



CONFERENCE MARCH 2nd 2024 COIN STREET NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE



# JUST SPACE CONFERENCE

SATURDAY 2<sup>nd</sup> MARCH 2024

# LONDON FOR PEOPLE AND COMMUNITIES



# AGENDA

- 10.30 - 11.00** Registration: attendees come in, tea/ coffee
- 11.00 - 11.10** Welcomes & Introduction
- 11.10- 11.50** Housing
- 11.50 - 12.30** Strategic issues
- 12.30 - 13.10** Climate change, biodiversity, green space
- 13.10 - 14.00** *LUNCH - including interviews!*
- 14.00 - 14.30** Tall Buildings
- 14.30 - 15.00** Town centres, street markets, industrial, class E
- 15.00 - 15.30** Social infrastructure, health, caring city
- 15.30 - 16.00** Inclusion, participation, fairness
- 1600 - 1605** CONCLUSION
- 1605 - 1630** Departures...



# What is Just Space?



- A loose network of grassroots community groups and campaigns across London + academics and planners in sympathy with our issues
- We came together at the London Plan EiP 2003 and found we were tackling many of the same issues
- We support each other through the London Plan-making process
- We support projects and a Knowledge-Exchange programme with BSP students, some here today



# What is today about?



The consensus which has framed planning and regen is shifting, because

- Many things aren't working - eg the affordable housing crisis
- Mayoral and national elections
- revisions or a new London Plan
- a new national planning framework?
- We want to have an impact on that debate - and many other organisations like Shelter, CPRE, with whom we can make common cause
- But it's already moving around at a fast past e.g. Labour talking about building on the Green Belt
- The starting gun has already been fired...



# The starting gun has fired...

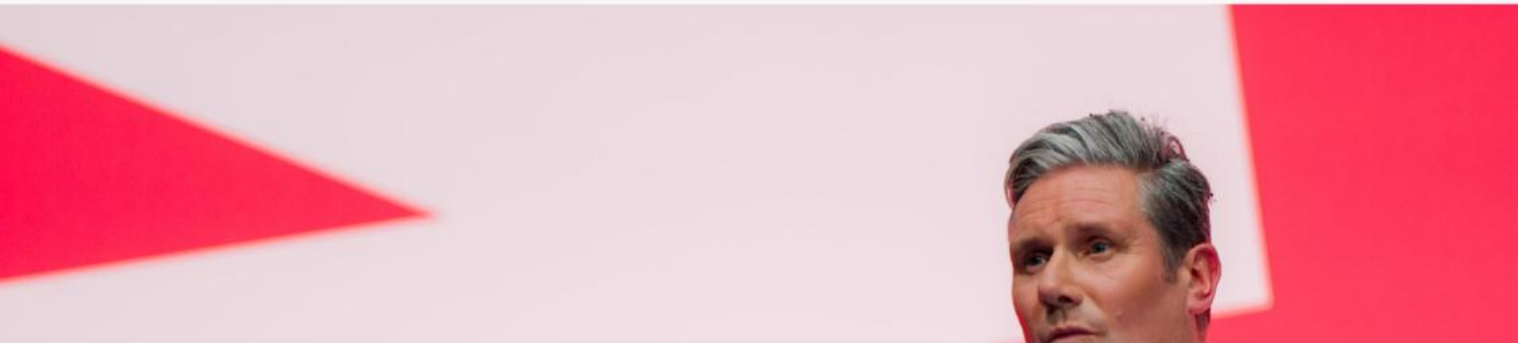


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Stories / JUST ANNOUNCED: Labour will build 1.5 million homes to save the dream of homeownership

## JUST ANNOUNCED: Labour will build 1.5 million homes to save the dream of homeownership

Oct 11, 2023



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For you

LIVE



Home

News

Sport

Weather

iPlayer

## NEWS

Home | Israel-Gaza war | Cost of Living | War in Ukraine | Climate | UK | World | Business | Politics | Culture

