Yorkshire and Humberside Conference & Exhibition 2012

The new landscape – localism, welfare reform and the implications for the region

25th May 2012

Post event briefing
**Introduction to the conference**

A new social housing landscape has emerged over the last year, bringing new opportunities and ever-changing challenges. The introduction of the Localism and Welfare Reform Acts have and will continue to have a profound effect on service delivery at national, regional and local level. Through a selection of insightful keynote sessions and interactive workshops, the conference (attended by over 100 delegates) gave attendees the opportunity to hear from leading housing professionals on the issues facing the sector today.

**Yorkshire and Humberside regional committee – post event briefing**

As part of the regional work plan for 2012 the Yorkshire and Humberside regional committee have commissioned a series of briefings to complement the range of seminars and events offered to CIH members across the region. A briefing will be published after every regional event to help ensure that all members, whether they have attended the event or not, can access the key issues raised, practice approaches shared and find out more about the topics discussed.

This briefing aims to provide an overview of the discussion and key points from the keynote sessions and interactive workshops. The full presentations from the speakers can be downloaded from www.cih.org/presentations/yhconf2012

**Further information**

For information on the conference or this briefing please contact David Higgins, Yorkshire and Humberside CIH committee member and conference lead - email david.higgins6@btinternet.com or telephone 07740 424842.

For information on CIH membership visit www.cih.org/membership

For information on the Yorkshire and Humberside regional committee please visit www.cih.org/yorkshireandhumberside
Keynote session one – setting the scene

The Localism Act and the region
Robin Lawler, CIH President

CIH topic background

‘Localism’ is a major part of the coalition government’s programme. It seeks to roll back the involvement of central government in the things that most closely affect local communities, such as housing and planning decisions. The ultimate aim is to support communities to identify and drive local priorities and shape what local services look like and how they are delivered. To achieve this, the government is looking to devolve power and funding to the lowest possible level (www.cih.org).

Discussion /key points

The government’s commitment to Localism heralds some significant opportunities and also poses real challenges. Robin Lawler provided an overview of the new operating climate for social housing and also discussed how the CIH are responding to this both on an influencing level and in providing support to housing practitioners.

- Significant challenges – CIH providing support in the toughest of environments
  - Increased unemployment, increased youth unemployment
  - Delivering affordable housing to meet demand – it will require more than a local incentive (New Homes Bonus) to secure an increase in supply
  - The National Planning Policy Framework reduces government direction, but how will developers fare with a plethora of locally determined plans?
  - Deficit reduction
  - Social and political reform

- In the light of these challenges will the visibility of housing be reduced? It is critical that the value of housing to economic growth and sustainable communities is demonstrated. CIH through the Housing Report and other influencing work continue to promote this value
- Devolved decision making under the Localism Act – in practice will government give up control across a range of issues? And how far do we want control?
- There is a need to build capacity and support local authorities around devolved decision making at a local level
- The housing sector needs to draw upon its collective experience and creativity – find sector led solutions to support communities through these challenging times
- Joint ownership of the problems faced and collective responses – the way forward
- Let’s be ambitious about housing
- CIH developing and supporting the sector
  - The CIH learning campaign
  - Investing in future leaders – CIH Rising Stars
  - Member get member campaign – growing the CIH membership
  - Ask the question, what do we need from leaders in difficult times? Look at the challenges faced, what skills are required?
  - What might a new housing profession look like and need?
    - Access to knowledge and learning – the CIH website is an excellent resource
    - A broader career path – wider skills base
A strong professional governing body

Opportunity for questions and discussion

The profession is facing its biggest challenge in a generation. There is a need for a new ‘housing management’ or ‘tough love’ to meet operational, customer and community needs. What does this mean for the skills required? Do we need a wider skills base in staff? What can we do to trigger the change?

