

**THE BEST OF
LABOUR IN
POWER**

Housing Innovations from Labour Councils

John Healey MP,
Shadow Secretary of State for Housing

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Introduction- John Healey MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Housing
The toughest place in the Labour movement today is being a Labour councillor, battling nearly ten years of the Tory-made housing crisis and cuts.

Today there are over a million people stuck on a council house waiting list. As a country we are building 30,000 fewer social homes a year than in 2010. Everyone knows someone who cannot get the home they need or aspire to own, and homeownership among under 45s has been at a record low under the Tories. Private renters remain at the mercy of rogue landlords and are too often forced to accept homes that are unfit, unsafe, and overpriced.

It's these great crises that face our Labour councillors, but I am proud to say, and as this report sets out, that Labour-run Town Halls have been a crucible of new ideas and innovations in housing, rolling back the damage done by almost a decade of failed Tory thinking and inaction from Ministers.

To provide a forum for fresh thinking in housing I set up the Labour Housing and Planning Innovation Network in 2015 in my role as Shadow Secretary of State for Housing. The report that follows is the second from the network, showcasing the very Best of Labour in Power.

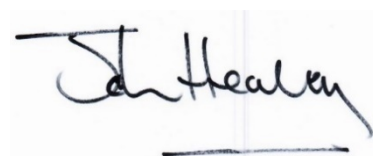
This new edition looks at 20 case studies of innovative action by Labour councils to crack the housing crisis. Thank you to all who have taken the time to contribute, and a special thank you to Joe Vesey-Byrne who has helped me pull together this report.

Every region has a Labour council with determination to do things differently and make a change for the better to the lives of local people. In the pages that follow you'll read about exciting projects like empty seaside guest homes brought into the 21st century, veterans building their own homes, and new environmentally friendly homes being built at scale – all under the aegis of Labour councillors and campaigners.

The tragedy of the Grenfell Tower fire has brought building regulations and fire safety to the forefront of our politics. As you will also read below, Labour authorities have taken clear action since June 2017, to make people safe again in their homes and ensure a monument to neglect on that scale can never again blacken the horizon.

Labour is showing people that things do not have to be the way they have been these last nine years. It's a great relief, as shown in this report, that even in Opposition in Westminster, our representatives in council chambers all over England are making a real difference in housing for millions and being true to the radical party Labour has always been.

John Healey MP



Birmingham City Council

Building Birmingham Scholarship Programme

As it tackles the housing crisis, Birmingham City Council is helping disadvantaged young people from the city carve out careers in construction and planning.

The Birmingham Development Plan, adopted in January 2017, forecasts a population increase of around 156,000 people by 2031. That equates to a need for 89,000 additional homes.

Under Labour, the Council has become the biggest single developer of new homes in the city, with Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust (BMHT) building over 3,100 new homes for sale or rent since 2009, with a further 365 homes currently under construction. These homes have provided significant housing growth and BMHT is now the largest authority housebuilder in the UK.

The Council is also keen to ensure that local people benefit from the jobs being created by the ongoing building programme and has designed the award-winning Building Birmingham Scholarship programme to help local young people forge careers in the construction industry.

The programme takes £500 per completed BMHT unit and invests it into the skills pathway. Over 70 young people are currently supported with up to £9,500 per year over their three-year university degree and to date 70% of graduates have attained a first-class degree.

The Building Birmingham Scholarship programme helps to reduce barriers to those from marginalised communities and less affluent families and has also encouraged a growing number of females and young people from BAME backgrounds to consider careers in construction.

The Council also has a successful Planning Apprentice Scheme to help develop a more diverse and younger pool of city planners within Birmingham.

"We talk a lot about inclusive growth and both the Building Birmingham Scholarship programme, and the Planning Apprentice Scheme are examples of our work to ensure that people and communities across Birmingham benefit from the extensive building programme currently underway.

Primarily of course, this is about providing quality homes for a young and growing population. Housing transforms lives, it transforms futures. It has an impact on people's physical and mental health and can positively impact on education. But as Birmingham builds the thousands of new homes over the next decade, the Council is determined to ensure that as many people as possible reap the social and economic rewards.

These two schemes are helping young people, many of them from deprived backgrounds, develop successful careers in the building industry.”

Cllr Sharon Thompson, Cabinet Member for Homes and Neighbourhoods

Estimated population (current)	1,141,374
Projected population (2039)	1,300,363
Households (000s)	426,023
Owner occupied (%)	53
Privately Rented (%)	21
Council and social tenants (%)	25
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£27,954
Median House Price	£185,359
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£675
LA Housing Waiting List	6,398
Housing benefit claimants	88,122

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Blackpool City Council

Transforming derelict seaside guest houses into quality private rented homes

Blackpool has taken the blight of empty guest houses and properties and created over 300 new privately let properties, available at local market rents. The larger derelict guest houses are turned into 1, 2, and 3 bed flats. The aim is to create a stable community in Blackpool, and already the properties in the scheme are occupied by between 400-500 people at any time.

My Blackpool Home is a unique housing and regeneration company established and owned by the Council, designed to deliver lasting, positive change in inner Blackpool. With less demand from holiday makers for traditional holiday accommodation over the last few decades, thousands of former guesthouses and holiday flats have gradually been converted into poor quality rented accommodation, leading to shocking housing conditions and concentrated deprivation in the heart of Blackpool. The core purpose of My Blackpool Home is to acquire and remodel poor quality accommodation, developing a rental portfolio that sets a new standard for quality and responsible management. In turn, this helps to create more stability and confidence in inner neighbourhoods.

The quality is driven up by the council's company, ending the scourge of shoddy conversions into bedsits and crowded HMOs. My Blackpool Home caps the proportion of 1-bed flats in larger conversions to no more than a third of the total homes created there. Smaller properties are converted into single family homes.

Derelict and empty properties are acquired from a diverse mix of sources. Many are bought on the open market, through estate agents, or through contacts with My Blackpool Homes. The company also works with small developers who bring empty properties up to standards and specifications set by My Blackpool Homes and then sell them to the council.

The non-profit nature of My Blackpool Home means they can be selective about the homes they purchase, securing value for investment and avoiding properties unfit to be transformed into stable homes.

The low cost of funding, and control by the Council, means that My Blackpool Home can accept much lower yields and make more conversion projects work to a higher quality standard than private investors.

Over 300 homes have been created over the last 3 years with a target to establish a portfolio of 1,000 homes by 2025. The aim is to complete 400 by the end of the 2019/20 financial year. On average 100 new properties have been created per year since the company was founded.

Funding for the work of My Blackpool Home has come through Blackpool Council, with £26 million already lent and a further £41 million approved. My Blackpool Home will not move into an operating surplus for another 5 years and will repay all previous losses a few years after that, so this is a long-term investment to deal with the town's biggest

issue. But the value of the stock developed so far exceeds the costs of developing it, establishing a firm financial foundation on which the company can build.

My Blackpool Home also provides a reliable lettings and management service for other private landlords in the town who agree to improve their properties to a reasonable standard. This is a further way of raising the quality of the wider private rented sector and helps provide more homes for people in housing need referred through the Council's Housing Options service.

