

AWICS Housing News

September 2015



Flats at Cressingham Gardens in Lambeth. Tenants of local authorities have had the ‘right to buy’ since 1980 and it is now planned to extend this to housing associations.

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Welcome

Welcome to the September newsletter.

In this edition, we provide an update on the latest statistics on local authority development and sales of social homes. This leads us on to review efforts by some local authorities to set up private housing companies as a vehicle for house building. Some intend that these housing companies may protect houses and flats from the 'Right to buy'. This follows the recent response by the Place Shapers housing association interest group to the parliamentary enquiry into Welfare reform and housing policy choices, including the extension of the 'Right to Buy' to housing associations and the mandatory reduction in social rent by 1% until 2020. We summarise key points in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill. Finally, we conclude with a report on efficiency savings from improved resident engagement for housing associations — an issue that we plan to cover further in the future. We also provide a list of all our current seminars and webinars.

We hope you find the information useful and enjoyable and welcome any feedback to be send to Adrian Waite (Adrian.waite@awics.co.uk).

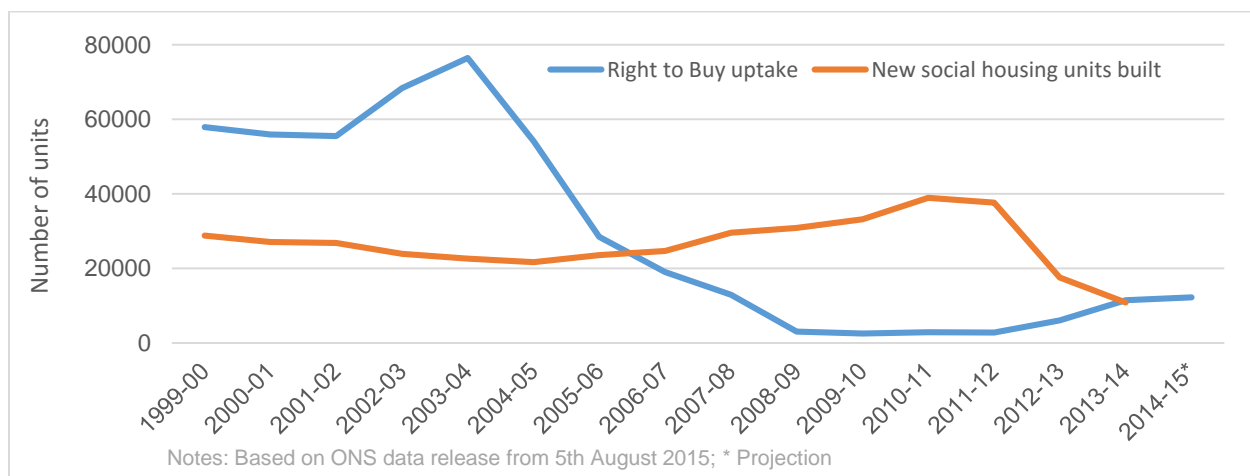
Best wishes,

Adrian Waite.

Updated figures on the Right to Buys' effect on Local Authorities

First of all, what do the most recent figures show about the volume of sales under the new Right to Buy?

In August, the Office for National Statistics released new figures on the number of social housing development compared to the sales of council homes under the 'Right to Buy' scheme. The figures are shown in the figure below.



The Office for National Statistics identifies two trends. First, the hike in 'right to buy' sales in the first ten years of the new millennium with a flat-lining redevelopment activity by local authorities. Second, a growth in redevelopments of social homes by local authorities throughout the second decade in the new millennium coinciding with a fall in 'right to buy' sales during the financial crisis. According to most recent figures, 'right to buy' sales are on the rise again as a result of the government's 'right to buy' initiative.

In 2013/14, 'right to buy' sales were on par with the number of social homes redeveloped by local authorities. For 2014/15, the trend appears to continue as 'right to buy' discounts increased from April 2015. In the three months to December 2014, there was a 15% increase in 'Right to Buy' sales compared to the previous year.

These 'right to buy' figures received a mixed reception. Media reports pointed out that the redevelopment statistics differ from government projections in that they lag those by about a half. This was recently acknowledged by the Department for Communities & Local Government and Brandon Lewis, the housing minister, saw the trend for further Right to Buy sales in a positive sign for "helping people get on and move up the housing ladder". The policy's eligibility criteria were recently loosened and now require tenants to have lived in their home for three instead of five years prior to using the 'right to buy'. In the future, the policy will be extended to Housing Associations. Further, Mr Lewis said:

"The 'right to buy' gives something back to families who worked hard, paid their rent and played by the rules. It allows them to do up their home, change their front door, improve their garden – without getting permission from the council. It gives people a sense of pride and ownership not just in their home, but in their street and neighbourhood."

