**THIS WEEK’S HOUSING NEWS**

**Issue 214 – 30 August 2011**

Where the full text article is freely available, please click on the headline for further information. Alternatively, please contact Information Services for further details.

If you would like advice or assistance with any of the issues covered in this bulletin, please contact Alan Aisbett, Partner at Pinsent Masons.

**NEWS**

1. **Call for action on homes ‘crisis’**  
   *BBC News*  
   30 August 2011  
   The housing market will be plunged into "crisis" without government action to address the "chronic under-supply of homes", a body representing housing associations in England has warned.

2. **An affordable home in Rock? It’s possible**  
   *Sunday Telegraph*  
   28 August 2011  
   The secret behind the low-cost housing scheme is a non-profit-making Community Land Trust created by locals fed up of being priced out of the housing market - a sort of bricks-and-mortar version of David Cameron's Big Society.

3. **Minister floats boat plan to ease home crisis**  
   *Daily Telegraph*  
   27 August 2011  
   Local authorities should encourage people to live on boats to ease Britain's lack of affordable housing, the Housing Minister has said.

   Also reported in *The Independent*, 27 August 2011

**PRESS RELEASES & OFFICIAL INFORMATION**

4. **Grant Shapps: Reducing red tape so councils can invest more in affordable housing**  
   *Communities and Local Government*  
   25 August 2011  
   New proposals, published for consultation, will allow councils more flexibility to trade their assets, and use the receipts to enable further investment in new homes and regenerating the local area.

   To view the consultation click [here](#)


5. **Government publishes list of RDA assets transferring to HCA**  
   *Department for Business, Innovation and Skills*  
   26 August 2011
The Government has published a list of Regional Development Agency (RDA) land and property assets that will be transferred to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The transfer is currently planned to take effect on 19 September 2011.

6. **HCA welcomes publication of RDA land and property asset list**
   **Homes and Communities Agency**
   **26 August 2011**
   The HCA will work with local partners to develop, invest in and dispose of RDA assets, through stewardship arrangements, in pursuit of the economic development and regeneration objectives agreed by local partners including Local Enterprise Partnerships and in support of local strategies.

   Reported in *Inside Housing*, 26 August 2011 and *Property Week*, 26 August 2011

7. **Helping to prevent homelessness**
   **Scottish Government**
   **25 August 2011**
   Local authorities across Scotland are teaming up to offer more options to people facing homelessness and are making significant inroads into the problem, a special seminar has heard.

8. **Council house building boom**
   **Scottish Government**
   **23 August 2011**
   Building 800 new council houses in West Lothian will safeguard dozens of local jobs, Housing Minister Keith Brown has revealed. Over two phases, 13 sites across the region are earmarked for new council houses, the first to be built in the region since 1983. West Lothian Council is backing the development with almost £63 million and the Scottish Government has invested £9.5 million.

9. **Second quarter sees larger increase in house purchase lending in Scotland than UK as whole**
   **Council of Mortgage Lenders**
   **24 August 2011**
   House purchase lending in Scotland rose by more than the UK as a whole in the second quarter of 2011, according to new data from the Council of Mortgage Lenders.

10. **More powers for communities to choose boats on water alongside bricks and mortar**
    **Communities and Local Government**
    **27 August 2011**
    Housing Minister Grant Shapps has urged local authorities not to become landlocked in their quest to meet local housing needs - but to consider how new powers restoring local control over housing provision and planning can enable people to choose boats on water alongside bricks and mortar.

11. **Government publishes list of RDA assets transferring to HCA**
    **Department for Business, Innovation and Skills**
    **26 August 2011**
    The Government has published a list of Regional Development Agency (RDA) land and property assets that will be transferred to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The transfer is currently planned to take effect on 19 September 2011.
12. **HCA welcomes publication of RDA land and property asset list**
Homes and Communities Agency
26 August 2011
The HCA will work with local partners to develop, invest in and dispose of RDA assets, through stewardship arrangements, in pursuit of the economic development and regeneration objectives agreed by local partners including Local Enterprise Partnerships and in support of local strategies.

Reported in **Inside Housing**, 26 August 2011 and **Property Week**, 26 August 2011

13. **Code for Sustainable Homes and Energy Performance of Buildings: Cumulative and Quarterly Data up to end of June 2011**
Communities and Local Government
26 August 2011
The latest official statistics on the Code for Sustainable Homes and Average Energy Efficiency (SAP ratings) have been published. Statistics in this release relating to the Code for Sustainable Homes show the number of dwellings that have been certified to the standards set out in the Code Technical Guide.

14. **Building greener homes costing less each year**
Communities and Local Government
26 August 2011
Building new homes to greener, low-carbon standards is getting cheaper every year, according to a new report. The new research, based on interviews with developers and the latest information about environmental technologies, shows the overall extra costs of building new homes to standards set in the Code for Sustainable Homes is falling year on year.

15. **July house prices up 1.3 per cent since June: average house price in England and Wales now £163,049**
Land Registry
26 August 2011
The July data from Land Registry's flagship House Price Index shows an annual price decrease of 2.1 per cent which takes the average property value in England and Wales to £163,049. The monthly change from June to July is 1.3 per cent.