Politics | Parliaments | Brexit

## Labour would build on green belt to boost housing, says Starmer

17 May 2023 • Comments





# The starting... has fired...

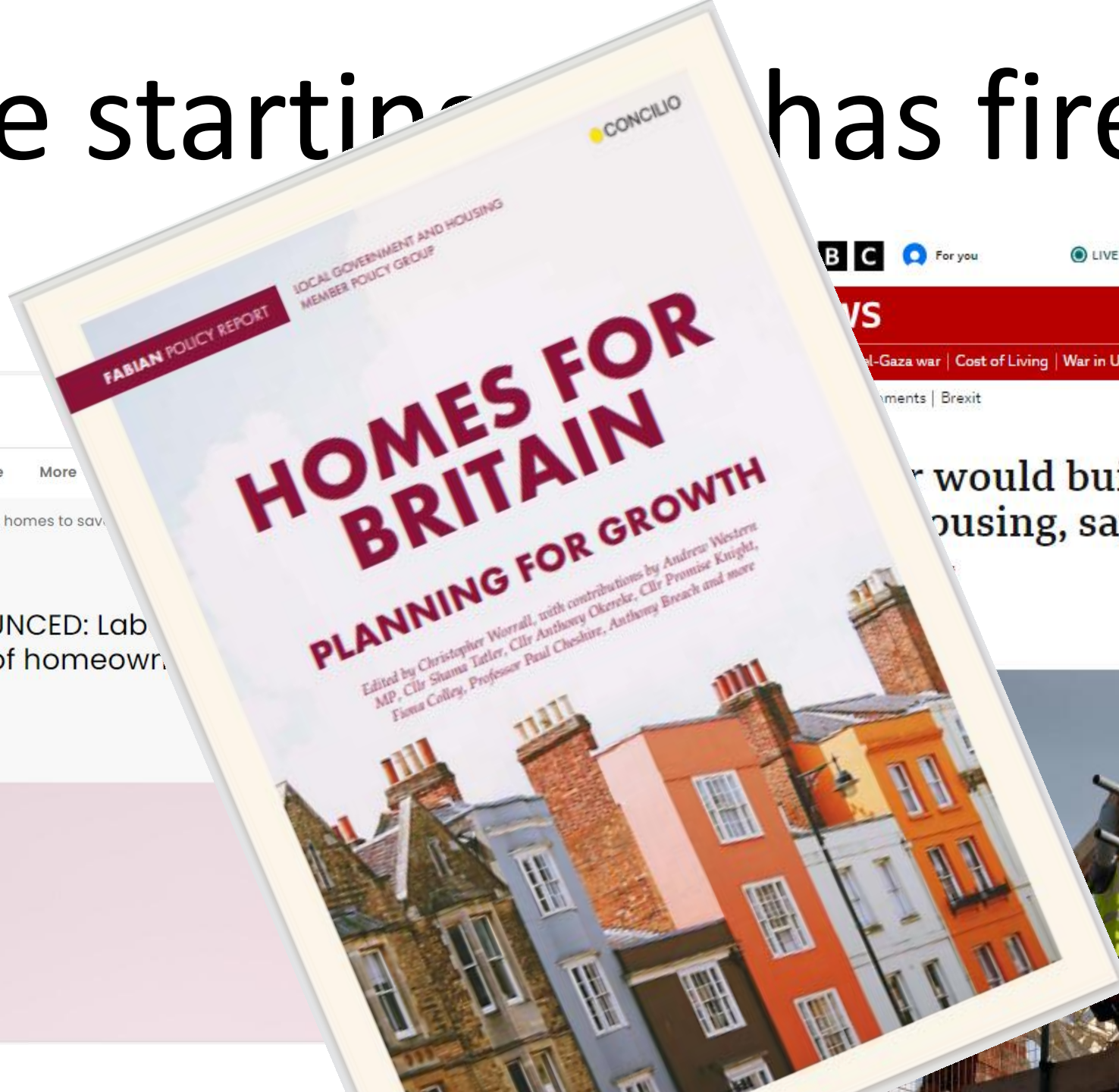


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Stories / JUST ANNOUNCED: Labour will build 1.5 million homes to save

JUST ANNOUNCED: Lab  
the dream of homeown.

Oct 11, 2023



Comments | Brexit

... would build on green belt to  
housing, says Starmer





Labour

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Stories / JUST ANNOUNCED: Labour

JULY

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Oct

## The housebuilding crisis

### The UK's 4 million missing homes

Samuel Watling, Anthony Breach  
February 2023

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# has fired...