"Thanks to this government's long-term economic plan, we have created over 33,000 homeowners through the 'right to buy', which has generated £2.4billion of additional investment in new affordable housing. Twice as much council housing has been built under this government than in all thirteen years of the last administration combined, when just one council home was built for every 170 'right to buy' sales."

Indeed, it is interesting to note that while 'right to buy' sales exceeded new social home building prior to 2006/07, since that time new build has exceeded 'right to buy' sales. It may be coincidental that the former period corresponds to the premiership of Tony Blair, while the latter period covers the premierships of Gordon Brown and David Cameron to date.

The future expansion of 'Right to Buy' will require local authorities to sell high value properties to raise funds with which to compensate housing associations for the discounts that they will have to offer their tenants. Enquiries at fifty local authorities have confirmed that councils in high-pressure areas such as London will be more affected than councils in areas with lower-value housing such as rural areas. 'Inside Housing' has reported that inner-London boroughs, authorities in East and South East of England, and Yorkshire expect a strong impact. In London, councils including Barnet, Haringey, and Westminster have already experienced trouble in replacing properties sold during the past two years. In comparison, Manchester, Nottingham, and Slough expect to be less affected. This has resulted in calls for a location-varied definition of 'high-value homes' appropriate to the local economic context.

There are imbalances in the recent patterns in 'right to buy' sales. For example, for London boroughs, it has been reported that a fifth of homes sold under 'Right to Buy' are now rented out at higher private rented sector rates. Furthermore, cases have been reported in which former council properties were bought back by the local authority after they were sold off in the 1980s. For example, Westminster has set up the Westminster Community Homes company buying back 295 former council homes at an average cost of £307,593 per property, 22 times above the price for which they were originally sold. In an interesting turn of events, Westminster Community Homes, may now be required to sell of the same flats they've recently acquired under the government's proposals for sale of high value council homes.

Councillor Paul Dimoldenberg comments:

"This is the ultimate proof that... housing policies have failed and are financial madness. Spending over £90million of public money buying back properties that were sold for a fraction of that demonstrates the scale of the housing crisis and the folly of selling off so many council properties without building any replacement flats. Instead, the £90million should have been spent on building new council flats on council- owned land to increase the total number of homes for those in housing need."

Early demands by local authorities to vary the discounts permitted under 'right to buy' in their locality as well as requests to vary the definition of 'high-value' homes are now partly addressed by the government. As announced in August this year, local authorities may now be able to decide with which 'property types' 'right to buy' properties may be replaced by. For example, Inside Housing has reported that some local authorities are approaching senior figures in the government to request that sold off properties could be replaced with, for example, low-cost home ownership properties, which may even include shared ownership arrangements.

Other councils, have been considering selling their council-owned high value stock to a council-owned housing vehicle. Scot Doling of law firm Trowers & Hamlins told 'Inside Housing':

"People have been talking about setting up vehicles outside the local authority's control to shelter high-value voids... but it goes back to the issue of why a local authority would be doing that. The only reason would appear to be to avoid a well-known government policy."

Ian Doolittle at the same law firm warned councils not to 'poke' the government by trying to use a council-owned company to protect high value properties. He said:

"At the moment, the government's talking solely in terms of council-owned void properties being replaced in their area... There have been some anxieties expressed to me about capital-owned new properties shortly before letting being treated as void. I'm absolutely sure the government has no intention of treating those as void. Those properties within a vehicle – and we've only got the press statement that came out with David Cameron's announcement about how the extension of Right to Buy was going to be funded – gave no hint that they were looking also at company voids to be sold and then replaced. But he warned delegates not to 'poke' the government. There's only going to be one winner in that process. Obey the rules, set up a company for a proper purpose within the legal and other constraints, deliver value, and there will be no need for government to go back to look at the policy and they won't look then at the voids that might be generated within a local housing delivery vehicle."

In summary, the increases in 'right to buy' discounts have tilted the balance between replacement of social homes by councils and the sell off towards the latter. The policy affects some 'high pressure' areas such as those around London the most. It is in these problematic areas that most controversy about the policy is seen. Some practitioners think that precautions and local variations in the application of the 'right to buy' rules could contribute towards a more equitable development in sell offs. Points that are being made include:

- The varied effects of the policy suggest the need for local flexibility for local authorities to vary the definition of high value homes appropriate to their locality.
- It is clear that there is a benefit for private home ownership as it saves its residents potentially many years of rent paid to a third person. However, it is suggested that there is a need to set requirements for Right to Buy such as restrictions on buy-to-rent uses for those who make use of 'Right to Buy' for a number of years after making use of their 'Right to Buy'.

