

HOUSING

LEASEHOLDERS BETRAYED!

"an outdated feudal system that needs to go"

Michael Gove's promise to 'fundamentally reform' the leasehold system has been abandoned after pressure from Downing Street.

Only in January this year, Gove announced that he wanted to scrap the system, saying: *'I don't believe leasehold is fair in any way. It is an outdated feudal system that needs to go. And we need to move to a better system and to liberate people from it.'*

Lisa Nandy, Labour's shadow housing secretary, said: *'These reports suggest a department in chaos and a housing secretary that has lost control.'*

'In the space of a few months, this government has caved into backbenchers on housing targets, locked themselves in internal battles on making the basic improvements for renters and is now rowing back on leasehold commitments.'

'Labour is the only party that will deliver much needed reform to give people secure, affordable and decent housing.'

'Where the Tories step back, Labour will step up and implement the Law Commission proposals in full.'



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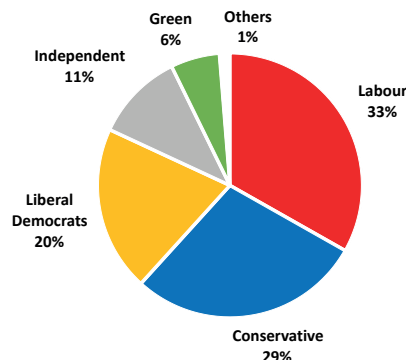
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SO FAR, SO GOOD

Labour had good reason to be pleased with the local election results. Although there were no contests in some of the big cities, there was a good spread of local government across England.

Clearly, there is still progress to be made before the General Election but this is a good step on the way.

Local elections 2023 - seats now held



LHG MOTION FOR LABOUR'S ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2023

If you have the opportunity to influence your Constituency Labour Party's delegation to Labour Party Conference this year, please try to muster support for the LHG motion, "**Housing – a winning issue**".

The key task is to ensure the motion is agenda-ed and debated as housing is not currently receiving the prominence that we believe is appropriate in the Manifesto process. Your CLP's backing could be critical.

Housing – a winning issue

In a rich country like Britain, it is a major scandal that many people are dying because of poor housing conditions, such as damp and mould, or have no home at all.

Many people cannot afford to heat their homes or pay an excessive proportion of their income on rent. Others fear poor fire-safety, live with dangerous cladding, or suffer under the feudal system that is lease-hold.

We know that only Labour can fix Britain's broken housing system. Labour already has the policies to do this, and our Shadow Front Bench is working with leaders across all sectors to ensure that the essential human right to decent and genuinely affordable housing can become a reality for all.

We need now to ensure **every voter** knows that transforming Britain's housing will be a priority for the next Labour Government, especially as it underpins other priorities such as good health and social care, affordable living costs and achieving net zero.

Annual Conference agrees that the Labour Party will make housing a winning issue at local and national levels by:

- Showing how things will be different under a Labour Government
- Showing how we would develop an equitable, genuinely affordable, accountable, and sustainable housing system
- Regularly promoting Labour's policies for tackling housing failings that affect all tenures and ages, throughout the country

YOU CAN \$TILL HE£P

If you are too busy to give time and energy, you can still help us in our work by making a donation by bank transfer to:

"Labour Housing Group", account number 50478080, sort code 08-90-06,

Co-operative Bank, PO Box 1AN, Blandford Street, Newcastle, NE99 1AN.

Of course, you can also send a cheque made payable to "Labour Housing Group" c/o **The Treasurer, Flat 2, 8 Torrington Park, London N12 9SS**

WHAT IS THE LABOUR HOUSING GROUP?

The Labour Housing Group is a lobbying group that is affiliated to the Labour Party and dedicated to the development of a socialist housing policy.

You can contact us at <http://labourhousing.org/contact> and join us at <https://labourhousing.org/membership/>

Individuals must be members of the Labour Party and agree to be bound by Labour Party rules and the LHG constitution.

Opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of the Labour Housing Group.

HOUSING AND DOMESTIC ABUSE – A WAY FORWARD

Towards the end of 2022 Labour Housing Group set up a task and finish group to understand how intricately-bound the issues of Domestic Abuse are, and to identify the steps that the next Labour Government can take to ensure that survivors of domestic abuse can begin to rebuild their lives in a way that keeps them and their families safe and free from harm, is consistent across England (housing is a devolved function) and easily-navigated.

I was delighted to be invited to join the group, having done work to raise awareness of domestic abuse during my tenure as President of the Chartered Institute of Housing, and we were greatly assisted by Kelly Henderson, founder and managing director of Addressing Domestic Abuse, a CIC based in the North East.

It was important to the group that we did not attempt to 'reinvent the wheel' and that we should seek the views of the many experts working on this issue in both the housing and domestic abuse sectors.

