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Defend Council Housing

National Conference – A MANIFESTO FOR COUNCIL HOUSING

Friday 19 March 2010

**TUC Conference Centre
Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS**

FULL CONFERENCE TIMETABLE INSIDE
**and plans for an evening Tenants Question Time with all main parties answering tenants questions on council housing,
secure tenancies, fair funding and robbery**

This conference, organised by tenants and other supporters of council housing, will be an important opportunity to hear from a wide range of contributors – including those negotiating with Ministers over the future of council housing – as well as talk to tenants from other areas about their experience. Councils say they want tenants to be well informed and regularly fund delegations to attend other conferences and events. Ask your authority to sponsor a delegation to attend this conference. Invite trade unions and councillors to attend too – unions may be able to help with transport if your council refuses.

With waiting lists and overcrowding growing, we need more council housing. Reform proposals for financing council housing and funding for 3,000 new council homes, mark a welcome change of policy. But privatisation through stock transfer, PFI schemes, demolition and sell offs of council homes and land to private landlords, continue to threaten council tenants' security, lower rents and democratic accountability of our landlord. At this key moment in the run-up to a general election, join councillors, MPs, tenants and trade unions to make our views on council housing heard loud and clear. Hear the latest on financial reform proposals and debate whether they offer a sustainable financial future for council housing of tenants across Britain, and updates from campaigns to defend our secure tenancies, against means testing and privatisation attacks on council housing.

- NO to privatisation
- Demand investment in council housing
- Fund at level of need
- Mass new build
- Defend secure tenancies
- No means testing

Defend Council Housing National Conference

A MANIFESTO FOR COUNCIL HOUSING

Friday 19 March 2010: TUC Conference Centre, Great Russell Street, London WC1B 3LS

WORKSHOPS

Depending on interest we hope to run as many of the following workshops as possible:

1. Finance reforms – are they good for tenants

Risks and benefits of government's proposals for the 'Reform of Council Housing Finance' and what we want – with Steve Partridge of the Chartered Institute of Housing, Moonlight Robbery supporter, Council lead members and others.

2. Case against stock transfer

'Stock options appraisals', 'fair and balanced' debate, the case against privatisation and the post-transfer experience, with tenant and union campaigners.

3. Case against PFI

Workshop with Dr Stuart Hodkinson, author of *Regenerating Council Estates Within a Neoliberal Straitjacket: The Private Finance Initiative in Little London*, Leeds, Steve Hack DCH and tenant campaigners.

4. The new homes we need

Why we need new first class, secure, affordable council housing; with Professor Peter Ambrose, editor of *Memorandum to the Prime Minister on Unaffordable Housing*; and Paul O'Brien of APSE, who have recently produced a report *A new generation of council housing: An analysis of need, opportunity, vision and skills*; Deborah Garvey Shelter and others.

5. Future for ALMOs

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

6. Defending security of tenure

Learn about the history of attacks on our security of tenure and the arguments as to why secure, affordable council housing matters.

7. Independent tenants movement

History of tenants organisation and organising effectively today, with Leeds Tenants Fed and John Grayson, housing researcher at Sheffield Hallam University and author of *Opening the Window: the hidden history of tenant organisations*.

8. Effective united campaigning

How to campaign; hear from successful campaigners; the importance of united campaigns, how we can stop the Nazis undermining tenants' common interests and exploiting housing need to spread their politics of hate and division.

CONFERENCE AGENDA & TIMETABLE

09.30 – 10.30	Registration
10.30 – 11.30	Opening session: A Manifesto for Council Housing
11.30 – 11.45	Tea/Coffee break
11.45 – 1.15	Workshop: Finance Reforms
1.15 – 2.00	Lunch
2.00 – 3.15	Workshop Session
3.15 – 3.30	Tea/Coffee break
3.30 – 4.30	Closing session: Building the campaign nationally & locally

Has your council decided to keep council housing or set up an ALMO?

Over 200 authorities around the UK own council housing. Most still have direct management, some are managed by an ALMO (Arms-Length Management Organisation), and some have both.

ALMOs face specific funding problems, and some are pushing stock transfer to the private sector: the two-stage privatisation tenants feared.

We all have a strong, common interest in reform of the housing subsidy system to create a sustainable future for council housing – not more problems and risks. The new attacks on security of tenure and attempts to bring market forces into council housing affect us all. And everywhere there is a need to build new council homes – not local housing companies and other private-public partnerships - to solve the housing crisis.

Facing transfer, PFI, or another options appraisal?

We have won a partial moratorium on further stock transfer, while councils consider proposals for housing finance reforms. But some councils are going ahead with transfer. And PFI (Private Finance Initiative) programmes are threatened in several areas, with £billions poured in to subsidise privatisation. A special workshop on PFI will look at the financial and other arguments. Others will discuss the detail of transfer and campaigning.

Councils spend a small fortune from tenants' rents – putting just one side of the debate. It's important that tenants, elected councillors and trade unionists hear both sides of the argument. Ask your local unions to sponsor a delegation to attend this conference so that you can hear prominent national speakers, participate in the workshops and speak to tenants from other areas to hear their experience first hand.

EXHIBITION: POSITIVELY COUNCIL HOUSING

DCH is inviting entries for a Positively Council Housing exhibition at our national conference.

We want photos, paintings, drawings or any other visual images that capture the real life of council tenants, not the negative stereotypes. We're looking for the positive side of life in council housing, including architecture, nurseries and other facilities, community events and activities; gardens, art and projects.

Tenants, union members, organisations and campaigners can send entries to 'DCH Exhibition' by post (to address on booking form) or email to info@defendcouncilhousing.org.uk. We will display as many as possible at the TUC Centre.

The following trade unions are affiliated to Defend Council Housing



Thank you to Southern & Eastern



for providing the venue for this conference

BOOKING FORM FOR DCH CONFERENCE 19 MARCH 2010

Friday 19 March 2010, 10.30am – 4.30pm (registration 9.30am onwards)

TUC, Congress House, 23-27 Great Russell St, London WC1

Delegate fees:

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

Basic lunch plus tea/coffee during breaks: £4

Please try and register in advance (by 12 March if possible) 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)



DETAILS OF ORGANISATION / PERSON BOOKING PLACES:

Name..... Local Authority Area

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

Address.....

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

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

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

Tel/ Email (optional) Fee (£5 / £25)..... Refreshments required (£4) (yes/no)

Workshop preference (tick) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (see full list of workshops overleaf)

Do you want to take part in a Tenants Question Time session with candidates from major political parties? [tick box]

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

Tel/ Email (optional) Fee (£5 / £25)..... Refreshments required (£4) (yes/no)

Workshop preference (tick) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (see full list of workshops overleaf)

Do you want to take part in a Tenants Question Time session with candidates from major political parties? [tick box]

Total No. of Conference Delegates

Total Conference Fees £.....

Affiliation fee..... Amount £..... No. of MPs reports..... 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

House of Commons Council Housing group report: 'Council Housing: Time to invest' £10 (or £5 for orders of more than 10 copies)

Annual subscription to Campaign Mailings & Briefings £15

DCH: PO Box 33519, London E2 9WW Phone: 020 7987 9989

E-mail: info@defendcouncilhousing.org.uk Website: www.defendcouncilhousing.org.uk