

DEFEND COUNCIL HOUSING

STOP PRIVATISATION INVEST IN COUNCIL HOUSING - WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED



All over Britain tenants are saying NO to privatisation. We want direct investment in council housing with no strings attached. Instead the government's 'Communities Plan' attempts to brave out the pressure.

After months of build up, their 'new idea' for housing amounts to nothing that addresses the needs of council tenants.

The 3.6 million council tenants in Britain, our children and everyone who needs a decent, affordable, secure home now or in the future have a right to expect some serious discussion and solutions from government. Council housing has been starved of money for 20 years and more. Worse - we have been subsidising the government - £13 billion has been siphoned out of our rents since 1990 through 'Daylight Robbery'

And all the Communities Plan comes up with is a bit more money with yet more strings attached. It solves nothing and leaves councils and furious tenants in the firing line yet again.

John Prescott said after the launch of the Communities Plan, there will be 'problems' if tenants continue to vote against transfer - as he knows we will. There is a clear and simple alternative: use the existing funds to create the first class council housing we need.

Tenants are sick of the blackmail that says we have to trade our secure tenancies and affordable rents for new kitchens and bathrooms. We demand both.

Transfer and PFI are discredited. There is no reason why extra money available for ALMOs could not be given to councils direct unless, as tenants increasingly suspect, the government's strategy is two-stage privatisation.

On January 29th, 1800 attended the Lobby for Council

LOCAL ELECTIONS

Council election campaigns will be starting in most areas, in the build up to elections on 1 May. Ask all candidates to sign up to our 'six demands'. Ask to speak to their meetings and make sure tenants put the Case for Council Housing at any election meetings. Tenants are not voting fodder. We will vote for councillors who stand up and fight for council housing.

DO THIS NOW

- Get every tenants' rep and councillor in your area to sign the statement overleaf
- Order copies of the new 'Case for Council Housing' pamphlet and broadsheet for members and tenants in your area
- Organise a delegation to the DCH conference 31 May

Housing at Parliament. A broad platform of tenants, trade unionists and MPs promoted the six demands to create a level playing field for council housing.

Government policy continues to make repairs and improvements conditional on tenants accepting transfer, PFI or ALMOs. Next year's £800 million budget to subsidise stock transfer could fund an annual 'investment allowance' enabling councils to clear the £19 billion backlog of repairs and improve our estates.

Why not use the money to let councils invest directly in council homes and give council tenants a real choice?

Support for council housing is growing - our alliance of tenants, trade unions, MPs and councillors is a powerful force. Join the fight for a real choice. Sign up to the six demands now (see over) and defend decent, affordable, secure and accountable council housing.

There is a clear and simple alternative: use the existing funds to create the first class council housing we need.

"I am proud that my union is at the forefront of the campaign to stop the sell-offs. This is a commitment - we will continue to be at the forefront of the campaign to keep council housing public.

"The only way we'll achieve what we want and keep our housing in the public sector is by winning the ballots - by becoming active, getting groups together who're prepared to go out and argue our case."

Dave Prentis general secretary UNISON

"I'm upset that the only solution for councils to deal with their housing problems is to

hive off their stock to someone else. Local authorities should be able to borrow money"

Flo Lucas, Liverpool council

"The money is obviously welcome, but the question remains: will this be sufficient? I don't think it will be. If all the councils that don't go down the stock transfer route go down the ALMO route then there won't be enough money."

John Perry, director of policy at the Chartered Institute of Housing

"ODPM had managed to secure the increase in funding for ALMOs to £2bn over the next three years, by switching

unused resources from the housing revenue account. These amounted to around £450m."

Housing Today 21.02.03

"The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister managed to find an extra £250m a year to fund arm's-length management organisations by a clever 'switch of resources'. Local authorities are required to set aside 75% of capital receipts and further money as part of their housing revenue account to cover debt to the government. This latter 'minimum revenue provision' - around 2% of an authority's 'credit ceiling' - is what the Treasury

has agreed to allow to be freed up for capital investment. This has been possible because of the introduction of the £1.59bn major repairs allowance two years ago to allow councils to invest in housing. The ODPM argued to the Treasury that this funding stream meant that the minimum revenue provision was no longer required."

Housing Today 14.02.03

"Many more councils are likely to want to keep their housing stock and set up ALMOs than will be able to under the government's spending plans."

David Butler, chief executive Chartered Institute of Housing

STOP PRESS....NEW DATE FOR DCH CONFERENCE: SATURDAY 31 MAY, FRIENDS MEETING HOUSE, PARADISE ST LIVERPOOL CITY CENTRE