We are particularly indebted to the remarkable group of women who sit on the 'National Policy and Practice Group', set up by the 'Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance'. Members of this group includes representatives from Womens Aid, Crisis, Shelter, CIH, NHF, Safe Lives, Respect and many more.

<https://www.dahalliance.org.uk/policy-influencing/national-housing-and-domestic-abuse-policy-and-practice-group/>

In addition we contacted the Society of Labour Lawyers, individual legal experts, academics and others.

Following the call for suggestions we came up with a list of proposals to submit to the Labour Party Policy Forum and separately sent these to the Shadow Ministers for Domestic Abuse, Jess Phillips MP, and Housing, Matthew Pennycook MP.

By its very nature domestic abuse is a housing issue, directly impacting on a survivor's right to a life free of violence and abuse and the right to a safe and stable home.

Although each survivor's experience is different, housing is the primary barrier for women attempting to leave abuse.

In a recent Women's Aid survey, 70% of women said their housing situation and concerns about future housing, including fears of homelessness or lack of safe housing, prevented them from leaving an abuser, which forces survivors including children, to remain in dangerous, traumatic, and life-threatening circumstances with the perpetrator.

It is impossible, however, to separate issues facing people experiencing domestic abuse from the wider context of a failed housing system and this is why one of the recommendations is a very broad one, to commit to building at least 90,000 social rent homes a year. We need a housing market that makes available to every citizen the right home, in the right place, at a price they can afford.

I was personally very disappointed that the five missions for a better Britain announced by the party earlier this year did not address the housing crisis head on, and fear that we will neither tackle entrenched inequality and generational unfairness nor allow domestic survivors a life in which they and their families can thrive, unless we put housing front and centre.

In addition we have made suggestions in the following areas:

- Allocations and Tenancies;
- Priority Need and Local Connection;
- A Gender-informed Homelessness Strategy (including an end to NRPF conditions);
- Language, Stigma, Good Practice and Legal Advice for Survivors.

We were delighted to hear from Jess Phillips that she wants to meet with the group as soon as possible and hope that she will be able to endorse these proposals and help the next Labour Government to take a tangible step towards enabling all domestic abuse survivors to access a safe, affordable home.

Alison Inman – Past President Chartered Institute of Housing, Board Member Tpas (Tenants Participation Advisory Service), Labour Housing Group Executive member



CUTTING HOUSING'S CARBON HANDPRINT

As the UK faces a continued housing crisis, a Labour government faces the unenviable task of balancing the massive demand for new homes and the need to take radical measures to address the carbon and climate impact housing creates.

Existing regulations focus on reducing the carbon footprint of new homes, but we need to do more by considering the lifetime impact of housing and development - the carbon handprint - of major developments.

A carbon handprint includes the indirect impact a company has on carbon emissions, such as energy usage by home occupants, the impact of encouragement or discouragement of active travel and the carbon impact of property alterations and extensions.

To effectively tackle climate change, it's essential to hold house building companies accountable for both their carbon footprint and their carbon handprint.

This requires the reformation of legislation around house building standards and planning regulations, and a greater focus on promoting sustainable behaviour among homeowners.

For instance, the Labour Party could focus planning reform on requiring all new developments to have exemplar public transport links and promotion of active travel, such as cycling and walking, to reduce carbon emissions from transport.

Labour could also revisit previous policies that encouraged homeowners to adopt sustainable behaviours, such as providing incentives for homeowners who invest in energy-efficient appliances and renewable energy sources like solar panels.

Building more homes is necessary to address the UK's housing crisis, but it must not come at the expense of worsening climate change.

By prioritising sustainability and introducing legislation to promote sustainable practices, we can build a better future for both our housing needs and the planet.

The Conservatives are silent on this issue. It is Labour who has the strength of conviction to push for these changes and ensure that we take action to protect our planet for generations to come.

Mike Reader is the Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Northampton South and works in construction with Mace Consult



BIG LANDLORDS DOING JUST FINE

The Office for National Statistics reports that rents on privately-let properties increased by 4.9% across the UK - the fastest increase since the agency began tracking in 2016.

Grainger, a Newcastle-based company, which rents out 10,000 homes across the UK, saw rents grow by 6.8% in the six months to March, up from 3.5% a year before. They expect rents will continue to rise as an exodus of small private landlords cuts the supply of homes to rent.

Chief Executive Helen Gordon said *"They are actually leaving the market. That is what is exacerbating the supply-and-demand imbalance. The reason they are leaving is increased regulation, increased taxation and rising interest rates that they can't deduct from their profits."*

Grainger plans to add 6,000 homes through a £1.6bn development programme.