"Blackpool Council has shown that Labour administrations can take decisive action to address market failure for the benefit of local residents. In setting up My Blackpool Home, Blackpool Council has already provided 350 households with high quality homes, put problematic empty properties back into use, and set a new quality benchmark for Blackpool's private rented market. We have also made a sound long term investment that will help us continue to deliver the high-quality local services that our residents deserve."

Cllr Simon Blackburn, Leader of Blackpool Council

Estimated population (current)	139,305
Projected population (2039)	136,452
Households (000s)	63,094
Owner occupied (%)	66
Privately Rented (%)	15
Council and social tenants (%)	19
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£22,704
Median House Price	£107,252
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£525
LA Housing Waiting List	5,954
Housing benefit claimants	14,873

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Bristol City Council

Using council-owned land to build affordable homes

Bristol's Labour administration was elected in May 2016. One of the largest issues during the election was the lack of affordable housing delivery in general and new council housing in particular. In the four years leading up to May 2016 average number of new affordable homes built annually was 180. Today, Bristol are on target to reach an annual level of affordable housing completions of 800 per year by 2020, over a 400% increase.

In 2018 the council completed 49 homes and in 2019 it will be 50 with a pipeline for the next few years of 670 council homes built of which 540 will be for social rent. Bristol are also buying a site for 300 homes.

The council has established a development company – Goram Homes to provide high quality, environmentally sustainable schemes fully compliant with our affordable housing policies. Two sites providing a total of 400 homes have already been allocated to Goram and should rise to 1,000 homes this year.

The approach is based upon pulling three policy levers in unison: land ownership, finance and planning powers. It was critical to set up a multi-disciplinary housing delivery team to oversee all routes to affordable housing delivery.

The first decision was to halt the sale of housing land. 80 hectares had been put on the market by the previous administration, Labour took it all off. Labour stopped the previous Mayor's policy of auctioning empty older council homes. 91 of these properties were being held empty, and Labour brought 65 back into use within the HRA and 26 were let on a peppercorn to homeless charities. The land owned by the council is assessed first to establish whether the council can quickly build council housing or housing company homes on them, if not, can housing associations or community led housing organisations take them on? Housing associations have a pipeline of over 700 homes on council land and community led organisations up to 1,000.

In Labour's first budget for Bristol, the council committed over £200m of capital to affordable housing. This included £45m for council housing (before the cap was removed), £100m for the housing company and £57m housing association rented housing grant to either top up section 106 planning allocations or to buy land. This has so far funded over 325 social and affordable rented homes. Bristol Labour have extended this funding to community led organisations. Another £14m was provided to fund the delivery team, project management and design to achieve planning applications. Before the cap came off council house building was increased by firstly moving from developing smaller backland and garage sites, to swapping a number of small sites for larger sites which were more efficient to deliver and also to provide a mix of rented and for sale housing. The first new estate of 133 homes is 53 social rent and 80 for market sale.

Bristol was one of the first councils to reduce the gaming of the viability system by making the viability assessments fully public documents and to challenge developers overpaying for land. The consistent message to developers on affordable housing has seen a steady rise in its provision, assisted by the grant fund outlined above.

Bristol has maintained a strong focus on affordable housing delivery using all tools at their disposal alongside clear, consistent leadership and investing in a delivery team to oversee 100+ developments including affordable homes.

“Building social housing at scale is critically important, however what we build must be the best homes we can, sustainable, healthy and accessible. As Nye Bevin said “While we shall be judged for a year or two by the number of houses we build... We shall be judged in ten years by the type of houses we build.””

Cllr Paul Smith, Cabinet Member for Homes

Estimated population (current)	463,405
Projected population (2039)	544,730
Households (000s)	195,272
Owner occupied (%)	58
Privately Rented (%)	22
Council and social tenants (%)	20
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£29,046
Median House Price	£274,121
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£925
LA Housing Waiting List	11,693
Housing benefit claimants	29,755

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Gateshead Council

Homes designed to support independent living

Estimates suggest there may be almost 3,800 people with a learning disability in Gateshead and this is expected to grow in the future. Gateshead Council is committed to giving people with learning disabilities choice and control about where they live providing services and housing which promotes wellbeing and independence and helps support the most vulnerable. Gateshead is providing the homes which the market is currently failing to provide.

The Winlaton scheme has utilised three pieces of vacant land within the Borough to provide a core and cluster development of affordable rented apartments and bungalows for adults with Learning Disabilities. The project will provide 14 new homes, supported by a concierge service that will enable independent supported living for vulnerable residents that otherwise require residential care facilities. The scheme has been in part funded by Homes England's Care and Support Specialised Housing Fund with the Council providing the remaining finance. The scheme has been wholly designed and developed by the Council. The new residents have already been identified and will be moving in imminently. The scheme not only promotes independent living and wellbeing but will also alleviate pressures on social care budgets.

All the housing within the scheme will be for affordable rent. The bungalows are Wheelchair user dwellings, whilst all other lettable units are Accessible and adaptable dwellings. They also meet the nationally described space standards. In some of the homes height adjustable kitchens have been fitted and there is provision for easy installation of bedroom to bathroom hoist where required.

The completed units have achieved EPC Energy Efficiency rating B and Carbon emission B. The chosen construction method and associated building services provide for thermal mass within the building fabric to moderate variations in indoor temperatures during the day and support the energy efficiency and the sustainability agenda.

The bespoke design of these homes alongside the provision of the right support will promote the wellbeing and independence of the new residents as well as help support their needs.

The homes are within the centre of an established existing community alongside good local facilities including local shops, dentist and GP surgeries and transport links.

Gateshead Council under Labour recognises the challenges and opportunities faced in relation to providing the right type of homes in the right places. In addition, they continue to strive for innovation, quality and better outcomes for the residents of Gateshead.

Estimated population (current)	202,508
Projected population (2039)	317,197
Households (000s)	90,865
Owner occupied (%)	58
Privately Rented (%)	15
Council and social tenants (%)	27
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£25,983
Median House Price	£131,820
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£500
LA Housing Waiting List	5,397
Housing benefit claimants	14,455

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Greater London Authority

Fast-track planning for affordable homes

To tackle the crisis in affordability facing the capital, the Labour Mayor of London has established a 'threshold approach' to affordable housing that offers to speed up the planning process for developments of low-cost homes in the capital. Proposals can follow a 'Fast Track Route' if they provide 35 per cent affordable housing. with a higher threshold of 50 per cent on public and industrial land.

The Fast Track exists to build more affordable homes and quicker, without relying on Section 106 agreements which have proven difficult to enforce. These agreements are legally binding contracts entered into within the local planning authority at the time that permission is granted. They require developments to provide an agreed amount of affordable homes on the site. Most obligations within a section 106 agreement are triggered when a developer implements a planning permission (broadly when they commence construction work) or at various stages within the development process (for example prior to occupation of a certain number of market units).

There is however no requirement in law for developers to implement a planning permission in which case the development (and S106 planning obligations) will not come forward. The agreement cannot be varied without consent of the planning authority and under current legislation a developer cannot appeal a decision not to agree to a variation within the first five years of the grant of planning consent.

