



Bae Caerdydd / Cardiff Bay

Caerdydd / Cardiff CF99 1NA

25 July 2000

Dear Colleague

LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND HOUSING COMMITTEE:

POLICY REVIEW OF HOUSING STOCK TRANSFER

Background

The Local Government and Housing Committee of the National Assembly is undertaking a policy review on the transfer of local authority housing stock into Community Ownership.

The review will consider whether the emerging model for Community Ownership is sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of local communities and whether there are alternative approaches which could generate the finance necessary to overcome the backlog of repairs and essential modernisation work.

Invitations for submissions

The Committee wishes to invite you to contribute to its consideration by providing a written submission setting out your organisation's views on housing stock transfer, including any detailed factual information to support your views. There is no prescribed format for submissions, but you may find it helpful to bear in mind the terms of reference for the review (see below). I have also set out below an indication of the sort of issues which the Committee will be considering as part of the review.

The Committee may in due course wish to invite you to give an oral submission in support of your written submission.

Terms of reference

The terms of reference for the review are:

To consider the policy on the transfer of local authority housing stock into Community Ownership, and in particular:

- *the emerging model for Community Ownership and the extent to which the model can be tailored to meet the needs of local communities (including disabled people and others with particular requirements);*
- *whether there are alternative approaches which could generate the finance necessary to overcome the backlog of repairs and essential modernisation for council housing.*

Issues to be considered in the review

In taking forward the review, the Committee will be considering the following questions (this is not an exhaustive list, but simply intended to give a flavour of the areas to be covered by the Committee):

- What are the advantages/ disadvantages of the emerging model of Community Ownership?
- Is the Community Ownership model sufficiently flexible to be adapted to meet the needs of local communities?
- Are there other stock transfer models which should be considered?
- What role might stock transfer play in community regeneration and sustainability?
- Should there be a maximum or a minimum size of stock transfer?
- What lessons can be learnt from the estate transfers which have taken place in Wales?
- What lessons can be learnt from the stock transfers which have taken place in England and Scotland?
- What would be the implications of a transfer to a Community Ownership organisation for

local councils and tenants?

- What processes are needed to engage the community and ensure that their views are heard, particularly those with special needs?
- Within the current public sector borrowing rules, are there any options other than stock transfer which would deliver investment on a scale necessary to overcome the backlog of repairs and essential modernisation for council housing in Wales (estimated at around £1 billion)?
- What are the advantages/ disadvantages of stock transfer compared with housing PFI projects?
- What lessons can be learnt from housing PFI projects in England?
- What are the advantages/ disadvantages of the proposal in the Housing Green Paper for arms-length management companies for local authority-owned housing?
- What would be the implications for council housing of a continuation of the status quo?

Publication of consultation responses

The Committee plans to make all the responses to the consultation available to the public on request. I will assume that you do not object to this unless you specify otherwise in your response.

Timetable

I would be grateful if you could send me any submission you wish to make by Friday 29 September 2000.

For your information, the Committee has invited submissions from the organisations on the attached list. In addition, a copy of this letter has been posted to the National Assembly's website so that other organisations and individuals can submit their views.

Yours sincerely

MARTIN STEVENSON

Committee Clerk

POLICY REVIEW OF HOUSING STOCK TRANSFER

ORGANISATIONS TO BE CONSULTED AS PART OF REVIEW

Age Concern Cymru

Care and Repair Cymru

Centre for Housing Management and Development, Cardiff University

Chartered Institute of Housing

The Commission for Racial Equality

Council of Mortgage Lenders

Disability Wales

The Federation of Black Housing Organisations

Help the Aged

House Builders Federation

National Association for Local Councils

North East Wales Institute of Higher Education (NEWI)

Shelter Cymru

Society of Directors of Public Protection in Wales

Tenant Participation Advisory Service Wales

University of Glamorgan

University of Wales Institute of Cardiff (UWIC)

Wales Association of Community and Town Councils

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Wales TUC Cymru

Welsh Consumer Council

Welsh Federation of Housing Associations

Welsh Local Government Association

Welsh Tenants Federation

Welsh Women's Aid