

## **Support 100,000 new council homes a year – Ditch the Developers’ Charter**

### **This Branch (etc.) notes:**

1. Housing and planning are central to issues of social inclusion and social justice in the UK.
2. The Labour general election manifesto 2019 proposed a needs-based and costed programme of public investment in social housing with the emphasis on council housing (100,000 new council homes a year). This would pay for itself long term by reducing benefit support for unaffordable private rents. This policy was based on the Shelter Report, A vision for social housing (2019), and its overall approach has been supported this year by the report of a House of Commons select committee with a majority of Conservative MPs.
3. This Conservative government has placed planning deregulation as the centre of its domestic policy agenda during the Coronavirus pandemic. There has been the widening of permitted development and planning permission in principle, followed by the Planning White Paper and related Changes to the current planning system. Both of the latter have been consulted on and now await government decision on whether and how to progress.
4. The Planning White Paper proposals intend to bring to an end the 1947 planning system in England, which is based on public decisions by publicly accountable local authorities on all changes in the use to land.
5. The White Paper proposes abolishing Section 106 developer contributions, replacing them with a national infrastructure levy. Consultation is to be focused on slimmed down Local Plans, and public consultation rights are to be withdrawn from specific planning proposals, on which local planning authority decisions will also be tightly constricted. There is a proposed zoning system to place large areas into categories with planning permission agreed in principle, or with a presumption of development rights for applicants. There is no recognition of the conflicts of interest between developers and the public interest, or any clear means to address and resolve specific conflicts when they arise.
6. The related proposed Changes to the current planning system include ambitious housebuilding targets which will increase pressure for demolition and redevelopment of council estates; the removal of affordable housing requirements from smaller developments; First homes (discounted home ownership) are to be the prioritised within affordable housing provision; and extension of the Permission in Principle consent regime to cover major developments (up to 150 homes).

**This Branch (etc.) believes:**

1. That the proposed planning changes amount to a developers' charter and if enacted will prevent the creation of stable and secure diverse and sustainable communities, with access for secure housing for all.
2. There will be no solution to the housing crisis without a return to mass government funded council house building, as proposed in the 2019 Manifesto. This is the solution to existing problems of unaffordability which the Tory planning proposals will only make worse.
3. That we must control the activities of private developers rather than freeing them to seek profit as they see fit, with the over-provision of unaffordable housing, oversupply of smaller dwellings, use of tenure segregation, etc.
4. That the proposals to remove the right of communities and elected local councillors to comment on, influence and object to specific proposals, is an unacceptable attack on our democratic right to shape the communities we live in.

**This Branch (etc.) proposes:**

1. That the Labour Party should continue to advocate for the general election manifesto 2019 policy to build 100,000 new council homes a year; and that this policy should be the basis of the party's policy approach over the coming period.
2. That a broad campaign under the slogans **Say No to no say on planning** and **Ditch the developers' charter** must be built to raise public awareness of the Tory planning proposals, and to build a united opposition to them. This should include campaign groups such as Homes for All, the professional groups who have raised objections, local authorities etc.