

DEFEND COUNCIL HOUSING

Tenants say...

Breakthrough for council housing



as Minister concedes councils can borrow

Stephen Byers' statement on freeing councils to borrow to fund investment is a breakthrough for council housing.

Council tenants resent the blackmail that says we can only have investment in repairs and improvements through privatisation.

We welcome Stephen Byers' acceptance that government has unfairly discriminated against council housing by making investment conditional on tenants "going into the private sector".

WE SAY
All councils must be free to borrow from April 2002

Write-off overhanging debt

We want to say "Yes" to more investment in our homes. The announcement goes some way to achieving the 'level playing field' but real choice means writing off the overhanging debt for councils who keep their housing - not just those who privatise it!

We need a speedy timetable to enact Byers' commitment. Our homes can't wait! All councils must be free to borrow by April 2002.

This is vital if we are to have a real choice of remaining as council tenants and getting our repairs and improvements done.

End Daylight Robbery

We also need action, as promised, to end Daylight Robbery now. Since 1991 government has taken over £10 billion from our rents through clawback on Housing Revenue Accounts. This must stop - every penny of council tenants' rents needs to be spent on the upkeep and management of our homes.

The powerful alliance of tenants, trade unions and campaigns opposed to housing privatisation is winning ground.

In England, Scotland and Wales tenants and trade unions have been campaigning together, leafleting estates, running stalls, meetings and lobbies. We are fighting privatisation on every doorstep. We have upped the pressure on government through a 1,500 strong united lobby of parliament in January, growing support for our 'Manifesto for Council Housing' and co-ordinated local action as part of the 'Stand Up For Council Housing' autumn offensive.

We are defending the principles of decent, affordable, secure and accountable council housing. The problem is not council housing but lack of investment.

Step up the pressure

Our campaigning is clearly having an effect. So let's step up the pressure for first class council housing as a choice and a right for everyone who wants it - not as a last resort.

Councillors and MPs who have reluctantly pursued privatisation as the only way of getting investment should now put their plans on hold. Councils proposing to ballot on transfer of housing must suspend their campaign.

Suspend All Transfer Ballots!

No more tenants should be urged to take a one-way ticket to privatisation now that Ministers have promised that councils will be free to invest directly in council housing.

STEPHEN BYERS' STATEMENT

“Local authorities have huge assets but are not allowed to borrow on the value of them...

When councils want to invest in their housing stock, as an alternative to going into the private sector, we deny them the opportunity of doing that...

We should give them the opportunity of raising money in that particular way...

We will introduce legislation to change the capital rules and allow councils to raise additional finance.”

Stephen Byers, DTLR minister at Labour Party conference 1 October 2001

Tenants don't want to be privatised...

● Postpone the ballots in Walsall, Glasgow and Birmingham, Crewe, Ealing, Carlisle, Harrogate, Bradford, St Helens; Knowsley, Waltham Forest, Liverpool...

● Stop wasting our rents on consultants pursuing transfer, Arms Length Company or PFI schemes.

● Spend our rents on improving our homes instead!