

Report to: Portfolio Holder for Housing
 Decision Date: 14 August 2024
 Portfolio Holder: Councillor Lee Brazier
 Director Lead: Suzanne Shead, Director Housing, Health and Wellbeing
 Lead Officer: Nicola Priest, Housing Regulatory Compliance Manager, Ext 5526

Report Summary	
Type of Report	Open report, non- key decision
Report Title	Signatory – Securing the Future of Council Housing
Purpose of Report	To present an overview of an interim report, led by Southwark Council and supported by 20 of the largest council landlords in total, setting out five solutions for a renewed council housing system and proposing for Newark and Sherwood District Council to be a signatory to the final report, in full at Appendix 1.
Recommendations	To approve for the Council to be signatory to the report, supporting the proposals set out for the future of council housing.
Alternative Options Considered	To not be a signatory.
Reason for Recommendation	To commit the Council’s support for the proposals set out.
Decision Taken	As per the recommendation.

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Over the past decade, Government has repeatedly stepped in to reduce council rents and set higher standards that council landlords must meet. These decisions have been made for good and often vital reasons, but the combination has created reduced income for councils to cover the cost of managing and maintaining homes while costs and responsibilities rapidly increase. Global events impacting the economy, construction costs and interest rates have turned this situation into a crisis.
- 1.2 In July 2024, Southwark Council and 20 of the largest council landlords in England came together on a cross party basis to launch an interim report “[Securing the Future of Council Housing](#)”. The report makes a case for council housing as a key solution to many of the challenges faced by residents and a long-term plan to deliver more and better council homes. Southwark Council is inviting other council landlords to be part of this

work, to collectively work with a new Government to fix national housing finances and deliver more homes.

- 1.3 Everyone should have a home in which they feel comfortable and safe in – as a foundation for a good life. Communities across England urgently need more affordable and secure homes. A record 109,000 households are living in temporary accommodation, including over 142,000 children. England’s council housing system has an unsustainable financial model, with a £2.2 billion gap in housing budgets by 2028.

2.0 Proposal

2.1 The interim report sets out five solutions for a renewed council housing system.

- i. Establish a new fair and sustainable HRA model – nine recommendations sit below this solution and it covers themes of debt adjustment, rents policy and fiscal targeting.
- ii. Reform unsustainable Right to Buy policies – a further five recommendations are listed here and include suggests reviewing discount levels, allowing councils to keep 100% of right t buy receipts and maximising how they can be used.
- iii. Remove red tape on the Affordable Homes Programme and other funds – four recommendations that cover reforming central government grant and measuring the benefits of council housing.
- iv. Announce a Green & Decent Homes Programme – three recommendations covering stock conditions and standards since the Decent Homes Programme, restoring the HRA system to health and a new Green & Decent Homes Programme.
- v. Fund the completion of new council homes – a final two recommendations focussing on how councils can underpin successful housebuilding.

3.0 Implications

In writing this report and in putting forward recommendations officers have considered the following implications; Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

3.1 Financial Implications – FIN24-25/2904

- 3.1.1 There are no financial implications resulting from this report as this is only requesting a signatory of support to the report solutions and recommendations.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Appendix 1 – Securing the Future of Council Housing