

Defend Council Housing

For tenants, trade unionists and councillors in authorities

- keeping council housing
- facing transfer, PFI or ALMO
- existing ALMOs opposed to two-stage privatisation

National Conference

'WINNING THE FOURTH OPTION'

The next stage of the campaign

Monday May 22nd 2006
TUC, Congress House
Central London



This conference is a unique opportunity for supporters of council housing to hear prominent speakers and discuss the arguments against stock transfer, PFI and ALMOs, the case for the 'Fourth Option' of direct investment and the campaign's progress.

Plenary sessions and workshops will bring together supporters across 'stock retention' authorities, those facing transfer, PFI or ALMOs and those



Tenants, trade unionists, councillors and MPs united on February 8

opposed to transfer of the ALMO companies into the private sector.

On Feb 8th 1300+ tenants, trade unionists and elected councillors came from more than 90 areas to a mass rally and lobby of Parliament. We've got the attention of Ministers and the Labour Party policy review shows a change in policy is in the air. Come to the conference – help bring this campaign to a successful conclusion.

Defend Council Housing National Conference

'WINNING THE FOURTH OPTION'



'The door is open, but it won't be easy. We can only win by a combination of the power of our arguments and the power of our campaigning. We must continue to engage nationally and to campaign locally for NO votes until we see tenants having a real choice and councils having real freedoms.'

Jack Dromey, T&G deputy general secretary, DCH fringe meeting, Labour spring conference Blackpool 11 Feb 2006

'Stick with your secure tenancies. Demand that all council tenants' rents and right to buy capital receipts are used exclusively on council homes and none of it is siphoned off. And insist on a clear code of practise to guarantee a fair and balanced debate which outlaws the blackmail. It is outrageous, it is indefensible and we are going to overturn it.'

Michael Meacher MP, former Environment minister



Michael Meacher MP, speaking at the February 8 Rally

'The impact of the Edinburgh No Vote has sent shockwaves across the whole Scottish political spectrum. It has created a debate about how to fund decent affordable council housing where none existed. As debt write off comes from the Westminster Treasury we should unite our forces north and south of the border to secure a future for council housing across the UK.'

Jenni Marrow, Edinburgh tenant and Scottish Tenants Org

"ALMO - it's a 'job and finish'. They were set up to achieve the Decent Homes target. Once they have done their job they are finished. Reverting back to direct council management shuts the door firmly against two-stage privatisation. Obviously any improved procedures and better tenant involvement under the ALMO can be adopted by the local authority."

Cllr. Chris Weldon, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Regeneration, Sheffield Council

The next stage of the campaign

Monday May 22nd 2006 TUC, Congress House, Central London

CONFERENCE AGENDA & TIMETABLE

- 09.30 – 10.30 Registration, films and transfer/PFI/ALMO advice session
- 11.00 – 12.30 Plenary session with national speakers
- 12.30 – 01.15 Lunch
- 01.15 – 03.00 Workshop Session
- 03.00 – 03.15 Tea/Coffee break
- 03.15 – 04.30 Plenary

WORKSHOPS:

- The Case Against Transfer
- The Future of ALMOs
- Housing Finance & Funding the 'Fourth Option'
- Organising effective local campaigns

Delegate fees: individual tenants: £5; councillors, unions, others (inc. tenants when sponsored by council or other funded organisation): £12. Basic lunch/refreshments: £2.50 extra.



Has your council decided on stock retention?

98 authorities have already decided to keep their homes after consulting tenants. But many will struggle to carry out all the improvements that tenants need. Tenants, councillors and trade unions from stock retaining authorities need to be part of the campaign to win the 'Fourth Option' and a level playing field to secure the long term future for council housing.

Are you in an ALMO?

The National Federation of ALMOs now propose transferring the ALMO companies into the private sector. Despite promises that ALMOs were set up with the specific remit to meet the Decent Homes standard they are working to take the two-stage privatisation process further. Discuss with other tenants, trade unionists and councillors from ALMO authorities how to campaign for the homes to revert back to the council once the improvements have been completed.

Facing transfer, PFI or ALMO?

Councils proposing stock transfer, PFI or ALMOs spend a small fortune - paid 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 council or 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 delegations from other areas.



'What we want is a decent home and they are telling us we are not going to get it unless we go private. It's cost me six months of my rent to pay for consulting with me. Why don't they just say to people 'have rent free for six months and bring up your home to a decent standard yourself! The tide is turning. There are more MPs that are more interested, now they know the dirty tricks that are going on, and now they know how much it's costing. All across the country we've got to say NO and all the MPs should back us.'

Carole Swords, tenant, Tower Hamlets (pictured above)

'Tenants voting to retain their council tenancies here in West Lancashire was only the first but a necessary stage in delivering Decent Affordable Council Housing. The longer the LSVT process went on the more tenants and Councillors came to see the unfairness and daylight robbery of tenants monies being used to subsidise the Council Tax. Only with tenants Councillors and Trades Union representatives coming together will we get our Labour government to hear the views of the people that matter.'

Cllr. Jane Roberts, Labour Housing spokesperson, West Lancs

'My Constituency seconded the Motion at Labour Party Conference because of appeals from many Council tenants. They were delighted with the overwhelming vote at the Labour Party Conference and look to Labour MPs to carry out that policy. This is a crucial time for the campaign in Gravesham with the ballot due to take place in June.'

Councillor Leslie Christie, Gravesham, Kent

BOOKING FORM FOR DCH CONFERENCE MAY 22nd 2006

Monday May 22nd, 11-4.30pm (registration and pre-conference workshop/films 9.30am onwards)

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



Delegate fees:

Individual tenants: £5
Councillors, unions, others: £12 (inc. tenants when sponsored by council or other funded organisation)
Basic lunch/refreshments: £2.50

Please register in advance and send details of delegates where possible. If you can send us your booking form before Friday May 12th this will really help our organisation of the event. If you wish to reserve places but don't know all the delegates' details, please fill the form in with as much information as you can and send with payment before May 12th, 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 / £12)..... Lunch required? (yes/no)

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

Tel/ Email (optional) Fee (£5 / £12)..... Lunch required? (yes/no)

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

Tel/ Email (optional) Fee (£5 / £12)..... Lunch required? (yes/no)

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)

Defend Council Housing was set up in 1998 to fight against the privatisation of council housing and for direct investment to make council housing first class housing for all who need it.

The campaign unites council tenants, trade unionists and activists around Britain. It has support from a wide political range of councillors and MPs.

Affiliate, Donate and Order Material

DCH relies on tenants, trade union and campaign groups for support. We can't use tenants rents to pay for leaflets and broadsheets to counter the glossy PR campaigns promoting privatisation. Please propose your organisation affiliates to DCH, make an additional donation and order campaign material to distribute in your area.

AFFILIATE

Annual affiliation fees:

Tenants/Community Organisations:

Local £10 District/Regional £25 National £50

Trade Union Organisations:

Local £40 District/Regional £100 National £250

ORDER MATERIAL TO DISTRIBUTE IN YOUR AREA

National four-page broadsheet

£18 per 100 / £100 per 1000

Annual subscription to Campaign Mailings & Briefings £15

Stickers, posters, badges (prices on request)

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

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