CONCILIO

## FOR AN GROWTH

Contributions by Andrew Western, Okechere, Cllr Promise Knight, Breach, Anthony Breach and more

### ... would build on green belt to housing, says Starmer



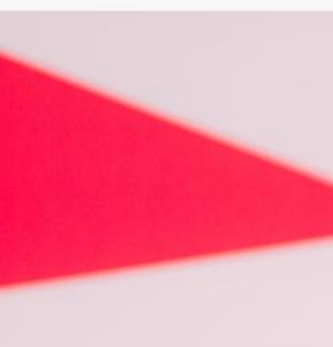




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# The housebuilding

## The UK's 4 million missing homes

Samuel Watling, Anthony Breach  
February 2023



### Anthony Breach: The planning system, not Thatcher, is to blame for the housing crisis

February 22, 2023



Anthony Breach

*Anthony Breach is a Senior Analyst at Centre for Cities, where he leads on housing and planning.*

The new housing minister stepped into her role just over two weeks ago and faces a daunting in-tray.

Alongside the immediate planning reform agenda and various consultations linked to the Levelling Up Bill, Rachel Maclean inherits the job of whittling down the backlog of the UK's 4.3 million missing homes.

Centre for Cities' new report on the housebuilding crisis sets out the scale of the



News Sport Weather iPlayer



### Green belt to mer





# What is today about?



**The purpose of today is to agree the nearest we could get to a Manifesto**

- a series of fundamental and detailed changes we want to see in planning for London
- and to make common cause with other groups such as Shelter, CPRE etc
- Start with housing's unaffordability crisis
- Then a step back to look at the bigger picture
- back into the detail... current issues + our proposals...
- break for lunch and finish at 4pm - MANIFESTO!





# Unaffordable housing - the issues



Homelessness and temporary accommodation crisis; hidden homelessness

lack of housing affordable to Londoners

Right to Buy => massive loss of social housing

Estate regeneration

Wasted and lost public land

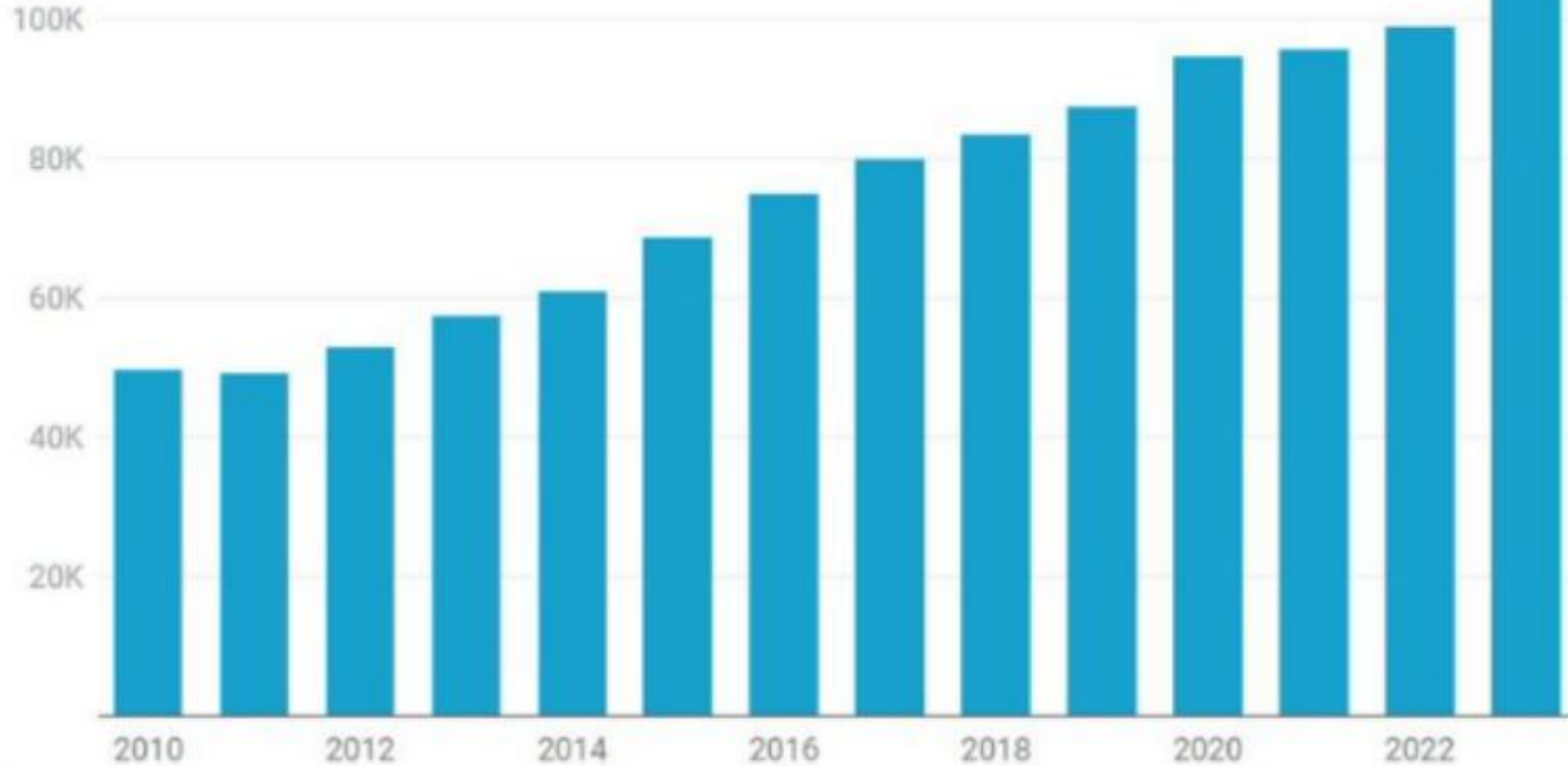
Private rents far too high for a sustainable city

