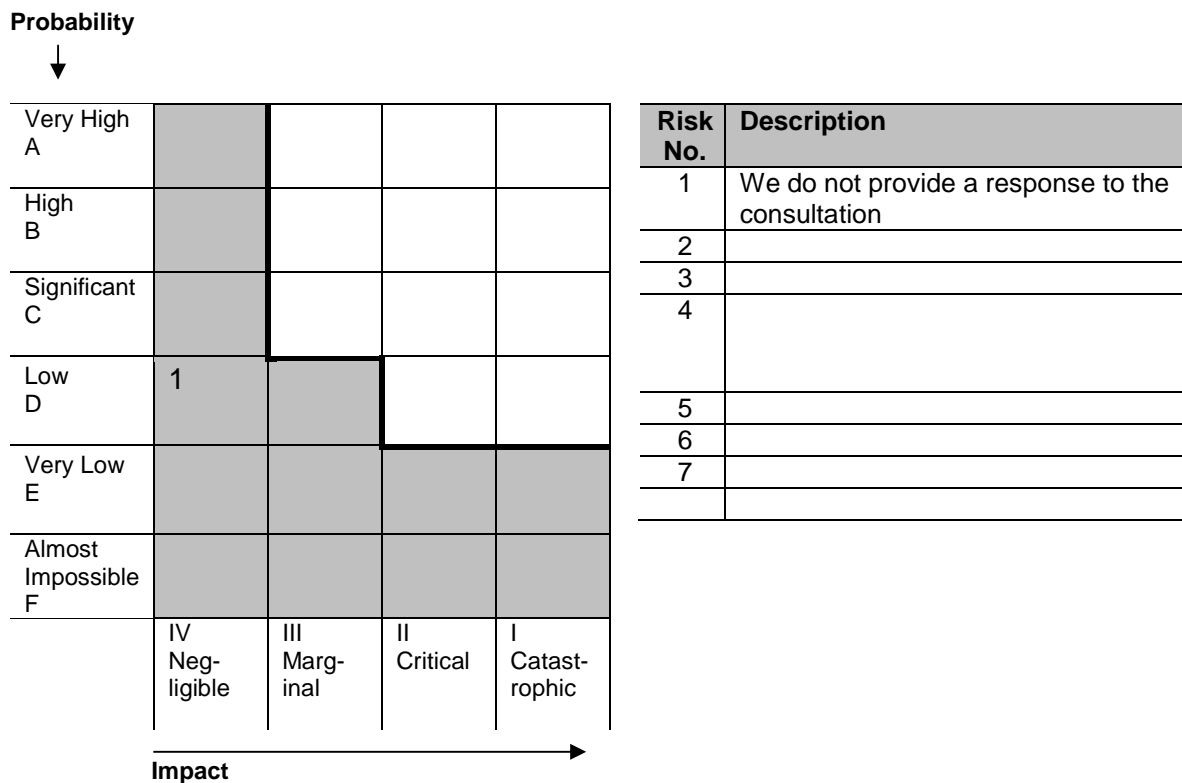
7.1 No direct implications have been identified in their report

#### 8.0 **EQUALITIES**

8.1 With one exception, impact assessments have already been published for all of the policy changes that the proposed directions would implement. The exception is the Government's Tenant Cashback proposals, for which an impact assessment is being published alongside this consultation document.

#### 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 document is subject to consultation and the Housing Landlord Services Task group has also been consulted on this document and the consultation closes on 29 September 2011

## 12.0 WARDS AFFECTED

12.1 All wards are affected.

Contact Officer: H Rai

Date: 5 September 2011

Appendices: A Implementing social housing reform: directions to the Social Housing Regulator- consultation document.

B Letter from Minister for Housing and Local Government. (28<sup>th</sup> July 2011)

Background Papers: None

Reference: X: C'tees, Council & Sub-C'tees/CSA/210911/HR – Implementing social housing reform: directions to the Social Housing Regulator