

Axe the Housing Act



To Lead council members for Housing and Planning

1 September 2016

Dear Councillor

We are writing to invite you a Housing Summit on Saturday 22nd October 2016 at Hamilton House, Mabledon Place London WC1H 9BD. Our aim is to bring together councillors and housing association board members, with tenants of all tenures, housing campaigners and trade unions, to discuss the current pressures on housing, the impact of the Housing & Planning Act and possible collective responses.

Already councils are discussing continuing to issue long-term secure tenancies, how they can avoid means testing tenant households, defying demands for starter homes, and more. Tenant groups are calling for joint campaigns of resistance involving councillors, tenants and trade unions.

We support the bill's intention to build more homes but are concerned that some proposals run the risk of reducing the number of genuinely affordable rented homes that our local communities desperately need.

Proposals forcing councils to make payments to government based on selling council homes will hamper councils' ability to invest in new affordable council housing and are likely to have the unintended consequence of increasing homelessness and pushing more families into the more expensive private rented sector.

- Cllr David Hodge, Leader of LGA Conservative Group
- Cllr Sharon Taylor, Deputy leader of LGA Labour Group
- Cllr Marianne Overton, Leader of LGA Independent Group
- Cllr Gerald Vernon-Jackson, Leader of LGA Liberal Democrat Group

(Letters, *The Guardian*, 10 April 2016)

The Local Government Association is warning that more than 70,000 social housing tenants could face rent rise bills of an average £1,000 a year from next year under government plans to increase rents for those deemed to be earning high incomes, and that the Act's pay to stay policy "would create a bureaucracy causing stress to families, further costs to councils, and financial returns to the Government far lower than it originally forecast. It is also warning administrative complexities now make implementation from April 2017 impossible."

Facing a worsening housing crisis, and a worsening financial situation for Council housing revenue accounts and for housing associations, housing provision will decline rapidly with local councils held responsible, unless we act to challenge and change this policy direction.

Interest and support has already come from councillors in Camden, Islington, Southwark, Tower Hamlets, Greenwich, Redbridge, Newham, Southwark, Lambeth, Salford, Harlow, Cambridge, Milton Keynes and elsewhere, and from the Association of Green Councillors, and from trade unions. AtHA is supported by many tenant and trade union groups including Unison, GMB, CWU, Bakers and NUT trade unions and Unite Housing Workers and others.

We invite you to join us in a campaign for urgent change to present and future Housing Policy in this country. Individuals or groups of councillors are welcome. We encourage you to contact local tenant groups and trade unions and to attend as a joint group if there is interest.

Yours

Eileen Short

On behalf of Axe the Housing Act campaign

Please return this form or email for more information about the Summit and to confirm your place(s)

[] send me more details of the Housing Summit 22 Oct 2016 on the Housing & Planning Act

[] reserve.....[number of] places for:

Name(s)

Council/organisation

EmailPhone

Address.....

.....Postcode

Scan and email to: info@axethehousingact.org.uk or post to: c/o DCH, PO Box 33519, London E2 9WW