



ARCH PRESS RELEASE

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Summing up for HRA consultation

Local authorities have been armed with figures from a debt calculation exercise to help determine their response to the Government's consultation on the future of housing finance.

A total of 54 councils, who are members of the Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) or Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE), took part in a modelling exercise that enabled them to estimate what their level of debt might be under self-financing proposals set out in the Government's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) consultation document.

ARCH commissioned consultants from ConsultCIH to undertake the modelling, which allowed likely debt allocations according to various scenarios to be calculated using data on; current average rent, management and maintenance costs and allowances, right to buy sales and other factors. The results were revealed at an event in London on 21st September.

The councils involved are now considering their position and will meet up again in London on 5th October, when they will discuss ARCH's response to the HRA consultation.

Ted Czernaik, director of housing and leisure at Broxtowe Borough Council and ARCH executive member, who chaired this week's event, said: 'ARCH has been campaigning for a level playing field on housing finance and gained considerable ground. This modelling exercise will enable councils to determine their position before the next event on 5th October, which will bring our views together to feed into ARCH's response to the HRA consultation. Everyone is ultimately on the same side and we need to achieve a consensus. Our members are committed to seeing if it is possible to reach a workable agreement across the sector.'

Brian Reilly, deputy housing director at the London Borough of Wandsworth and ARCH executive board member, said: 'While it will be difficult achieving a consensus among authorities in very different positions, we need to quickly identify exactly what is required to maximise our chances, as this vital opportunity to get rid of the obsolete and unfair system could otherwise be missed or at best substantially delayed.'

ARCH's HRA consultation event, organised in partnership with APSE, takes place at Coin Street Neighbourhood Centre, SE1 on 5th October.

NOTES FOR EDITORS

1) The Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) represents councils whose tenants and residents have chosen for their local authority to be their landlord.

2) ARCH has been campaigning for the housing finance system and opportunities for council to fulfill their potential to build new homes. For further information on ARCH visit: www.arch-housing.org.uk

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION;

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