

An independent newsletter produced for tenants and leaseholders

COUNCIL POISED TO OPEN TRANSFER TALKS WITH TENANTS

After looking at all their options, a working party of Tenants, Councillors and Housing Staff is recommending to Rutland County Council that it should begin talking with Tenants and Leaseholders about a possible transfer of all Council homes to a Registered Social Landlord.

A Transfer cannot happen without a secret ballot of all Tenants. Tenants will decide on Transfer.



Tenants and Leaseholders take a break during a recent meeting.

SO WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

It is becoming harder for local Councils to carry on funding housing services and harder to keep homes maintained and modernised. As a result, England's Council housing needs a massive investment of money.

In Rutland, the Council brought in specialists to look at the problem. It then set up a working party of Tenants, Councillors and Housing Staff to look at the best way to deliver the extra money to improve Rutland's Council housing, keep services up to scratch and provide new affordable homes in the County. This group recommends the Council should look at a transfer to a Registered Social Landlord such as Spire Homes.

SO WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

The Council needs Government permission for a transfer. More importantly it has to consult with Tenants and Leaseholders.

Homes can't transfer without Government permission and a secret ballot of Tenants.

If the Council accepts the recommendation, Tenants and Leaseholders must have their say over the future of housing in the County. Over the coming months there will be local meetings, posters, events, newsletters and yet more meetings. Tenants on the Rutland Tenants and Leaseholders Partnership (RTLTP) and **DWA**, the Independent Tenants' Advisors will also be busy making sure you have all the information.

Now is the time for you to get in touch. Tell us what you think

Use the tear off slip on this newsletter or phone Freephone 0800 0855 492

It is important that you let the Council know what you think Don't wait – have your say now

A message from Rutland Tenants & Leaseholders Partnership (RTLTP)

Members of the RTLTP are continuing to keep a close eye on the Council's proposals.

If you would like to get involved please get in touch.

Everyone can help us by filling in one of our simple survey forms so please ring our Independent Tenants' Advisors for your copy. Over 120 Tenants and Leaseholders have taken part in our survey so far. And altogether over 180 Residents have already told us their views. If you want to know what other people are saying, ring DWA for your copy of the latest survey results.

The RTLTP promise:

- To give you the facts
- To look after the interests of all Tenants and Leaseholders
- To be independent of the Council

If you want to get involved or find out more phone **DWA** on: 0800 0855 492

Congratulations to the winners of our competition in issue one – Ms B Tagg, Mrs Jayne Gregory and Mrs E Large. Each wins a £20 shopping voucher.

And congratulations to Susan Naylor who wins the Survey Form Prize Draw of a £50 shopping voucher.

Get in touch – Get involved

If you want to contact RTLTP ring **DWA** free on 0800 0855 492 and we will ask someone from RTLTP to get in touch with you.

DWA

A NOT-FOR-PROFIT HOUSING CONSULTANCY COMPANY

Genuinely Independent Advice This is NOT a Council newsletter

It has been produced with local Tenants and Leaseholders and **DWA**, your Independent Tenants' Advisors

FREEPHONE 0800 0855 492

ARE YOU A LEASEHOLDER?

This affects you too. You have a right to be consulted too. Get in touch – get involved

Our day-to-day Housing Service in Rutland already comes from a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) – Spire Homes, who have been running our Housing Service since 2006.

USE OUR REPLY SLIP TO GET IN TOUCH OR FREEPHONE DWA 0800 0855 492

This newsletter is available in other languages and formats such as CDs and bigger print. If you know anyone who needs this kind of help please let us know. You can also visit our website on: www.dwa-housingconsultants.co.uk and click on Tenants' Zone – Rutland. Remember – there must be a secret ballot of all Tenants. Get in touch – get involved.

SO WHERE'S THE PROBLEM?

Council homes in Rutland need to be improved and modernised to meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard and to stop them falling into decline. As things stand at present it looks as if the Council needs to spend around £23 million over 10 years to do this, but it doesn't have all this money available.