Empty homes

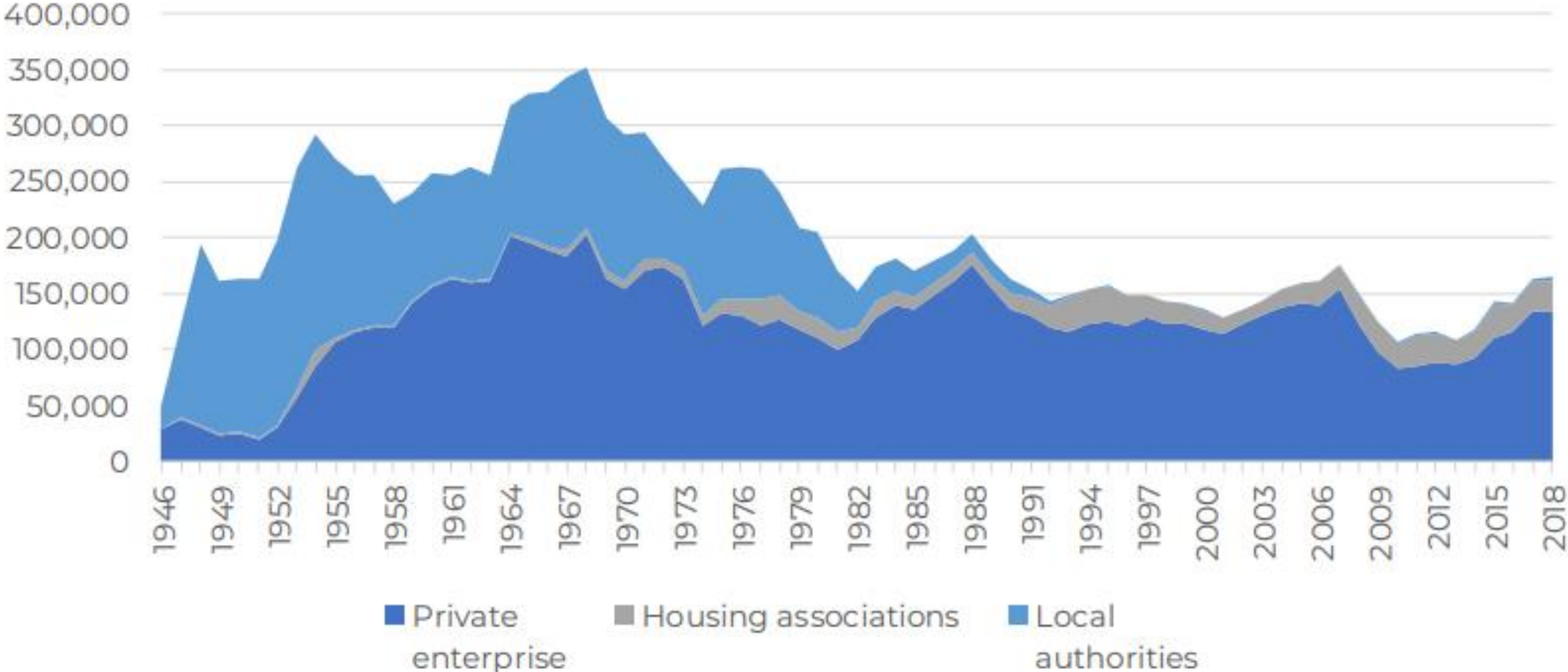
Permitted Development Rights (office to residential) producing poor quality accommodation

