

## Tenants, trade unionists, councillors and MPs demand **FOURTH OPTION—Real choice for tenants**



**Tenants want direct investment in council housing—not the “three card trick” of transfer, PFI or ALMO. We’ve had enough of being told this is the only way to get improvements done.**

Why should we trade our secure tenure and lower rents to get repairs and improvements we have a right to?

Council housing is the best value and most democratic way to run our homes. Where tenants hear the facts about privatisation and the alternative, they are ready to fight to keep our rights and improve our estates.

As John Prescott's department admits, council housing can pay for itself—if all the income from rents and 'right to buy' receipts is reinvested.

Add the money spent subsidising privatisation through debt write off and their army of consultants and the extra cost of housing benefit, and there would be sufficient to fund direct investment.

The government is pushing privatisation based on political dogma. It's not about money. Tenants demand real choice—We want direct investment in council housing with no strings attached.

**The government is under serious pressure to concede the 'fourth option'—direct investment in council housing—as an alternative to stock transfer, PFI or ALMOs.**

Council tenants do not want privatisation—and many continue to vote against stock transfer, PFI and now ALMOs too.

The massive 77% no vote against ALMO in Camden was a major blow to the government's privatisation drive. This

was quickly followed with a 80% vote against PFI on Maiden Lane. Tenants in Wrexham rejected stock transfer—widely regarded as setting the tone for the rest of Wales—and Kingston tenants also voted NO.

These results shock the policy-makers, and boost the confidence of tenants and trade unionists across Britain resisting similar blackmail.

Pressure from tenants, coupled with effective campaigning at national level, has isolated and exposed the failings of government policy.

Housing Minister Keith Hill continues to deny that concessions will be made—but this sounds increasingly hollow and desperate. As Roy Urwin, chief inspector of housing at the Audit Commission told MPs in January, 'something is going to have to give and I doubt if it is the tenants' views'.

A damning report by the ODPM Select Committee of MPs (see inside) has rejected the government's key arguments and condemned the continued blackmail of council tenants. The influential committee supports an investment allowance and a 'level playing field' for council housing.

The Local Government Association (LGA), on behalf of councils in England and Wales, now backs this 'fourth option'. Many councils sense that the government can be forced into conceding direct investment. To the embarrassment of Ministers this will now be debated at the Labour Party annual conference. John Prescott has offered to meet critics to find a compromise.

More than 200 MPs are also now backing the campaign's demands. We need to lobby every MP to sign the early day motions (EDM 430 and EDM 1337) in Parliament.

The determined alliance of tenants, trade unions and the councillors, MPs and others who support council housing are a formidable force.

However much Ministers huff and puff, in many areas housing privatisation won't be tolerated. All those who believe in council housing have to help make sure that wherever councils push stock transfer, PFI or ALMOs there is a concerted campaign to oppose the blackmail.

We need to pull the growing opposition together to win a fourth option—direct investment in council housing to give tenants real choice. Ministers say they believe in choice in public services.



**Tenants and trade unionists 1500 strong lobby of Parliament**



photos: Jess Hurd report digital

### **ODPM consider ALMOs sell-off**

“Arm's-length management organisations could take over ownership of council homes by 2006 under radical new proposals drawn up by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister' (Inside Housing 3.9.04).

This is exactly what DCH predicted and why we describe ALMOs as two-stage privatisation. They are simply a short term attempt to get round tenants opposition to stock transfer.

The obvious question is if government has extra money for ALMOs why won't they allow councils to use this money direct—unless privatisation is their end game?

## **DCH NATIONAL CONFERENCE**

### **WINNING THE 'FOURTH OPTION'** **Fri 29 October**

**11-4.30pm TUC, Congress House, Gt Russell Street, London WC1**

**Make sure your tenants, trade union members and even councillors and MPs are not kept in the dark—**

**Speakers, workshops and discussions provide an antidote and strengthen local and national campaigns for the 'fourth option' to give tenants real choice.**

**Organise a broad delegation from your area.**

**Tenants: £5; trade union members and councillors £12**

**Sponsors include SERTUC, UNISON and House of Commons Council Housing group**

### **INSIDE**

■ Council housing can pay for itself

■ No evidence to back Ministers arguments

■ Select Committee backs

“investment allowance”

■ Audit Commission accuses councils of “mis-selling”

■ How to organise a local campaign

# **Say No to privatisation**