Practical Help – Working Together to deliver homes and communities we can all be proud of
Introduction

The new decade brings real challenges but also new opportunities for improving the housing prospects of current and future generations. This document sets out how the Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) will work across political parties to help deliver the homes and communities the UK so urgently needs.

This is not a simple wish-list of policy priorities. We are committed to setting out our own members’ policy priorities through a housing pact at our national conference in June. Rather it is an offer to work together to make progress in what is an increasingly pressing housing crisis.

Our expectation of you, as the UK’s political leadership, is to build firm foundations and commit to a prioritisation of housing policy and championing of practical solutions. This document describes how CIH will support parliament and devolved governments to deliver strengthened housing policy and practice. It sets out our offer of help to policy makers and the housing community in what is going to be a difficult period for the UK.

About CIH

The Chartered Institute of Housing is the professional body for people involved in housing and communities. We exist to maximise the contribution that housing professionals make to the well-being of communities. Our aim is support professionals to learn, improve and influence.

CIH is an established, valued and trusted partner of government, politicians and the housing community:

- We have a unique and strong position in the sector – CIH cuts across the housing domain with membership drawn from local and central government, housing associations, education, voluntary and the private sector;

- This brings real strength - invaluable access to a wealth of resources, experience and knowledge, generated in-house and also through our extensive network of housing leaders and 22,000 CIH members across the sector.

The Housing Challenge

The scale of the challenge is huge. We have a massive gap between the number of homes we need, and the number of homes we are building. In 2008-09 we built less than half the number of homes local communities and housing experts have told us we need. The consequences are significant - for families, for communities and for our economy. More and more young people can no longer afford to buy their first home, with the average age of first time buyers now in the mid 30s. More and more families are finding renting suitable and affordable housing difficult. Almost two million people are on housing waiting lists. We have long standing issues around the quality of our existing housing stock and some of our communities remain blighted by estates that are unsafe and homes of last resort. The recession has made an existing crisis even more acute.

Why Housing Matters

In our tough economic climate, you are going to have to make tough decisions about priorities for public spending and political attention. We believe housing should be a priority because it is so fundamental to so many aspects of people’s lives.

Our House Proud campaign, in partnership with Inside Housing magazine has shown why housing is so important.

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Starters for 10: cut out and keep stats

Every one of the following facts is evidence of the savings good housing makes to the policy areas which will be vying for headlines in the coming election. House proud will bring you many more of those in the coming weeks and months. For now, let’s get those out there.

- **Health**: Children living in acutely bad housing are 20% more likely to attend A&E than other children.
- **Education**: 25% of children in bad housing gain no GCSEs compared with around 10% of children not living in bad housing.
- **Employment**: Housing associations have spent £200m in the past five years on projects to help workless residents.
- **Sustainability**: Every £1 spent on energy efficient housing saves €0.42 in health costs.
- **Vulnerable people**: Every £1.60 spent on anti-social behaviour saves £0.42.
- **Supply**: £6,696 a year, compared with a fifth of the £3,339 in the private sector.

Housing associations have contributed almost £6,696 a year, compared with a fifth of the £3,339 in the private sector.

Supporting People, the government’s supported housing programme, saves £3.41 from other services.

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Sources: Shelter, Coadhais, CIH, Housemark, CLG, Cop Gemini
CIH’s offer on housing policy and in supporting the delivery of practical solutions

We will draw on our resources to:

1. Provide leadership and access to innovation through;
   - Our new and creative policy ideas and thinking;
   - Unparalleled access to frontline practitioners – the people who best know housing and are working on a day-to-day basis to make policy a reality;
   - Opportunities for debate on key issues including the future of housing and the fundamental changes required to our housing system.

2. Produce high-quality and highly-regarded work, including policy and practice research and think-pieces across a wide range of issues:
   - Our forward looking policy work called Re-thinking Housing set out a comprehensive vision on the need for a housing reform agenda in England;
   - We led the way in our contribution to reform of local government housing finance;
   - We played a leading role in championing a new approach to providing better services for social and private sector tenants;
   - We played a key role in the work of the Northern Ireland Housing Commission and the Essex Review in Wales;
   - We published fresh thinking about financing of housing in Scotland;
   - We are championing the development of work around flexible approaches to tenure across the UK.

3. Create and maintain a robust evidence base to draw on to support policy development through our research work. This includes:
   - Publishing the UK Housing Review, in partnership with the Building Societies Association, the single most comprehensive annual analysis of the state of housing markets across the UK;
   - Working closely with our subsidiaries - HouseMark and ConsultCIH Ltd - to bring up-to-date and fresh evidence from the issues faced by tenants and practitioners.