- Be clear about boundaries and expectations
- Work with local authorities to foster collective solutions
- Share best practice – possible virtual network in the region
- The CIH website is a good resource
- Example: the change from local administration of housing benefit will see staff helping clients negotiate on line applications. Organisations will need a different delivery model – with both specialist and generic roles.

How is the CIH currently engaging with the issue of Supporting People?

- Domini Gunn Peim leading on this for CIH
- Encourage regions to gather information on local decisions and approaches and share – create a virtual network
- Different approaches by each local authority – gather information and lobby to raise awareness of the impact of decisions made.

Economic reform and the role of housing – if government shifts to plan B and goes for growth through investment in housing, is the sector ready?

- The housing sector is at different stages around the country
- More collaboration required to meet challenges
- A poor housing offer is a brake on the economy – need to highlight the impact of not investing in housing on the economy
- Monitor the impact of the National Planning Policy Framework – what works well and share.

Many tenants are unaware of the implications of the welfare reform changes for example, under occupation and the bedroom tax. How is the CIH updating tenants? Are we getting enough information out?

- Concerned that ordinary people are not getting the message. There is a big piece of work to do around explaining the impact to customers
- One approach sees Manchester housing organisations undertaking a collective campaign to raise awareness and prompt customers to talk to their landlord about how the changes will impact on them personally
- How do we join with other sectors to support tenants to mitigate the impact of the changes? For example, Credit Unions, employment and training support
- Need to scale up support through collaboration to deliver more impact.

Private sector rents and the housing benefit changes – local authorities can discharge their homelessness duty via the private rented sector. What will the impact of this be?
• Localism means that a local authority can decide how to approach and respond to local issues for example, housing the homeless in the private sector. As there is a shortage of affordable social housing – this will often be the only option
• Concerns around the cost, management and quality of some of the private rented sector housing. This is a real challenge, as demand for private renting is increasing and by 2016 will make up the higher proportion of the rented sector.

Further CIH reading and information on these topics can be accessed through the following links:

Localism

CIH corporate plan
Welfare Reform and the region
Lord Richard Best, President of the Local Government Association: Chair, Hanover Housing Association Board

CIH topic background

The Welfare Reform Act 2012 received Royal Assent on 8 March 2012, following 18 months of intense debate and scrutiny. The Act sets out fundamental changes to the welfare system, aimed at improving the benefits system to reduce dependency on welfare through: improving incentives to work, making work pay and reducing overall spend (www.cih.org).

Discussion/key points

Lord Best considered the key issues emerging from the Welfare Reform Act and the implications for the region

- Driver for reforms – benefit payments to be made simple – Universal Credit will include all benefits including support for housing costs (housing benefit)
- Driver for reforms – benefits to be fairer and encourage work – taper, lose 70p in benefit for every £1 earned
- Council tax benefit – remains with the local authority – issues of duplicated effort and administration cost. Local discretion on awards for claimants – pensioners not affected by this, which increases the reduction impact on other claimants
- Making work pay – reducing the ‘perceived generosity’ of the benefits system. Media coverage focussed on rare cases of expensive rents but contrast these with the actual JSA rate for a 24 year old at £65.40pw
- Reducing the cost of paying benefits – to support deficit reduction – but cuts to entitlements will impact on the poorest households
- Administration – call centre and not face to face – previously local administration enabled discretion and understanding which will be difficult to achieve through a remotely administered national scheme.

What do the reforms mean in practice?

- £500 cap – includes housing costs. So if living in a high rental area, claimants will be required to pay more from their benefit on their rent, leaving less to live on
- Shared room rent for under 35 years – will have to make up the shortfall between actual rent and local housing allowance (LHA) level for a shared room if they choose to remain in non-shared accommodation
- 30% LHA cap – help with housing costs in the private sector based on the lower 30% of rents – assumption from government that private landlords will reduce rents down to meet shortfall. Impact now being seen, landlords not letting to those on housing benefit as there is an increasing demand from non LHA claimants for accommodation
- Homelessness – discharging duty to private sector – problematic if housing benefit doesn’t cover rent. Anecdotal evidence of problems with this approach, for example, landlords not renewing tenancies of those on HB. This is only the first few months of the benefit reductions with only around 10% of the final total being implemented so far.

