

Report to:	STOCKPORT HOMES MEMBER COMMITTEE		
Date of Meeting:	15 February 2021 Stockport Homes Member Committee		
Title of Report:	SOCIAL HOUSING WHITE PAPER		
Report of:	ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE		
Confidentiality	Non-Confidential		
Purpose of Report:	To provide an overview of the Social Housing White Paper, outlining the actions that Stockport Homes will undertake.		
Type of Report	Information		
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that the Member Committee note the requirements of the White Paper and the actions that need to take place.		
Financial Implications of the recommendations	There are changes in the White Paper that are likely to have a financial impact on Stockport Homes. The implications will be understood and addressed through an action plan.		
Value for Money Implications of the recommendations	There are no value for money implications from the recommendations in the report		
Risk Implications of the recommendations	Risk Number	Risk Description	Risk Mitigation
	8	Significant changes to local and national housing policies have a negative impact on SHG and/or its customers	The action plan that will be developed will ensure that SHG is prepared for requirements of the White Paper when legislation is enacted.
	10	SHG is not adequately prepared for the requirements of the Regulator for Social Housing when it	The action plan that will be developed will ensure that SHG is prepared for requirements of the

		becomes a large provider	White Paper when legislation is enacted.
Council Impact Assessment (CIA)	Does a CIA need to be completed? No	If so, has one been completed? <i>Choose an item.</i>	
Customer Impact	The White Paper has implications for the way in which social housing providers interact with their customers. SHG is well placed to fulfil the requirements but an action plan will be developed to ensure any new requirements are undertaken.		
Safeguarding Implications of the recommendations	There are no safeguarding implications from the recommendations in the report		
Equality Impact Assessment	Does an EIA need to be completed? No	If so, has one been completed?	
Equality & Diversity Implications of the recommendations	The White Paper contains details of the approach to disabled facilities grants, although there are no significant changes are proposed by the Government to that approach.		
Environmental/ Sustainability Implications	The White Paper sets out how providers should seek to maintain and develop homes to meet environmental sustainability targets.		
Content of Report signed-off by Director	Sandra Coleing 04/02/2021		
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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Government has published a Social Housing White Paper¹ that sets out a new Charter for social housing residents. This report summarises the key elements of the White Paper and the actions that SHG will undertake in readiness for the new legislation.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017 prompted significant debate within the social housing sector and beyond about the role and function of social housing. The incident prompted the Government to undertake a discussion exercise with residents of social housing. In 2018 the Government followed up its consultation by publishing a Green Paper to seek views on its proposals for social housing reform. While there were plans to create a Green Paper before the Grenfell Tower fire, the disaster prompted the Government to extend the remit making it a Social Housing Green Paper.
- 2.2 The Green Paper promoted discussion about the role of social housing in delivering a safe, well managed housing service for those that need it most. It focused on the relationship between tenants and landlords, the role of social housing in providing a “safety net” for those that need it most, and the support that can be provided to help social housing residents move towards home ownership.

3 SOCIAL HOUSING WHITE PAPER

- 3.1 The White Paper was published in December 2020. It aims to ensure that social housing residents have positive experiences in their communities, in their homes, and with their landlord. It builds on the Government’s commitment on building safety, its funding of affordable housing, and to encouraging home ownership.
- 3.2 The Government recognises that many social housing landlords listen to and respect the views of tenants. This is demonstrated through initiatives such as the National Housing Federation’s Together with Tenants Programme, of which Stockport Homes is an early adopter, and the See the Person² campaign. The White Paper supports that work by creating a new Charter for Social Housing Residents.

4 CHARTER FOR SOCIAL HOUSING RESIDENTS

- 4.1 The Charter sets out what social housing residents should expect from the sector. It has seven themes covering:
- To be safe in your home: The Government will work with industry and landlords to ensure every home is safe and secure

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-charter-for-social-housing-residents-social-housing-white-paper>

² A national, tenant-led campaign that challenges negative stereotypes of social housing in the media - <https://seetheperson.org/>

- To know how the landlord is performing: including on repairs, complaints and safety, and how money is spent so residents can hold landlords to account.
- To have complaints dealt with promptly and fairly: with access to a strong ombudsman that will provide swift and fair redress.
- To be treated with respect: supported by a strong consumer regulator and improved consumer standards for tenants.
- To have your voice heard by your landlord: through regular meetings, scrutiny panels and being on its Board, for example.
- To have a good quality home and neighbourhood to live in: with your landlord keeping your home in good repair.
- To be supported to take your first step towards ownership: as a ladder on to other opportunities.

4.2 The new Charter will be enforced through the Regulator of Social Housing via its consumer standards. It will involve strengthening the Regulator's standards in that area and requiring landlords to be transparent about performance and decision-making, put things right when they go wrong, and listening to tenants through effective engagement.

5 SHG APPROACH

5.1 There are many areas within the White Paper where details are yet to be announced or confirmed by the Government. An assessment of the proposals has enabled Stockport Homes to begin developing an action plan to meet any new obligations. Given the scope and scale of the White Paper the actions are wide-ranging, but a summary of the main themes are as follows:

- Understanding the responsibilities for nominated, accountable or named persons and implementing those requirements once known
- Addressing new obligations on safety, including within the consumer standards and as part of requirements relating to building safety
- Preparing for new regulatory obligations such as an enhanced consumer standard, more active regulation, and reporting against financial and performance measures
- Meeting new Housing Ombudsman Code of Practice requirements
- Supporting customers to access the Government's opportunities and empowerment programme and influencing the Government's work on professional training and development for social housing staff
- Providing views to potential consultation exercises on the Decent Homes Standard, allocations, smoke and carbon monoxide detection regulations, and home ownership proposals
- Understanding and implementing obligations on anti-social behaviour, such as any new crime and tenant perception measures, domestic abuse, and community trigger arrangements

- Assessing whether Stockport Homes can access and use the new affordable housing funding schemes and assessing the impact of changes to shared ownership models.

5.2 A full White Paper Action Plan will be created once further details of specific requirements are known, but work is underway to assess the current position and implement and embed any new requirements contained within the proposals.

6 CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The White Paper contained wide-ranging changes for the social housing sector, seeking to raise standards in areas such as tenant involvement, shared ownership, anti-social behaviour and complaints. Stockport Homes delivers its services in line with the Government's proposals and already goes beyond those levels in many instances.

6.2 There are areas in the White Paper that require further work to ensure that Stockport Homes, together with Stockport Council meets the new requirements and takes advantage of new opportunities. The action to meet those obligations will be contained within an action plan once further details are known.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 It is recommended that the Member Committee note the requirements of the White Paper and the actions that need to take place.