POLICY DAY

Our Autumn Policy Day is planned to take place in the East of England on 16th September with a focus on rural housing.

We are currently looking for a suitable venue in the East Midlands / East of England area, and working with Labour Coast and Country to make this an interesting and informative event.



It is intended to be a “hybrid” meeting, with attendance either in-person or via Zoom.

The issues faced by those seeking to live in rural (“sparsely-populated”) areas do not necessarily differ from those living in towns, but their context and severity may well do so. Some of the issues that are more frequently mentioned include:-

- a lack of truly affordable rented homes
- insufficient family-sized homes
- a lack of suitable sites /planning permission
- higher costs of building and maintenance
- older homes in need of refurbishment

Baroness Sue Hayman will be talking about the Co-op Party’s Rural Commission report. She is Labour’s Shadow Spokesperson on Environment, Food and Rural Affairs/Leveling Up, Housing, Communities and Local Government, and a former member of the Co-op Party’s Rural Commission.

Jo Lavis is a Rural Housing consultant.

Laura Atkinson is a Rural Housing Enabler in Essex.

We want to hear from you if you have experience of housing in a rural area and the sorts of issues that you have encountered in trying to meet rural housing need.

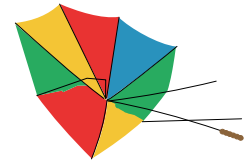
Examples of successful building/renovations of genuinely affordable housing would be especially welcome.

Paul Martin (Policy Officer)

pauljmartin@clara.co.uk

LEGAL & GENERAL FALLS OUT

Legal & General, one of the largest makers of prefabricated homes is halting production at its factory near Leeds, putting jobs at risk and casings



doubt over the sector’s future. L&G, traditionally linked with insurance and pensions, is making the majority of its 450 staff redundant.

The factory is one of the biggest in the UK and manufactures homes in modules that are assembled on site more quickly than traditional construction methods. Remaining work will be for existing projects in Bristol, Selby (North Yorkshire) and Broadstairs (Kent).

Since it began in 2016, L&G’s prefabricated homes business has accumulated losses of £176m, despite the parent company injecting £182m. The company says it built 15,000 homes over the previous three years and remains “deeply committed” to the UK housing sector.

Firms in the same business are also in financial difficulties and last year three others closed.



Nicky Gavron

In 2016, Mark Farmer, the government’s Modern Methods of Construction (MMC) champion, wrote a report entitled ‘[Modernise or Die](#)’ which was upbeat about the sector.

Five years later, he asked “Have we got the people we need to deliver the homes that this country needs, that the government is expecting as part of its political commitments? Increasingly, the answer is, no.”

Labour’s Nicky Gavron said that the market for MMC has grown over the past five years - especially for schools, hotels and student accommodation.

However, as far as MMC for house-building is concerned, timber-frame panelised house manufacturers have fared much better than full modular factory-made 3D, pre-fabricated units (volumetric) like Legal and General.

She commented that “MMC should be a crucial part of Labour’s industrial strategy. Sadly, this Tory government ditched theirs.”

DERELICTION OF DUTY

"UK insulation scheme would take 300 years to meet government targets"

Poorer families will pay more and for longer than everyone else

This Government's appalling records on both energy security and climate change are exposed by the latest data.

Their scheme to improve insulation and cut the cost of heating has made such a slow start that the "UK insulation scheme would take 300 years to meet government targets" according to **National Energy Action**.

At the same time, those poorly insulated homes will have to pay almost £1,000 more than others on their energy bills this winter, according to research by the **Energy and Climate Intelligence Unit** (ECIU).

Homes have energy performance certificates rated A to G with A being best insulated. ECIU's analysis found that homes rated band F are likely to have a gas bill £968 higher than a home rated as band C.

Those that are rated band D will have to pay £420 more for their gas compared with the higher rating.

Jess Ralston, senior analyst at ECIU, said: "These stark differences between highly insulated and poorly insulated homes show the real-world impacts insulation could have in time to dent exorbitant bills this winter.

The most vulnerable, such as the elderly, tend to live in colder homes and these are the groups that are being placed at risk by inaction from the government on energy efficiency."

Gillian Charlesworth, the chief executive of the Building Research Establishment said:

"Setting out a clear, long-term strategy to retrofit the UK's buildings will not only ensure we continue to deliver the net zero strategy, but it will also bolster our energy security by lowering demand for natural gas."

LABOUR'S WARM HOMES PLAN

Labour's alternatives were set-out last August by Keir Starmer. Labour wouldn't let people pay a penny more on their fuel bill over the winter, saving a typical family £1,000 and bringing

The Labour leader said that the party's plan to stop bills rising would save the typical family £1,000 and bring energy costs under control helping to tackle inflation.

Labour's £29bn plan would have prevented the energy price cap rising and be funded by extra tax from oil and gas giants.