- Social housing
  - Rents increased by CPI rather than RPI, so lower future income stream from rents
Increased non-dependent deductions
Rent direct – paid to tenant on a monthly basis. Will rent be paid in the light of increasing demands on income? 6 pilots to see how this might work in practice
Rent direct – a philosophical approach – claimants to manage their own income/budget
As a result of pilots - possible expanded ‘vulnerable person definition’ to enable rent direct payments straight away for more vulnerable tenants and also possible introduction of 8 week arrears trigger for rent direct
Under occupation – bedroom tax – April 2013 – average £14pw deduction from benefit for each bedroom under occupied. Claimants will have to find the difference from their other benefits. Examples shared of the practical impact of the bedroom tax and how it is predicated on a supply of smaller homes which people can downsize to (which in reality is not the case)
Arrears collection – how will you collect the £14pw? What will it cost to administer? At what point do you take action to evict? What options are available? – declassify properties and take a lower rent which affects income streams and adversely impacts on ability to invest in new housing or community support?
43% of all working age tenancies in Yorkshire and Humberside will be affected by the bedroom tax.

In conclusion

- Housing is the engine of economic growth
- New homes needed – we are not keeping pace with the newly forming households
- Welfare Reform Act compounding problems – impacts are not sustainable
- The future is about collaboration – housing associations and local authorities working together.

Opportunity for questions and discussion

Will there be a shift in political and popular mood around the benefit changes when people realise the impact these will have?

- It’s important that the public understand that when we are talking about building new homes, it’s not just about this generation’s ability to access affordable housing, it’s about the next generation’s ability
- Galvanise the 670,000 affected by the bedroom tax to lobby MPs – let them know the real impact of the cuts
- Ensure that those who will be affected know they will be, by how much and what options are available to them
- Example: delivering housing at a local level with local support – one provider has identified the people waiting for housing in a particular area. These people have made a small deposit towards a locally planned development. As a shareholder in that scheme with an interest in it being delivered, the prospective occupiers are able to create local pressure to secure planning.

Further CIH reading and information on these topics can be accessed through the following links:

Localism

Welfare Reform and Universal Credit
Interactive workshop sessions

Homelessness and allocations

Chair – Sarah Davies, Policy and Practice Officer, CIH
Adrienne Reid, Assistant Chief Executive Neighbourhood Services, Incommunities

CIH topic background

The Localism Act 2011 has given local authorities new powers to shape the way in which they approach allocations, manage their waiting lists and make use of tenancies. Although local authorities will still be required to operate and publish an allocations scheme, this no longer has to be open to all applicants. The Act still requires local authorities to grant priority to households meeting the existing reasonable preference criteria; but in addition to this, local authorities will be given greater flexibilities and discretion to shape their approach to allocations (www.cih.org).

Improving mobility in the social housing sector is a key priority for government. A range of measures have been introduced to support housing mobility including HomeSwap Direct: and £13 million to help local authorities tackle under-occupation (www.cih.org).

