

Defend Council Housing

National Conference STAND UP FOR COUNCIL HOUSING



Thursday 12th July 2007
TUC, Congress House
Central London

Contributors to include:

- Professor **Peter Ambrose**, Brighton University ● **Weyman Bennett**, joint secretary, Unite Against Fascism ● **Gail Cartmail**, assistant general secretary Amicus ● **Lesley Carty**, Camden DCH ● **Frank Dobson** MP
- **Jack Dromey**, deputy general secretary T&G ● **John Grayson**, researcher and social historian, Sheffield Hallam University ● **Paul Holmes** MP
- **Jenni Marrow**, secretary, Scottish Tenants Organisation ● Cllr. **Abjol Miah**, Tower Hamlets Council ● **Austin Mitchell** MP ● **Paul O'Brien**, chief executive, Association for Public Service Excellence ● **Heather Wakefield**, national secretary UNISON ● **Lyn Ralph**, chair Doncaster Tenants Federation
- **Eileen Short**, Tower Hamlets Against Transfer ● Cllr. **Mike Tansey**, Sunderland City Council ● **Alan Walter**, chair Defend Council Housing
- **Dexter Whitfield**, European Services Strategy Unit ● Cllr. **Margaret Wilkinson**, executive member for Housing, Vale of Glamorgan Council

This conference is an opportunity for tenants, trade unionists and councillors to discuss the latest developments on negotiations for the 'Fourth Option', the future for council housing and share our experience. It will bring together those from the 125 authorities retaining their council homes and others where tenants have voted NO to privatisation, those from ALMO authorities and those yet to be balloted on 'stock options'.

We all have a common interest to win the

'Fourth Option' and fight off proposals to take away our lifelong secure tenancies. We all need a change in the housing finance regime to enable every authority to improve existing homes and estates, maintain the Decent Homes standard for years to come and build first class council homes for future generations as an alternative to privatisation and market forces.

Get your tenants organisation, union or political group to organise a broad based delegation to attend from your area.

- Vote NO to privatisation ● Demand investment in council housing ● Defend secure lifelong tenancies

Defend Council Housing

STAND UP FOR COUNCIL HOUSING

This 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 negotiating with Ministers over the future of council housing – as well as talk to tenants from other areas about their experience. Councils always 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.



Frank Dobson MP, member, House of Commons Council Housing group

If you've got a ballot coming up, fight like hell to persuade people to vote NO – the more people who reject it the better chance we have of turning over this stupid policy...

What was left of my hair stood on end when I heard these apparently New Left thinkers say that what is needed is insecurity of tenure. I bet they're not insecure in their tenure! And their idea of trying to avoid council estates becoming ghettos for the poor is to encourage people with a job and a bit of money to move out! Think about it..! There's one simple straightforward answer – we don't have enough houses in this country, so build the bloody things!



Lyn Ralph, chair, Doncaster Tenants Federation

I believe Ministers wake in the wee small hours and think 'What can I throw at council tenants this week?'

Ms Kelly now wants to revert to the last century, means testing to force tenants to relinquish their hard fought for security of tenure, only gained in 1979... I am disgusted that yet again the tenants are being 'shafted'. Despite the obscene amount of money poured into Governments coffers from council rents, still they treat council tenants like something on the sole of their shoe!

We, Doncaster Federation of Tenants' & Residents' Associations fully support the aims of DCH to campaign against the abolition of secure tenancies.



Jack Dromey, Deputy General Secretary T&G

Council tenants who do not want to transfer resent being told that it is the only way that they can get much needed improvements made.

Many tenants who have transferred rue the day because their rents are soaring and their new landlords are not what they were cracked up to be...

Labour now needs to change course. Tenants should have real choice, including the right to stay with their council and to get much needed improvements made to their homes. And we need hundreds of thousands of new homes, including built by councils.

Thursday 12th July 2007 TUC, C

CONFERENCE AGENDA & TIME

- 09.30 – 10.30 Registration, films and
- 10.45 – 11.00 Introduction
- 11.00 – 12.30 Plenary: Winning the
- 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

WORKSHOPS:

1. Funding the 'Fourth Option'
2. Debating Hills: The Role of Councils
3. The Cave Review: Deregulation, Pr
4. ALMOs: Revert back or two-stage p
5. The Case Against Stock Transfer (i
6. Unite: Stop the Nazis exploiting ho
7. Independent tenants organisation
8. Organising Effective Local Campaign

Has your council decided on stock retention?

