

CamdenDefendCouncilHousing

NOVEMBER 2007



STAND UP FOR COUNCIL HOUSING

কাউন্সিল হাউস বিক্রির বিপক্ষে রুখে দাড়া
U Joogso Difaaca guriyaynta Dawladda Hoose

TENANTS, TRADE UNIONISTS and other supporters of council housing across Camden are organising against council plans to sell off empty homes, privatise some estates and cutback, centralise and privatise services.

We've fought off – and successfully defeated – previous attempts to attack council housing in Camden. We stopped stock transfer in 1997/8, stopped them privatising the caretaking service in 2000/1, defeated the ALMO in 2004, and Maiden Lane tenants rejected PFI later that year. We're not going to let this council get away with it either.

The council says that selling 500 homes as they become empty and privatising some estates is the only way to raise money to improve Camden's homes and estates. But with 15,000 on the council waiting list and many more living in overcrowded conditions every single council home that becomes vacant is desperately needed.

Tenants don't want to lose our secure tenancies, lower rents and charges and a landlord we can hold to account – that's what happens if our estates are sold to a so-



Tenants across Camden demand direct investment – not privatisation

called Registered Social Landlord. Councillors are also proposing, as part of a wider cuts package, to cut, privatise and centralise housing services. This will lead to a more remote and less accountable service, with the loss of local Estate Managers and caretakers replaced by agency cleaners.

The council's proposals are a betrayal of their promises to tenants. The long term hole in Camden's housing finances won't be solved by selling off homes this year. We need to win a change in government policy – the 'Fourth

Option' for council housing – to secure the future for council housing. If we allow Camden to start selling homes and privatising estates now they will come back for more each and every year!

We expect our elected councillors to stand up for Camden tenants. We expect them to back the national campaign involving tenants, trade unions, councillors and MPs across parties to win the 'Fourth Option'.

Camden plans to submit their 'options appraisal' proposals to government. They want to claim

that they have our support. In May tenants' reps voted almost unanimously against the council's proposals in a meeting of the Joint District Management Committee (representing Tenants & Residents Associations across Camden). Two council organised seminars passed the same resolution.

Support this campaign to win the improvements we need to our homes and estates and secure a long term future for council housing in Camden without sell-offs and privatisation.

SIGN OUR OPEN LETTER

THE COUNCIL is pretending it genuinely wants to know what tenants think.

Yet again they're spending a small fortune (from our rents) on glossy pamphlets, expensive mailings and seminars. But their CONSULTATION is fundamentally dishonest. It doesn't even ask the direct question whether we want homes and estates sold – yet this is what they propose to submit to the government suggesting that this strategy has our support.

Get your Tenants & Residents Association (TRA) to oppose these proposals. Sign our open letter to Ministers and councillors.



Respect our choice: we want £283 million ALMO cash

In 2004 the government offered Camden £283 million to fund improvements if we accepted an ALMO. We rejected two stage privatisation and demanded that government give the additional funding available direct to the council.

It wouldn't cost a penny more either in terms of cash or public borrowing for the £283 million to be given to the council direct. Ministers should respect our choice, stop the bullying and blackmail and fund the improvements we need.

Government commitment

THE GOVERNMENT HAS A CLEAR manifesto commitment "By 2010 we will ensure that all social tenants benefit from a decent, warm home with modern facilities".

Tenants in some councils have been bullied into ALMOs or stock transfer but more than 100 councils have kept their homes under direct management like Camden. Most can

meet the government's Decent Homes target but some, like Camden, need extra financial help.

A year ago Ministers attempted to walk away from meeting their 'Decent Homes' commitment but our campaigning has forced them to recognise that this would be political suicide.

At a meeting in October Housing Minister Yvette Cooper told a delega-

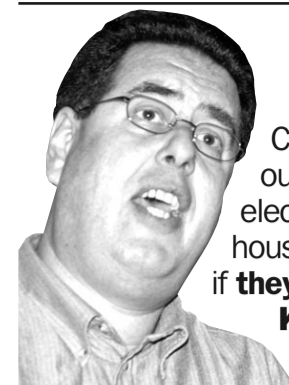
tion that included Camden tenant Alan Walter that they did intend to meet Decent Homes in full. She said they were working with councils like Camden to find a solution. We have to make sure it's a solution acceptable to us!