Download the workshop presentation here www.cih.org/presentations/yhconf2012

Discussion/key points

- Localism by its very nature will have varying results across areas. The use of flexibilities in practice will depend on the characteristics of an area. For example, where market and social rents are close, investment for new housing is unlikely to be generated. There are also disincentives to a wide ranging use of flexible tenures in these areas as one of a housing associations USPs is the security it can offer.
- Allocations – how ‘real’ is the ability to be flexible in additional / localised criteria? Reasonable preference remains – but how many homes will actually be left as we see homelessness increase following the housing benefit reforms? Access to the private rented sector is narrowing and therefore difficult to use for homelessness situations. 70% increase in presentations from the private rented sector following the welfare reform changes.
- The welfare reforms will have a greater impact on families and will require support to mitigate. High levels of working age under occupation – possible solutions being explored include:
  - Supporting mutual exchange
  - Expanding a moving home scheme to families, this may work out more cost effective than developing rent arrears
  - Working with housing benefit administrators locally on agreeing discretionary housing benefit awards, particularly for those families where children are just under the age of needing separate bedrooms. Currently on a case by case basis
- Lodgers – and the need to undertake the introduction appropriately and properly. Concern that if there is a large rise in poor quality House of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) there will be a capacity issue of in terms of local regulation. Is there a potential management role here for housing associations?
- Centralised benefit system – very hard to use, lots of support needed to access. Lessons learned from CBL schemes and access to these, often high levels of staff support required
• The CIH have produced *How to...consider new approaches to allocations and lettings* - which sets out the increased flexibilities that are being granted to local authorities in England under the Localism Act and provides some guidance on how authorities could begin to rethink their approach to allocations in light of them.

**Further CIH reading and information on these topics can be accessed through the following links:**

- Allocations
- Localism
- Homelessness
- **Making the best use of stock / enabling people to move**
- **How to ...improve housing mobility**

*CIH briefing coming soon* – use of the Private Rented Sector in discharging the homelessness duty
Who’s complaining now?

Chair – Michael Gelling, Chair, TAROE
Linda Collier, Head of Service User Relations, Housing Ombudsman
Ian Shepherd, Performance and Planning Manager, South Yorkshire Housing Association

CIH topic background

The government is introducing measures through the Localism Act which will change the way that complaints are dealt with once the complaints process of the landlord has been exhausted. The emphasis is that, where possible, complaints should be resolved at a local level and this should ultimately reduce the numbers that are escalated to the Ombudsman (www.cih.org).

The Localism Act will mean that from April 2013 tenants will be able to request that their complaint be considered by a ‘designated person’ - either an MP, a local councillor or a recognised tenant panel. The designated person can either try to resolve the complaint locally, refer it directly to the Housing Ombudsman or refuse to take it on board. Tenants are still able to contact the Housing Ombudsman Service directly but must wait for eight weeks from the date the complaint has gone through the internal procedures of the landlord (www.cih.org).

The Housing Ombudsman Service will also become the sole Ombudsman for all complaints relating to the management of social housing (www.cih.org).

Download the workshop presentation here www.cih.org/presentations/yhconf2012

Discussion/key points

- South Yorkshire Housing Association approach - recognising, recording, reporting and responding
- Providers need to make complaints procedures more appropriate and tenant friendly
- Invest in training to help identify what a complaint is
- Acknowledge that the tenant is in control of the complaint and where it goes
- Changes to complaint handling as a result of the Localism Act
- Designated person – concern that political agendas will be promoted through use of complaints. In addition, how will the designated person issue work? Tenant panels may be the best approach?
- Need to foster ownership and accountability – bringing in change around complaints may require a cultural shift for staff
- The best value approach to complaints is to deal with the issue when it starts – right first time.

Further CIH reading and information on these topics can be accessed through the following links:

Localism

Complaints reform

How to...develop your complaints process
Tenancy management

Chair – David Higgins, Yorkshire and Humberside CIH Committee Member
Steve Hepworth, Operations Director, North Lincolnshire Homes
David Hambler, Director, Dickinson Dees LLP

CIH topic background

The government has now introduced new flexibilities for housing providers to offer new tenants a tenancy for a fixed term, where they choose to do so. Where providers use these new flexibilities, they are required to offer tenancies for a fixed term of at least 5 years, except for in 'exceptional circumstances' where they may offer a tenancy of between 2 and 5 years. Providers must publish a tenancy policy setting out whether and how they intend to use the new flexibilities. These reforms have been implemented through the Localism Act and through changes to the regulatory standards framework. For most providers, they took effect from April 2012 (www.cih.org).