- Two thirds of 'right to buy' receipts go to the national government for further redistribution. The government may want to consider a presumption in favour of local government when a house owner wishes to sell on a previous council home. It may be appropriate for the national government to help local councils to buy back these previous homes at a below-market price.

We are holding a seminar on 'Right to Buy Extension, Sale of High Value Homes and Rent Reform' and a webinar on 'Right to Buy Extension' later in the month. For details please see below.

Local authorities developing through private companies and investment vehicles

The previous article touched on local councils' drive to develop future housing through private housing companies. It is said that the benefit of setting up an independent company is to raise capital beyond the government's borrowing cap. The borrowing ceiling has been implemented to prevent councils from borrowing more than the government considers to be affordable from the national perspective, but it has left councils at a disadvantage when compared with housing associations and private developers who can borrow against future expected rental income. Another reason for setting up an independent company is to enable councils to evade the Right to Buy requirements.

The Local Government Association has created the 'LG Develop' initiative. 'Inside Housing' has reported that fourteen councils have already signed up to the scheme that allows them to borrow collectively from institutional investors. The scheme is reminiscent of a financial intermediary organisation that was proposed in the Elphike-House review into how local authorities may develop more affordable home units. In total, the fourteen councils that are part of the scheme expect to borrow £798million to build up to 6,300 homes. Aligning with the drive for private housing companies owned by the councils, the investments will go into independent companies that are either wholly or partly owned by the councils developing housing units on council-owned land.

Examples of councils forming independent housing companies in London are Southwark Borough Council and Westminster City Council. We mentioned Westminster in a previous article as an example of a council that has set up an independent company earlier than others. Southwark has more recently decided to set up an independent company limited by shares. However, Councillor Livingstone of Southwark Council said that the independent company was set up to allow the council to realise its building ambitions of developing 11,000 units by 2043. He said:

"There is a challenge around Right to Buy and how it takes away from housing stock, but we're not doing this to get around that. It's a way for us to build 11,000 new homes."

The table below summarises the two schemes:

	SOUTHWARK BOROUGH COUNCIL	WESTMINSTER CITY COUNCIL
INCORPORATED	2015 (decisions for incorporation taken)	2009
COMPANY	Southwark Housing Company	Westminster Community Homes
MANAGEMENT	Strategic Director of Housing and Community Services, Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services and Director of Legal Services	7-member board with four council nominee, 2 residents, and one independent board member
COMPANY FORM	Private company limited by shares	Industrial and Provident Society (not for profit)
UNITS		357 units

The housing minister, Brandon Lewis has stated that he is not supportive of councils following this strategy as it evades the existing rights of tenants for their Right to Buy. In March this year, he said:

“The actions of a handful of councils mean the Right to Buy for some tenants is now under threat – I will not support any council setting up a housing company unless their tenants continue to have the chance of having a Right to Buy.”

Councillor John of Southwark Borough Council said:

"London is suffering from a chronic shortage of quality, affordable homes. We in Southwark are committed to using every tool at our disposal to increase the supply of all kinds of homes across the borough, including new council homes. And we are committed to demanding the highest standards of quality, so that Southwark becomes a place where you will not know whether the home you are visiting is in private, housing association or council ownership.

“Through our planning policies, we will unlock new sites for house building, both council and commercial. Through our large scale regeneration programmes and the financial contributions they bring to the council, we will deliver new private, housing association and council homes for hard working families on all income levels. Through our new homes delivery programme, we will deliver a total of 11,000 high quality new council homes for social rent and thousands more for shared ownership. And through the long term active management of our council housing assets, we will ensure that every council tenant enjoys a high quality home that is warm, dry and safe, with a modern kitchen and bathroom.”

Future of Housing Associations enquiry and PlaceShapers response to DCLG

The government intends to extend the ‘Right to Buy’ scheme at similar discounts available to tenants in council housing to tenants of housing associations. It is proposed that the scheme will be financed by the sell-off of high value council homes.

The practicalities of 'forcing' housing associations to sell of their homes under the 'Right to Buy' scheme has been criticised by representatives from the sector. It has been suggested that the 'Right to Buy' in combination with other policies, such as the mandatory reduction of rent by 1% a year over the next four years, substantially interfere with the business plans of housing associations. We have reported that the 'right to buy' and rent reductions have various effects, such as a lower borrowing capacity for housing associations against the future expected rent income.

In the previous newsletter, we reported of the statements of Neil Hadden of Genesis Housing Association. In response to the government's plans to extend the 'right to buy' to housing associations. He said:

"We are not able, or being asked, to provide affordable and social rented accommodation to people who should be looking to the market to solve their own problems. I do think [the Budget] is a watershed in all sorts of ways. Our development programme is configured on the basis that we produce a third social housing or affordable housing, a third intermediate tenure, such as shared ownership, and a third for the market... We've been having discussions in the light of the Budget and we really think that the affordable rented element has gone. We should be looking more at a 50 / 50 split between intermediate tenures [such as shared ownership] and market rent or outright sale. (We) will look to see how current commitments can be 're-configured'."

