

News from around the sector

Thursday 4 October 2018

In the headlines

May announces end to council borrowing cap

During her party conference address, PM clears the way for councils to build thousands of new homes.

[24 Housing](#)

Theresa May's Conservative party conference speech - full transcript

Here is the text of Theresa May's conference speech as provided by the Conservatives.

[The Telegraph](#)

Scrapping HRA cap 'could see 100,000 homes built.'

Abolishing the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) borrowing cap could allow councils to build up to 100,000 more homes, housing consultancy Savills has said.

[Inside Housing](#) (register)

Councils losing £300m a year due to Right to Buy

Cutting the discounts available could lead to an extra 12,000 homes being built a year, CIH has calculated. But the organisation says right to buy should be suspended altogether to stem the loss of social rented homes.

[CIH](#)

UK councils spent £300m putting homeless in hotels in three years, shocking figures reveal

The figures, which relate to the last three financial years 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18, lay bare the shocking extent of homelessness across the UK.

[London Evening Standard](#)

Grenfell Inquiry: No-one should have lived there, says fire chief

Deputy assistant commissioner Andrew O'Loughlin told the inquiry into the disaster that the failure of the building could not have been foreseen. He was defending the decision to tell residents to remain in their homes.

[BBC](#)

Grenfell tenants were bullied during refurbishment, says fire survivor

Antonio Roncolato tells inquiry residents were unhappy about relocation of gas boilers in tower's corridors

[The Guardian](#)

Policy, regulation and legislation

Government announces new housing measures

New measures to support homebuyers, build more homes, improve building safety and create a Commonwealth Games legacy.

[MHCLG](#)

£7.5m fund for councils' digital innovation opens

Grants of up to £100,000 will be available for projects which demonstrate they benefit local public services and have the potential to be rolled out more widely across the country.

[MHCLG](#)

Plan announced for foreigners to pay more property tax in the UK

Foreigners who buy property in the UK are set to pay a higher rate of stamp duty, the tax payable on purchase, it has been announced.

[Property Wire](#)

Government bans combustible cladding above 18m

New building regulations will be introduced for external wall systems banning plastics, wood and other products that include combustible materials found in some aluminium composite panel systems.

[Construction Enquirer](#)

Scottish Housing Regulator publishes its annual report for 2017/18

The report gives the highlights of the work the Regulator did last year to safeguard and promote the interests of tenants, homeless people and others who use the services of social landlords.

[Scottish Housing Regulator](#)

Tory Mayor calls for Homes England to be abolished

Homes England should be abolished and the money should be distributed directly to regions, the Conservative mayor of the Tees Valley has said.

[Inside Housing](#) (register)

Government support to boost skills and prosperity

The Chancellor Philip Hammond pledged government support for apprenticeships, adult training, to boost management skills in small businesses.

[HM Treasury](#)

Housing statistics and intelligence

Annual house price growth steady in September

UK annual house price growth steady at 2%. Prices up 0.3% during the month, after taking account of seasonal factors.

[Nationwide](#)

London house prices fall again as stamp duty and Brexit fears bite

Average price of a home in the capital is £468,544, more than twice national average.

[The Guardian](#)

Private sector rents rising across most of England

Private sector rents across England and Wales increased by 2.6% in the 12 months to August 2018, hitting an average of £861 per month, the latest research shows.

[Property Wire](#)

'Brexit blot on the landscape' causes headaches for construction sector

The report said the September data indicated the sector continues to be in a "downbeat mood".

[Yorkshire Post](#)

Welfare reform and benefits

Citizens Advice to provide support to Universal Credit claimants

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will fund Citizens Advice to provide Universal Support from April 2019, the government has announced.

[DWP](#)

[Esther McVey's Universal Credit funding vow under fire from poverty charities](#)

In her speech to the Conservative Party Conference on Monday, work and pensions secretary Esther McVey unveiled plans for a £39m partnership with the charity Citizens Advice to provide “universal support” to make sure applicants get their first Universal Credit payments on time.

[Huffington Post](#)

[Do new Universal Credit requirements affect women more?](#)

Since April 2017, parents receiving Universal Credit have been required to start looking for work once their youngest child turns three. Previously, it was when the child turned five. According to data for the UK from 2014, 91% of single parents with dependent children were women. It was still around this level in 2017.

[Full Fact](#)

Finance

[Moody's issues A2 credit rating for second part of LiveWest bond](#)

Credit ratings agency Moody's has given LiveWest Capital, the finance issuing arm of housing association LiveWest, an A2 debt rating ahead of a £50m bond.