Housing associations - transparency, accountability

## Households in temporary accommodation in England



### New build by tenure, England



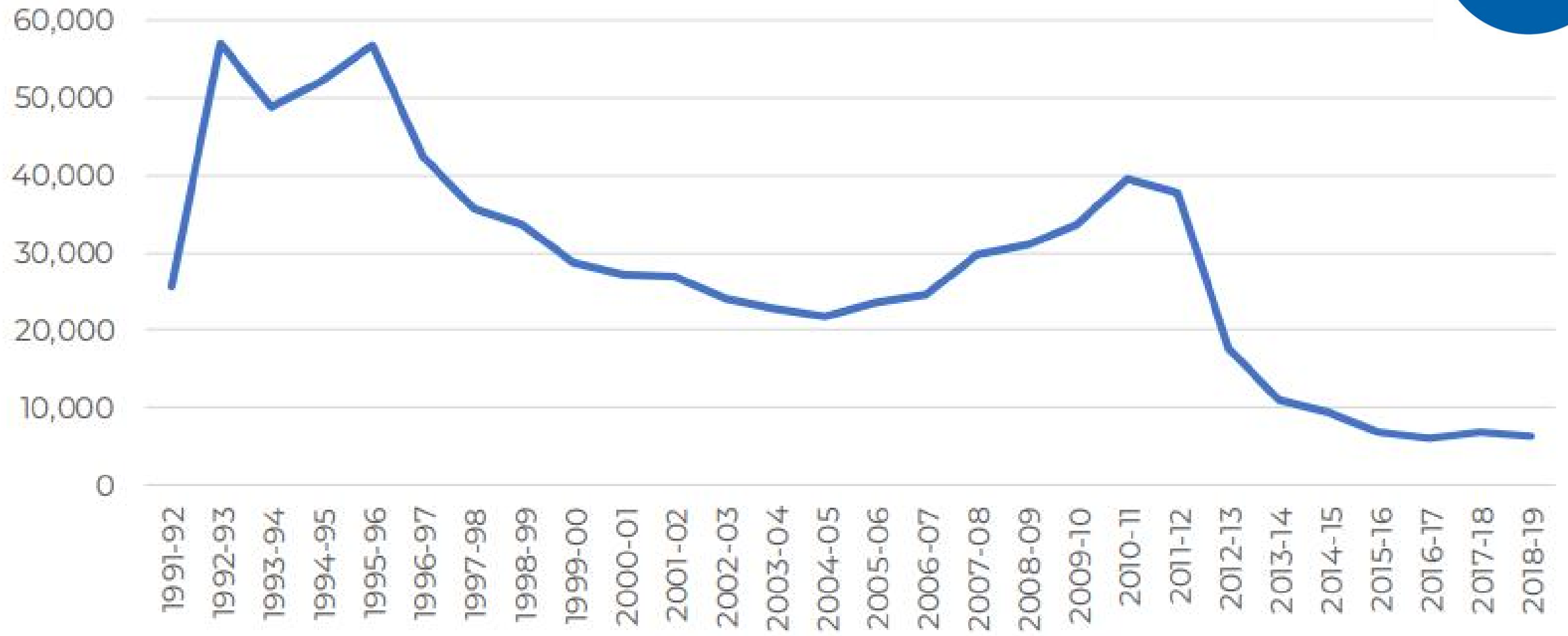
Source: MHCLG Live table 244

# Cumulative social housing sales



Source: MHCLG Live Table 678

# New social rented housing, England



Source: MHCLG, Live Table 1000



## Loss of social rented homes: 2018/19

	Number of homes
New build social rent	6,000
Demolitions	-4,000
Affordable Rent conversions	-5,000
Right-to-buy sales	-15,000
Acquisitions	1,000
Total loss of social rented homes	-17,000

