

HOUSING FOR THE MANY: LABOUR'S REVIEW OF SOCIAL HOUSING

Call for evidence

After eight years of failure, the Conservatives have no plan to fix the housing crisis. Since 2010 housing has become less affordable and more insecure.

We now face market and policy failures on all fronts: rough sleeping homelessness has more than doubled, homeownership has hit a 30-year low and new housebuilding has still not recovered to levels a decade ago before the global financial crisis and recession. However, this Review concentrates on social housing.

The number of new social rented homes has fallen to a record low, council homes have been sold off without being replaced, and the very definition of 'affordable housing' has been stretched beyond breaking point to include homes for rent at up to 80% and for sale at up to £450,000.

Tenant voice has been watered down and funding for Labour's decent homes programme has been scrapped. Even after the tragedy at Grenfell Tower, the Conservatives won't commit to making every home safe.

To fix the broken housing market we must think differently and offer people a new deal for housing. A bold, long-term plan to make housing genuinely affordable, safe, secure and decent, and to give tenants more control over decisions about their homes.

This call for evidence asks a series of core questions but they are not exhaustive so please raise issues and offer views on any topic you believe the Review should cover. Equally, there is no requirement to respond to all the questions. And where possible, do let us have any evidence or analysis - with sources - that backs your view.

Review – how did we get to where we are?

1. What are the most important decisions made in recent decades for social housing – good and bad?
2. What were the successes and shortcoming of Labour's approach in government?
3. What have been the successes and shortcoming of the Conservatives' approach in government?

Definition – what should ‘affordable’ mean?

4. What vision and role should social housing have under a Labour government?
5. Does social housing need rebranding? In name, in concept, or both?
6. What should we mean by social/affordable housing, both to rent and to buy?

Building – how do we build the scale of social housing required?

7. How many genuinely affordable homes are needed?
8. What groups of people are most in need of new affordable housing, to rent and to buy?
9. What range of agents and actors should be involved in delivering these homes?
10. Our manifesto committed us to building 100,000 genuinely affordable homes to rent and buy each year including the biggest council housebuilding programme in over 30 years. Besides extra public subsidy, what other measures could be taken to boost investment to meet our target?
11. High land prices make it expensive to build social housing. How can we reduce land costs and increase the availability of land for social housing?
12. What should we do to increase the acquisition and conversion of empty homes?
13. What should we do to increase the contribution that private developers make to providing more affordable homes?

Standards – how do we secure decent standards in current and new social housing?

14. Our housing stock is ageing and over half a million council and housing association homes are classified as non-decent. How can Labour deliver decent homes for all?
15. How should we make new and existing social homes greener and more energy efficient?

Tenants and residents – how do we improve involvement, voice and rights?

16. How do we make the regulation of social housing more tenant-focused?
17. How do we best ensure a voice for tenants in national standards and policy-making?

18. How do we ensure an effective voice and role for tenants with their landlords, including on estate regeneration?

How to respond

Please send your responses by email to: socialhousingreview@labour.org.uk

In your submission, it would be helpful if you could provide your name, organisation if you are not responding as an individual, and contact details.

Submissions will be treated as confidential. If we wish to quote you or your organisation we will only do so with your approval.

To ensure that all submissions are considered, please send your responses by January 31 2018.