Download the workshop presentations here www.cih.org/presentations/yhconf2012

Discussion/ key points

Legal issues
- Ending a flexible tenancy mid-term? Tenant NTQ requires a clear rent account
- What if the landlord is late serving the 6 month notice?
- Concerns around appeals and legal challenges

Use of flexible tenancies
- Emotional response to the question of flexible tenancies – feel like they are counter to the purpose of providing affordable homes and sustainable communities
- But, recognise that the emotional approach needs to be put to one side as providers have an overriding priority to make the best use of their housing stock
- Continual reassessment of housing need
- Base your decisions on what is right for your organisation, your area and your stock
- If you do adopt flexible tenancies you must make sure you have effective procedures in place and that staff are trained to respond and manage the new approach
- Can your IT system manage the new requirements?
- Impact of Welfare Reform on chosen approach – be flexible and review
- What will the local authority tenancy strategy say?
- Advocate wide consultation with board, customers, local authority and housing association partners – when developing approach
- Experience – offer of flexible tenancies via local CBL scheme – no difference in levels of bids
- Challenge – working across multiple local authority areas, how do you develop a tenancy strategy to deal with this?
- Be clear at the outset when establishing flexible tenancies with tenants – when will you review, what happens if under occupying etc.

Further CIH reading and information on these topics can be accessed through the following links:
Developing a tenancy policy

The practical implications of tenure reform
The new regulatory landscape

Chair – Ceri Lewis, Yorkshire and Humberside CIH Committee Member and immediate past Chair
Maxine Loftus, Strategic Regulation Manager, Social Housing Regulator
Sue Howlett, Tenant Board Member, Leeds Federated Housing Association
Ian Rumsam, Head of Homeworks, Together Housing Group

CIH topic background

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) have now taken over the regulation of all social housing in England. A revised regulatory framework published by the previous regulator, the Tenant Services Authority (TSA), in March has also now taken effect. It significantly changes the way that social housing providers are regulated.

There is now a clear distinction between how providers' performance against 'economic' and 'consumer' standards is assessed. The economic standards ensure that housing providers are financially sound and well run, they cover governance and financial viability, value for money and rent. The consumer standards relate to the services that housing providers deliver to tenants, they cover tenant involvement and empowerment, home, tenancy and neighbourhood and community. The regulator's main focus is on ensuring that the economic standards are met. Their role in relation to the consumer standards is limited and they will now only intervene when there is a risk of 'serious detriment' to tenants. They will have no role in monitoring how providers are performing against these standards (www.cih.org).

Download the workshop presentations here www.cih.org/presentations/yhconf2012

Discussion / key points

Maxine Loftus gave an overview of the new regulatory standards and what these mean in practice

- The new regulator, with a need to reduce risk and protect the sector, will concentrate attention on larger providers or those with complex funding arrangements
- The detailed document on how regulation will operate in practice Regulating the Standards is now available
- New approach – backstop consumer regulation and proactive economic regulation
- Tenants and boards have a heightened role in consumer standards regulation – the regulator will no longer be proactive on this apart from issues of 'serious detriment'
- Serious detriment – case studies developed over time – may be anonymised and shared in future to give a steer on what serious detriment might consist of and how the regulator may address
- Proactive economic regulation – retaining focus on the governance of providers
- 8 key focus areas including Value for Money – which should cut across the whole organisation / delivery
- Transparency and accountability – balance between too much information for tenants and not enough. The regulator will be looking for meaningful, manageable and realistic engagement.

Sue Howlett gave an overview of the scrutiny and co-regulation approach at her organisation

- There is nothing wrong with the landlord and tenant working together – that is what co-regulation is about
• Would advocate a staff member attached to tenant scrutiny work to help facilitate a smooth process and support report writing etc.
• Discussion around ability of tenant board members to participate in scrutiny – are we being too purist?