To tackle the problems caused by this the Mayor has created the Fast Track. Since its introduction, 39 developments have followed the Fast Track Route. 4,153 affordable homes have been permitted, with 11,043 units overall. The average level of affordable housing per scheme was 44%. There are additional referable schemes following the Fast Track Route which have not yet been approved.

There are various other criteria that need to be met to follow the Fast Track Route including the Mayor's requirements on tenure and affordability. Schemes following the Fast Track Route are not required to submit viability information and are not subject to late viability reviews. The approach provides certainty to the market so that affordable housing requirements are reflected in land values and speeds up the planning process by avoiding protracted viability debates. Schemes that do not provide the relevant affordable housing threshold or meet the other criteria follow the Viability Tested Route.

The Fast Track Route was introduced as part of the threshold approach to affordable housing in the Affordable Housing and Viability Supplementary Planning Guidance which was published in August 2017. The threshold approach is also included in the Draft London Plan which was first published in December 2017. Examination Hearing sessions for the plan finished in May 2019 and the plan is due to be adopted in 2020.

“For many years, rules from the national Government have allowed developers to use opaque ‘financial viability’ arguments to dodge requirements for affordable housing in new developments. At City Hall, we have been determined to end this.

When we got into office, we recruited a new expert viability team with the skills to interrogate developers’ viability assessments. We brought in tough new planning rules to clamp down on bad practices and make transparency the norm. We introduced new mechanisms designed to push developers into offering more affordable housing upfront.

The facts show our approach is working. Under the previous Mayor, affordable housing fell to just 13 per cent of homes given planning permission. By last year this had risen to 36 per cent – and that’s after we changed the definition of ‘affordable’ to bring back social rent. Even under this Government we are showing what a difference our approach makes to the lives of Londoners.”

James Murray, Deputy Mayor for Housing

Estimated population (current)	8,908,081
Projected population (2039)	10,245,061
Households (000s)	3,543,472
Owner occupied (%)	50
Privately Rented (%)	25
Council and social tenants (%)	25
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£35,716
Median House Price	£466,824
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£1,495
LA Housing Waiting List	232,409
Housing benefit claimants	638,219

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Leeds City Council

A new generation of council homes to rent at prices linked to local incomes

Leeds City Council has delivered 1,000 affordable homes over the last five years using a range of funding and delivery routes. The programme has helped the city to regenerate and address some derelict or nuisance sites and included the first Council extra care housing scheme for older people.

The ambitions of Labour-run Leeds were only limited by the funding available and the cap placed on financial headroom. The Council has rapidly responded to the new freedom to build with the changes to HRA announced in October 2018 and has set out an ambition to deliver the equivalent of 300 new homes per year over the next five years (totalling 1,500 homes). Leeds Council have already identified sites which will deliver up to 800 new homes and have 400 council homes in the pipeline today.

The homes will be let at rents that are affordable within the context of average incomes in Leeds. The aim is to provide homes that are no more than 30% of the average Leeds wage of £28k, which will generally be around 60% of market rents and significantly less than those offered at so called “affordable” rent levels nearer to 80% of market rates. Labour in Leeds is doing away with the Government’s bogus and mistrusted definition of “affordable”, so often out of the reach of people on ordinary incomes.

This new generation of council homes are being built to high standards and provide for a wide range of needs including a further 200 new extra care housing places for older people. All homes will meet accessibility and energy efficiency standards significantly above Building Regulations and a significant number will meet full wheelchair accessibility standards. The homes should be at least £100 p.a cheaper to run than the equivalent Building Regulation home and will produce 6 times less carbon than the average home in England and Wales, recognising Leeds’ commitment to tackling the climate emergency.

“As a Council it is important to recognise the need for housing, with growing populations that is sustainable and affordable. We have worked hard as a city to ensure we are in a position to progress and build new Council houses for our residents and communities, ensuring that we address the need for affordable housing that families and individuals can reside in for years to come.”

Cllr Debra Coupar, Executive Member for Communities

Estimated population (current)	789,194
Projected population (2039)	861,827
Households (000s)	334,662
Owner occupied (%)	55
Privately Rented (%)	23
Council and social tenants (%)	21
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£28,137
Median House Price	£185,231
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£671
LA Housing Waiting List	17,198
Housing benefit claimants	51,657

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Liverpool City Council

Re-opening the Housing Revenue Account to build a new generation of council housing

In May 2019, Joe Anderson, Mayor of Liverpool, announced that he was re-opening the City's Housing Revenue Account meaning Liverpool will have council housing again for the first time in more than 30 years.

Liverpool transferred all its council housing stock in 2008 to housing associations in the area. After nearly a decade of Tory and Coalition attacks on public funding the City has seen levels of new build social housing come to almost a standstill. Housing associations in the City, driven by the Government ideology of affordable rent and a focus on the 'bottom line', had been selling off social housing stock in some of the poorest and most vulnerable areas of the City. Council housing waiting lists were growing – particularly where people either needed smaller or larger homes.

Mayor Anderson decided to act. He convinced Government to waive the remaining £700m+ stock debt that was left over from the 2008 stock transfer and, with that agreement in place, has set out on delivering a new generation of Council homes.

With aspirations for both new build and refurbishment and redesign of older stock, Joe is already developing ambitious plans to transform the city's social housing landscape.

Liverpool accept that their ambitions are not without challenge, not least of which being the lack of social housing grant in the City when trying to build a Housing Revenue Account from the ground up – Liverpool is one of the many areas which the Tory government have chosen to deprive of social rented grant.

However, Liverpool are looking at a number of innovative ways of meeting these challenges and already have their first half a dozen homes ready for occupation.

This is complimentary to the work being delivered by the Council's ethical housing company, Foundations, which is radically reshaping Liverpool's housing market. Foundations is creating bespoke properties for the homeless, foster carers, large families, the elderly and people with a disability and is improving the availability of good quality, affordable homes in the city. It will also accelerate the rent to buy sector over the coming decade, with the unique rent-to-buy initiative making home ownership more affordable. Fourteen of the first rent to buy homes have recently been completed on Park Street, offering tenants the chance to rent their new home at a reduced rate and use the savings to fund a deposit to buy it.

It's a bold and potentially disruptive move by the Mayor, who has also established a local authority commercial house building company in the City and there are already signs of other local authorities following suit – hopefully spawning a new appetite for council homes that the next Labour government can properly fund and support.

Strong socialist values are at the heart of Liverpool's vision while an ongoing community wealth building approach is exploring new ways of helping everyone get a foot on the housing ladder – including setting up a mutual bank to offer no deposit mortgages.

Liverpool was the first city in Europe to provide council housing and whilst a Tory Government have prevaricated on ways to increase house building numbers, it's again taken a Labour led local authority to take the initiative and show Government the way.

“Liverpool is at the sharp edge of the housing crisis, we have had to be innovative and bold to transform how housing works for the people of our city. We need a range of approaches to a make sure nobody is left behind, that's why we set up our own ethical housing company, Foundations, to help more people get a foot on the property ladder and have recently announced a new generation of council housing.

Liverpool pioneered public sector housing and it is right and fitting that our proud socialist city is back offering council housing to meet the needs of local people. This is what we have achieved with no real financial support – imagine what we could get done with a Labour government behind us.”