In July 2015, the Parliamentary Communities and Local Government Committee launched an enquiry entitled 'Enquiry into the future of housing associations' to determine the likely effects of recent government policies on the sector. Clive Betts MP is the chair of the committee. Commenting on the enquiry, he said:

"Providing people with a roof over their heads, and ensuring more homes are built, are central to our nation's future. Uncertainty around the extension of the Right to Buy scheme and issues arising from the impact of welfare reforms and from changes announced in the Budget, raise real questions about the future sustainability of housing associations. Our inquiry will examine the effect on housing associations, and particularly their ability to house their tenants and invest in building new homes, of government policies, including the extension of Right to Buy and the reduction in rental income announced in the Budget."

Here we summarise the response of the 'PlaceShapers' group of 100 housing associations to the committee's request for information. Here we will focus on comments in relation to the extension of the Right to Buy as well as the proposed rent reduction of 1% until 2020.

- The report drew out the housing associations' strong contribution to the local communities through integrated health and social care, employment training, and support. They also point out the important role of housing associations to contribute to housing supply with plans for a further 30,000 homes to be built by 2020. Importantly, housing associations use their local knowledge to build locally facilitating resources and partnerships.
- Members have concerns about the extension of the 'right to buy' mainly for the government's interference. Secondly, there is a concern for the implications of the scheme for sustainability of business models and the impact on delivering future housing. Key issues mentioned in the response include: the methodology for stock valuation of sold off properties, replacement costs, the impracticality of the need for 'like for like' replacements, the level of protections given for hard-to-replace stock, the opportunity of fraud and abuse of the scheme by third-party financiers, and the financial costs and staff resources required for administering the scheme.

- Amongst other things PlaceShapers recommends that the government should ensure that full compensation can be achieved for sold off units at market rate at valuations no older than three months. It is suggested that per locality local government and local housing associations come up with local asset management strategies to coordinate housing supply locally. They also called for fraud checks and a required documentation of the origin of the buyer's money sources.
- In terms of the 1% rent reduction, Place Shapers warned that some housing associations have incurred a loss in the business models as some of their properties have not yet achieved target rents under past government agreements. In addition, it has been said that 25% of its members expect an income loss of £198million. Generally, the organisation takes the view that housing associations should be free to set their own rents.

We are holding a seminar on 'Right to Buy Extension, Sale of High Value Homes and Rent Reform' and a webinar on 'Right to Buy Extension' and 'Social and Affordable Rent Reforms' later in the month. For details please see below.

Summary of Welfare Reform and Work Bill

The Welfare Reform and Work Bill introduces changes to the welfare system. It is comprised of three parts. In the first part, the bill introduces a requirement for local authorities to report on progress towards (1) full employment, (2) the establishment of three million apprenticeships, and (3) the progress towards implementing the troubles families programme.

In its second part, it repeals most of the provisions of the Child Poverty Act (2010) and instead implements measures of child poverty based on the training or work of family homes as opposed to economic indicators such as median household income. It introduces a new duty for the Secretary of State to report annually on 'life chances' meaning children living in workless households and educational attainment at age 16, in England. The name and remit of the Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission is changed so that it becomes the Social Mobility Commission.

In the third part, it introduces widespread changes to the welfare system. It allows for the introduction of extensive changes to welfare benefits, tax credits and social housing rent levels. These will account for around 70% of the £12-13 billion in welfare savings identified in the Summer Budget 2015.

The welfare and housing measures include:

- There will be a reduced benefit cap of £23,000 per household in London and £20,000 elsewhere
- Most working-age benefits will be frozen, including tax credits and Local Housing Allowance¹, for four years starting in 2016
- Limiting support through Child Tax Credits / Universal Credit
- The abolition of Employment and Support Allowance Work-Related Activity Component
- Changes to conditionality for responsible carers under Universal Credit
- Replacing Support for Mortgage Interest with Loans for Mortgage Interest

¹ The benefit payments include: bereavement allowance, carer's allowance (1.15 million claimants in 2014/15), child benefit, child tax benefit, employment and support allowance (1.61 million claimants in 2014/15), Guardian's allowance, housing benefits, incapacity benefits (137,000 claimants in 2014/15), jobseeker's benefits, maternity cover, sever disablement allowance (166,000 claimants in 2014/15), widowed parent's allowance.

