

SAY NO TO ALMOS



8 REASONS TO REJECT ALMOS

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| M | This government wants to privatise council housing – ALMOs are a key part of their strategy | M | Tenants on the board will not be allowed to represent our interests – their hands will be tied by company law |
| M | Camden already has nearly 2/3rds of the money it needs – there is no urgent reason to go ALMO | M | Massive amounts will be spent on consultants, re-organisation and higher pay for senior managers |
| M | Elected councillors will no longer be accountable for what happens to our homes. It's a recipe for excuses | M | Ordinary housing workers will lose out by being TUPE transferred. Staff turnover and demoralisation will affect the service |
| M | A separate private company means less co-ordination between housing and other services – when we need more! | M | Winning direct investment without strings is worth fighting for. We've already won concessions. We can win much more! |

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The case against Camden Housing going ALMO

Camden Council wants to setup an ALMO (Arms Length Management Organisation) to run our homes. The government says that councils who set up ALMOs can get extra money for council housing.

But if extra money is available why not give it to councils direct – without the requirement to set up a private company – unless privatisation is their real agenda? (see page 2)

WHY WE SAY ALMOS ARE TWO-STAGE PRIVATISATION

The ALMO formula, originally designed by the Tories, is now being promoted where Ministers and councillors know they can't get tenants to accept stock transfer.

Their hope is that if they can get housing management hived off to a separate company it will be much easier to complete the privatisation process in a second stage.

Camden councillors and senior officers who are suggesting that the ALMO will only be a cosmetic change are being dishonest. In other areas

where ALMOs have been set up they have moved fast to re-brand the company and create as much distance from the rest of the council as they can.

'Ashfield Homes' in Nottinghamshire moved out of the town hall into new rented new offices in an industrial estate on the edge of the area. Kirklees and Derby Homes are proposing to privatise a whole range of services they currently get from the council.

They believe that setting up an ALMO will undermine the campaign for more direct investment in council

housing and weaken the independent tenants movement. Some councillors are saying that if the ALMO goes wrong the council could take the housing back.

But if the ALMO spends all the money without doing the promised improvements then it's easy to see how they will argue that the only option left is handing over complete control to a private company.

In the 1980s the Tory government forced councils to transfer the running of local bus services to ALMOs. In 1985 it then privatised the lot. The lessons are obvious!



MINISTERS UNDER PRESSURE

In 2000 Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, was reported as predicting the 'end of council housing'. But it has not happened.

Tenants and trade unionists along with some councillors and MPs have been resisting privatisation and demanding direct investment with no strings attached. We have already won concessions.

The government is now

in a difficult position. They want to push on their privatisation project.

They also face the embarrassment of failing to meet their own 'Decent Homes' target unless they successfully blackmail tenants to accept their agenda or concede direct investment in council housing.

Privatisation is deeply unpopular. The back-bench revolt by MPs on

foundation hospitals and top up fees for students (two other New Labour projects undermining public services) shows the difficulties Ministers face.

John Prescott's 'Communities Plan' announcement is an attempt to tough it out. They desperately want tenants to accept as a 'fact' that stock transfer, PFI or ALMOs (Arms Length Management

Organisations) are the only options for extra housing investment

That's exactly the same argument Camden Councillors used to push stock transfer in 1997. That wasn't true then and it's not true now.

Council housing would not exist today if we'd allowed politicians to bully us in the past. We shouldn't let them bully us now!

This broadsheet was written and produced by Camden tenants.

The council has refused to provide equal resources to put the case against ALMOs.

Thanks to Camden UNISON (trade union representing council workers) for helping to make this broadsheet possible.



REJECT THE BLACKMAIL. WE WANT DIRECT INVESTMENT IN COUNCIL HOUSING – WITH NO STRINGS ATTACHED!