4. We offer a range of highly regarded services to help support the housing community in its work. This includes:
   - Providing training and services to over 30,000 housing professionals every year, including accredited learning for professionals and tenants;
   - Publishing two magazines - Housing Practice and Housing Magazine - which are distributed to over 20,000 housing practitioners and key decision makers every month;
   - Hosting over housing 60 events each year, including the UK’s largest housing event which attracts 10,000 delegates and visitors and features leading speakers including the Secretary of State or Minister of Housing and Planning;
   - A range of extremely successful regional events and conferences throughout the year – organised by our regional committee network of senior officers and practitioners;
   - Our comprehensive national education and training work is the cornerstone of much of CIH’s activities. It provides a direct link into the ongoing professional development of the sector – from Board members, Chief Executives and Directors through housing officers and neighbourhood wardens. Work ranges from open access courses on specific issues such as housing law, our provision and maintenance of the definitive online resource Practice Online, through specialist workshops on environmental sustainability, to our regeneration master-classes and leadership development programme (run with Warwick University's Business School);
   - Our annual ‘Oscars’ for housing – the UK Housing Awards – which enables us to collect hundreds of examples of the latest good practice and promote new ideas across the whole sector.

5. We will make available CIH’s experienced and knowledgeable staff, our nine Regional Committees and our National Business Units in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales to engage with politicians and decision makers on policy development and implementation at national, regional and organisational level.

6. We will provide you with free access to our housing specialists and their resources, including an email helpline – policy.practice@cih.org. If you have a question about policy or a constituency issue that you need help with, CIH can offer practical advice and support.
Our track record in working with political leadership

CIH has an impressive track record in working directly with political leadership across the UK – in both national and local governments – at Westminster and in devolved government. In addition to our direct links with housing teams across parties, CIH also:

- provides the Secretariat for the All Party Political Group on Housing;
- has been leading work on the local authority strategic housing role, working closely in a formal partnership with the LGA group;
- our regional committees in England and devolved boards also engage regularly with local parliamentarians in their constituencies across the UK.

Our expectations in return

Our expectation:
1. Your party sets a long term vision for housing and considers fundamental change alongside incremental change.

What needs to happen?
- We need political leadership from across parties to bring forward a public commitment to ensure a fit for purpose housing system for the benefit of current and future generations;
- Elected representatives understand and are prepared to talk about housing issues in their area and nationally.

Our expectation:
2. There is recognition and promotion of the positive contribution of housing to economic and social policy.

What needs to happen?
- There is a wider recognition and support for housing’s critical role in creating socially and economically vibrant and flourishing communities;
- There is a clearer political steer about the importance of including housing as part of the solution to issues around improving health, educational, economic and environmental outcomes.

Our expectation:
3. That there is greater political leadership at all levels in championing the importance of housing.

What needs to happen?
- Political leadership around housing is needed not just at the national level, but critically in local communities. Although housing is fundamental to the success of our neighbourhoods and the quality of individuals’ lives, local communities can sometimes be opposed to regeneration or new housing development. We need to have strong political leadership to secure support to help meet the needs of people struggling with housing, as well as recognise the concerns of existing communities.

Our expectation:
4. All tenures are given clear attention in policy and funding terms with full recognition of their interrelationships.

What needs to happen?
- Political leadership acknowledges that all tenures – social rented, private rented and forms of home ownership - fulfil a critical role in the housing careers and choices of current and future generations;
- There needs to be an increased understanding that all tenures are interrelated and that what happens in one form of tenure will have consequences on the supply and demand of other tenures - and on an effective housing system.

Our expectation:
5. There is clarity on the respective roles to be played by social and intermediate housing and policy and funding are aligned accordingly.

What needs to happen?
- Political leadership engages in a much needed discussion on:
  - the profile of people who they want to access the different tenures, particularly the social rented and the intermediate rented sector;
  - the help that might be provided to support people to make positive choices about different tenures;
  - the different approaches to public funding (and taxation) that support individuals and organisations in the provision of housing;
  - the outcomes that they want to see from people living in these tenures.
Working Together we believe we can make a difference

Building these firm foundations is critical. You have a key role to play in enabling us, the housing community, to deliver homes and services that meet the housing, social and economic needs of the greatest number of people.

CIH is ready to work with parliamentarians and the housing community to meet the challenges and maximise the opportunities that the new decade brings for the future of housing and communities.

We look forward to working together.

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