

FIVE SISTERS AND CAIRN ROCK HOUSING NETWORKS

WRITTEN SUBMISSION

Part 1 – Right to buy

Q1. We agree to the abolition of the Right to Buy as this would ensure a retention of stock for landlords. Also we consider the RTB has become overly complicated with the inclusion of varying criteria and rights for tenants.

Q2. We think the 3 year timetable is adequate as long as this is well advertised and all tenants are advised of change and are well informed throughout.

Part 2 Social Housing

Q3. Reasonable Preference Groups [RPG] would be a fairer way to allocate properties as a percentage would always be let to these RPGs rather than a high percentage of all lets being allocated to homeless as is current practice. However RPG should always reflect local need and this should be selected through meaningful consultation with tenants and applicants as a legislative requirement to ensure this is carried out.

We agree with the proposals when considering if an applicant is a home owner, and without good reason, they would not be considered for social housing.

Q4. We had mixed views around SSSTs and SSTs however we agreed landlords would have more powers to combat ASB in communities as they would have the flexibility to introduce SSSTs as this should ensure tenant behaviour is acceptable as displays of ASB would likely happen early on in tenancies. Through closer monitoring in respect of a SSST there may be support issues flagged up to staff and interventions could be offered.

However SSSTs should only be used where appropriate i.e. ASB, non-payment of rent or previous/likely breaches of a tenancy agreement, and not widely spread.

The use of SSTs means tenants do not have full range of rights as all other tenants will have, no succession rights, no assigning to others or joint tenants and again we would consider these should only be considered where appropriate.

Several members views were initial tenancy SST/SSSTs would be a good method of monitoring every new tenant at the onset of their tenancy and again could identify any support they may require whilst allowing the landlord more power and control of their stock.

Q5. Yes

Part 3 Private Rented Sector

Q6. We consider this should make resolutions quicker and easier for tenants and landlords, this could save money as there would be less need for lawyers to be involved. The publishing of decisions would be of benefit as they can be accessed and details would allow a better understanding for tenants and landlords.

We would add if this is good enough for the private sector then why was the same provision for a Housing Panel dropped from the Bill as this would have given tenants easier access to resolutions.

Q7. New legislation would allow councils power to make owners pay for their maintenance, safety and security and this will enhance local communities and put a stop to landlords having to meet these costs from the HRA.

Q8. We would welcome this test but would add there is a need for further discussion and information around a stage 2 provision.

Part 4 Letting Agents

Q9. To regulate in this way through a register would offer good protection to tenants and would be governed by a statutory code of practice, this would be welcomed and letting agents will be more accountable.

Q10. Letting agents should be regulated with proper rules and regulations set and breaches more easily identified and resolved offering tenants a better degree of protection of their rights. If the same level of regulation as is in social sector this would be better as the variances of leases are confusing and are not as open and accountable as in the social sector.

Part 5 Mobile home sites with permanent residents

Q11. The fit and proper person test in relation to management of sites should give more enforcement powers to Local Authorities and would be welcome.

Q12.N/A

Part 6 Private housing conditions

Q13. Though N/A to us as council tenants we would have serious concerns about transfer of assets without appropriate consultation.

Part 7 Miscellaneous

Q14

Other issues

Q16. Yes we consider Housing Panel/Tribunal for Social housing sector should have been included and the introduction of the use of probationary

tenancies, have been too easily dismissed from the Bill and these should have more discussion/debate.

Five Sisters and Cairn Rock Housing Networks
28 February 2014