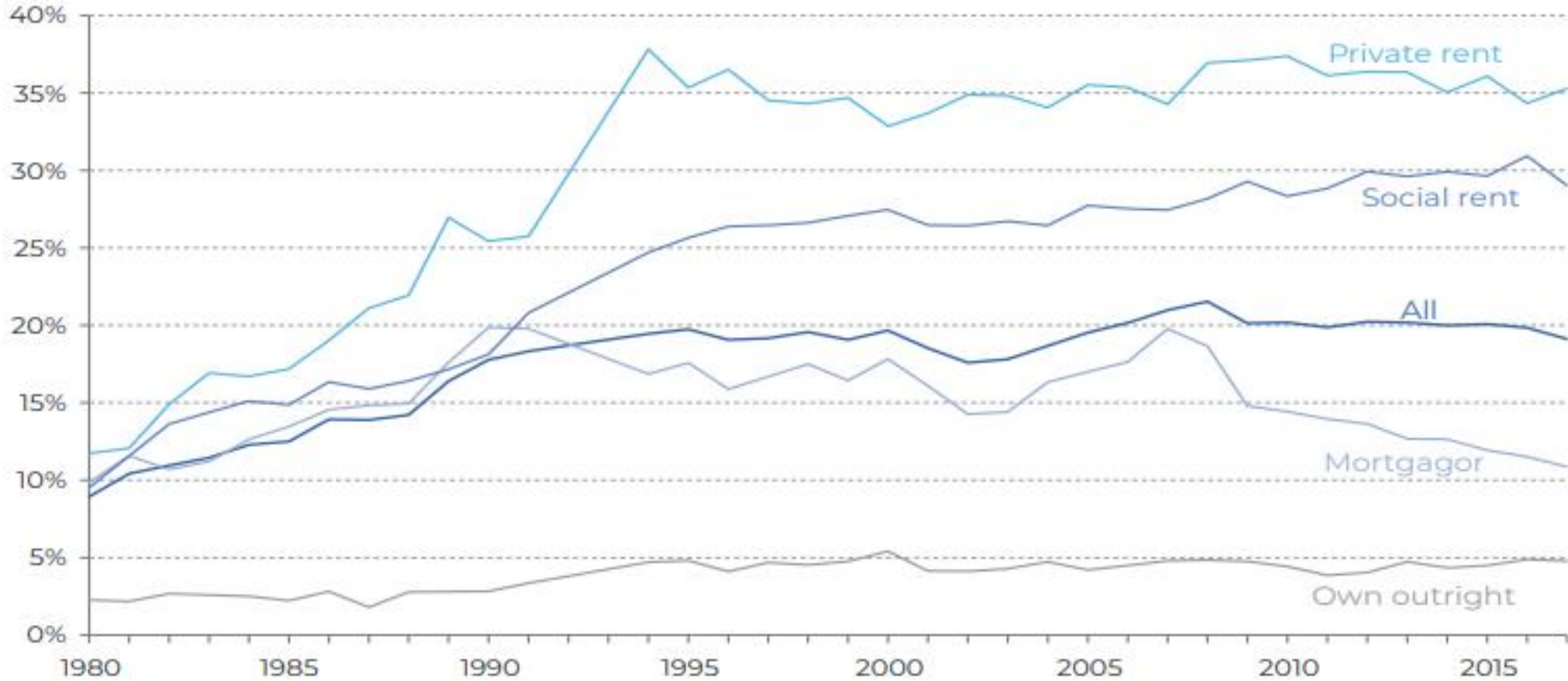
Source: AHC, MHCLG, Live Tables 678, 684, 1000 and 1009 and Regulator of Social Housing, Housing, Statistical Data Return

## Right to buy discounts versus the Homes England Affordable Housing Programme/GLA investment, England



Source: MHCLG, Live Table 682 and CIH 2019 UK Housing Review

## Average housing cost-to-income ratio by tenure, working-age family units, gross of housing benefit: UK, 1980-2017



Source: Tomlinson, D *Inequality Street: Housing and the 2019 general election* (Resolution Foundation, 2019)



# Unaffordable housing - the issues



**Affordable housing delivery model has failed:** focus on viability, yet land values unconstrained - developers pay too much then 'can't afford' social goods

**Housebuilding model has failed :** relies on an imperfect market + housebuilder's cartel; Predicated on property values forever rising.

