

Minchinhampton Woolaway Homes



News from Partners in Change – your independent advisors
June 2007

Dear Resident,

We are Ed Isaacs and Joy Squires from Partners in Change. A group of local residents has chosen us to act as your independent advisor over the next few months.

As you know, Stroud District Council is looking at the future of the Woolaway properties in Minchinhampton. Their structural condition means that they need major repairs within the next five years. The work needed is extensive and there is not enough money to repair all the Council-owned homes. For this reason the Council has drawn up a number of options for the future of the properties. These include repair or demolition and redevelopment by either the Council or a Housing Association. Each of these options has different implications for you as residents.

The Council is planning to take a decision in October. Before they do this, they want to hear your views. This is where we come in as independent advisor.

- We will want to make sure that you have all the necessary information to make an **informed** choice.
- We are available by Freephone, Freepost, email or home visits to give you advice and answer any particular concerns you have.
- We will visit **every** resident (tenants and owner-occupiers) to explain the options and find out your views.
- We will **report** what we find and your views to Stroud Council.

Inside this newsletter, you will find more about the background to what the Council is looking at and what we will be doing as your independent resident advisors.

Yours truly,

Ed Isaacs Joy Squires

Ed Isaacs and Joy Squires



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There are three options that are being looked at:

Option 1. Repair all the council-owned houses

The houses are expensive to repair and the Council says that it does not have enough money to do this. The only way this could happen is if all the council-owned homes are transferred to a housing association that is willing to put some of its own money into the project.

Option 2. Demolish all or most of the council homes and build new homes at affordable rents at no cost to the Council or a housing association

This can be done by selling plots of land for private housing and using the money to build some new homes for rent. There will not be enough money, however, to provide enough new homes for rent for everyone who might want to stay in the area. More homes for rent could be provided if a housing association rather than the Council built them.

Option 3. Demolish all or most of the council homes and build enough new homes at affordable rents for everyone who is likely to want to stay in the area

This will work in the same way as option 2, but because more rented housing is needed, the only way this can be done is to find a housing association that is willing to put some of its own money into the project.

Partners in Change will give you independent advice and find out your views about these options



What happens next?

Over the next few weeks, we will want to come and visit you and find out your views about these options and the future of your own home. Before we do this, however, we are inviting you and all your neighbours to a drop-in at George Pearce House on **Saturday 16 June**. It will held **between 12.00 and 5.30pm**. You will be able to meet us and learn about these options in more detail. We will also arrange an appointment to come and visit you in your own home.

If you are not able to make it, we will still get in touch with you to arrange a visit to your home.

In the meantime, you can contact us at any time if you would like more information about your home and this project. You can get in touch in a number of ways:

- calling our freephone number: **0800 389 1306** or our consultants' mobile number **07977 517277**
- emailing us at **ed.isaacs@partners-in-change.co.uk**
- writing to us at: **Partners in Change, FREEPOST, MID 23212, Wolverhampton WV1 1BR**

You can also find out about Partners in Change and our work in Minchinhampton on our website: www.partners-in-change.co.uk

When is the Council due to take a decision about the Minchinhampton Woolaways?

Stroud District Council is due to take a decision on the future of the Minchinhampton Woolaway homes in October. Before it does this, however, it wants to make sure that all residents are well informed and make their views known. Once we have visited everybody we will produce a report with the findings and our own independent advice. We will make sure that this report is discussed beforehand with resident representatives from the Hampton Waves Residents' Association and other tenant representatives in the Stroud District.

We are meeting and reporting back to Hampton Waves Residents Association on a regular basis.

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Frequently asked questions – Council tenants

If the Council were to demolish, would it have to rehouse me?

Yes, the Council has a duty to do this. It would need to find a property of the right size and, as far as reasonably possible, in the area you want. We will be able to give you more information about rehousing when we come to visit you.

Would I be able to move back?

The Council has told us that it wants to make sure that there are as many new homes available as possible for tenants to move back to. Whether there are enough for everybody will depend on the option selected (see options 2 and 3 above).

Will I get compensation if my home is demolished?

Yes, you will get Home Loss payment. This currently stands at £4000 per household. You will also get assistance that will cover the cost of moving and connecting new services.

Options 1 and 3 rely on a housing association being prepared to put its own money towards the project. Has anyone spoken to a housing association about this?

Not yet, but this is something we have asked the Council to look at before a decision is made.

If a Housing Association was to take over our homes, will our rents go up?

The government has taken over rent setting from social landlords such as councils and housing associations. The policy is that rents for similar council and housing association properties in the same area will be broadly similar.

You will probably have lots of other questions to ask. For this reason, we are holding an open day at George Pearce House on Saturday 16 June 2007. We will be able to explain more about the options and advise on what they mean for you. We will be available from 12.00 to 5.30pm.

If you are not able to make it, we will still be getting in touch with you personally when we visit all residents to find out their views.