Mayor Joe Anderson

Estimated population (current)	494,814
Projected population (2039)	550,639
Households (000s)	220,224
Owner occupied (%)	54
Privately Rented (%)	20
Council and social tenants (%)	26
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£26,703
Median House Price	£135,723
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£450
LA Housing Waiting List	17,873
Housing benefit claimants	47,729

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London Borough of Barking and Dagenham

Municipal housebuilding for affordable homeownership

100 years after the Addison Act led to the Becontree Estate, the largest council estate in its time, Barking and Dagenham is once again leading the way in municipal house building.

The Labour authority is taking the spirit of innovation of the Becontree Estate and applying these principles to the 21st Century. Just like then, we want to provide homes for all, from the cradle to the grave, for the vulnerable and aspirational.

Barking and Dagenham is directly investing over £750m on the council's balance sheet to build almost 3,000 new council funded and built homes over the next four years – drawing also on grant funding from the GLA and making use of our Right to Buy receipts. We are filling the investment gap which the private sector alone cannot meet. The homes will be built by the council's company Be First and managed by the council company Reside.

The bulk of the housing offer will remain truly affordable with approximately 70% (or 2,100) homes at 80% market value rent levels or below, with around 650 new homes at the equivalent of council rents. This is in line with the needs of the community.

What makes Barking and Dagenham unique is the range of incomes people can earn and still find a housing option they can take up. Homes available cater from those needing a council comparative rent, to those on the London Living Wage, at £19k as well as those on moderate working incomes, such as a family income of £30k plus who can access 80% market value rents or shared ownership.

This means a shop worker earning £19.5k, or a labourer on £23.5k can rent a 1- or 2-bed flat; a bus driver earning £35k can rent or get a foothold on the shared ownership ladder; and a train driver earning £45k being able to buy a below market priced property. No one is left behind. The only squeeze is the limits imposed on our ambitions, not some imaginary middle.

Most importantly, the homes are for local people first and foremost – as embodied in the council's allocations policy. Households must have been living in the borough for at least three years to get on the housing register and Reside homes always go to local people first. Over 80% of homes recently completed for shared ownership went to existing borough residents.

Be First, aims to be a model house builder, and Reside, a model landlord, managing homes in a way which combines good customer service with the best of both worlds that the private and public sectors offer, including conditions of tenancy and rental levels.

Barking and Dagenham are using the PWLB to borrow at low rates to build new homes. The advantage of managing them through Reside is that are for the Borough for life, avoiding the damaging effects of Right to Buy.

Barking and Dagenham is going beyond the traditional local authority response which is to cater only for the least well off in often substandard housing and leaving everyone else to fend for themselves on the open market. There are no poor doors, sink estates, or gated communities, and certainly no gentrification. This is the progressive socialist response to modern day austerity and the housing crisis of our times.

Estimated population (current)	211,998
Projected population (2039)	266,405
Households (000s)	78,978
Owner occupied (%)	47
Privately Rented (%)	22
Council and social tenants (%)	31
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£29,274
Median House Price	£299,002
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£1,200
LA Housing Waiting List	4,587
Housing benefit claimants	16,636

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London Borough of Croydon

Retrofitting sprinklers in all council high-rise blocks

Croydon Council was the first in the country to commit to retrofitting sprinklers in all high-rise blocks. These include all the blocks in the borough 10-12 storeys and one eight-storey sheltered block.

Sprinklers have been a legal requirement in all new high-rise blocks since 2007, but there is no commitment for councils or the Government to retrofit existing blocks with the fire safety device. Croydon has led the way and taken on the responsibility to retrofit all blocks.

A week after the Grenfell Tower fire, Croydon's Labour Council announced it would retrofit sprinklers in its 25 high-rise blocks, plus one eight storey sheltered block. The £10m programme began in September 2017 and concluded in July 2019. Over 1,252 individual properties across the borough were fitted with new sprinklers. Installation costs per unit were £4200

The targeted sprinkler systems are discreet and are triggered only in a room affected by fire, reducing the risk of false alarms and water damage. The feedback from residents has been resoundingly positive, but despite repeated calls from the Council leadership the Government has failed to provide any financial support for the programme.

Residents and tenants were engaged in the process throughout, including being invited to see a show flat to demonstrate how the new sprinkler systems would integrate into their home.

According to Government figures released on the eve of the second anniversary of the Grenfell Tower fire, there were 338 high-rise residential and publicly-owned buildings with ACM cladding systems unlikely to meet Building Regulations yet to be remediated in England.

"As a Labour council our tenants' safety is our absolute priority. With the tragic loss of life at Grenfell Tower, we immediately put in place plans to retrofit our taller blocks with sprinklers. Despite initial assurances from Government that they would do 'whatever it takes to keep people safe' they have repeatedly refused financial assistance to Croydon and other councils to get this work done, saying that sprinklers are additional not essential.

Croydon has listened to Dany Cotton, London's Fire Commissioner who said "This can't be optional, it can't be a nice to have, this is something that must happen" and we have ensured we found the resources to keep our tenants safe."

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Homes and Gateway Services Cllr Alison Butler

Estimated population (current)	385,346
Projected population (2039)	442,615
Households (000s)	154,932
Owner occupied (%)	62
Privately Rented (%)	22
Council and social tenants (%)	17
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£35,876
Median House Price	£364,600
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£1,100
LA Housing Waiting List	5,138
Housing benefit claimants	21,678

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London Borough of Ealing

The first successful ballot on estate regeneration

In London, all councils are now required to consult residents with estate ballots as a condition of funding from Labour Mayor Sadiq Khan. Ealing Council were the first to take on this challenge and delivered the first successful estate ballot in London in 2018.

In their bold 2018 local election manifesto, Ealing Labour committed to embracing estate ballots and consulting local people before the regeneration goes ahead. After receiving overwhelming support from residents, with Labour's vote share increasing across the Borough, Labour-led Ealing Council put this commitment into practice and asked the residents of the High Lane estate in Hanwell what they thought about proposals to rebuild their neighbourhood. This was no small regeneration project, which included a community centre, a new shop and multi-use games area alongside new homes.

With almost 60% of residents taking part in the ballot, 90% of those voted in favour of the new scheme. It's important to remember that no council or developer should ever take the support of residents for granted, and this vote was the result of years of hard work to secure the best possible deal for local people.

With the housing crisis continuing to bite across the UK, particularly in and around cities like London, genuinely affordable housing is a major priority for Labour councils like Ealing. Ealing Labour pledged to deliver the most ambitious genuinely affordable homes target in London, with 2,500 promised over the council's four-year term. Estate regeneration has huge potential to redesign some older housing blocks and provide those desperately needed genuinely affordable homes, but it has not been without controversy.

Giving local residents a ballot on estate regeneration really does mean putting power into the hands of communities. It means winning the trust of local people on their doorsteps and making the case for regeneration that works for communities.

Labour has pledged to roll out balloting on estates set for regeneration nationwide, and the key message from Ealing is that balloting is a powerful tool to engage your communities. Done right, estate ballots will push councils to think more carefully about designing neighbourhoods and homes and to build support from the local community.