Labour's Warm Homes Plan reduces energy demand and lowers bills in the longer term by insulating 19 million homes across the country over the next decade.

If the Government had followed Labour's plan a year ago, they could already have insulated two million of the coldest homes.

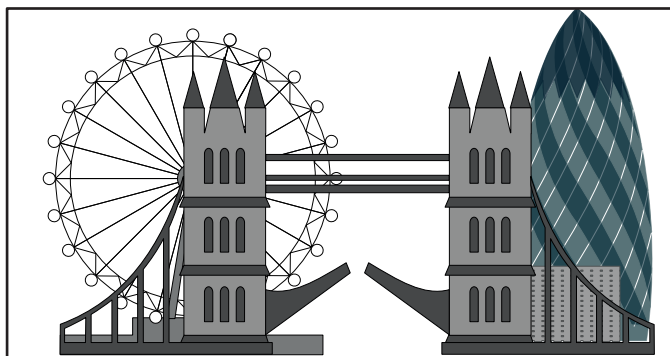


Keir Starmer said "We've had 12 years of Tory government that has failed to prepare and refused to invest, leaving bills higher and our country less secure.

This is a national emergency. It needs strong leadership and urgent action.

"Labour's fully-funded plan would provide the foundations for a stronger, more secure economy. Only Labour can give Britain the fresh start it needs."

LONDON BRANCH AGM REPORT



LHG's London Branch took place on 22nd April in "hybrid" in-person and Zoom format.

The first guest speaker was the housing activist Kwajo Tweneboa who spoke passionately about the shocking conditions he witnesses regularly.

Luke Murphy of the Institute for Public Policy Research shared his insight into the processes of policy making within Labour and in Government.

The incoming Executive Committee consists of Andy Bates, Fiona Colley, Helen Denis, Ross Houston, Asma Islam, Karl Lewis, Dermot McKibben, Sem Moema, Ellie Ormsby, Jack Shaw, Chris Wongsosaputro.

Two motions were agreed as shown here.

CUTTING RESIDENTIAL HEAT-LOSS

The next Labour Government should:

1. Create a Task Force required to research and fund projects that will significantly reduce the output of carbon from homes in the lifetime of the next Parliament. It must be led at Cabinet level and empowered to co-opt academic and industry advisers as well as public servants.

2. Require Cabinet Office and Treasury to provide legal and funding support as appropriate to overcome obstacles.

3. Give councils a key role in developing local projects designed to demonstrate implementation. The aim should be to develop a "library" of solutions which can be replicated across the country.

Planning can begin now. Labour local authorities should begin preparation for the demonstration projects they want to receive support, notably by gathering the evidence to underpin the work.

Motion moved by Paul Martin

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

London Labour Housing Group notes that there is a housing affordability crisis in Britain.

- ♦ For decades there has been an under-supply of social housing.
- ♦ The growing private rented sector is under-regulated and often exploitative of tenants.
- ♦ Our housing stock is the least efficient and most draughty in Western Europe.
- ♦ Thousands of people are still trapped in unsafe buildings post-Grenfell.
- ♦ The idea of home-ownership seems impossible for an entire generation.

London Labour Housing Group believes Labour must:

- Commit to a national council house building programme. At least 150,000 new council and housing association homes a year within five years, with 100,000 being new local authority council homes for social rent.
- Introduce a renters rights bill, give greater inspection powers to local councils and give Sadiq Khan and the Metro Mayors the power to introduce rent controls.
- Abolish Section 21 evictions and introduce open ended tenancies.
- Increase Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance Rates to levels that allow people on lower incomes to cover rising private rent demands.
- Give councils new powers to bring empty homes back into use by raising council tax on properties that have been empty for more than a year.
- Enforce the replacement of dangerous Grenfell style cladding on all high-rise and high-risk homes without passing the cost onto tenants.
- Launch a national retrofit programme to decarbonise our housing stock.
- Extend the Right-To-Buy-Back programme to help councils buy back leasehold homes on their estates.
- Give councils the ability to establish Housing Pressure Zones where they can set the rules about who can buy properties in particular areas. This could be used to restrict overseas investor activity and prioritise local first time buyers.

Motion Moved by Aydin Dikerdem

"The eight biggest house-builders in this country made over £7.7 billion in profit in 2021 and 2022.

Over the same period, all developers only built 5,718 social homes.

There's a housing emergency; we can't keep prioritising profit over people"

**Action on
empty
homes**


**SHELTER
HOME IS
EVERYTHING**



**"VOTERS
DON'T CARE MUCH
ABOUT HOUSING AND
HOMELESSNESS"**



**LABOUR CAMPAIGN FOR
COUNCIL HOUSING**

