
REPORT TO:	HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM: 5
DATE OF MEETING:	27TH APRIL 2006	CATEGORY: RECOMMENDED
REPORT FROM:	CHAIR OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE	OPEN
MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:	COUNCILLOR. R. SOUTHERN	DOC: s:\cent_serv\committee reports\housing & community services\27 april 2006\chairhcs-arch.doc
SUBJECT:	ASSOCIATION OF RETAINED COUNCIL HOUSING (ARCH)	REF: RS/SAC
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	ALL	TERMS OF REFERENCE: HCS 01

1.0 Purpose of Report

1.1 This report recommends that the Housing and Community Services Committee

- Authorises the Director of Housing to commit the Council to membership of the Association of Retained Council Housing, and:
- Further authorises payment of the sum of £1,000 in membership fees.

2.0 Background

2.1 The Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) is a newly forming organisation which aims to represent the interests of stock-retaining housing authorities at a national level. Housing Associations and Arms Length Management Organisations already enjoy the benefits of such representation through the services of the National Housing Federation and the National Federation of ALMO's respectively.

2.2 Membership of the Association will be open only to those housing authorities who have successfully completed a Stock Options Appraisal which has recommended stock retention in whole or in part, and have had that Appraisal and recommendation signed off by the relevant Regional Government Office.

2.3 ARCH will seek recognition and close working links with the Local Government Association in the interest of furthering its aims. Those aims, are expressed in the organisation's Constitution (attached at Annexe 1), are fourfold:

- To lobby Government for a sustainable long term financial strategy to support residents' choice for retention of Council housing in local authority ownership and management;

- To share good practice and exemplify the successes and long term benefits of local authority ownership and management;
- To champion the concept of a comprehensive housing service and the integral role of retention of the housing stock to local authorities' strategic and enabling role, and:
- To promote opportunities for collaborative working, joint commissioning of services and policy development to support the objectives of stock retention.

3.0 Conclusions

- 3.1 It is the officer view that the formation of such an organisation as ARCH is both timely and necessary, and that this authority can only benefit from membership. There is a clear need for a responsible national voice for stock retaining housing authorities, and it is important that this authority be seen to be playing an active role in the national debate.