

## **Your Questions Answered**

### **If the proposal goes ahead:-**

#### **Will my landlord/freeholder change?**

Yes, if you are a tenant or leaseholder of PGHT or WCHG, Willow Park Housing Trust (subsequently renamed as **Wythenshawe Community Housing Group**) will become your new landlord/freeholder. However, the conditions of your tenancy or lease would not change as a result of the Group consolidation and you would have the same rights and protection that you have now.

In summary:

- If you are a PGHT or WCHG resident then WPHT will become your landlord, and the name will then change to WCHG.
- If you are a WPHT resident then the name of your landlord will change to WCHG.

#### **Will I need a new tenancy agreement or lease?**

No, there will be no need for existing tenants or leaseholders to sign a new agreement or lease, as explained above all the conditions would transfer over and there is no need to sign a new document.

WCHG will introduce a new tenancy agreement for all new tenants after the Transfer of Engagements has taken place.

#### **When will the proposal take effect?**

We anticipate that the Group consolidation will legally take effect in Spring next year.

#### **Will Willow Park Housing Trust keep its name?**

No, Willow Park Housing Trust will change its name to Wythenshawe Community Housing Group.

### **What is a Community Benefit Society?**

A community benefit society is a type of organisation which carries on charitable purposes for the benefit of the community. Most housing associations (private registered providers of social housing) are charitable Community Benefit Societies (CBS) these days. WCHG, PGHT and WPHT are all currently registered charities. Changing their constitutions to become a charitable CBS is a formality to enable the transfer of engagements to happen. The change would have no effect on residents.

### **What is a Transfer of Engagements?**

A transfer of engagements (or “TOE”) is a form of merger. One association transfers all of its assets and liabilities into another association. It is an effective and relatively straightforward way of merging two organisations.

### **Will my rent or service charge be affected?**

No, the proposed Group consolidation will not affect your rent or service charge. We will continue to review charges every year, as we do at the moment, in line with your current tenancy agreement or lease.

### **Will there be a change to how I pay?**

No.

### **What about the right to buy?**

If you already have the right to buy, or right to acquire, you will not lose the right and you will continue to be able to exercise the right in the same way as before.

### **Will my repairs, grounds maintenance or cleaning contractors change?**

There are no plans to make changes to any of our contractors as a result of this consolidation – as contracts come up for renewal though we will review what’s best for all residents.

**Will I have the same contacts (e.g. my Rent Officer, Tenancy Management Coordinator)?**

Yes, services will continue to be delivered in the same way by the same people and there are no plans to change this. All of our telephone numbers will stay the same, and we will be developing new ways for residents to access our services online.

As we introduce improvements over time and integrate the three associations, this may change and we'll make sure you know who any new contacts are.

**Will the way I contact you change?**

No, except your landlord will become Willow Park Housing Trust (renamed as Wythenshawe Community Housing Group) if you are currently a tenant or leaseholder of WCHG or PGHT. However, you will continue to get in touch with us as you do at the moment, by phone, by email or via the website.

**Will your offices be affected?**

No, there are no plans to change offices.

**What are the benefits of the proposed consolidation?**

In the short term there will be a period of integration.

In the longer term we believe the group consolidation will allow us to generate more economies to help achieve our aims of better services, investing in the community and building more homes.

**Are there any disadvantages to the proposal?**

We have looked carefully at the consequences of this proposal and through a process known as due diligence we will ensure that the consolidation will be of no detriment to our residents. One disadvantage is that the time and resources required to align the systems and people from both organisations may have a delaying effect on some shorter term improvements, but this will result in efficiencies in the long term. Other than that, we have concluded, subject to residents' views, that the proposal makes good business sense.

**What are the costs associated with the proposal?**

The merger will inevitably involve initial staff time and external advisors' costs. However, we are confident these costs will be quickly recovered through the savings that a larger, streamlined organisation will achieve. Residents will bear none of the costs of the consolidation and the savings made in the longer term will mean we are able to improve and add to the services residents benefit from.