The Minister was clearly uncomfortable defending Camden's strategy of selling off homes (when the government says it wants councils to

build more council housing) but she is no doubt relieved that the council is trying to persuade tenants to accept sell-offs and privatisation.

By stopping Camden selling homes and estates we defend our own immediate interests and put the ball back into the government's court. They've robbed enough money out of council housing over the years. We're only asking for a small bit back.

**NO SELL-OFFS NO PRIVATISATION
NO CENTRALISATION NO CUTS**



“We’re only still council tenants today because we always fight for our interests. Council housing is worth fighting for – and our campaign is getting stronger. Tell all our elected politicians to stand up for council housing – and let them know what we’ll do if they don’t!” **Alan Walter, vice chair Kentish Town DMC and chair Defend Council Housing**

Camden Defend Council Housing

“While I was leader of Camden council we bought up from the private sector 4,500 flats. Most of them were occupied, and we did it to give the people living in them security of tenure.” **Frank Dobson MP**



“Most of us wouldn’t be able to live in Camden if we didn’t have council housing. Our secure tenancies, lower rents and being able to hold our landlord to account makes all the difference. We can’t let the council sell off, privatise, cutback and undermine what we’ve got. Enough is enough. Support this campaign.” **Lorraine Revah, chair Gospel Oak DMC**

STOP THESE ATTACKS

Oppose the privatisation of caretaking...

The council is trying to replace our residential caretakers with a cleaning agency. It’s not good enough.

Tenants want more than a basic cleaning service; we want dedicated caretakers who know all their tenants, look out for those who are vulnerable or elderly and have a relationship with kids growing up on their estate. They fulfil a vital role in dealing with repairs and providing local knowledge to Estate Managers and other council officers. They are an essential part of the community.

All this will be lost if they are privatised. With a cleaning agency we’ll be lucky if we see the same person twice! Contract cleaners under pressure to meet targets will have no time for tenants and be less likely to have any commitment to the job. There are enough private contractors making a big profit out of running our services; we don’t want any more. We stopped the privatisation of the caretaking service in 2000 and we must do it again!

...sales of council homes

The council wants to raise money by selling off homes. They say now that it will only be 500 properties. But once they start do you believe they’ll stop? Reducing council housing is crazy – it’s two fingers to the 15,000 on the council’s waiting list. Without council housing ordinary working people couldn’t afford to live in Camden. Council housing doesn’t just belong to us; it belongs to future generations as well. How dare councillors try and sell it off?

The homes being chosen for sell-off are street properties – homes that are more easily adapted for disabled and elderly people. Homes with gardens young children need too. Government’s latest big idea is promoting ‘mixed communities’ with people of all incomes living side by side. Government is also now encouraging councils to expand council housing yet Camden Council is proposing to go in the opposite direction. We need more council homes, not less!

...centralisation of services

Centralising housing services doesn’t work. Two years ago the council created a repairs call centre against tenants’ wishes. They promised it would both save money and improve the quality: it has done neither. Loss of local knowledge plus high turnover of temporary staff means there are more complaints than ever; and less accountability.

Now the council wants to centralise other housing sections. This has been opposed by tenants reps meeting in the District Management Committees (DMCs).

Camden tenants have always argued

that having Estate Managers who can build up a relationship with all their tenants is the best way of providing a high quality accountable service. Centralising rents will lead to an impersonal statistics driven service resulting in more financial suffering and increased evictions. Centralising action on anti social behaviour will also lose real personal knowledge of who is involved, what the issues are and what can be constructively done.

The council experiments in centralisation have failed – we don’t want any more!

... and selling off estates

The council is talking of ‘regeneration’ of estates. They have started holding meetings on four estates – Maiden Lane, Rowley Way, Holly Lodge, and Chester/Baltimore, to try and bully tenants into privatisation. If they can get away with it there, they’ll work their way around the borough, apologising all the way.