Those in 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 – many authorities able to meet Decent Homes face long term financial pressures without it and the new attacks on security of tenure and attempts to bring market forces into council housing affect us all.

Are you in a

Moves to push ALMOs in the sector continue – despite ALMOs were set up with to meet the Decent Homes. We need to learn from experience and have an discussion about whether to direct council control. Homes has been achieved door on two-stage private an active part in defend secure tenancies.

Make sure a broad delegation of tenants, councillors and

The following trade unions are affiliated to Defend Council Housing



g National Conference

COUNCIL HOUSING

Congress House, Central London

AGENDA

Stock transfer/PFI/ALMO advice session

'Fourth Option'

campaign at national and local level

Council Housing

Profit and the Market

Privatisation

(including post transfer experience)

Using

or 'consumer panels'?

Designs

Should we go to an ALMO? Facing transfer, PFI or ALMO?

...into the private...
...promises that...
...the specific remit...
...is standard...
...each others'...
...informed...
...to revert back...
...once Decent...
...ed to shut the...
...privatisation and play...
...ing our lifelong

Councils proposing stock transfer, PFI or ALMOs spend a small fortune – paid from tenants' rents – putting just one side of the debate. There's a lot of experience and 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.

...d trade unionists from your area attend this conference.



Tenants reject privatisation across UK and demand 'Fourth Option' to improve existing and build new council homes

WHAT'S IN THE WORKSHOPS:

Funding the Fourth Option

Housing finance made simpler; how the 'Fourth Option' could be funded; the 'self financing' pilot scheme and issues around the national pooling system of council housing finance.

Debating Hills: The Role of Council Housing

Why security of tenure matters and must be defended; how investment to improve existing and build new council homes would both address the housing crisis and help create 'sustainable communities'.

The Cave Review: Deregulation, Profit and the Market

Decent, affordable, secure and accountable council housing makes sense and needs defending. Information on the new threats to deregulate, bring in market forces, lift rent controls and allow RSLs to make profits.

ALMOs: Revert back or two-stage privatisation

Why tenants faced with ALMOs should hold out for direct investment; discuss the proposals to take ALMOs onto the next stage of privatisation and making the case for existing ALMOs to 'revert back' to council management once Decent Homes is met.

Independent tenants organisation or 'consumer panels'?

Many councils are actively working to undermine independent tenants organisation and the National Consumer Council is recommending 'consumer panels'. What's the history of the tenants movement, and what can we do to re-build tenants organisation to make it effective and genuinely under tenants control?

BOOKING FORM FOR DCH CONFERENCE 12TH JULY 2007

Thursday 12th July, 10.45am – 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: £20 (inc. tenants when sponsored by council or other funded organisation)
- Basic lunch/refreshments: £4

Please try and register in advance (ideally by June 22) 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 / £20)..... Lunch required? (yes/no)

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

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

Tel/ Email (optional) Fee (£5 / £20)..... Lunch required? (yes/no)

Workshop preference (tick) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (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 £40 District/Regional £100 National £250

ORDER MATERIAL TO DISTRIBUTE IN YOUR AREA

- National twelve-page broadsheet**
£18 per 100 / £100 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)

DCH: PO Box 33519, London E2 9WW Phone: 020 7987 9989
E-mail: info@defendcouncilhousing.org.uk Website: www.defendcouncilhousing.org.uk

SIGN THIS ON-LINE DOWNING STREET PETITION

“ We the undersigned petition the Prime Minister to provide the ‘Fourth Option’ of direct investment in council housing as an alternative to privatisation by stock transfer, PFI or ALMO, to enable local authorities to respect the choice of their tenants and bring all homes up to at least the government’s Decent Homes Standard by 2010 and also build a new generation of decent, affordable and secure council homes for rent, accountable to an elected local authority landlord, and to give a clear commitment to defend the lifelong secure tenancy that council tenants enjoy and uphold the right of everyone who needs or wants to rent public housing to do so without time limit or means testing so that council housing can again become a tenure of choice and council estates can once again be a place that people are proud to live in. ”



Go to the Prime Minister’s website:
<http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/fourth-option>