"Ealing Labour committed to working with residents on estate regeneration in our 2018 manifesto, and I'm proud that we were able to deliver on this with the High Lane estate ballot.

By delivering the first successful estate ballot in London, Ealing Labour have shown that balloting local people is a positive step forward to engaging with communities about the place they call home.

For Ealing Labour, an estate regeneration done right is one that brings local people along with us.”

Cllr Julian Bell, Leader of Ealing Council

Estimated population (current)	341,982
Projected population (2039)	359,906
Households (000s)	126,788
Owner occupied (%)	54
Privately Rented (%)	28
Council and social tenants (%)	18
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£33,154
Median House Price	£486,033
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£1,375
LA Housing Waiting List	13,685
Housing benefit claimants	25,590

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London Borough of Hackney

In-house Council team building council homes for social rent and shared ownership

Hackney Council has returned to its historic role as a builder of public housing, inspired by their radical municipal socialist roots, by creating an in-house development team of 60 staff. The in-house team uses an innovative cross-subsidy model which built 912 homes across the Borough, against a backdrop of a decade that has seen consistent Government attacks on social housing, cuts in funding and national under delivery.

On council-owned estates and smaller sites across the borough, Hackney is building high quality homes built to last, retaining land and ownership to control quality and affordability – with 1945 Parker Morris space standards plus 10%, a third of all homes built for families and over 10% made accessible for disabled residents - all lifetime homes.

The council's approach is also focused on placemaking – on building good quality homes in neighbourhoods that stand the test of time. Hackney incorporates shared foyers with mixed tenures to prevent the creation of 'poor doors', as well as shared courtyards, play-spaces and new community facilities like community gardens and halls, retaining ownership and management of the freeholds regardless of tenure through their in-house innovative 'new build team'.

Every scheme is done collaboratively with residents, giving residents the right to return to the new homes, and designing the new homes with the people due to live in them in mind. The architects who are appointed meet residents and hold a series of local events to gather feedback on every detail – from the bricks used, to the colour scheme and kitchen layout. In some cases, local people have gotten the chance to choose the finishes inside their new home and take part in architect and constructor procurement.

It was a Hackney MP and Minister – Christopher Addison – that first laid the foundations of a social house building movement with the 'Homes for Heroes' Housing Act 1919 and the local councils built hundreds of homes. Labour councils know the life-changing impact that decent and affordable housing in local areas can have.

But since 2010 this Tory Government has not provided a single penny to local authorities to build affordable homes. So with help from the Labour Mayor of London Sadiq Khan's Building Council Homes for Londoners programme, Hackney uses an innovative cross-subsidy model – building a few homes for outright sale on the council's schemes to fund the provision of homes for social rent and shared ownership.

This means the council can ensure the majority of homes built by the council are genuinely affordable, plus Hackney uses an in-house sales team – Hackney Sales – to market properties to local people. Hackney Sales prioritises homes for sale to people that live and work in the Borough, managing sales and marketing strategies and avoiding sales to buy-to-let landlords and foreign investors. For example, at the award-

winning King's Crescent Estate, 95% of homes have gone to local buyers, with none sold overseas.

Only a Labour-run local authority that values social housing and stands-up against Tory restrictions of Right to Buy would innovate to unlock more funding for genuinely affordable homes. The council now have a plan to double their record, working with partners and the in-house team to build over 2,000 homes, including over 1,000 homes for council social rent, living rent, or low-cost homeownership on council land between 2018 and 2022.

Estimated population (current)	279,665
Projected population (2039)	341,756
Households (000s)	117,719
Owner occupied (%)	29
Privately Rented (%)	29
Council and social tenants (%)	42
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£33,650
Median House Price	£551,995
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£1,712
LA Housing Waiting List	12,766
Housing benefit claimants	34,807

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London Borough of Islington

The country's first specialist LGBTQI+ homeless shelter

A complex homelessness crisis like the one created by the Conservatives demands finessed and bespoke solutions. Islington Council has led the way, supporting the country's first specialist LGBTQI+ homeless shelter in disused Clerkenwell Fire Station.

According to charity Stonewall, almost one in five LGBT people (18%) have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives. The figure is higher among trans people, one in four of whom have experienced homelessness at some point in their lives.

As the local planning authority, Islington acted in tandem with the Mayor of London's office to give a new lease of life and new purpose to the Clerkenwell Fire Station – which had been left empty under Conservative Mayor Boris Johnson since 2014, at a cost to the taxpayer of over £500,000.

Queer charity The Outside Project has been running the shelter on the upper floor of Clerkenwell Fire Station, and the shelter will continue to operate for at least a year. In addition, Stonewall Housing and Streets Kitchen have partnered up with the Outside Project to provide advice services and meals.

The Mayor's office provided £50,000 towards the shelter. When it opened Sadiq Khan said

"It is wrong that so many buildings across London stand empty when there's a housing crisis and when they could be used to help homeless Londoners. The level of homelessness is a national disgrace and we need to do all we can to help people off the streets. That's why we're increasing City Hall's rough sleeping budget to twice what it was when I took office - and making sure the former Clerkenwell fire station building is put to good use, rather than standing there empty after it was shut by the previous mayor. I urge businesses and private developers to follow this example and offer any empty spaces they own so we can put them to use helping London's homeless too."

The Outside Project and Streets Kitchen are valued partners in Islington Council's work in tackling rough sleeping, and regularly contribute to the council's Homelessness Forum.

"It will be the first LGBTQI+ community centre we have had that centres homelessness in our community. That's really important. It's a massive site - it will be the biggest LGBTQI+ centre we have had in London. This is the one shelter specifically for our community and obviously the community centre will shelter the most vulnerable members of our community and that's the key thing we really need."

Project Director Carla Ecola

Estimated population (current)	239,142
Projected population (2039)	280,390
Households (000s)	105,862
Owner occupied (%)	30
Privately Rented (%)	30
Council and social tenants (%)	40
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£44,999
Median House Price	£615,783
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£1,733
LA Housing Waiting List	14,469
Housing benefit claimants	24,608

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Norwich City Council

The largest zero-carbon Passivhaus social housing development in the country

Norwich has a particularly proud history of seeking higher environmental standards in the delivery of affordable housing by working in partnership with local registered providers. In recent years the city under Labour has purposely stepped away from adopting a typical local authority approach as a housing provider. The political leadership had a choice: go for 'safe', standard housing or be bold and ambitious. They chose the latter. In so doing, Norwich has delivered the largest Passivhaus social housing development in the country. It includes over 100 units

Drivers of the scheme included the promise of reduced energy bills for tenants to help them tackle fuel poverty; compliance with the council's environmental strategy; and the desire to replace stock lost through the right-to-buy with high quality new homes.

The projects were funded through the council's Housing Revenue Account, from a mix of borrowing, reserves and 30% from retained Right to Buy receipts.

In addition to the environmental benefits of Passivhaus, there were a number of social drivers that led to the council taking the decision to deliver Passivhaus: - reduced energy bills for tenants to tackle fuel poverty, reducing rent arrears – research with a local RP has shown that in Passivhaus dwellings tenants have more money to pay rent and there is a low level of rent arrears; health benefits from homes delivered to Passivhaus have better air quality, helping with asthma and allergies.