- Rents in social housing will be reduced by 1% for four years starting in 2016. Those on higher incomes (£40,000 in London and £30,000 elsewhere) in social housing will have to pay the market rate
- Increase in the national minimum wage to £9 by 2020
- 18 to 21 year-olds will have to go on apprenticeship training or other work-based skill training program to maintain Universal Credit
- Support for Child Tax Credits will be reduced to two children from April 2017 onwards

The overriding aim of the welfare benefit measures in the Bill, including changes to Support for Mortgage Interest and reductions in social housing rents, is to reduce expenditure and to 'help to achieve a more sustainable welfare system'. A related aim is to support efforts to increase employment and to 'support the policy of rewarding hard work while increasing fairness with working households'.

The Government estimates that the effect of the Bill will be as follows:

- The caps will affect 126,000 households in 2017/18, the first full year of the policy. These include 156,000 adults and 333,000 children
- Of these, 92,000 will be additional, including 112,000 adults and 224,000 children.
- They will suffer an average benefit reduction of £63 a week, with the median £50 a week. The average for the newly affected 92,000 is £39 a week, while those already capped at £26,000 would lose £64 a week.
- Around 64% of capped claimants will be single women (most of them single parents) compared to just 12% single men.
- Three-quarters will be aged 25 to 44 (because they are most likely to have children).
- 94% of households in receipt of the carer's allowance will be exempt – but 6% will not be (presumably because they are not in the same household).
- In mitigation, the assessment cites increased help for childcare costs for households moving into work and £800million of discretionary housing payments available for five years from 2016/17.
- Savings to the Treasury (in cash terms) rise from £95million in 2016/17, where it looks like the new caps will be introduced area by area, to £480million by 2020/21. Total savings over five years are put at £1.6billion (double the level of discretionary housing payments, which also have to cope with all the other cuts in housing support).

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has made the following 'key points':

- Jobs statistics can mask important variations between groups. The Government's full employment target is right but to monitor performance and encourage the right interventions it would be helpful if it also reported to parliament on who is getting these jobs.
- The proposed changes to the Child Poverty Act 2010 are at best a step sideways. The government should build upon the 2010 measures to provide a more extensive picture of poverty in the United Kingdom, rather than change them to look at that picture from a different angle. We urge the Government to retain an income measure, ideally linked to a cost of living measure, to give a proper focus on families' real ability to afford the basics of life in a decent society. The United Kingdom needs a strategy to reduce poverty across all ages, otherwise poverty is likely to rise.
- The long term aim to improve productivity and support a higher wage economy is right but progress is bound to be gradual, and closer attention must be given to pay and progression at the lower end of the labour market. In the meantime, the income shortfall facing millions of families is now bigger as a result of the Summer Budget.

- Reducing social rents by 1 per cent per year will give a welcome boost to some current social tenants, but it is likely to impact on the supply of new homes available to households on the lowest incomes.

It should be remembered that not all the government's welfare reforms are contained in this Bill. Some of the measures do not require primary legislation and are being introduced through regulations.

We are holding seminars on 'Welfare Reform: The Implications for Housing and Local Government' in October and November. For details please see below.

Successful resident engagement in housing associations

It is clear that tenants in housing associations and council-owned housing will see changes in the ownership of properties around them. The governments' expansion of the Right to Buy to housing association tenants and the extension of the discounts mean that 'right to buy' is becoming more attractive. Alongside the reduction in requirements to access 'right to buy' by reducing required eligibility from five to three years of in-residence period, its availability expands to tenants of housing associations. 'Right to buy' has helped to create mixed tenure estates with social tenants, owner-occupiers and private tenants all in residence. All residents expect to continue to live in neighbourhoods where properties are well kept and maintenance well co-ordinated.

Recently, Paul Hackett reported on the successful turn-around of housing association 'AmicusHorizon' since its failure to meet governance and service delivery standards and to satisfy regulatory scrutiny back in 2007. Following a period of change, including a new management board with new ideas, the organisation established nine resident area panels and a resident council as a way to enable resident participation in setting 'local priorities, shaping our local services and engaging with residents in their area'. It succeeded in increasing its resident satisfaction ratings for complaint handling from 41% in 2007 to 91% in 2015.

The story of 'AmicusHorizon' has been taken up by the Department for Communities and Local Government as an example of good practice and further details on this case study can be downloaded from the housing association's website ([link](#)). The case study provides a compelling case for the benefits of resident engagement. It mentions the following key findings:

- Cost savings of £2.7million were achieved in the complaints & customer experience department by involving residents in finding appropriate rules and regulations *together*.
- The highest customer satisfaction of all social land lords was achieved (97%)
- Residents have become active participants in the management of the housing association where this feedback channel has changed the relationship between resident and housing provider.
- Transition towards a "One Team" culture as a basis for acting collaboratively and collectively.
- Better ways for dealing with conflicting and controversial decisions together.

