

Defend Council Housing



INVEST IN FIRST CLASS COUNCIL HOUSING

- Stop privatisation
- Improve existing
- Start building new

DCH Conference

Tuesday 25 November 2008
Central London

**DCH National Conference, University of London Union (ULU),
Malet Street, London WC1E 7HY**

Registration 9.30am; Conference 10.30am – 4.30pm

Contributors include: ● Professor **Peter Ambrose** ● **Weyman Bennett**, joint secretary, Unite Against Fascism ● **Lesley Carty**, DCH ● **Frank Dobson** MP ● **Jack Dromey**, deputy general secretary UNITE ● **Wilf Flynn**, UCATT executive council ● **Steve Hilditch**, facilitating workshops for Review of Council Housing Finance ● **Dave Gibson**, housing consultant and Moonlight Robbery campaign ● **John Grayson**, housing researcher ● **Paul Holmes** MP ● **Adam Lent**, TUC Head of Economic and Social Affairs ● **Linda McNeil**, chair, Leeds Tenants Federation ● **John Marias**, Cambridge Tenants Against Privatisation ● **Michael Meacher** MP ● **Austin Mitchell** MP ● **Paul O'Brien**, chief executive, APSE ● **Steve Partridge**, director, HQN ● **Alan Rickman**, chair, Winchester TACT ● **Patricia Rowe**, Taunton tenant ● **Eileen Short**, Tower Hamlets Against Transfer ● **Heather Wakefield**, national secretary UNISON ● **Alan Walter**, chair Defend Council Housing

This conference is an opportunity for tenants, trade unionists, councillors and other supporters of council housing to sharpen the arguments, share experience and feed into the government's Review of Council Housing Finance. We need to unite the council housing family bringing together those from authorities directly retaining their homes as well as ALMOs and provide support for people facing 'stock options appraisals' and transfer ballots. We all need to stop the robbery from tenants' rents and capital receipts. We have a common interest to secure a new financial settlement for council housing that enables every authority to improve existing homes and estates, maintain improvements for years to come and build a new generation of first class council homes for future generations. Get your tenants organisation, union, local authority or political group to organise a broad based delegation from your area to take part.

- Opposing privatisation and attempts to means test and stigmatise council housing as housing of last resort
- Winning the 'Fourth Option' to secure first class council housing with secure tenancies, low rents and an accountable landlord as a tenure of choice

Defend Council Housing National Conference

UNITING THE COUNCIL HOUSING FAMILY

This conference comes at a critical time for council housing. Ministers have promised their review will "ensure that we have a sustainable, long term system for financing council housing" and "consider evidence about the need to spend on management, maintenance and repairs". Yet some councils are still proposing to conduct expensive 'stock options appraisals', some ALMOs are discussing privatisation and authorities are even balloting tenants on transfer before the review's outcome is known.

The conference, organised by tenants for tenants and other supporters of council housing, will be an important opportunity to hear from a wide range of contributors – including those at the heart of negotiations with Ministers. There will also be time to talk to tenants from other areas and share lessons and experience.

Councils always say they want tenants to be well informed and regularly fund delegations to attend conferences and events. Ask your authority to sponsor a delegation to attend this conference. Invite trade unions and councillors to attend too. Contact local unions for help if your council refuses.

Stop privatisation

Nearly 2.5 million tenants have rejected privatisation. We value our secure tenancies, lower rents and charges and an elected and more accountable landlord. We're angry that tenants in many authorities (those directly managed by the council and, as we predicted, in some ALMOs) face an ongoing threat of privatisation.

We're demanding a moratorium on any further privatisation or expensive and wasteful 'stock options appraisals' until the outcome of the government's review is known and evaluated. Government and local authorities must stop bullying and blackmailing tenants. We demand they respect tenants' choice and ensure the review delivers the secure future for council housing as promised.

Improve existing homes

It's a scandal that government robs money from tenants rents (£1.7 billion this year) – and then tells us there's not enough money to modernise and improve all our homes. Evidence shows that government has been massively underfunding allowances to councils for the management, maintenance, repair and improvement of council housing. It's been treating council

housing like a 'cash cow'.

Ministers must now ring-fence at national level all the income from rents and receipts and provide a 'level playing field' on gap funding and debt write-off. This would fund an increase in allowances to 'level of need' to enable all authorities to modernise our homes and estates and maintain improvements in future years.

Start building new

The crisis in the private housing market underlines the case for massive investment in a new generation of first class council housing. There's strong demand: the Local Government Association predicts the 1.67 million households on council housing waiting lists will rise to 2 million households (5 million people) by 2010.