[Inside Housing](#) (register)

[Moody's downgrades up to £2bn of housing association loans](#)

Credit ratings agency Moody's has downgraded between £1.5bn and £2bn worth of housing association loans over new government regulations.

[Inside Housing](#) (register)

[Local services face further £1.3bn government funding cut in 2019/20](#)

Main government grant funding for local services will be cut by a further £1.3bn (36 percent) in 2019/20 despite many councils already struggling to balance their books, facing overspends and having to make in-year budget cuts, the Local Government Association reveals today.

[LGA](#)

Council finances to come under further strain, CIPFA fringe meeting hears

Demand on social care will continue to rise and services, particularly non-statutory ones, will continue to be cut, Drew Cullen, CIPFA's director of public affairs, told the session, which examined the pressures on local government.

[Public Finance](#)

Northamptonshire County Council plan to cut £65m unveiled

A council plans to cut spending on agency staff and highways services, while boosting tax receipts, to tackle a £65m funding shortfall.

[BBC](#)

Human Resources

Nottingham City Council accused of trying to 'ban homelessness'

Liberty claims a new Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) will mean people are forbidden from giving food to rough sleepers.

[BBC](#)

Welsh government will safeguard homelessness and housing support funding

Sector leaders praise ministers for listening to concerns over plans to merge 10 government grants.

[24 Housing](#)

Energy and environment

Landlords urged to manage legionella risk after two cases reported since May

Landlords have been urged to update their plans to manage the risk of legionella after two cases were reported in social housing schemes in a four-month period.

[Inside Housing](#) (register)

Useful reports

Meanwhile, in London: Making use of London's empty spaces

This report analyses the extent, value and potential of meanwhile use in the capital.

[Centre for London](#)

Reality Check: What are the plans to boost council homes?

Theresa May, in her party conference speech, pledged to boost council house building. This would be achieved, the prime minister said, by scrapping the existing limits on councils' ability to borrow money. What exactly is this cap and what impact has it had?

[BBC](#)

Stamp duty cuts won't solve housing crisis

Research from Key suggests that scrapping stamp duty for last-time buyers won't guarantee older homeowners downsize.

[Money Observer](#)

Labour is planning the most radical tax and spending reforms in over 70 years

The important thing to understand about the Labour manifesto last year, and the speech by John McDonnell, the shadow chancellor, last week, was that they were not about offering an alternative to austerity. They were offering something much, much more dramatic than that — an alternative to the form of market capitalism practised in this country for at least the past 40 years.

[IFS](#)

Private renters now key to political battleground, Shelter research shows

Exclusive research carried out by Number Cruncher Politics, for Shelter, reveals private renters in key marginal seats say they are less likely to vote Conservative in the next general election – in fact the Conservatives are a massive 22 points behind Labour.

[Shelter](#)

Blogs and opinion

[LGA responds to scrapping of the housing borrowing cap](#)

"Today's speech by the Prime Minister shows that the government has heard our argument that councils must be part of the solution to our chronic housing shortage."

[LGA](#)

[Five thoughts about Theresa May's promise to get councils building houses again](#)

One should acknowledge when things that sounds small are actually big – and the housing policy Theresa May announced in her speech to Tory conference in Birmingham earlier today appears to be one of them.

[City Metric](#)

[May's HRA announcement deserves its warm welcome – but the Budget will be the real test](#)

Jules Birch picks over the prime minister's surprise announcement on council borrowing.

[Inside Housing](#) (register)

[Only a total rethink can solve the housing crisis](#)

If shelter is a human right why not create a national housing service to provide homes for those who have none?

[The Guardian](#)

[Johnson reinforces tenant stereotypes PM tried to tear down](#)

Would-be PM says social rented sector "more likely" to vote for a Labour Party that didn't understand home ownership.

[24 Housing](#)

[London calling to the faraway towns](#)

Welcome to a short discussion about the history of housing and devolution in London, littered with tangential and laboured references to The Clash.

[National Housing Federation](#)

Other news

[Rising turnover of association chief executives sees 44 depart in three years](#)

Forty-four housing association chief executives have retired in the past three years taking a combined 511 years of experience with them, Inside Housing found.

[Inside Housing](#) (register)

[UK businesses issue firm rejection of Theresa May's plans to slash immigration after Brexit](#)

Construction firms said the plans would make the government's own target of 300,000 new homes per year "impossible" to meet, despite ministers' pledges to tackle the housing crisis.

[The Independent](#)

[Where does rent hit young people the hardest in Britain?](#)

People in their 20s who want to rent a place for themselves face having to pay out an "unaffordable" amount in two-thirds of Britain, BBC research shows.

[BBC](#)