The Council is also restricted in how much it can spend on managing, maintaining and investing in your homes. Year by year the Council believes it will face more demands for services to Tenants but the money Government will allow the Council to spend is unlikely to keep pace. This means that they may have to make some cuts in the future to make the books balance.

And yet another problem is that the Council has no money itself to build any new homes for rent in the County.

The Council wants to raise Tenant satisfaction, improve services and invest in Tenants' homes to meet the Decent Homes Standard. The working group of Tenants, Councillors and Staff recommends that the Council works with Tenants and Staff to explore whether a **Stock Transfer** to a Registered Social Landlord like Spire Homes is the best way to achieve that.

TRANSFER FACT

A transfer cannot happen without a secret ballot of all Tenants.

- If the majority who vote, vote NO then no transfer can take place
- If the majority who vote, vote YES then a transfer may take place.

But don't wait – have your say now.

QUESTION	Staying with the Council ANSWER	Transferring to another landlord ANSWER
Will I get the same service?	Under current arrangements Spire Homes will continue providing the day-to-day service until 2011. After that the Council may need to cut down on spending and some services may need to change.	An agreement (called an Offer Document) will set out standards at least as good as present. This would be legally binding and a new landlord will have to keep any promises it makes.
Who will make the decision to transfer?	If the Council wants to go ahead with any transfer plans there would have to be a secret ballot of all tenants. If the majority of those voting vote NO , a transfer cannot take place.	If the Council wants to go ahead with any transfer plans there would have to be a secret ballot of all tenants. If the majority of those voting vote YES , a transfer may take place.
Will I have to move home?	No, whatever happens you are safe in your home and all your rights are protected	No, whatever happens you are safe in your home and your key rights are protected

Now is the time to have your say. The Council wants to know what you think

GET IN TOUCH – GET INVOLVED

If you want to get involved or find out more please use this tear-off slip. Post it to DWA FREEPOST SWC 5119 Telford TF8 7ZA. No stamp is needed.

Name _____

Address _____

Postcode _____

Phone number (if you have one) _____ email: _____

Your question or comment _____

If you would like to take part in our survey, please tick this box and we'll send you our survey form. Don't forget to give us your name and address. Watch out for more newsletters, leaflets and local meetings.

YOUR INDEPENDENT ADVISORS

When Landlords are thinking of making any major changes to the housing service Tenants and Leaseholders are entitled to their own independent housing experts to double check what the council is doing or saying.

DWA are experienced Tenants' Advisors. They are a not-for-profit company who strongly believe that Independent Tenant Advisors should be just that – independent.

DWA works for Tenants and Leaseholders. They do not work for the council.

DWA are here to explain the issues and make sure everyone understands what is going on.

Your Independent team of housing experts, community development workers and experienced tenants is led by Deborah Walthorne and David Williams. Their job is to make sure everyone gets the information they need about what is going on.

You may receive lots of unofficial information over the next few months. If you are not sure about anything please check with your Independent Advisors to make sure you have all the facts. The Freephone 0800 0855 492 is open between 10 am and 3pm Monday – Friday. It is free to landline callers. If you use a mobile phone there may be a fee – check with your phone company. Out of hours you can leave a message on our answerphone. We will ring you back if you leave your name and full telephone number – don't forget to tell us your area code. You can write to DWA at Freepost SWC 5119 Telford TF8 7ZA. No stamp is needed.

Competition Time

How much do you know about what is going on?

Q1. How much will the Council need to spend on modernising and improving homes over the next 10 years?

Answer: _____

Q2. Who will make the final decision about a transfer?

Q3. What is the full name of the tenants and leaseholders group that is keeping a close eye on the proposals?

Q4. When should you have your say?

Now Later

Send your answers to:

Freepost SWC 5119 Telford TF8 7ZA

The first three correct answers to arrive will each win a £20 shopping voucher.

Don't forget to give us your name and address!

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