A big council house building programme providing well built and designed family homes with secure tenancies, low rents and an accountable landlord is the only practical way to provide the decent, affordable, secure and accountable homes Britain needs. It would enable councils to open up allocation policies once again to butchers and bakers, nurses and teachers, so that council housing can again become a tenure of choice providing mixed and sustainable communities.

Tuesday 25th November 2008 University of London Union (ULU), Central London

CONFERENCE AGENDA & TIMETABLE

09.30 – 10.15 Registration

10.30 - 12.00 Plenary: Investment in first class council housing

12.00 – 12.30 Plenary: Presentation and Q&A on government's Review of Council Housing Finance by Steve Hilditch (facilitating the expert and practitioner workshops) and Steve Partridge (contributor)

12.30 – 01.15 Lunch

01.15 – 02.45 Workshop Session

02.45 – 03.00 Tea/Coffee break

03.00 – 04.30 Plenary: Building the campaign at national and local level

WORKSHOPS:

1. Stop privatisation

A moratorium, dealing with 'stock options appraisals', 'fair and balanced' debate, the case against privatisation and the post-transfer experience

2. Improve & maintain existing council homes

How housing finance works, the options, risks and benefits facing the government's 'Review of Council Housing Finance' and what we want

3. Start building new

Investment in a new generation of first class council housing makes sense, defining 'affordability', mixed communities and 'tenure of choice'

4. Future for ALMOs

Options for tenants: revert back, stay the same or privatisation via stock transfer or morphing into public/private partnerships

5. Tenants movement and organising today

History of tenants organisation and organising effectively today to defend our secure tenancies, low rents and hold our landlords to account.

6. Unite against the Nazis

What we can do to stop the Nazis undermining tenants' common interests and exploiting housing need to spread their politics of hate and division.



"Ministers need to demonstrate their commitment to council housing now! Whilst we're waiting for the outcome of the Review of Council Housing Finance government must provide an interim solution for embattled authorities who are unable to improve their homes and maintain these improvements. This should include:

1. Additional resources for those authorities who are unable to meet the basic Decent Homes standard (selling off existing council homes or land is not acceptable).
2. Ensuring, as a minimum, the gap between tenants rents and allowances does not increase during the review. This would provide an immediate increase of £216 million for allowances in the 2009/10 determination.
3. An immediate moratorium on further transfer ballots and a halt to the expensive 'stock options appraisal' process until the review's outcome is known."



Austin Mitchell MP,
chair, House of
Commons Council
Housing group

Tenants, trade unionists,
councillors and MPs
demand:

**'FOURTH
OPTION' for COUNCIL
HOUSING**



COMMUNICATION
WORKERS UNION



GMB
BRITAIN'S GENERAL UNION



RMT

tssa



UNISON



BOOKING FORM FOR DCH CONFERENCE 25 NOVEMBER 2008

Tuesday 25 November 2008, 10.30am – 4.30pm (registration 9.30am onwards)
 University of London Union (ULU), Malet Street, London WC1E 7HY



Delegate fees:

Individual tenants £5; funded tenants, trade unions, councils and others £25

Please try and register in advance (ideally by 15 November) to give us an idea of numbers attending and workshop preferences. If you don't know all the delegates' details, please fill the form in with as much information as you can and send with payment, then send or bring with you the delegates' details on the day. This will help make registration much quicker for everyone! (You will be able to register and pay on the day if necessary)

Name..... Local Authority Area

Organisation..... Position.....

Address.....

Tel No(s)..... Email.....

DELEGATES (Photocopy to fill in more delegates names if required)

Name..... Address.....

Tel/ Email (optional) Fee (£5 / £25).....

Workshop preference (tick) 1 2 3 4 5 6 (see full list of workshops inside)

Name..... Address.....

Tel/ Email (optional) Fee (£5 / £25).....

Workshop preference (tick) 1 2 3 4 5 6 (see full list of workshops inside)

Total No. of Conference Delegates Total Conference Fees £.....

Affiliation fee..... Amount £..... Donation..... Amount £.....

No of Broadsheets..... Amount £..... Mailing Subscription..... Amount £.....

Total Enclosed £.....

(please make cheques payable to Defend Council Housing and return to: DCH, PO Box 33519, London E2 9WW)



AFFILIATE

Annual affiliation fees:

Tenants/Community Organisations:
 Local £10 District/Regional £25 National £50
 Trade Union Organisations:
 Local £50 District/Regional £100 National £250

ORDER MATERIAL TO DISTRIBUTE IN YOUR AREA

National newspaper
 £20 per 100 / £120 per 1000
Annual subscription to Campaign Mailings & Briefings £15
Case for Council Housing pamphlet £10
 (or £2.50 for individual tenants / bulk orders)
Dear Gordon pamphlet £5
 (or £1.50 individual tenants/bulk orders)

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