

CIPFA Housing Panel,

SUBJECT Housing Landscape

New Prime Minister

With Mrs May's departure we are into yet another new era for social housing. The pressure in terms of service demands is still increasing and we will have to wait and see the new PM's attitude to housing crisis. Whilst Mrs May's government has tried to ease the problems around housing, many of the things promised in her opening Downing Street speech have been left undone.

Grenfell Tower

The two-year anniversary of this tragic event passed with much comment that little has been done to make people safer in their homes. Although HMCLG have made financial provision for the replacement of certain types of cladding in both social and non-social tower blocks and many housing providers have embarked on providing sprinkler systems. The types of cladding that are now deemed unsafe appears to be growing and the recent event at Barking again demonstrated that there is significant work to be done. Meanwhile residents of Grenfell are taking out legal action in America against the cladding firm.

Help to Buy

A recent National Audit Office report found that two-thirds of those who bought a home through the scheme could have bought a home without it, with one in every 25 participants in the scheme having incomes that exceeded £100,000 a year. It also found that the scheme was boosting the profits of housebuilders across the country and that the government would be exposed to significant financial risk if the values of properties fell.

Right to Buy Receipts Consultation

This paper that was issued along with the social housing green paper on 14th August 2018. In it the ministry were seeking views on ways to reform rules on using Right to Buy receipts from sold council homes, and on reforming the national one-for-one replacement commitment. We are still awaiting the department's response to the views expressed. The closing date for the consultation was 9th October 2018.

Housing Revenue Account Information

On 14th March the department placed on its website Guidance in relation to the Housing Revenue Account. It provides Information and advice on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and consents for disposal of land from the Housing Revenue Account in relation to England. It provides authorities with details and related forms of many of the consent processes that they need plus various determinations and legislation that apply to the HRA.

Universal Credit – 53 weeks

LGA provided an update on the ongoing discussions with DWP on universal credit and the 53 Mondays issue. Panel members will recall that because of the coincidence of a leap year and the 53 Mondays, tenants on Universal Credit were going to go into arrears as DWP does not allow for this. It was noted that

DWP started off being receptive and appeared to want to try to solve the issue but there has now been a considerable delay with the official comment that

they are still considering the matter. It is thought that they are looking to sort the matter by changing some regulations. However, this seems to be taking a long time.