In the follow-up the Department for Communities and Local Government published their evidence base in a report entitled 'Tenants Leading Change' (downloadable here: [link](#)). The report details five case studies, including that of 'AmicusHorizon' as well as an online survey with 198 tenant and 210 landlord responses. Under the headline of 'resident engagement to be seen as *investment not as a cost*' the report details early evidence of business benefits, such as financial benefits through tenant-led scrutiny. For example, in the five case study organisations, cost savings and efficiency gains totalled £3.9million alone.

This is early evidence and the Department for Communities & Local Government and the National Tenant Organisation will continue to explore the evidence base further to derive a framework that extrapolates and articulates benefits of tenant engagement further. In future editions of this newsletter, we will monitor the development of these initiatives and keep our clients up to date on relevant advice.

Information about independent residents' advice services that are offered by AWICS can be found on our website at: <http://www.awics.co.uk/IndependentTenantAdvice.asp>

Chartered Institute of Housing Conference

Adrian Waite will be attending the Northeast England Chartered Institute of Housing Conference to present a session on business planning in housing associations and local authority housing. He is well placed to do this having assisted a number of housing organisations with business planning.

In advance of the meeting, he participated in a question and answers session with the Chartered Housing Institute. The questions and answers are shown below.

What do you think are the top three priorities for the housing sector in the region at the moment?

"There are currently many challenges facing the housing sector but I think that three of the most important ones in the northeast are:

- Convincing the government that local authorities and housing associations are part of the solution to housing issues and not part of the problem.*
- Seizing the opportunities that are offered by the devolution agenda to bring decision making closer to communities in the northeast and to ensure a joined-up approach in the region.*
- Developing robust business plans that will deliver investment in homes and communities and value for money; and will address the challenges created by 'right to buy', sale of high value council homes, rent reform and welfare reform."*

What do you think should be done to tackle these issues and what do you think the future will be like for the region?

"To tackle these issues I think that local authorities and housing associations should:

- Work with local partners to empower local communities. Devolution should be about accepting responsibility for decision-making and creating sustainable economies and communities.*
- Offer a vision for the future of housing that includes promoting home ownership alongside social and affordable housing and that is financially sustainable without significant subsidy. This will require an innovative approach to financial management.*

"The future for Northeast England is bright. The region has significant natural and human resources. The region's leaders should seize the opportunity to make the region one of the most prosperous, vibrant and inclusive places in the world."

Why do you feel delegates would benefit from attending the event as a whole?

"I would recommend anyone with an interest in housing in Northeast England to attend the event. It provides an excellent opportunity to hear from informed speakers and to network with colleagues in other housing organisations. I am sure that delegates will leave the conference better informed and empowered to tackle the housing issues that we face."

Further information about the conference is shown below.

AWICS Webinars — a convenient way to access training

For a long time, AWICS has provided seminars and workshops and in-house training to customers all over the United Kingdom. Since 2006, over 3,000 individuals across England, Scotland, and Wales have attended our courses as a result of which they are able to carry out their roles more effectively.

Our seminars are held in easy-to-reach and good quality conference venues around the country. For example, we have recently held training in London, Huddersfield, Cardiff, Wrexham and Falkirk. Our training venues are ideal for the small groups and we traditionally restrict our training seminars to a small number of attendees.

However, we would now like to enhance our offer to our clients to include webinars. The Internet has become a medium we have all become used to and therefore we invite you to join us in webinars in the autumn and winter of this year.

These webinars will look at a range of subjects of interest to clients in local government and housing and will be held between October and December. They will last between 1½ and two hours and will offer participants plenty of opportunities for questions and discussion as well as a presentation on the topic. The cost will be £50 a session plus value added tax.

The webinars will conform to the same standards that clients have come to expect at our seminars and workshops but will offer a different format in which to learn and exchange information and points of view. Participants in each webinar will also receive a digital copy of the presentation used and a digital copy of a briefing paper on the subject.

Our next webinars will be as shown below:

<i>Webinar subject</i>	<i>Upcoming Webinars</i>
<i>Introduction to the Housing Revenue Account</i>	UK-wide — 1st Oct 2015
<i>Right to Buy for Housing Association tenants</i>	UK-wide — 8th Oct 2015
<i>Sale of high value council homes</i>	UK-wide — 13th Oct 2015
<i>Social Rent Reforms</i>	UK-wide — 19th Oct 2015

Further information will be posted on our website at <http://www.awics.co.uk/webinars.asp> as it becomes available and can also be requested by emailing enquiries@awics.co.uk.

Services for Housing Associations

We have updated our brochure that describes our service offering for housing associations. It includes management consultancy services, seminars and workshops, in-house training, webinars and independent residents' advice. The new brochure can be downloaded here: [Flyer of AWICS services for late 2015](#).

