



defend council housing

'winning the fourth option' national conference

october 29, TUC, London

agenda

- 11.00 **welcome**
- 11.10 **plenary session**
Austin Mitchell MP,
Frank Dobson MP,
Dave Prentis UNISON,
Alan Walter DCH,
Clive Betts MP,
Kevin Curran GMB,
Frank Chance Birmingham DCH,
Ken Purchase MP,
Alan Ritchie UCATT,
Cllr. Willie Smith Corby Council
Mick Connolly SERTUC
- 12.45 lunch
- 1.30 **workshop session**
Funding the 'fourth option';
History of the tenants movement;
How to approach stock option appraisals;
Case against Stock Transfer;
Arguments against going ALMO;
How to organise an effective campaign and
Post transfer experience
- 3.00 tea/coffee break
- 3.20 **final session**
motion
election of national committee
chair's closing address
- 4.30 conference ends

Direct investment in decent, affordable, secure and accountable council housing is what tenants want. It is cheaper than the private alternatives and can make an important contribution to improving housing conditions for three million existing council tenants, our children and millions more facing overcrowding, homelessness and soaring mortgage payments.

The government's dogmatic policy of making extra investment conditional on three privatisation options of stock transfer, setting up arms length companies or PFI, denies tenants real choice and makes no financial sense.

The case for the 'fourth option' - direct investment in council housing - is overwhelming and is supported by tenants, trade unions, the Local Government Association and many councils and growing numbers of MPs.

We welcome the commitment by Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott: "Public financing of housing doesn't treat local authorities on a level playing field and I want to see that changed and I promised to do that and look at an enquiry into it".

We urge John Prescott to conclude this review with urgency. In the meantime we call for a moratorium on local stock options appraisals and any further transfers, ALMOs or PFI deals. Clearly it is unacceptable for councils to continue to bully and blackmail tenants to choose between 'three options' when the Deputy Prime Minister has said himself that he was 'near agreement' on providing an alternative 'fourth option'.

To help all authorities access further direct public funding without strings, we propose the ODPM Community Housing Task Force is replaced by a 'Continuous Improvement Task Force', of experts in service delivery, providing councils with constructive support in running good-quality housing service.

In light of the ODPM ALMO review on the future of ALMOs - including selling them off - we support tenants' right to demand ALMO housing reverts back to direct council management and control at the end of five years.

Tenants and councillors in many areas are denied full and balanced information by senior officers and consultants who often stand to gain personally from promoting privatisation. DCH will continue to provide the facts and arguments needed at local level to resist stock transfer, two-stage privatisation by ALMOs or PFI and support tenants demanding a fair and balanced debate and a formal vote before any decisions are made.

At local level we will encourage broad based local campaigns uniting all those who support council housing to take the alternative arguments onto every council estate to oppose privatisation and win support for the 'fourth option'.

Conference agrees to step up the national campaign: to produce a briefing for all local authority councillors, organise an event at Parliament in conjunction with the House of Commons Council Housing group in late January to collect further evidence to feed into Prescott's review and arrange a major fringe meeting at the Labour Party Local Government spring conference, with all the sponsoring organisations, on February 12th in Newcastle.

Proposed National Committee

Dave Anderson Coventry
Defend Council Housing

Frank Chance Birmingham
Defend Council Housing

Piers Corbyn Southwark
Defend Council Housing

Marian Doherty
Manchester UNISON Housing
Stewards

Jean Kysow, Lewisham

John Marais Cambridge
Tenants Against Privatisation

John McDermott Leeds
UNISON Housing Stewards

Austin Mitchell MP

Stephen O'Connor, Stafford

Patricia Rowe, Taunton Dean

Eileen Short Tower Hamlets
Against Transfer

Alan Walter Camden Defend
Council Housing

Mark Weeks Tower Hamlets
Against Transfer

Constitution allows for reserved spaces for TAROE, Welsh Tenants Fed, Scottish Tenants Fed and affiliated national unions.