‘Regeneration’ of estates means stock transfer, and transfer means privatisation. Housing associations (‘Registered Social Landlords’) are private companies in law. Talk of ‘not for profit’, community-based ownership, co-operatives or community land trusts is nothing more than window dressing to disguise these basic facts.

The Housing Association sector is driven by mergers and takeovers. “England’s largest housing association has held talks with the Housing Corporation about floating the company on the stock market...” (*Inside Housing*, 05/01/07) And a recent government review has recommended that they should be less regulated, with profit-making companies being able to register as Social Landlords (‘Cave Review of Social Housing Regulation’, June 2007).

LOSS OF SECURE TENANCY Council tenants’ secure tenancies are lost after transfer. Housing associations promise that extra rights written into the tenancy agreement will give equal security with the rights we have as council tenants. These promises don’t have the same force in law as statutory rights. Importantly, new tenants won’t get these extra promises. So over time tenancy rights will be eroded.

MORE EXPENSIVE Privatisation is very expensive. Housing Associations have higher management costs and pay fat-cat salaries (top chief executives now get £200,000 plus – all paid by their tenants).

The Public Accounts Committee of MPs found when in 2003 that it costs £1,300 per home more to improve after transfer than it would have cost under local authority control. Camden’s own figures estimate that it would cost even more – £3,025 per home. “In the case of a stock transfer, there would potentially be some additional running costs, and irrecoverable Value Added Tax (VAT) on repairs costs...” (Report to Scrutiny Committee, May 07).

HIGHER RENTS Housing Association rents are much higher. The average rent for a Camden council home in 2006 was £74.82 per week. The average rent for a housing association home in Camden was £88.35 per week (18% percent higher); with some as high as £112.35 per week (50%

higher). (Figures from the Housing Corporation, 2006).

Our council ‘secure’ tenancies guarantee us the legal right to a ‘reasonable’ rent. Housing associations are allowed by law to charge a market rent and their trade body is lobbying government to be allowed to increase their rents faster (‘Building Neighbourhoods’, National Housing Federation, September 2007). Government has been trying to ‘converge’ council and Housing Association rents but their plans are now in disarray. Ministers have recently been forced to admit that council rents will not reach convergence by 2012 and have just produced a new paper consulting on ways to keep council rents affordable (‘Mechanism for setting Guideline Rents in Housing Revenue Account subsidy 2008-09 and 2009-10’, September 2007)

LESS ACCOUNTABILITY Individual tenants and tenants associations can lobby our local ward councillors and, if we don’t like the way they run our homes, vote them out. This direct democratic relationship would be lost if we are privatised.

Housing associations are run by a board of directors who are legally accountable to the company. Having tenant Board Members is a con. “At the time of transfer, tenants are often led to believe that they will have an explicit role in representing the interests of their fellow tenants on the board. This is not compatible with the accepted principle that as board members they have to work for the principles of the organisation” (‘Housing: Improving services through residential involvement’, Audit Commission, June 2004)

RISK Housing Associations are huge, impersonal businesses who are increasingly diversifying into non-social-housing activities. Of the 28 housing associations who own homes in Camden, four of them own more than 50,000 homes, while the biggest operates in 190 local authority areas across the country. 20 of them have been involved in expansion either by mergers / takeovers of other housing associations, or becoming part of group structures. At least 12 are involved in market renting, and 19 in various forms of new development, from shared ownership to outright sale (information from the Housing Corporation).

Private landlords want to get their hands on the land our estates are built on. Transfer is a one-way ticket. One fifth of transfer associations get into difficulty per week (18% percent higher); if things go wrong, there is no return.

OPEN LETTER to government ministers and Camden councillors:

WE DEMAND FOURTH OPTION

We want direct investment to improve council homes and estates.

We don’t want to lose our secure tenancies or a landlord we can hold to account or see our rents and charges increase. Nor do we want estates privatised, council homes sold, caretaking services contracted out and housing services centralised or cutback.

