RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Modernisation agree Southwark Council’s response to the Social Housing Green Paper 2018 (appendix 2) and the covering letter (appendix 1).

2. That the Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Modernisation agree for the final response to be published on the Council’s website and emailed to the tenant and resident groups listed below in paragraph 6.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3. The green paper on social housing was published by the Government on 14 August 2018. It details how the government will work with local councils and housing associations to provide a new deal for social housing. The consultation closes on the 6th November 2018.

4. The social housing green paper is underpinned by five principles:
   - Ensuring that homes are safe and decent
   - The need for swift and effective resolution of disputes
   - Empowering residents and making their voice heard so that landlords are held to account;
   - Tackling stigma faced by residents challenging the stereotypes that exist
   - Building the social homes that we need and ensuring that those homes can act as a springboard to home ownership.

5. The social housing green paper was discussed with Members on the 19th September 2018. This meeting included Councillor Stephanie Cryan – Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Modernisation and Councillor Leo Pollak – Cabinet Member for Social Regeneration, Great Estates and New Council Homes. It has also been discussed with senior council officers across housing and planning policy.
6. Officers have also met with the following groups to give them opportunity to provide their comments, which have informed the response. The Futures Steering Board is submitting its own response. Officers met with the following:

- Southwark TMO Committee – 12th September 2018
- Tenant Council – 17th September 2018. Due to agenda pressures Tenant Council deferred the item but requested an item on this at the area forums.
- Area housing forums following the decision by Tenant Council
- Futures Steering Board – 7th October 2018
- Home Owner Council – 10th October 2018
- Southwark Housing Association Group (SOUHAG) - 19th September 2018 (Main) and 17th October 2018 (Management).
- An email was also sent to the Resident Engagement review sounding board, to give them the opportunity to feed in comments.

**Related consultations**

7. When the Government published the Social Housing Green paper consultation on the 14th August 2018 they also published a separate consultation on the use of Right to Buy receipts. This consultation closed on the 9th October 2018. Southwark Council submitted a response. The Council welcomed most of the increased flexibilities such as extension to the timeline for spending the right to buy receipts, and allowing 50% of eligible expenditure on new homes for social rent but argued this could go further. We also welcomed allowing the combination of funding of Affordable Homes Programme grant and right to buy receipts, but again argued that this does not go far enough. The council stated concerns about the introduction of restrictions around acquisitions as given the housing crisis it is important that councils are able to use all tools at their disposal, including acquisitions, to meet the local need for social rented homes. The response also recommended that the government abolishes the right to buy or suspend the initiative in areas with high need for social rented housing such as London.

8. There was also a call for evidence in to the review of social housing regulation. Southwark Council has opted to respond to the questions on regulation posed in the Green paper. At the Conservative Party conference Theresa May announced proposals to drop the Housing Revenue Account borrowing cap. The Government gave local authorities up to the 24th October to comment on the changes to the determination to allow this. Southwark Council welcomed these changes.

**KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

9. The council’s proposed response is attached in (appendix 2). The response to the individual questions combines comments from councilors, officers, tenants and resident groups and local housing associations. The response will also include a covering letter from the Cabinet Member for Housing Management and Modernisation to the Secretary of State, outlining any wider issues which do not fit under the questions posed (appendix 1).

10. The Council has made a commitment to publish the consultation response. The intention is to publish this on the Council’s website, and to share the link through the council’s housing publications and social media. The response will also be emailed to the resident groups and SOUAHG as per paragraph 6.
Policy implications

11. There are no policy implications at this time as this is a draft response to a social housing consultation.

Community impact statement

12. There are no community impact implications at this time.

Resource implications

13. There are no resource implications at this time.

Legal implications

14. There are no legal implications at this time.

Financial implications

15. There are no financial implications at this time.

Consultation

16. The council has consulted with some residents groups and housing associations to inform our response to this consultation, as set out in paragraph six.

SUPPLEMENTARY ADVICE FROM OTHER OFFICERS

Director of Law and Democracy


18. The paper sets out the Governments vision for rebalancing the relationship between residents and landlords in the social housing sector and invites responses to a range on a range of questions underpinned by the following principles:

- a safe and decent home
- improving and speeding up how complaints are resolved;
- empowering residents and ensuring their voices are heard;
- tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities,
- building the social homes that we need and ensuring that those homes can act as a springboard to home ownership.

19. Southwark’s Constitution provides under Part D, paragraph 16, that the approval of responses to consultation documents from government relating to significant changes affecting their portfolio area is reserved to the Individual Member for decision making provided they do not require any changes to the budget and policy framework. The Cabinet Member therefore has the authority to agree the proposed response; at this point there are no budgetary or policy framework implications as the government’s proposals are still at consultation stage.
20. Significant policy changes affecting the council’s Housing Revenue Account are reported on in the two budget reports presented to Cabinet in the December and January preceding the financial year in question by the Strategic Director of Finance and Governance. The Green Paper lays out a set of proposed policy modifications from central government and as such would not affect the HRA until set out either in statute or confirmed by other directions. Until such time, any action the council takes resulting from the consultation will be met from within existing resources.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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APPENDICES

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AUDIT TRAIL

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<tr>
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<th>Paul Langford, Director of Resident Services</th>
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