

Letters to the Editor
The Times

12 November 2008

Sir,

As a council tenant by choice all my life and as Chair of the National Federation of ALMOs, whose 69 individual members manage more than 1 million local authority properties around England, I feel somewhat more informed than most in saying that the reported Government proposals to end security of tenure ('Council homes for life to be scrapped' – The Times, Nov 10) are misguided, counter-productive and socially unjust.

The NFA, which has been highly successful in delivering the Government's 'Decent Homes' programme, giving residents back pride in their homes and wider communities, is totally opposed to the proposals on the following grounds:-

- (i) we fully support secure tenancies and whilst in favour of giving residents a range of options, the threat of a review will be more destabilizing than productive in terms of sustainable communities
- (ii) we object to the stigmatisation of council tenancies as subsidised housing when owner-occupiers and private tenants who are on low incomes can also receive help to pay for their housing
- (iii) the real issue is the need for greater housing supply and reducing security does not deliver that

The obsession with owner occupation continues to drive Government policy. No other country has a housing market which offers so limited alternatives. We need to develop a system where council housing is a tenure of choice and not a last resort for a temporary period.

Yours

Dennis Rees
Chair of the National Federation of ALMOs, Board member of the new Tenant Services Authority