



# Moonlight Robbery

Campaign to end the robbery of council tenants!

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## BRIEFING - March 2008

**Government says we live in 'subsidised housing', but far from being subsidised, council tenants actually subsidise other tax payers through our rents; this year, to the tune of £1,400 million - more than £13 per tenant per week.**

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**How does this happen?** Most of us assume that our rent payments are used exclusively to pay for the running cost of our homes: repairs, management (housing staff wages) and maintenance (things like caretaking). However, this year we are paying £1,400 million more than councils are allowed to keep, to cover running costs. Government uses most of this money, to cover the cost of repaying loans used to buy land and build our homes; thus subsidising the tax payer.

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**Since this Government has been in power, it has robbed council tenants of over £19,000 million - £9,500 per tenant**

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**Why we shouldn't be paying off debt:** As tenants, we do not own or benefit financially from the asset value of council housing. So when a council home is sold, Government rules ensure that most of the money from the sale is not reinvested in council housing. Government takes 75% of proceeds of right to buy sales and councils get 25%. Government spends its share on things which the tax payer should fund and many councils spend their share on items which should be paid for through council tax not rents.

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**Rent rises subsidise other tax payers:** Since 2001, when the government introduced its national rent setting scheme, council tenants have been subjected to increasing rent rises (above the rate of inflation); deterring many from working and pushing them into claiming benefits. This year most tenants have had rent increases of around 2% above the rate of inflation.

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**At the same time, because huge amounts of our rents are 'robbed' each year, the repairs, management and maintenance of our homes is short-changed, even according to the Government's own research. The shortfall is more than £1,000 million a year.**

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**Bare-faced Robbery:** To add insult to injury, this year, the Government plans to rob us of an additional £200 million (over and above debt re-payments). This particularly bare-faced robbery is set to double within 3 years.

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**The Moonlight Robbery Campaign demands an end to the robbery of council tenants.**

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- Our rents payments should be used exclusively for repairing, managing and maintaining our homes, not used to extract a hidden tax from which other tax payers are exempt.
  - The £19,000+ million robbed by Government since 1997 must be returned and reinvested in council homes.
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*Moonlight Robbery* is a tenant led campaign supported by local, regional and national tenants federations