Upcoming seminars

The seminars and workshops for 2015 retain the same high standards for which 'AWICS' is well known and include some new and topical subjects. The 2015 series of seminars and workshops are as follows

:

<i>Seminar subject</i>	<i>Upcoming seminars</i>	<i>Bookings</i>
<i>Local Authority Housing Finance</i>	London — 10th Nov 2015	Book
<i>Extension of the Right to Buy — Implications for housing associations and local government</i>	London — 22 nd Sep 2015	Book
<i>Devolution in England — the financial implications</i>	Oldham — 4 th Nov 2015	http://www.awics.co.uk/devolution
	London — 11 th Nov 2015	
<i>Local authority new build — the financial implications</i>	London — 1 st Dec 2015	Contact: enquiries@awics.co.uk
	Oldham — 8 th Dec 2015	

Client and reader survey (please give us feedback)

Please consider to give us feedback on how we are doing through our client survey: [link](#).

Editorial notes



This edition of the Housing newsletter was edited by Sebastian Weise. Sebastian is a freelancer and PhD student at the Centre for Digital Innovation at Lancaster University. He is knowledgeable about participatory urban planning, local government, government reform, and geospatial services.

The AWICS Housing News is published by 'AWICS' Limited. Articles are written by Adrian Waite unless otherwise stated. However, the views expressed in articles are not necessarily those of 'AWICS' or Adrian Waite unless expressly stated.

About 'AWICS'

'AWICS' is a management consultancy and training company. We specialise in providing support in finance and management to clients in local government and housing in England, Scotland and Wales. We are well known for our ability to analyse and explain complex financial and management issues clearly.

Our mission statement is 'Independence, Integrity, Value'. We therefore provide support to clients from an independent standpoint that is designed to help the client to achieve their objectives. We are passionate about working with the utmost integrity. We believe that we offer the best value for money that is available today!

For more information about our services and us please visit our website at www.awics.co.uk or contact Adrian Waite at Adrian.waite@awics.co.uk. Services that we offer include:

- Management Consultancy – <http://www.awics.co.uk/ManagementConsultancy.asp>
- Interim Management – <http://www.awics.co.uk/interimmanagement.asp>
- Regional Seminars - <http://www.awics.co.uk/seminars2015.asp>
- In-House Training - <http://www.awics.co.uk/inHouseCourses.asp>
- Independent Residents' Advice – <http://www.awics.co.uk/IndependentTenantAdvice.asp>
- Technical Books - <http://www.awics.co.uk/TechnicalBooks.asp>
- Free Information Service - <http://www.awics.co.uk/information-service.asp>

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- Improvement Through Action

Services of a Company Secretary/Governance Advisor

Impact Housing has been providing services to Cumbrian Communities since 1975. We are a charitable housing association that also provides a whole host of other services, including supported housing, support for young people, specialist elderly accommodation and community businesses.

Impact's Company Secretary is retiring after 6yrs and we are looking to replace him. Impact is a Charity and like all Housing Associations is regulated with a "light touch" by the Homes And Communities Agency. Our governance structures are relatively simple, with a Board meeting every month, usually at 5.30 on the third Wednesday. Meetings alternate between our offices in Penrith, Workington or Carlisle.

We are looking for an efficient, self employed individual who will service our Board, run our elections and AGM, maintain our Governance Manual, keep up to date with changes in our regulatory world and ensure our statutory compliance. Services will be charged on an hourly basis, plus travel expenses. Hours tend to average around 15 per week.

You will get a good feel for our organisation by looking at our website. Our meetings are collaborative and strategic and are reliant on a sound structure in which we can concentrate on the key issues. We are looking to appoint a Company Secretary who can support that way of working.

How to Apply

Please read the current job information and job profile on our website at: www.impacthousing.org.uk/latestjobs.

Please reply in your own style, with a current CV to vacancies@impacthousing.org.uk, covering (at least) the following areas:

- Relevant experience and qualifications
- Availability for interview and for the post (including any booked holidays)
- Two referees, including a current employer or Company Secretary client
- Your hourly rate

For an informal chat, please contact: 'Mark Costello' (Chair) on 07443111226 or 'Mike Muir' (Chief Executive) on 07813858905

Closing date: Monday 7th September at 4.00pm

Interviews: Mid September (date to be confirmed)

Start date: October

Impact Housing Association Ltd

Committed to equal opportunities

Head Office: Nook Street, Workington, CA14 4EH



Follow us on Twitter @impacthajobs

We deliver excellent services, so we need excellent people.... Would you like to work in an innovative, customer focussed organisation?

ELECTRICIANS - join us!

Cheltenham Borough Homes manages and maintains homes on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council. Our Vision is that our customers are able to improve their quality of life and live in good quality homes, in places where they choose to live.



