

## LETTER FROM THE PRINCIPAL PRIVATE SECRETARY, FIRST MINISTER REQUESTING CONSENT OF HER MAJESTY

To: The Private Secretary to Her Majesty

Dear Sir/Madam

### **HOUSING (WALES) BILL**

Please find enclosed two copies of the Housing (Wales) Bill, for which the Consent of Her Majesty is sought.

#### **Statutory background**

Section 111(4) of the Government of Wales Act 2006 states:

*“The standing orders must include provision for securing that the Assembly may only pass a Bill containing provisions which would, if contained in a Bill for an Act of Parliament, require the consent of Her Majesty or the Duke of Cornwall if such consent has been signified in standing orders.”*

Standing Order 26.67 of the National Assembly for Wales further states:

*“If a Bill contains any provision, or is amended so as to include any provision, that would, if contained in a Bill for an Act of the United Kingdom Parliament, require the consent of Her Majesty, or the Duke of Cornwall, the Assembly must not debate the question whether the Bill be passed (or approved following Reconsideration) unless such consent to such a provision has been signified by a member of the government during proceedings on the Bill at a meeting of the Assembly.”*

#### **Purpose of the Bill**

The key aims of the Bill are:

- Introduce a compulsory registration and licensing scheme for private rented sector landlords and letting and management agents;
- Reform homelessness law, including placing a stronger duty on local authorities to prevent homelessness and allowing them to use suitable accommodation in the private sector;
- Place a duty on local authorities to provide sites for Gypsies and Travellers where a need has been identified.

- Introduce standards for local authorities on rents, service charges and quality of accommodation;
- Reform the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy system;
- Give local authorities the power to charge more than the standard rate of council tax on homes that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for at least one year; and
- Assist the provision of housing by Co-operative Housing Associations

### **How the Bill could affect the Crown**

The Housing (Wales) Bill is capable of applying to the private interests of the Queen and the Duke of Cornwall, and in so far as Her Majesty or the Duke are the landlord of any relevant personal property situated in Wales or is liable to pay council tax on such property. The relevant provisions are contained in Parts 1 and 7 of the Bill.

### **Amendments**

It might be helpful to be aware the Minister for Housing and Regeneration intends to table amendments to Parts 1 and 7 of the Bill which could further affect the private interests of the Queen and the Duke of Cornwall. We do not, however, intend to seek consent for these provisions until they have been agreed by the National Assembly for Wales. These amendments are as follows:

#### **Part 1 – private rented housing**

- Introduction of fixed penalty notices for offences under this Part
- Introduction of rent repayment orders in respect of rent paid to unregistered or unlicensed landlords.

#### **Part 7 – council tax**

- Extending the power in the Bill for local authorities to charge more than the standard rate of council tax on homes that have been unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for at least one year to also cover dwellings which are occupied periodically.

### **Consent**

I respectfully ask the Queen for consent, in so far as she may be affected by the Bill as introduced.

Thank you for considering this request and please let us know if we can be of any further assistance to you.

Yours sincerely

**Des Clifford**  
**Principal Private Secretary, First Minister**

Enc: Two copies of the Bill

CC:

The Secretary to the Crown Estate Commissioners, 16 New Burlington Place, London, W1S 2HX

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