

Defend Council Housing



HAMMERSMITH SAY NO TO PRIVATISATION

in Council consultation on future of council housing

Hammersmith Council has set up a 'residents commission' to discuss the future of council housing in the borough.

This includes consulting on possible Council housing stock transfer – ie privatisation. They have appointed as Chair of the 'residents commission' former Labour MP Keith Hill, who keenly promoted stock transfer as a Housing Minister, despite opposition from Labour conference, tenants and trade unions.

Tenants, leaseholders, trade unions and everyone concerned about housing in

Hammersmith, need an independent voice in this, speaking up for tenants and the future of council housing.

The 'Residents Commission on Council Housing' has been set up to carry out: *'strategic oversight of the Stock Options Appraisal'* with *'approximately a dozen residents supported by the programme manager'* (Minutes Cabinet 1st Dec 2014 – item 105).

We need to organise, to ensure this is not used to push through a Council – management agenda for

washing their hands of council housing. Tenants have to organise, with trade unions and the community, to ensure everyone knows the dangers.

Privatisation threat

Some say a resident-run company is the only protection against wholesale selling off of estates. But privatisation is not the answer for tenants, leaseholders or for people who need homes in Hammersmith.

Councillors say they aim to 'give housing residents ownership and >>>

Hammersmith say NO to privatisation

>>> management of their homes' looking at ways to 'give residents ownership'.

But the Council are preparing for a privatisation ballot: *'This report proposes the undertaking of a Strategic Housing Stock Options Appraisal (SHSOA), which will include a range of options including disposal of the housing stock by way of stock transfer, prior to putting the issue before tenants in a potential ballot.'* (Cabinet 1.12.2014; Agenda Item 16)

Contracts are being made for legal, publicity and property consultants to push this forward, with powers already built in to extend each contract 'should stock transfer be recommended'. (Cabinet 1.12.2014 minutes.105)

Stock transfer means privatisation. However it's dressed up, it is a transfer from public to private ownership. It means losing

council secure tenancies, bringing higher rents and loss of accountable landlord.

Tenants, trade unions, councillors and MPs have rejected privatisation all over Britain, instead demanding direct investment to improve and build new council homes.

'Community led' hollow promise

'Community led' the latest phrase used to promote privatisation. It means little or nothing in practise. Legally the landlord would be a housing association, and tenants on the Board are bound by company law, are not elected or accountable, are gagged and denied a majority on the parent body.

All over London housing associations are rushing to replace existing tenancies with up to 80 per cent market rents and fixed term tenancies. The are

pushing demolition and major redevelopments for private sale and market rent.

Even 'Community' housing associations undermine tenants' rights by using up to 80 market rents for new homes.

Housing associations mergers and take overs mean small landlords are swallowed by big national organisations, with no local control. Tenants have been thrown off Boards, and promises on rent levels and rehousing go out the window.

There is a real debate going on among tenants in Hammersmith. Government and Councils are pushing demolition and redevelopment. Sell-off of our homes makes this easier. The only protection is a broad united campaign to stop privatisation and demand investment in council housing, without strings.

Get in touch to help ensure everyone hears both sides in this consultation:

I want more information I want to help distribute leaflets for a fair consultation

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY:

Name.....

Address

Email Phone

Return to: DCH, PO Box 33519, London E2 9WW

or email: info@defendcouncilhousing.org.uk or tel: 07432 098440