We are angry that government is still refusing to respect our choice and that Camden Council is now helping them by promoting an “options appraisal” strategy that takes pressure off government – ignoring the views of the District Management Committees which almost unanimously rejected their proposals and other elected representatives – when we need to be stepping the pressure up.

The council’s latest “Investing in Camden’s homes” ‘CONSultation’ exercise is a manipulative and expensive waste of (our) money. It does not give the council a mandate to sell, privatise or cut services.

Their strategy means council housing will remain massively underfunded, services will get worse, rents and charges will rise

faster, there will be less homes for people on the waiting list, and the government will walk away from its obligations and manifesto commitment.

The council’s proposal is not a one-off pragmatic solution. Winning the ‘Fourth Option’ of direct investment is the only way to get sufficient funding for the immediate improvements we need to our homes and estates and secure the long-term future for council housing in Camden. The council’s strategy will see them come back for more sales, privatisation and cuts every year.

We formally oppose Camden Council’s “options appraisal” submission to government based on sales, privatisation, cuts and centralisation of services and demand that they withdraw it.

We demand that our elected representatives join with tenants, trade unions, councillors and MPs across the UK to get government to respect tenants’ choice and agree the ‘Fourth Option’ of direct investment to provide first class council housing.

THESE ARE SOME OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE ALREADY SIGNED THIS LETTER

TENANTS’ REPRESENTATIVES:

Lorraine Revah, chair & Joan Stally, vice chair, **Gospel Oak DMC**; Brian Portage, chair & Alan Walter, vice chair, **Kentish Town DMC**; Charlie Hedges, chair, Bill Abbs & Chris Tarpey, vice chairs, **Hampstead DMC**; Beryl Allen, vice chair, **Holborn DMC**; Bob McMahon, vice chair **Camden Town DMC**; Meric Apak, chair, **Camden Federation of Tenants & Residents Associations**; David Rodgers, chair & Jessica Marsh, vice chair, **Camden Association of Street Properties**; Douglas Bateman, secretary, **Agar Grove Co-Op**; Paul Tomlinson, DMC rep, **Amptmill Square Estate TRA**; Meric Apak, chair, **Artisan Dwellings TRA**; Caroline Sinclair, chair, **Aspern & Russell Nurseries TRA**; Geoffrey Burton, DMC rep, **Bacton Tower TRA**; John Ebrill, secretary, **Bayham Place RA**; A Ward, DMC rep, **Belsize Grove TLA**; Liz Nicol, DMC rep, **Bourne Estate TA**; Chris Tarpey, DMC rep, **Bray TRA**; Hasan Shah, DMC rep, **Burnham TRA**; Ellis Hillocks, chair, John Cowley, secretary & John Hiscoke, DMC rep, **Camden Square Area TRA**; John Murphy, chair & Carol Wild, DMC rep, **Castle Road TRA**; Mary Kate Spencer, secretary, **Cayford Estate TRA**; Gill McMullan, secretary, **Charlton Kings TA**; Derek Nesbitt, chair & Miranda Martin, secretary, **Churchway Estate TRA**; Silla Carron, chair, **Clarence Way Estate TRA**; Jackie Holloway, DMC rep, **College Place TA**; Bob McMahon, chair, **Coopers Lane Estate TRA**; Jean McLoughlin, chair, Mike Walsh, secretary & Ian Sharp, **Curnock Street Estate TRA**; Marie Hunt, chair & Valerie Nicolaides, treasurer, **Gamages TRA**; Carl Raamaas, chair, **Garnett House TRA**; Patrick Breen, chair **Goldington Street Estate TRA**; Mike Cookson-Taylor, **Gospel Oak rep CASP**; A.M. Williams, chair, Ian Dungwell, secretary, B. Ashley, treasurer & Bob Robbins, DMC rep, **Gospel Oak 7&8 Estate TRA**; Henry Nakano, chair, **Greenwood TA**; Martin Carrol, **Hampstead rep, CASP**; Joseph Jones, DMC rep, **Harben Road Estate TRA**; John Rolfe, DMC rep, **Hillgrove Estate TRA**; Kathleen O’Donoghue, **Holborn rep CASP**; Elizabeth Doherty, joint secretary, **Holly Lodge RA**; John Loughran, chair, Michael Aylward, secretary & Roy Naime, treasurer, **Ingestre Road Estate TRA**; Derek Jarman, secretary, **Kenistone & Willingham TRA**; Petra Dando, **Kentish Town rep CASP**; Elizabeth Baghall, DMC rep, **Kilburn Vale Estate TRA**; Margaret Smith, chair, Jaqui Draper, vice chair & Rita Thorpe, treasurer, **Kiln Place TRA**; Gill Reeves, DMC rep & Stan Bartle, deputy DMC rep, **Leysdown, Shipton & Stonegate TRA**; P. Harrison, DMC rep, **Lymington Road RA**; Catriona Hill, DMC rep, **Mansfield Road TRA**; Cheryl Murphy & June Guzzmore, DMC reps, **Mayford Estate TRA** Loretta Allen, DMC rep, **Mortimer Crescent TRA**; Helia Evans, secretary, **Ossulston TRA**; Alan Walter, chair & June Dodds, social secretary, **Peckwater Estate TRA**; Vivienne Abberley, DMC rep, **Primrose Hill Court TRA**; Jean Hurman, chair, **Regents Park Estate TA**; Jeanette Davison, chair & Elaine Berger, secretary, **Rhyl Street TRA**; Carol Thomas, DMC rep, **Sidings TRA**; Claude James, chair & Sara Bell, secretary, **South Hampstead TRA**; Joan Stally, secretary, **St Silas TRA**; Cathy Pound, DMC rep, **Tiptree, Barling & Havering TRA**; Carol Delaney,

