

A Wider Approach

The recent article 'A decent performance' by Robbie Bilton (06.07.2006) and letter in response by Alan Long of Mears (27.06.2006) have addressed the issues of the future role of ALMOs and the importance of local authority leadership on social housing. Both of these issues are still emerging and require clarity from DCLG.

I agree with Alan that the real debate is not necessarily about ALMOs but the type of organisation needed to build stronger communities. This debate is continuing with one example being the attempt to find an alternative option to ALMOs, RSLs and PFI for the many stock retaining local authorities. Perhaps any new option could be built around a wider approach to the improvement of the local environment as a whole, linked to the achievement of wider aspirations than solely achieving the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

The issues for ALMOs are similar to those for stock retaining authorities, RSLs and PFI authorities – sources of funding, mainstreaming, improving standards and the move from decent homes to decent neighbourhoods.

If the long awaited White Paper begins to address some of these concerns then it may go a long way to achieving the aim of reengaging the public with local government.

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