



Supporting our membership 2017

Introduction - This summary sets out the work the CCH has done for our membership over the last year.

Consultation and networking – long term CCH members will know that we carried out a large membership survey in 2015, and priorities identified in that survey have driven our work with members since then. Members told us that the three most important issues for the housing co-op movement are:

- supporting existing co-ops to maintain viability and governance
- building more co-operative homes
- helping with the governance of co-ops

We have held two regional member forums this year in Birmingham in March and in London in October. The main issues discussed at those member meetings were:

- an update on policy issues
- the CCH's work on developing new co-operative homes and the potential for development
- at the Birmingham forum, we discussed the CCH guidance on long term finance. At the London forum, we launched the CCH's guidance on governance and viability and we discussed fire safety and the CCH's forthcoming guidance in this area.

Government policy – the issues that had been concerning our sector in 2015/2016 – such as Voluntary Right to Buy, rent reductions, Local Housing Allowance caps – had largely all been mitigated by work the CCH and others had done in dialogue with Government. It would not seem to be the case that any of these issues are now particularly affecting our sector.

Much of the focus of our relationship with the UK Government over the last year has been in relation to enabling a framework to develop community-led housing (discussed below), but it has dramatically changed in relation to our identity as a national tenant organisation following the horrific Grenfell Tower incident (also discussed below). These avenues mean that we are in a position to discuss issues facing our housing co-op membership as necessary.

We have also engaged throughout the year with the social housing regulator, the Homes and Communities Agency, most notably engaging with them on their charging Registered Providers fees, and in relation to their current consultation on Value for Money metrics (we shall be responding to the HCA consultation and circulating information to our members on this shortly).

Member guidance – we launched our governance and management guidance at our London Member Forum – aimed at both our housing co-op members and more broadly at the whole community-led housing sector - and this has been well received.

We have also published outline guidance on fire safety (we are planning to publish fuller guidance on health and safety in Spring 2018), and we have kept our members informed on various other issues. We also provided guidance on rents, and we have also continued to promote our guidance on long-term finance planning published last year.

Developing new homes – members have identified the importance of our work to support the development of new co-operative homes. During the year, we have updated our New Co-operative and Community-led homes guidance (based on our growing experience of supporting development of new schemes); we have worked with the Co-operative Councils Innovation Network Housing Commission on the publication of their report; and we have continued to work with the Welsh Government and the Wales Co-operative Centre to develop their co-operative housing sector.

Most notably we have worked throughout the year with the Department of Communities & Local Government and others to support the development of the shortly to be launched Community Housing Fund that will provide capital and revenue funding for the development of new community-led housing schemes. The CCH will particularly be involved in developing a training and accreditation programme for those wishing to support the development of new community-led housing schemes. The CCH has also engaged with the Greater London Authority and Birmingham City Council on the development of co-operative housing. We have also had dialogue with the Co-operative Party regarding their co-operative housing policy.

A Voice for Tenants – responding to the horrendous tragedy at Grenfell Tower, the CCH has initiated and led a programme, working with partner national tenant organisations and a growing group of tenants who wish to be involved to explore how to ensure that there is a voice for tenants in Government. We have met twice with the Housing Minister and are now arranging a series of events for the Minister to meet with social housing tenants and hear their views in advance of a forthcoming Green Paper on social housing. We have proposed a programme of work to Government which is likely to progress in the new year to explore how to establish a voice for tenants and to scrutinise how tenants are involved in social housing.

Through this initiative, we have also fed into Dame Judith Hart's Building Regulations and Fire Safety Review, attended a Roundtable event with Dame Judith and supported the arrangement of tenant events for the review. The review will produce an interim report in December with a view to the final report in April. This is likely to result in some significant changes regarding fire safety and tenant involvement.

Work with mutual housing associations – we have continued to work with our mutual housing association members - launching the Mutuality & Accountability in Housing Associations we produced with them in Parliament, and exploring how to assess the value of their mutuality.

Providing services - we have formally provided services to 40 co-op and other organisations over the last year. This assistance ranged from small pieces of governance work to much larger policy reviews.

Rules – we have worked with Co-operatives UK to produce new Model Rules for housing co-ops and for management co-ops.

Plans for next year – based on what members have told us they want, we plan the following activities for next year:

- ongoing communications with members. In particular, we wish to provide a facility for our members to have a presence on our website.
- provision of services to co-ops and other organisations
- member guidance documents – we will provide guidance in areas relating to our governance and management guidance. We welcome our member co-ops telling us which areas would be particularly useful.

- development of a training and accreditation programme for those wishing to provide support to new community-led housing organisations
- encouraging and supporting the development of new community-led housing organisations through the Community Housing Fund in England and working with the Welsh Government in Wales
- work with our mutual housing association members to help them assess the value of their mutuality
- a major programme of work with the national tenant organisations to develop a voice for tenants

We are planning the following dates:

- **CCH annual conference
11th to 13th May 2018 (provisional date)**
- **CCH Member Forum Liverpool – March 2018**
- **CCH Member Forum Birmingham – September 2018**

We look forward to working with our members over the coming year.

CCH January 2018