The Passivhaus scheme meant the Council was upskilling the local workforce allowing them to have a niche in the construction market, utilising local apprentices; creating opportunities for local businesses (via the city's Fabric First Framework); and generating income from council assets.

The scheme has included a pilot programme and then a larger site of almost 100 Passivhaus homes:

Hansard Close

The pilot Passivhaus scheme is Hansard Close to the north of the city, on the outskirts of the Mile Cross social housing area. It comprises ten flats in two blocks. Architects made good use of the southern outlook of the site, in order to maximise solar gain, whilst ensuring appropriate shading was also in place. The pilot included 8 x 1-bedroom flats and 2 x 2-bedroom wheelchair- accessible flats.

Goldsmith Street

The Goldsmith Street site, close to the city centre, comprises 93 dwellings, which were built on the site of a former sheltered housing scheme. 25 not fit for purpose, bungalow units were decommissioned in order to form the site.

The property mix includes: 53 x 1-bedroom flats, 3 x 2-bedroom flats, 4 x 3-bedroom flats, 40 x 2-bedroom houses, and 5 x 4-bedroom houses.

The projects were funded through the council's Housing Revenue Account, from a mix of borrowing, reserves and 30% from retained Right to Buy receipts.

Estimated population (current)	141,137
Projected population (2039)	155,486
Households (000s)	63,446
Owner occupied (%)	39
Privately Rented (%)	30
Council and social tenants (%)	31
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£25,071
Median House Price	£199,831
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£693
LA Housing Waiting List	4,024
Housing benefit claimants	12,227

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Nottingham City Council

Making older and colder homes energy efficient with Energiesprong

Nottingham Labour has set itself the target of becoming a net zero carbon city by 2028. One of the ways it will achieve this is by improving the energy efficiency of its older housing stock.

Nottingham's 2050 housing project uses the Energiesprong model to retrofit cold and draughty homes to make them affordable, warm and desirable. After retrofitting, the homes are close to net zero energy, including energy for the tenants' own appliances. This means the home generates enough energy for the heating, hot water, and most of the electrical use of the tenants.

There are a number of innovations with the Energiesprong model. It uses the council's 30-year planned spend to get to where the home needs to be at the end of that 30-year period. Current investment plans do not factor in achieving homes without carbon emissions.

The 'Solution Provider' is procured to achieve a performance outcome, which they guarantee for 30 years, along with the maintenance costs. This allows the savings in maintenance and the savings in energy to be used to repay the capital cost. It also puts the Housing Provider and the Solution Provider onto the same side, driving for the same outcome.

The solutions are manufactured off site and craned into place in a day. Effectively the house is completely wrapped with new walls and a new roof, all of which are manufactured off site.

The technical solutions employed on the first homes include ground source heat pumps, battery storage, thermal storage, solar PV, and controls which optimise the way these work together.

The tenants receive a warm home that looks like a new home and performs better. They pay no more than they did previously, and in many cases, they pay a lot less. The landlord pays no more than they previously paid. The home achieves a higher than A standard EPC, effectively making it an energy positive home.

Nottingham has completed 10 homes under a pilot stage and is on site with the next 155, with external funding already secured to continue with more.

"Collaboration and innovation has been needed to bring about this project to decarbonise our social housing stock. As the city's largest landlord it's right to address energy inefficient homes not only to address climate change but also to save our residents' money.

This is a part of our Fuel Poverty Strategy and we are proud to be at the forefront of rolling out this new technology”

Cllr Linda Woodings, Portfolio Holder for Housing, Planning and Heritage

Estimated population (current)	331,069
Projected population (2039)	361,603
Households (000s)	129,139
Owner occupied (%)	47
Privately Rented (%)	26
Council and social tenants (%)	26
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£23,288
Median House Price	£142,012
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£595
LA Housing Waiting List	5,501
Housing benefit claimants	27,800

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Oxford City Council

Saving lives with all-winter shelter provision for rough sleepers

Rough sleeping is a national crisis that is all too obvious on the streets of Oxford, where Oxford City Council also faces the impact of countywide cuts that include all but £500,000 of the housing related support previously funded by Oxfordshire County Council.

The number of rough sleepers counted in the City has trebled since 2010 according to official government statistics. Service workers and campaigners on the ground know the true figure may be much higher than even this appalling record suggests. Cases of prevention and relief work by the Council has been forced up from 445 in the last financial year of the last Labour Government, to 1,159 in the latest measure.

In response to the Tory-made crisis, the city council has increased the number of beds it funds for people experiencing homelessness to around 220 in 2019/20 and sought government funding to deliver new and innovative projects. These include an £890,000 Oxfordshire Trailblazer programme delivering ground breaking results in preventing homelessness as early as possible and more than £1 million in temporary Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding.

Last winter, the council provided 39 new beds with RSI funding, many in specialist projects. These included winter shelters for people with no local connection or recourse to public funds and a women-only project.

In 2018 the council said it wanted to provide winterlong shelter available to anyone instead of emergency beds that are only activated during periods of freezing weather. It has now committed an extra £1.3 million in new funding – including more than £950,000 from the Rapid Rehousing Pathway programme and Public Health England – to help deliver better support for people to move from the streets into sustainable housing.

The centrepiece of this transformation programme is the conversion of a former jobcentre into a new daytime support and assessment hub and shelter for up to 60 people. From October, 1 Floyds Row will initially offer a winterlong emergency shelter available to any rough sleeper, with a range of other accommodation expected to open for people going through assessment by the end of 2019.

People currently experiencing homelessness have helped co-design the new centre, which will provide accommodation for rough sleepers with dogs.

“Nobody should have to sleep rough in Oxford, which is why we’re spending more than £3 million this year and doing what we can to make it easier for people to engage with us and come inside for good.”

Cllr Linda Smith, Deputy Leader and Cabinet member for Leisure and Housing

Estimated population (current)	154,327
Projected population (2039)	157,697
Households (000s)	273,057
Owner occupied (%)	46
Privately Rented (%)	33
Council and social tenants (%)	22
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£33,725
Median House Price	£396,387
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£1,250
LA Housing Waiting List	1,620
Housing benefit claimants	7,369

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Plymouth City Council

A self-built home for homeless veterans

Plymouth is a city that values its military past and continues to support the military and veteran community. The city's Armed Forces Covenant is led by the Council and its top priorities include veterans' housing and homelessness. Plymouth under Labour and Cooperative councillors has pioneered service veterans self-build housing.

The Nelson Project was completed in August 2018 and has become a national focus of attention as a multi-award-winning flagship housing scheme that sought to encourage innovation in housing delivery and to accelerate the supply of well-designed homes to meet the housing needs of service veterans in the city.

The service veteran housing projects are a true partnership between Plymouth City Council, LiveWest Housing Association, Form Design and Community Self Build. Conceived to transform the lives of returning service veterans, the project helps them to build their own homes, whilst promoting health, social equality and wider training and employment opportunities.