Together Housing Group is participating in the tenant cash back pilot for repairs. Ian Rumsam provided an overview of progress, the approach taken and outcomes

• The tenant cash back scheme is not about rewarding bad behaviour in terms of neglecting the upkeep of homes
• Together has found that tenant cash back can have a positive impact on tenant engagement. It can also reduce management costs as well.

Further CIH reading and information on these topics can be accessed through the following links:

Regulation reform
Tenant cash back
How to...prepare for regulatory reform – tenant engagement and scrutiny
How to ...deliver value for money
The UK green deal scheme

Chair – Martyn Broadest, Yorkshire and Humberside CIH Committee Member
Graham Smith, Operations Director, Gentoo Group
Owen Daggett, Sustainability Manager, Joseph Rowntree Foundation

CIH topic background

The main environmental issue for housing organisations is of course the major challenge of tackling climate change. The UK government has set a binding commitment to reduce carbon emissions (the main cause of climate change) by 80% by 2050. Given that more than a quarter of emissions are produced in homes, this is a huge target for the housing sector too, requiring new standards for new building and a programme to bring the existing stock up to much higher levels of energy efficiency. The scale of this is enormous – one house must be ‘retrofitted’ each minute in the UK from now until 2050.

The main tool for tackling existing homes will be the government’s Green Deal which starts in October 2012, together with its Energy Company Obligation (ECO) (www.cih.org).

Download the workshop presentations here www.cih.org/presentations/yhconf2012

This workshop gave attendees a clear understanding of the Green Deal initiative due to be introduced in autumn 2012, including discussion on the main aims of the scheme and wider funding options available. Graham Smith shared Gentoo’s approach to and experience of, rolling out a scheme similar to the Green Deal, successfully.

Discussion/key points

- Social housing providers should not look at the Green Deal as a standalone initiative, but as one of a range of potential funding mechanisms to deliver energy efficiency improvements as part of their asset management plans
- Gentoo have achieved 85% take up on their Energy Saving Bundle Scheme, which shares similar principles to the Green Deal. Key issues are:
  - Scheme subsidised by Gentoo
  - Aim to give people what they want
  - Offer choice to customers
  - Working with customers face to face
- The Performance Gap is the difference between the ‘design performance’ and the ‘as built performance’. JRF have measured this through extensive analysis. The difference is very significant. The Performance Gap risks undermining the ‘golden rule’ principle of the Green Deal
- Need to factor the ‘comfort take’ – often expected savings do not translate into actual savings for example, tenants who could not afford to heat their homes before the energy efficiency works end up with a comfortable home afterwards at a similar level of expenditure
- Understanding and managing tenant behaviour is as important as the physical improvement being installed.

Further CIH reading and information on these topics can be accessed through the following links:

The green agenda
Keynote session two

Planning and development in the new environment

Karl Tupling, Head of Strategy, Programme and Performance, Homes and Communities Agency

CIH topic background

The number of new homes built has fallen dramatically in the past five years. In 2010 just 102,730 homes were built, down more than 15,000 from the previous year. Housebuilding is now at its lowest peacetime level since 1924. There are now 1.7 million households on social housing waiting lists, mortgage availability is at a low - applicants are older and require higher levels of deposits than previously - and private rents are rising. Specific government policies to help increase supply include encouraging the use of public sector land for development, through a ‘build now, pay later scheme’, a new investment framework, the Affordable Homes Programme, which the government estimates will provide 170,000 new affordable homes by 2015, the introduction of a New Homes Bonus, to incentivise local authorities to support development and reforms to the planning system (www.cih.org).

