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## Keeping housing in-house delivers wider benefits to local communities

Councils that own and manage properties are delivering value to local communities in addition to their housing role, according to latest research.

*Under One Roof: The holistic benefits of retained council housing* examines the way in which direct control of housing stock can help fulfil wider economic, social and environmental goals and enable local services to be delivered in a more joined-up way. The report is published jointly by the Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) and the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) at a launch event on 25<sup>th</sup> March at the Tower of London.

The research found:

- Tackling anti-social behaviour is the area where retaining ownership and management of housing has greatest impact followed by; community cohesion, efficiency and value for money, community engagement, health and well-being, environmental challenges, regeneration and neighbourhood renewal.
- Owning and managing stock helps councils' strategic housing role, particularly in terms of homelessness, allocations and sheltered housing.
- Staff working within a single organisation can liaise more closely when delivering different services to the same individual or family.
- Involvement of council tenants in decisions about their homes is a catalyst for engagement in local democracy and involvement in improving local services.

Paul O'Brien, chief executive of APSE, said: 'Council housing has been marginalised over the years, but it is coming into its own once again with opportunities to build new properties and proposed reform of the iniquitous housing finance system. This report demonstrates clearly how councils whose tenants have chosen for their local authority to be their landlord are able to add value to economic, social and environmental sustainability as well as delivering a whole host of vital services in a holistic manner. We have campaigned for a level playing field for retained council housing for many years and hope that this will be provided in the next Parliament so that these benefits can be maximised.'

Cllr Milan Radulovic, national chair of ARCH and housing portfolio holder at Broxtowe BC, said: 'This report shows benefits retained stock councils have achieved for their communities, which go way beyond the provision and management of affordable homes. In areas where housing is under one roof with other local services, important connections between those services and between policy and practice are apparent. Such benefits have been delivered by retained council housing despite the odds stacked against it financially. We have campaigned for a fairer finance system and this would give retained stock councils the long-awaited opportunity to achieve even more for the communities they serve so well.'

A tenant interviewed during the research commented: 'If any of us have problems, they point us in the right direction and the help is all under one roof.'

The report places retained council housing within the current policy context and features survey results and case studies demonstrating holistic housing benefits. Examples include:

- West Lancashire, where an 11% drop in crime has been achieved due to the housing department funding a member of staff in a multi-disciplinary team.
- Midlothian, where new council housing is helping meet social and environmental sustainability and economic regeneration goals as well provide affordable homes.
- South Derbyshire, where being a stock retained authority is bringing advantages in fulfilling the authority's strategic housing role.
- Carmarthenshire, where health improvements are being delivered due to a holistic housing standard.
- Wandsworth, where emergency control, highways, anti-social behaviour, dealing with dangerous dogs, democratic engagement and providing new properties are enhanced through owning and managing housing.

**For further press information and commentary contact:**

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**Notes for editors**

1) The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) is a not-for-profit local government body working with over 300 councils throughout the UK promoting excellence in public services including housing. For further information on APSE visit: [www.apse.org.uk](http://www.apse.org.uk)

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2) The Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) was set up for councils whose tenants have chosen the local authority as their landlord. ARCH brings councils who own and manage housing together to get the best deal for their tenants. For further information ARCH visit: [www.arch-housing.org.uk](http://www.arch-housing.org.uk)

Contact: [email@arch-housing.org.uk](mailto:email@arch-housing.org.uk)

3) Copies of Under One Roof: The holistic benefits of retained council housing are available from: [mbaines@apse.org.uk](mailto:mbaines@apse.org.uk). Price £40 non-ARCH and APSE members.