



PRESS RELEASE

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COUNCIL RESIDENTS HAVE THEIR SAY ON HOUSING FINANCE

Tenants who have voted for their council to be their landlord gave their views on the future of housing finance at a consultation event organised by the Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH).

ARCH brought local authority residents, officers and councillors together in London on 24th November to gather feedback for its official response to the Treasury and Department for Communities and Local Government joint review of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

People who live in council properties told the government official overseeing the review of their frustration with the current system. They said that it means their rents are disappearing into a national pot – which currently stands at £193m and is set to increase – while there is not enough money to maintain properties and provide more affordable homes locally.

Marlene Price of Wandsworth, resident representative on the ARCH executive, said: 'The current system is blatantly unfair and excessively complicated. We want a system that is fairer and more transparent.'

Mrs Price headed up a meeting to agree guidelines for a tenants' sub-group, a regional residents' network that will work closely with the executive, during the event. She said: 'Tenants and residents who came along are enthusiastic about having their say on HRA and other concerns and I look forward to working with them.'

Marilyn Thornley, special projects officer at the Tenant Participation Advisory Service, who is developing ARCH's tenant governance model, said: 'It is important that any group feeding back to government has tenant representation. This is a real opportunity for tenants to get their voice heard.'

Pauline Walton, representing Canterbury City Council residents, said: 'It gives ARCH tenants a chance to give views on questions that are being considered and have a stronger voice in the national tenants' movement.'

Jennifer Holmes, representing West Lancashire DC residents, said: 'At present, it feels like people in council housing are the poor relations. They want to know why they can't have the same deal as residents in other social housing.'

Photo: Marlene Price

