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Written by Kerri Blyberg, Monitoring Consultant on 18 September 2017



With Brexit dominating the Queen Speech agenda, the Draft Tenant's Fees Bill was the only firm legislative action promised to help tackle the housing crisis in this two-year parliamentary session. Although uncontroversial in nature, because of more pressing legislative matters it is likely to be kicked into the long grass, particularly as the Government response to the consultation is yet to surface.

The Government has however remained steadfast in its commitment to implementing the proposals of February's Housing White Paper, with responses to the leasehold ban consultation being analysed and the long-awaited consultation on proposals for a standardised methodology for assessing local housing need now published.

As part of this, the Government is also setting out additional proposals to reform the planning system, with further revisions to the National Planning Policy Framework expected in the next year.

Details on a new rent formula for social landlords are also expected on the horizon, while speculation mounts on the future funding of supported housing, stamp duty, as well as efforts to increase house building and help young people get on the housing ladder.

Of course, in light of the tragic events surrounding Grenfell Tower, much of the departments and opposition agenda is likely to remain focused around building regulations. Additionally, while the terms of reference of the Grenfell public inquiry controversially excluded a wider look at social housing, the Government will need to assure the sector that questions over the availability, funding and quality of social housing are not being ignored.

Outside of the social rented sector, we could also see a renewed focus on housing standards in the private rented sector. While the Draft Tenants Fees Bill will go some way in tackling rogue landlords, the Government has committed to further work to support tenants and drive up standards in the sector. If it doesn't, it faces close scrutiny from Labour, having used their own party manifesto to pledge to introduce new legal minimum standards to ensure properties were up to standard. Since then, shadow secretary of state for housing John Healey has continued to be vocal on the issue while Karen Buck MP has reintroduced her Homes (Fitness for Habitation) Bill, due for second reading in January.

Turning to local government, question marks hang over the future of business rates as the Local Government Finance Bill found no reintroduction in June's Queen's Speech. While extended pilots on 100 per cent business rate retention have recently been launched, local councils are calling for an assurance from Government that it remains committed to its roll out.

Finally, eighteen months have now passed since the last devolution deal was announced, and with the success of the six new Metro Mayors, many in local government are keen to reignite the devolution process - not least to ensure that powers reclaimed from Brussels through Brexit make their way to local government and not just Westminster.

[Communities, housing and planning](#) ^[1]

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