

# **HOMES FOR ALL**

## **(incorporating Axe the Housing Act)**

### **Election Campaign Update and Briefing**

**If elected as a Councillor in May 2018 will you pledge to support:**

- **No eviction of tenants in rent and service charge arrears due to Universal Credit**
- **Calls on other local landlords not to evict due to Universal Credit arrears**
- **Regulation of private renting to include controlled rents, secure tenancies and an end to no-fault and retaliatory evictions**
- **50 per cent council and social rent housing on any new development site and 100 per cent on publicly-owned land**
- **A residents' ballot before any major redevelopment scheme involving demolition or decanting of existing residents**
- **Rejecting attacks on migrants: developers, landlords and political policies cause the housing crisis, not migrants**
- **Linking up with other councils and councillors to promote a national petition demanding Government deliver promised funding for fire safety improvement works**
- **Joining with tenants and trade unions to deliver this petition to Downing Street and/or relevant Ministers**

#### **Introduction**

We need to redouble our efforts to achieve Justice for Grenfell and decent, secure, truly affordable and safe **Homes for All**.

That requires political action to scrap the Housing and Planning Act, control rents in the private sector and invest in existing and new/reclaimed council housing. To achieve this we need to unite as tenants and housing activists, trade unions and politicians who support our aims, from all parts of the country, working together to expose, highlight and challenge the housing crisis.

#### **Unmet need**

- 92% of local authorities (LAs) failed to meet affordable housing need in 2016-17
- The Government estimates Numbers sleeping rough sleepers in England rose 15% in 2016-17 and 169% from 2010. (MHLGC figures released 25.01.18). These are an underestimate and exclude sofa-surfers, those in temporary, unfit and otherwise insecure housing.

## **New Homes for rent**

- In England 217,350 net additional homes were created in 2016-17 (DCLG 16.11.17)
- Of these 2.48% (5,380) were built for 'social rent'. 1,840 homes were built by local authorities (LA) in England 2016-17.
- The number of social rented homes has fallen by 151,000, or 4%: 103,642 local authority homes and 46,972 housing association (HA) homes for social rent were lost between 2012 and 2017. (MHLGC- England)
- Housing associations have 47,000 fewer properties let at social rent in 2017 compared to 2012. The biggest loss is homes shifted to 'Affordable' rent tenancies: 102,000 HA lettings have been converted so far.
- The 15 biggest 'G15' housing associations, which own 550,000 homes (21% of all HA homes) started only 244 new homes for social rent, 3 per cent of their total new homes, in the first 9 months of 2017-18 <http://g15london.org.uk/about-us/g15-in-numbers/>
- New 'Affordable Rent' (up to 80% market rent) homes increased by 27% (to 41,530) in 2016-17

## **Private renters**

More than half of the population knows someone who is struggling to afford to rent or buy a suitable home. More than 7 in 10 renters have experienced health and safety issues during their current tenancy, from rodent infestations to doors that don't lock. 40% avoided asking for repairs, for fear of landlord reprisals. (See Citizens Advice, 'A state of disrepair' 2017)

The lack of affordable and social housing is directly trapping families in poverty – [90% of low income private renters](#) face a shortfall between their housing benefit and their rent.

Today in the UK almost 60% of those living in poverty are non-pensioners in working households. In 1994, at 35%, this figure was markedly lower. Poverty rates [before housing costs](#) for working households with and without children have remained largely unchanged since 1994. It is only after accounting for housing costs that the poverty has greatly increased. (These figures from [recent research by the IFS and JRF](#))

## **Housing & Planning Act 2016**

The outline Housing and Planning Act ('the Act') was passed in 12 May 2016 and has been disintegrating ever since. Implementation of the Act has largely stalled and the necessary enabling measures are unlikely to get through parliament. Opposition in and outside parliament means:

- Pay to Stay will not be imposed on council tenants.
- Right to Buy for housing association tenants is delayed indefinitely
- Sell-off of "higher value" empty council homes is suspended for two years.

- Over-priced Starter Homes targets on new developments dropped.
- Some of the changes to the planning system delayed or dropped.

Local Planning Authorities' register of "brownfield land" no longer has to contain ALL the brownfield land. Some local authorities are only including large sites which already have planning permission.

The requirement to grant "Permission in Principle" to all sites on the Brownfield Register has also been scrapped. Plans to force local authorities to privatise their development control functions through competition with private providers, have not progressed beyond pilot schemes.