secretary, **Torriano Estate TLA**; Erica Brostoff, secretary, **Tybalds Close TRA**; Bill Abbs, chair, **Webbheath TA**; Jane Esnault, chair, Lorraine Butler & Celia Dos Santos, DMC reps, & Ron Corp **Wendling TRA**; Diane Morris, chair, **Westcroft Estate TRA**; Jo Burns, DMC rep, **Whittington Estate TRA**

Key: TA = Tenants Association; TRA = Tenants and Residents Association; TLA = Tenants and Leaseholders Association; RA = Residents Association; DMC = District Management Committee (tenant reps)

TRADE UNIONS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS:

Robert Laurie, secretary & Nicola Seyd, treasurer, Camden Trades Council; David Eggmore, secretary & Liz Leicester, chair, Camden Council UNISON; Mandy Berger & Phoebe Watkins, joint convenors, Camden UNISON Housing & Social Care; Sandy Nicol, secretary, UNISON SOAS; Janet Maiden, chair, UNISON UCLH; Mac McKenna, rep, RMT Kings X & St Pancras; Mark Dolan, delivery rep, CWU North London; Merlin Reader, rep, CWU Mount Pleasant International; Mick King, secretary, CWU Central London; Sean Wallis, secretary, UCL UCU; Kevin Courtney, secretary, Camden Teachers Association (NUT); Anna Owens, organiser & Claire Keenan, secretary, PCS Euston Tower HMRC branch; Wendy Munro, chair, Caversham Elderly People’s Organisation; Candy Udwin, Somers Town People’s Forum; Tom Costello; Harvey Bass, Kings X Residents Panel; Omar Yusuf, co-ordinator, Somali Community Centre; Penny Abraham, Bloomsbury ward councillor

UNISON = public sector workers’ union; CWU = Communication Worker’s Union; PCS = Public and Commercial Services union; NUT = National Union of Teachers; RMT = Rail Maritime and Transport union; UCU = Universities and Colleges Union

ADD YOUR NAME TO THE LIST NOW...

Fill in and send to Camden Defend Council Housing, c/o 42 Aborfield, Peckwater Estate, London NW5 2UD. Or you can email: camden@defendcouncilhousing.org.uk

Name.....