Due to expansion we have vacancy for an Electrician

Salary Grade E - £23,322 - £24,472

Plus call out allowance circa £2,799 based on a rota. 37.5 hrs per week. Vehicle for work purposes and uniform provided. Good working conditions including 24 days leave.

Reporting to the Responsive Repairs Supervisor you will provide an Electrical repairs, improvements and testing service to the dwellings managed by Cheltenham Borough Homes and assist in the smooth running of operations.

You must be qualified to IEE 17th Edition and hold a City & Guilds 2391 testing and inspection qualification. You must hold a full clean driving licence. You will have the ability to work effectively in a team environment or under your own initiative, be highly organised and able to work effectively with customers, senior managers and staff. Previous experience of working on a PDA is desirable. Out of hours working will be necessary.

A proven track record in the Electrical industry along with excellent communication skills is essential in what will prove to be a demanding, varied and rewarding job.

Closing Date: 30th September 2015.

Interview to be confirmed

For an application pack please visit our website at www.cheltborohomes.org or alternatively call the HR department on 01242 775314 and ask for an application pack. For more information please contact Emma Wall, Building Services Manager on 01242 774649.

Please note that CVs are not accepted. Any offer of employment will be subject to BPSS (identity check, verification of criminal record, employment history and nationality/ immigration status) and a medical assessment.

We deliver excellent services, so we need excellent people.... Would you like to work in an innovative, customer focussed organisation?

BUILDING SURVEYORS — join us!

Cheltenham Borough Homes manages and maintains homes on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council. Our Vision is that our customers are able to improve their quality of life and live in good quality homes, in places where they choose to live.



We have a vacancy for a Senior Building Surveyor – Salary Grade I - £34,751 to £37,332 - 37 Hours per week

This role currently requires you to have a vehicle available for work, for which you will be paid an allowance. This will be reviewed annually and is subject to change

We are seeking a Senior Building Surveyor to manage a small team of surveyors, primarily delivering capital maintenance & improvement programmes to the CBC housing stock.

Do you possess the following?

You will need to be RICS or CIOB qualified or have suitable relevant experience and be able to demonstrate a passion for delivering a high class service, together with good leadership skills. You will need a proven track record in managing major works programmes, be experienced in contract management, have good budgeting skills and show commitment to providing a customer focussed service.

If you would like to apply please see below for application details.

For an application pack please visit our website or alternatively call the HR department on 01242 775314 and ask for an application pack. For more information please contact Vicky Day on 01242 775225 or email her on vicky.day@cheltborohomes.org. Closing date 30th September 2015

Any offer of employment will be subject to BPSS (identity check, verification of criminal record, employment history and nationality/ immigration status) and a medical assessment.

Programme Surveyor

Technical & Investment

Band H, £31,110 - £32,784

(Full time 37 hours per week)



We deliver excellent services, so we need excellent people....

Would you like to work in an innovative, customer focussed organisation? Then join us!

Cheltenham Borough Homes manages and maintains homes on behalf of Cheltenham Borough Council. Our Vision is that our customers are able to improve their quality of life and live in good quality homes, in places where they choose to live.

The main focus of this role will be contract administration of the major window and door renewal programmes to be delivered across the housing stock. The role will be key to ensuring works are delivered to an excellent standard, with high levels of customer satisfaction and evidenced value for money. The role will be responsible for the line management of a Resident Liaison Officer and will be required to develop this role to maximise benefits that it can provide. Additionally the role will be expected to work as part of the Technical and Investment team, providing support to other team members and undertaking a range of other work including stock surveys and defect diagnosis.

Do you possess the following:-

- Academic building qualification of at least HND or equivalent with at least 3 years' experience working in a technical building related role?
- Excellent contract administration & cost control skills?
- Self-motivated with the ability to work under your own initiative but also as part of a team?
- Commitment to customer care?
- Ability to communicate well at all levels?

For an informal discussion please contact Julian Denslow on 01242 774634 or e-mail: Julian.denslow@cheltborohomes.org

Closing Date: 13th September 2015

For an application pack please visit our website at www.cheltborohomes.org or alternatively call the HR department on 01242 775314 and ask for an application pack. Completed applications can be returned to: recruitment@cheltborohomes.org

Please note CVs are not accepted.

Any offer of employment will be subject to BPSS (identity check, verification of criminal record, employment history and nationality/ immigration status) and a medical assessment.

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One Drummond Gate, London

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- Get a practical guide in relationship building with tenants and leaseholders
- Learn from case studies on post depooling, implementing a service charge module and calculating a sinking fund
- Network and share best practice with peers
- Receive a FREE copy of the Federation's new comprehensive guide to service charges (RRP £60)

Book your place at www.housing.org.uk/servicecharges
Call 020 7067 1066 Email events@housing.org.uk

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