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www.bestha.co.uk

7th November 2024

[Address]



Dear Appointee,

Appointee of: [Tenant]

I am writing to you as an appointee for the above named tenant. The information below and in this pack has been posted to them. I wanted to make you aware of the consultation so that you can provide any support required.

Proposal of a Merger between Bespoke Supportive Tenancies Limited and Westmoreland Supported Housing Limited

We are writing to inform you that Bespoke Supportive Tenancies (BeST) is currently engaged in merger discussions with Westmoreland Supported Housing.

This letter tells you what is being proposed and the potential benefits or disadvantages. As part of the decision to merge, we would like to understand our tenants' views on it, so this letter also tells you how you can give us your thoughts or ask us a question.

What is being proposed?

Both organisations are currently exploring how we can create an effective, combined housing association and what that might look like. BeST and Westmoreland Supported Housing currently share a common purpose - we are both regulated providers of social housing offering homes for vulnerable adults requiring care. We both operate in England and Wales, and we share the same values. We believe that the combined organisation would offer significant potential benefits for both organisations our customers and employees.

Benefits of merging

A merger would enable both organisations to improve its services. By working together, we could create greater efficiencies, better utilise our resources and more effectively respond to the needs of our customers. Here is a summary of what the merger would mean for you.

- **Extra Resource** - We would have more Housing Officers, Surveyors and customer-focused staff to service your needs, improving our customer experience.
- **Improved Customer Focus** - We would aim to enhance our housing management services with more staff as a result of a merger. With smaller areas to cover, our housing team could spend more time working with you in your home.

Registered Office: 7a Sentinel House, Albert Street, Eccles, M30 0NA

Bespoke Supportive Tenancies Ltd is a charity registered in England, registration number: 1143046. A registered provider of social housing, registration number: 4718. A Not-for-Profit organisation, limited by guarantee, registration number: 07375502.

- **Choice and Opportunity** – BeST have over 1450 homes across the UK and Westmoreland Supported Housing has 900 homes within a similar geographical coverage. A merger could offer further choice and opportunity of alternative accommodation.
- **Improved Repairs Services** - We believe a merger would help us provide a more responsive repairs service offering better value for money for both organisations.
- **Financial Resources** - A merger would improve our financial standing, giving us the ability to deliver better value for money and respond more effectively to your needs.
- **New Customer Strategy** - We would create a new customer strategy that would give you, our customers, carers and appointees more opportunities to share your views on how our services are provided.
- **Increased Regulation** - A merged organisation would be larger than either BeST or Westmoreland Supported Housing are presently. This means we would be very closely monitored by the Regulator of Social Housing, giving you even more confidence in the standards we would provide.

Potential disadvantages of merging

If a merger proceeds, a dedicated team will work on integrating our organisations. We know that there may be some temporary impact to some services leading up to the merger, but we would aim to minimise any disruption.

We understand that you may have concerns about us becoming a larger landlord. Please be assured that our commitment to providing high quality homes and services would remain unchanged. We are focused on maintaining our current teams and enhancing our effectiveness to meet our customers' needs.

Have your say

We want to hear your feedback on the proposed merger and plan to hold a consultation with all our customers to ensure your voice is heard.

The consultation period will start from Monday November 11th, 2024, to Friday January 10th, 2025. We have extended the consultation period to take into account the Christmas holiday period.

Please submit any questions or comments before the closing date to ensure they are included in the consultation.

To respond, you can:

- Complete the enclosed form and return it using the provided freepost envelope.
- Fill out the form on our website at <https://www.bestha.co.uk/merger-consultations.php> or scan the QR code below.
- Our website has a dedicated section on the merger proposal, where we will answer your questions. This section will be updated on a regular basis.

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- We will hold drop-ins at our larger schemes and virtual drop-in sessions with our team. Details will be shared in future updates.

We have included additional information with this letter to help answer any questions you may have. If you have any questions, feel free to speak to your dedicated housing officer or use any of the means available to you detailed in this letter.

Over the consultation period, we will send out regular reminders for you to take part. Your opinions are extremely important to us.

If you have further queries, please call us on **0161 786 6000** option 6. Leave a message with your question and a convenient time for us to return your call. Alternatively, you can email us at **MergerConsultations@bestha.co.uk**

What happens after the consultation ends

The Boards of BeST and Westmoreland Supported Housing will review all comments and feedback on the proposal to decide whether to proceed with the merger plans. We will inform you of the outcome and decisions once both Boards have decided on the approach.

Yours sincerely,



Steve Fensom
Chief Executive



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