Address

.....Post Code

TelEmail

“Many of us feel very privileged to live in an environment and community like Holly Lodge, we shouldn’t have to ask the current residents to sacrifice that privilege and ‘Option’ for others in the future for the ‘Privilege’ of having their own toilet... Most of the bed-sit residents would rather protect this estate, not be its asset strippers.”

Elizabeth Doherty, Joint Secretary, Holly Lodge Residents Association

“Camden Council has come forward with plans to privatise our homes on the Alexandra and Ainsworth Estate. At a public meeting on the 18th July Cllr Chris Naylor, the council’s housing chief, outlined just three options – all of which involve privatisation or semi-privatisation. The proposals met with a distinctly cool reception.

The councillors’ preferred option appeared to be for transfer to a ‘fully mutual co-operative’. It would involve charging higher rents and sales of homes to raise the additional funds needed for repairs.

The council have not been serious enough in their attempts to lobby the Government for direct investment. The council’s three options have been described by some people on the estate as ‘anti-social housing’. We must make sure they don’t get away with it.”

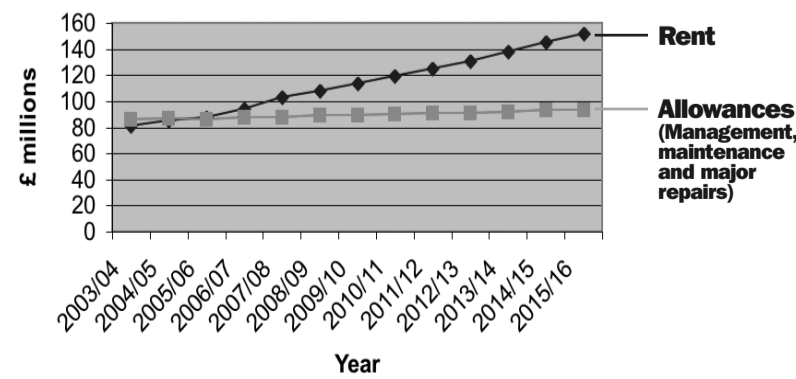
Andrea Butcher, Alexandra and Ainsworth Estate

“The Council estimates that Maiden Lane needs £30-40 million for repairs. They are currently looking at development opportunities and disposing of assets. Selling off the commercial properties would only raise £12.20 million in possible income. So they are also considering ‘all options’ including knocking down the entire Estate!

Many residents are already very cynical about what they see as decisions being taken behind ‘closed-doors’. At the moment, we don’t have a TRA but if there is any move to sell off part of the Estate, people will come together to collectively oppose the proposals. We have already seen off a PFI scheme here, when residents voted 82% NO in a ballot.”

Kate Purcell, Maiden Lane

HOW GOVERNMENT ROBS OUR RENTS



CamdenDefendCouncilHousing

What we're fighting for

We should defend and improve council housing for our children and for future generations – it's their right as well as ours.

The campaign for the 'Fourth Option' (the alternative to the government's three options of stock transfer, PFI and ALMOs) has a very broad base of support.

MPs and councillors across parties

back the demand. The TUC, representing Britain's trade unionists, agreed to campaign for the 'Fourth Option' at its conference in September and the biggest trade unions (CWU, FBU, GMB, PCS, RMT, UCATT, Unite and UNISON) are affiliated to our campaign on behalf of millions of workers and their families who need council housing as well as those who work in local government.

Three years running Labour's own conference backed our demand. This year the Prime Minister only avoided defeat by abolishing votes. It was clear there was still overwhelming support amongst delegates and the government knows the issue isn't going away.

All over Britain tenants are opposing privatisation and demanding direct investment. More than 100,000 tenants have voted NO since October 2006.

Some 250 MPs have signed Early Day Motions in Parliament.

Ten years ago, politicians and the press talked about the 'death of council housing'. Now the government is responding to pressure by talking up council housing as part of the solution to the housing crisis. Policy is changing – both to allow councils to build again and to allow them to keep all their rents on new homes.