Reported in **BBC News**, 26 August 2011 and **Property Week**, 26 August 2011

16. **Housing market crisis as home ownership lowest level since 1980s, study warns**
National Housing Federation
30 August 2011
The housing market is in crisis as owner occupation rates tumble and house prices and private rents soar, according to a new study. Home ownership in England will slump to just 63.8% over the next decade - the lowest level since the mid 1980s - as an entire generation are effectively locked out of the housing market, according to a new study.


**ARTICLES**

**Legal**

17. **Legal barriers make evictions unlikely**
Local Government Chronicle, p. 10-11
18 August 2011
Tough talk from ministers and councils on evicting those from social homes found to have been involved in rioting is unlikely to be realised in practice, legal experts have said.

18. **Housing company fined thousands for breach**  
**Inside Housing**  
**25 August 2011**  
A housing company has been fined £8,000 for flouting safety rules after turning flats into a hostel for asylum seekers.

19. **London riots: Tenants sent eviction warning letters**  
**BBC News**  
**24 August 2011**  
Dozens of letters have been sent to council tenants in south London warning they could face eviction if convicted over recent rioting in the city.

20. **Northern Rock takes surveyor to High Court**  
**Building**  
**26 August 2011**  
Nationalised mortgage lender Northern Rock Asset Management has launched a High Court action against surveyor Hockleys Professional over a house valuation, sparking renewed claims that such litigation is damaging the market.

**Government policies**

21. **Salmond wants VAT cut to boost home improvements**  
**Building**  
**23 August 2011**  
The First Minister of Scotland, Alex Salmond, has called on the government to cut VAT on home improvements to boost the ailing housing market.

22. **Green belt development row grows**  
**Inside Housing**  
**23 August 2011**  
The planning minister has waded into a row between campaign groups and housebuilders over proposed planning reform.

23. **Government drops VAT changes to contracts**  
**Building**  
**26 August 2011**  
Last-ditch lobbying by housing associations has helped persuade the government to abandon proposed changes to VAT on design and build contracts, which the housing sector claims would have cost it tens of millions of pounds a year.

24. **Private cash scheme to help deprived families**  
**Inside Housing**  
**30 August 2011**  
The government hopes to raise up to £40 million in private finance to fund social intervention projects as part of a new pilot scheme.
Housing finance and data

25. Housing stats: new build sales and completions in July
Building
26 August 2011
Latest new build and completions statistics which show that private registrations increased by 6.7% and completions by 6.2% from this time last year.

26. Mortgage approvals start rising
BBC News
30 August 2011
Mortgage lending to house buyers is starting to pick up, according to the latest figures from the Bank of England.

27. TSA to crackdown on value for money
Inside Housing
26 August 2011
The Tenant Services Authority will take a stronger line on value for money after finding it could not account for more than a third of the operating cost variations between landlords.

28. UK’s most affordable location revealed
Inside Housing
30 August 2011
Scotland is the most affordable place to own a home in the UK, a new report by the Bank of Scotland has found.

Local authority housing

29. Councils fail to identify five-year supply of land
Inside Housing
26 August 2011
More than half of Welsh local authorities have failed to identify enough land to meet housing need over the next five years.

Housing management

30. Housing framework worth £210 million seeks 100 contractors
Construction News
25 August 2011
Procurement agency Fusion21 is looking for around 100 contractors for a housing maintenance framework deal worth £210 million.

Housing associations

31. Landlord makes 11th-hour bid for energy funds
Inside Housing
26 August 2011
A housing association has launched a last-ditch attempt to help social landlords prise £350 million of eco-cash from the grasp of energy companies.

32. Battle looms over affordable rents
Inside Housing
26 August 2011
Rows between housing associations and town halls over rent levels are threatening proposed developments under the government’s £1.8 billion affordable homes programme.

Construction

33. Six contractors awarded £800m social housing framework
Building
23 August 2011
Social housing procurement consortium Cyntra has announced the six contractors in charge of its £800m housing repairs programme.

Also reported in Construction News, 23 August 2011

34. Home build plans up by a fifth
Inside Housing
26 August 2011
Applications to build new homes in the UK rose by almost 20 per cent year-on-year in the three months to the end of July.

35. Bovis profit doubles as construction costs squeezed
Building
30 August 2011
Pre-tax profit at housebuilder Bovis Homes doubled in the first six months of the financial year on the back of reduced construction costs, according to interim results published today.

36. Landlords face bank bill for tens of millions
Inside Housing
26 August 2011
Housing associations are facing short-notice calls for tens of millions of pounds from lenders because of the dive in global share markets.

37. Housing crisis to ‘worsen’ as planning permissions fall
Inside Housing
26 August 2011
The number of planning permissions granted in England in the last quarter was the second lowest in five years, according to the latest figures from the Home Builders Federation.

Also reported in Property Week, 26 August 2011 and Building, 26 August 2011

38. Housebuilders unaware of risks in shared-equity schemes
Property Week
26 August 2011
Failure to comply with complicated regulations in shared-equity schemes could incur the wrath of the Office of Fair Trading

39. Slump in planning approvals for new Scottish homes
BBC News
26 August 2011
The number of new homes being granted planning permission in Scotland has slumped at a faster rate than any other part of the UK this year, according to new data.