

INVESTMENT IN EXISTING HOUSING IS KEY

NFA warns increased funding is needed for existing council homes if Government's ambitious strategy for affordable, sustainable homes is to be realised

Press release

Date: 18 October 2007

Further investment in the maintenance of existing social housing stock beyond the decent homes programme must be a priority if the Government is to meet its ambitious targets for everyone to have access to a decent home, the NFA (National Federation of ALMOs) has warned.

In its official response to the Government's Housing Green paper this week, the NFA has called for a real and continued investment in council housing maintenance and warned that a focus on new build must not divert resources away from the continued improvement of social housing properties.

Whilst the body has broadly welcomed the Government's vision for the delivery of decent and affordable housing for all it says that future funding streams must ensure that stock continues to be maintained as a minimum at decent homes level.

Dennis Rees Chair of the NFA said:

"The NFA welcomes the government's vision for the future of decent and affordable housing for all and recognises that there is a need for an increase in affordable housing provision. ALMOs have proved they can deliver decent homes and excellent housing services and are well positioned to help meet the Government's ambitious targets for new supply. However it is vital that the work of the hugely successful decent homes programme to bring local authority housing stock up to acceptable standards remains a top priority.

"Additional resources above and beyond the £2bn allocated to ALMOs during the Comprehensive Spending Review will be required to meet the needs of the decent homes programme. "

In the response to the Green Paper the NFA also raised concerns over the future of round six ALMOs who have waited for over a year to receive their funding and over shortcomings in the housing subsidy system that could lead to much of the good work of ALMOs being undermined through inadequate funding. The NFA also called for the government to implement financial freedoms to enable high performing ALMOs to channel any surplus resources into the provision of local services.

The NFA has welcomed the extension of the eligibility criteria for access to the social housing grant from three stars to two stars which will enable a further 31 ALMOs access to extra funding.

The National Federation of ALMOs promotes the ALMO option in council house management which provides housing management and housing services to more than one million council properties across 66 live and 4 aspirant ALMOs nationwide.

ALMOs are the top performing social housing sector according to the Audit Commission with 14 ALMOs scoring three star ratings, exceeding the ratings achieved by either directly managed councils or housing associations.

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