

CIPFA Housing Panel,

SUBJECT – Housing Regulator

Joanne Pit and I were due to meet with Jonathan Walters, Deputy Director, Strategy and Performance at the Regulator of Social Housing earlier this year. However, due to sickness I was not able to attend and the meeting was eventually rearranged for April when we met two of his assistants. They were keen to engage with CIPFA and the Housing Panel in particular, Jonathan has always been a willing speaker at our Housing Conferences.

The Regulator wants to ensure that Local Authorities are prepared for working within the confines of the rent standard, something that Registered Providers have done for many years. She also wants to ensure that Local Authorities are able to provide the data that her staff require to enable them to check compliance with the Rent Standard. Whilst initially there may be some duplication the current LAR (local authority housing statistics data returns) forms that are completed, the new LADR (Local authority data return) forms will supersede them. Those who have completed them under the pilot scheme and have experience of the NROSH system (completed by RPs). This was something that the regulator's staff that we met thought would be the case. They were keen to have as many local authorities trying out the new data requirements in the pilot year and were pleased to note that around 50% of authorities had signed up in the first couple of weeks.

Since our meeting, on 7th May, the Regulator of Social Housing launched a 12-week consultation on the revised Rent Standard that will come into effect from 1 April 2020. The Regulator claims that the long-term rent settlement should help provide a stable financial environment for the social housing sector to make the best possible use of its resources in supporting the delivery of new homes and effectively managing and maintaining properties, while protecting the interests of social housing tenants.

Response to Consultation

Whilst in many respects, the Regulator is only carrying out the instructions of the Department and as a Panel we made our views known at that time, (this focused solely on the introduction of the rent standard for the HRA) a view might be taken that there is little point in making a response. However, the panel has always noted that consultations are the chance to make points, even if they are unlikely to have any impact. It might be pertinent for the panel to consider if it wishes to respond on some or all of the issues set out below:

- 5 years = long term? – should this not be at least 10 years
- Stable financial environment - but the worse housing crisis in years
- Effectively managing and maintaining properties – Grenfell consequences – cladding renewal/sprinklers/fire doors/ tenant engagement/tenant safety
- Removal of rent determination power from local authorities
- Reset social rents to the correct levels, given the imposition of the 1% rent reduction policy.

Would the Panel wish to respond?