The Nelson Project has delivered a multi-award winning, innovative and high-quality scheme of 24 single bedroom affordable apartments, with the service veterans building their own homes as part of a wider development to help others in housing need. The site includes 12 self-build units for ex-service personnel, six units for people with learning disabilities and six general needs affordable homes. All 12 veterans that worked on the project lived in the homes they built.

The long-term benefits for the community are also clear. A study conducted by the University of the West of England for the Forces in Mind Trust found that for every £1 spent on a self-builder on such a scheme, between £4.70 and £7.20 was generated for the local community.

This is a powerful example of what can be done when public, private and third sector organisations work together to deliver a quality housing solution on surplus derelict city owned sites. Creating much-needed skills for the construction industry whilst providing the opportunity for the service veterans to rehabilitate and reintegrate into society through community self-build.

The social benefits are significant as the scheme delivers 100% affordable housing to help meet a mix of identified housing needs whilst helping reduce homelessness; the engagement of the homeless Veterans and their individual inclusion back into the community, enabling progress and empowerment.

A second scheme, The Stirling Project, aims to build upon this success and do more, and was submitted for planning in July 2019. The Stirling Project will also involve service families and self-build, again as part of a wider mix of 25 new affordable homes that are planned to complete by August 2021.

'Our armed forces and veterans play an integral part in Plymouth's life. We were concerned to see a disproportionate number of veterans using our homeless services. Through partnership work we have not only enabled 12 veterans to build their own homes but also to find work. The demand continues, so we're doing it again.'

Cllr Chris Penberthy, Cabinet Member for Housing and Co-operative Development

Estimated population (current)	263,100
Projected population (2039)	276,442
Households (000s)	111,025
Owner occupied (%)	59
Privately Rented (%)	21
Council and social tenants (%)	20
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£27,688
Median House Price	£396,387
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£525
LA Housing Waiting List	9,719
Housing benefit claimants	16,751

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Rotherham Council

Transforming a derelict shopping centre into affordable shared ownership houses

58 new homes for shared ownership have been developed by Rotherham Labour at The Bellows, the site of a 1970s style shopping centre with multi-storey car park above. The area is now unrecognisable due to the Council's investment in much needed high-quality homes on the site.

The under occupied site had fallen into poor condition when it was taken over by Rotherham Council via a Compulsory Purchase Order as part of the Housing Market Renewal programme launched by the last Labour Government. The programme also provided the resources to carry out local master planning to develop long term ambitions for the site, before the funding ended under the Tories in 2011.

This provided an ideal opportunity to introduce the Council's first shared ownership homes, offering the chance for first time buyers and working families on lower incomes to own their own home in a prime location.

Household income in the area is below the national average at approximately £23,595, so with local average house prices around £100,171 and rents around £500 per month, many local people are priced out of the market.

Rotherham Council was successful in bidding for Homes England grant funding from the Shared Ownership and Affordable Housing programme. A total of £6.81m allocation was secured for the delivery of 227 homes across multiple sites, with £1.74m allocated to The Bellows.

Residential development commenced in March 2018, and all 58 homes will be completed by December 2019.

Out of the total of 58 properties, there are 28 Council rented homes including 11 x one-bedroom apartments, 10 x two bed apartments and 7 two bed houses.

There are also a further 30 shared ownership homes made up of two and three bed roomed houses. The homes are priced to be affordable to local people; a typical two-bed new build on The Bellows is valued at £125,000, so for a 25% equity share in the property, mortgage payments will be around at £182 a month, rent at £195 including service charge, which is a total of £477 per month. This offers buyers an investment in a good quality, low maintenance home which comparatively would cost more to rent locally.

The Bellows offers a range of properties making it an inclusive development. Two of the two beds are wheelchair accessible, fully adaptable, sensitively designed, for someone to adapt the property to meet their current or future personal needs with provision to accommodate a through floor lift if and when required.

The Rother Living brand has been developed to promote the Council as a developer and to signal the Council's commitment to building high quality, energy efficient and

affordable new homes for local people. Capacity has also been increased internally to ensure the successful delivery, implementation and management of the new homes.

Crucible, local experts in the sale and marketing of Shared Ownership properties, are working with the Council to manage the sale of properties. They are part of South Yorkshire Housing Association and are working with the Council to help local people understand what shared ownership could mean for them.

There is also visible evidence that the wider investment is starting to pay off. A number of new businesses have started to flourish in the immediate area, a sign of confidence that things are on the up. A new restaurant, coffee bar and hair dressers will add to the development of the new shopping precinct and are perfectly located for the new tenants and residents at The Bellows.

Estimated population (current)	264,671
Projected population (2039)	276,777
Households (000s)	111,742
Owner occupied (%)	64
Privately Rented (%)	14
Council and social tenants (%)	22
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£25,942
Median House Price	£140,303
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£495
LA Housing Waiting List	6,674
Housing benefit claimants	16,910

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Southampton City Council

Tackling hidden homelessness with quality temporary accommodation

Homelessness in Southampton is higher than the national average and there is a growing demand for temporary accommodation mainly due to insecure and short-term tenancies in the private rented sector. With one in three of the city's children living in poverty, the use of bed and breakfasts and other unsuitable temporary accommodation has a huge impact on families' wellbeing, health and education. In the meantime, there is often vacant land during long-term large regeneration schemes that could be better used.

Southampton City Council are working in partnership with Inland Homes to produce Southampton's Hugg Homes, a project that was created to provide a flexible and agile response to the growing housing crisis and 'hidden homelessness' crisis, experienced by those that have no secure or safe home they can call their own.

The aim of the project is to utilise dormant land to deliver new bespoke modular housing to help support local housing needs. These homes allow low income families to access good quality, affordable, well-located accommodation. Southampton City Council have used it to address the growing demand of temporary accommodation. Completed just before Christmas 2018, it meant the city could provide homes to those families who otherwise would not have spent the Christmas period together.

Hugg Homes are designed and manufactured in the UK and have innovated a modular home that can be easily built on unused land. This is not like cramped and unsuitable converted office accommodation being used in the private rental market or for temporary accommodation, but design that is based on a bespoke modular concept made exclusively to an exacting specification.

Quality is at the heart of their design, to ensure people's lives can be enhanced rather than hindered. It is situated in landscaped courtyards, each with private access and private lockable external storage large enough for a buggy or cycle. All homes come with contemporary and comfortable living spaces with full-service connections, which maximise space and efficiency; and new and durable fitted kitchens with integrated appliances, fridge / freezer and washing machine.

It was important for Southampton Council that these homes were energy efficient and affordable to run as well, so each home has thermal and acoustic performance levels in line with building regulations and delivers an EPC rating of at least 'C' (higher than the average UK home).

This specific scheme is there until the long-term regeneration plans of the site are implemented. However, due to the 'pop-up' nature of Hugg Homes and 60 year design warranty they come with, the council can easily refresh and relocate these or similar ones to new sites. Southampton City Council are currently planning to have more Southampton Huggs throughout the city, and are exploring the use of them to help with

the decanting process for estate regeneration to avoid family displacement, offering continuity of community services, education and family support networks.