Download the keynote session presentations here www.cih.org/presentations/yhconf2012

Discussion / key points

- Plan for Growth – accelerated release of public land, co-ordinated approach, the right land in the right place to support development. Yorkshire and Humberside includes a significant number of sites with housing capacity
- Phased and managed approach to release of land – careful not to flood market
- New Foundations progress
  - Newbuy scheme – 95% LTV mortgage for properties up to £500k. For 1st time buyers. A number of mortgage providers have signed up. Estimate over 100,000 new homeowners will benefit
  - Growing Places Fund – supporting infrastructure development and housing growth, significant allocation to the region and priorities are decided locally
  - Get Britain Building – ‘uninstalling’ development sites, estimate partners in contract August to October 2012 for completion during December 2012 to December 2014
  - Empty Homes - £50m in region, applications being assessed
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is with us now – lots to think about for Local Planning Authorities.

Paul Atkins, Senior Development Manager, Yorkshire Housing Group

- NPPF introduced March 2012 – a radical change from previous
- Focus on sustainable development – 3 issues to address economic, social and environment
- Guidance reduced from approx. 1,000 to 50 pages - but resultant grey areas, scope for legal challenges
- Local Development Plans central to new approach
- Housing providers helping to secure delivery of affordable housing – ensure that local plans are robust and achievable. Work with local authorities and communities pulling plans together to
support, shape and build relationships. Help ensure plans are up to date and meet local housing need. Support development and delivery through collaboration and skill sharing

- Work with private developers – provide support to bring plans forward – use your specialist knowledge and support to secure affordable housing in the new development in return
- Tough times but still delivering – Yorkshire Housing in 2011 delivered more than have delivered before
- By getting involved in the development of local plans you can help shape the delivery of affordable housing for the next 15 years.

Opportunity for questions and discussion

*How will tenants get engaged with planning? What recourse do they have if not consulted?*

- The Local Planning Authority (LPA) has a duty to show how they have engaged and who they have consulted – community support vital to bringing forward plans
- Tenant involvement can result in better designs / plans for an area
- Recourse via appeals process – but would hope that early engagement and inclusion of community would reduce this

*How will neighbourhood plans be funded?*

- The LPA has a duty to cooperate – but do they have to pay? Is this realistic in the current climate?
- Collaborative approaches / pooled resources by partners a solution – working together with community to bring forward plans

Further CIH reading and information on these topics can be accessed through the following links:

- Planning policy
- Housing supply and development
Panel discussion

Is the government likely to consider further changes to the Housing Benefit entitlement for the under 25’s?

- Growth is required to kick start the economy, without this there could be increased pressure to secure further deficit reduction savings and the Housing Benefit for the under 25’s could become subject to review.

There has been strong public support for the welfare changes – will social housing be seen as welfare housing as in the USA?

- Policies seem to be moving away from mixed communities – for example, pay to stay and improved right to buy discounts are pointing to social housing as the residual option for those with no choice
- Need to understand that some people choose to live in social housing – they don’t want to buy
- It would be useful to develop ‘one agenda’ from the sector including the CIH, National Housing Federation, Shelter and tenant organisations – which could be the basis for discussions with government
- CIH acknowledge the need to engage tenants in outputs including the Housing Report and the Comprehensive Spending Review work
- Everyone has a role in lobbying government through their MPs.

Further reading

CIH - The Housing Report

Since the coalition government came to power in May 2010 it has taken a big bang approach to reform announcing significant changes to the planning system, welfare, investment and social tenure. The aim is to meet people's housing aspirations. The CIH along with the National Housing Federation and Shelter have launched a series of reports aimed at holding ministers to account by rating the government’s direction of travel under ten main policy headings.

Communities and Local Government - Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England

The government's housing strategy sets out a medium-term vision for housing, until 2015.

Forthcoming events in the region

28 June 2012 – Yorkshire Sculpture Park, Wakefield
CIH Yorkshire and Humberside AGM and evening event – going local: the role of housing in strong and sustainable communities

12 July 2012 – York College
The future of social care – who delivers? who pays?

To book either event please visit www.cih.org/eventsfinder or contact the CIH events team on 024 7685 1722 to book over the phone