We still haven't got our hands on the extra money we need, but the Council is being dishonest when they ignore the fact that we are pushing government in the right direction - towards agreeing a deal that respects tenants' choice. Ministers are on the back foot and we can win; but only if we keep up the pressure.

It's time elected politicians stood up for us and represented our interests...



All Camden tenants are part of this campaign

আমরা কেউই কাউন্সিল হাউস বিক্রি, বিরোধী করন এবং সার্ভিস কাটার সমর্থন করিনা। আমরা চাই সরকার আমাদের কাউন্সিল হাউসের উন্নতি করবে - আমাদের এবং আমাদের সন্তানদের জন্য।

কেমডেন বাসিন্দারা ঐক্যবদ্ধ হতে হবে। সবাই মিলে কাজ করলে আমরা কাউন্সিলের প্লান বন্ধ করতে পারব এবং আমাদের ঘর বাড়ি ও ইষ্টেটের উন্নয়নের জন্য ফান্ড দিতে সরকারকে বাদ্য করতে পারব।

Qofna ma taageerayo iibinta guryaha dawladda, U bedelidda degaanada dawladda hanti gaar ahaaneed iyo ku soo uruurinta adeegyada Dawladda Xaruun-dhexaad. Dhammaan waxaan doonaynaa in dawladdu noo maal-galiso guriyaynta dawladda annaga iyo carruurtayada.

Dadka deggan guryaha Camden waxaa loo baahan-yahay in ay is-abaabulaan. Waa horjoogsan karnaa qorshaha Dawladda Hoose, waana qasbi karnaa in dawladdu u qoondhayso lacag dheeraad ah si dib-u-hagaajinta guryaha iyo degaanada loo meel-mariyo.

Make these politicians listen

Politicians – whether government Ministers or councillors – always like to appear confident, decisive, and unbeatable and not for making U turns – right up until they do!

Stopping them isn't easy but it can be done when we organise effectively as Camden tenants have showed before.

Remember when the council told us in 1997 that privatisation by stock transfer was the only option – the alternative would be no investment. We forced them to back down and they then managed to run a £50 million a year programme putting in new double glazing, roofs and other improvement works.

We stopped the council privatising the caretaking service a few years ago.

We beat the ALMO – despite them spending a fortune promoting it. The campaign for the 'Fourth Option', which Camden tenants have been spearheading, is gaining more and more support.

If we'd accepted the 'facts' that the council has given us in the past and their bullying and blackmail we wouldn't still be council tenants today.

No one has ever said winning would be easy but the alternatives – selling homes, and privatising estates and services – is no alternative for us today or generations of council tenants tomorrow.



We're determined to keep and improve council housing – respect our choice

GET ORGANISED ON YOUR ESTATE AND STREET

No one supports selling off council homes, privatising estates or cutting and centralising services. We all want government to invest in council housing – for us and our children.

Camden tenants will need to get organised. We can stop the council's plans and force government to provide additional funding to carry out the improvements to our homes and estates.

We need to make sure there are Tenants & Residents Associations on every estate and amongst street properties too.

Where our organisation is weak we have to inject some new life into it and make sure we're talking to everyone – new and old tenants, black and white, young parents and pensioners – so that our associations (TRAs) are more effective and more representative. That means getting round the doors talking to people, organising meetings, getting everyone to sign the open letter and joining lobbies at the Town Hall.

This isn't a spectator sport where a few do the campaigning and the rest watch!

WHAT YOU CAN DO:

- Sign the open letter and get others to sign too.
- Help distribute this newsletter to every council home – contact us for more copies.
- Organise a meeting on your estate/area and invite a speaker from Defend Council Housing.
- Write a letter to the local papers supporting the campaign.
- Tell your councillors and MP that you oppose the council's current strategy and you want them to demand government provide the 'Fourth Option' of direct investment to fund improvements.
- Make a donation to help the campaign (we can't use tenants' rent money like the council).

Thanks to Camden UNISON – the union representing council workers – for funding this newspaper so that tenants can hear the arguments against the council's proposals.



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