Southampton's Hugg Homes are part of the council's integrated approach to helping to solve the housing crisis, using the same piece of land to meet short term and longer term needs more effectively. By working in partnership, Labour is ensuring there are more affordable housing options for people as well as offering quality accommodation to those that are homeless or at risk of being homeless, giving better outcome for families and making it more efficient for the Council.

"Everyone deserves a home they can call their own that is safe, secure and affordable. Unfortunately, with the growing housing crisis, this has become a privilege rather than a right. In the face of rising homelessness and a shortage of affordable and quality homes, here in Southampton we are delivering innovative solutions through our Southampton Hugg Homes project, which offers affordable homes alongside high quality temporary accommodation for families and individuals most in need."

Cllr Satvir Kaur, Cabinet Member for Homes and Culture

Estimated population (current)	252,796
Projected population (2039)	279,456
Households (000s)	101,448
Owner occupied (%)	49
Privately Rented (%)	28
Council and social tenants (%)	23
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£26,610
Median House Price	£206,808
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£775
LA Housing Waiting List	8,351
Housing benefit claimants	14,502

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Stevenage Borough Council

New Town regeneration as a driver for new social housing

Stevenage has delivered 168 new homes across a range of developments, as part of its programme to regenerate New Towns. The regeneration needs of New Towns, particularly first-generation New Towns like Stevenage, are well known and documented. The infrastructure having all been built over a relatively short period of time is now suffering from deterioration and decline that requires large-scale regeneration. Stevenage has used this as an opportunity in relation to housing delivery by building new homes alongside the essential neighbourhood regeneration they must deliver.

Stevenage has a long-standing housing waiting register of over 2500 households. As a New Town, there are expectations among residents that social housing will be readily available as it would have been in the day when the council housing stock was at the 30,000 level.

The tight boundaries in Stevenage, and the planned nature of the New Town means that there are few brown field sites available for housing development. This has made it increasingly difficult to deliver social house building at scale. However, Labour made this an absolute priority to do so and has seen significant progress.

The first scheme took place at Pin Green and delivered 30 new homes. It greatly improved the associated community facilities with new shops, a community centre and coffee bar.

The council has moved to develop further new homes at two of the neighbourhood centres in Bedwell (14 homes) and Bandle Hill (15 homes).

Two further schemes which will be all social housing at Symonds Green (29 properties) and Shephall Way where Labour took the opportunity to re-locate a doctor's surgery. The new development will commemorate the 100th anniversary of council housing by being named Addison House.

The council is delivering housing schemes that provide homes for those who are currently homeless, a new generation of housing for older residents (including those suffering from dementia) and to increase the pace of delivery of general needs and regeneration. This is the basis of a new development planned at Longmeadow which will deliver 236 new homes, 50% affordable and social rented, 4 new community shops, an independent living scheme and a new community centre.

The focus on delivery has shown that Labour councils can deliver a far greater amount of social and affordable housing through the development of mixed tenure housing where the homes for outright home ownership provide essential cross-subsidy for the social housing.

'In spite of the funding constraints we face, our Labour council at Stevenage has made innovative housing development in Neighbourhood Regeneration one of our top priorities. Fundamentally we believe good quality, secure and affordable homes improve life opportunities and strengthen communities'

Cllr Sharon Taylor OBE, Leader of the Council

Estimated population (current)	87,754
Projected population (2039)	98,401
Households (000s)	50,390
Owner occupied (%)	58
Privately Rented (%)	15
Council and social tenants (%)	27
Median House Price	£279,012
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£895
LA Housing Waiting List	2,121
Housing benefit claimants	5,499

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Telford and Wrekin Council

Council-owned agency as a challenger in the private rental market

In 2015 Telford and Wrekin Council established a private limited company called Nuplace to develop and manage high quality homes for private and affordable rent within the Borough.

The aim of the company was to respond to the Borough's housing need, raise the standard of rental provision in the housing market, stimulate local economic growth, regenerate brownfield and stalled sites, generate a long-term income stream for the Council and protect Council jobs.

The company is wholly owned by the Council and has three Directors, all of whom are Council Officers, and has no paid staff. Directors report to a Programme Board, comprising of senior Council Officers and elected members. The company borrows money from the Council to acquire sites (both in Council and third party land ownership) and to fund the development programme. An initial capital allocation of £64m was approved to deliver the programme. All services for the development and management of the properties, including financial/ legal support and marketing, are procured by Nuplace from the Council in order to provide a fully managed holistic service. The company business plan assumes that properties are retained and rented for 30 years. In order for a site to receive investment a number of viability criteria need to be met in terms of rental yield, return on Gross Development Value and Internal Rate of Return on equity.

By the end of financial year 2019/20 Nuplace will have delivered 420 homes, including 44 affordable homes and 19 units of specialist accommodation.

Nuplace generates a profit and the Council also secures income through interest charges and the sale of development and housing management services to the company. The council also benefits through incremental New Homes Bonus and Council Tax. There is also a broader economic benefit in the local economy through the development activity of Nuplace and opportunities are taken to link in with other community projects and estate regeneration activity.

The Nuplace initiative sits alongside other proactive work in the private rented sector such as the Telford and Wrekin Landlord Accreditation Scheme. The aim is to improve standards in the private rented sector through education, support and advice to landlords and letting agents. The scheme also aims to provide reassurance to tenants on which landlord to choose for their future or current home. The scheme was developed in consultation with the private rented sector and includes a number of elements that were requested by a number of landlords and letting agents.

“Nuplace is an intervention in the housing market that delivers a number of benefits for local people. It provides high quality homes with a landlord that people can really trust and who they know will deliver for them. The project also enables the generation of income that can be reinvested in wider Council services. Our 2019 local election manifesto included a commitment to deliver a further 200 homes through Nuplace on brownfield sites in the borough.”

Cllr David Wright, Cabinet Member for Housing, Transport and Infrastructure

Estimated population (current)	177,799
Projected population (2039)	191,482
Households (000s)	70,104
Owner occupied (%)	60
Privately Rented (%)	19
Council and social tenants (%)	21
Median Gross Annual Income - Full Time	£25,922
Median House Price	£163,172
Median monthly Private Rented Sector	£575
LA Housing Waiting List	2,374
Housing benefit claimants	12,569

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The Labour Housing Innovations Network is a forum of over 300 Labour council leaders, group leaders, housing portfolio holders and planning board chairs set up to provide an opportunity to contribute views on the housing pressures faced locally and housing policies needed nationally – on homelessness, council house financing, house building, planning powers and much more.

The Network acts as a direct line of communication between Labour on the frontbench in Westminster and Labour on the frontline of the housing crisis in local government.

As a member of the Network you can expect:

- Quarterly briefing with the latest news from the Housing frontbench team in Westminster, as well as a focus on a particular area of housing policy relevant to your local authority. Each update will also include a section on this area of housing to invite your advice and comment
- Campaign information and ideas for local elections, with localised data alongside the national picture
- Invitations to contribute to special Labour projects, such as the new Innovations report and study of councils' capacity to build big-scale again.

To get regular updates on housing policy from the Shadow Secretary of State for Housing John Healey MP, sign up to the Labour Housing Innovations Network by visiting <https://mailchi.mp/parliament/jointhenetwork>

John Healey MP