**The home ownership model has collapsed:** low-wage/precarious economy + student debt + declining wages = mortgage out of reach => exacerbating social divide.

# Impact of Estate Regeneration

[www.estatewatch.london](http://www.estatewatch.london)

- 23,000 social rented homes were demolished in London between 2012 and 2022
- Over 100 estates across London currently under threat of demolition



# Mayoral approvals for developments avoiding affordable housing...



- London needs about 65% of new housing to be 'affordable' (evidence at Examinations of the London Plan)
- London Plan Policy aims for 50 per cent affordable housing on public land, but the Mayor is accepting 35%... Mayor in practice allows large developments with very little social rented housing

## **Example: Cavalry Barracks, Hounslow:**

- Public land (Ministry of Defence): 22 listed buildings. 1,525 homes, £500m
- In the first phase of 765 homes only 62 will be social rented (8%). Overall 166 social rented (11%)



Garrison Church Room

NAAFI

F. Coach Houses

Wagon Shed

Hardinge Block

Stables

NCOs Houses

Married Quarters

F. Stable Ranges

F. Officers' Mess and Quarters

F. Stable Ranges

Drums & Pipes

F. Coach Houses

F. Married Quarters

Soldiers' Quarters

Mobilisation Store

Stables

Quartermaster's quarters

The Keep (Armory)

Former Chapel

Ablutions, Laundry

Workshops

Carbin

Farmer's Shop

Barrack Master's House

School

Medical Centre

Guard House

Barrack Master's House

Stores

Stores

# Private sector renting

- 30% of homes in London are privately rented (2.7m homes)
- 20% higher asking rents than pre-pandemic

**No legal minimum standard for private rented properties in England** (unlike social housing)

Nearly a quarter of private rented homes dilapidated

- Half a million properties pose “a serious and immediate risk to a person’s health and safety”
- Landlords can rent out property with serious health hazards
- enforcement action requires the tenant to make a complaint to their local authority.







# Unaffordable housing: our proposals?



- **A new financial model:** more public-housebuilding
- **New definitions:** 'Public Housing' or 'Not-for-profit rented homes'
- **Public land should be reserved** for public housing
- **Abolition of Right To Buy**
- **Presumption against Estate redevelopment schemes**
- **Tenancy reform for private tenants**
- **Prioritise retrofitting, upgrading**
- **End / de-prioritise viability testing and abolish 'hope value'**
- **Requisition of empty homes & commercial properties**



# Housing: Recovery Plan policies



**Policy 19:** Ensure well-maintained, social rented homes of suitable and adequate size for all.

**Policy 20:** Simply housing people is not enough. Social housing must be culturally-aware so that people can remain with or further build their community.

**Policy 21:** The affordability crisis in the private rented sector should be addressed.

**Policy 22:** Tenancy reform to support greater rights for private tenants in the shape of open-ended tenancies with few grounds for eviction + develop housing alternatives, including Community Land Trusts and Co-operatives.

**Policy 23:** Improve existing housing via refurbishment and repair not demolition and redevelopment

**Policy 24:** Requisition empty homes and offices

**TOWN  
PLANNERS  
FOR  
AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING**

\*'affordable'  
is not 80%  
market rent  
(not on  $\frac{1}{4}$   
average income)

AUSTIN  
THE PEOPLE'S  
ASSEMBLY

DUNLOP  
SPORTS

RENT  
CONTROL  
BUILD  
COUNCIL  
HOUSES

RENT  
CONTROL  
BUILD  
COUNCIL  
HOUSES  
TAKE THE  
WEALTH OF  
THE 1%

PEOPLE  
MORE  
IT



# Strategic London: the Issues



***What links most of the planning issues that we think need to change?***

**- The ownership, development and taxation of land**

- Huge amounts of savings and investment, and from abroad, flow into the ownership and development of land and buildings, especially our housing stock, pushing up market values.
- Homes to live in become financial assets.
- extreme concentration of activity in London sucks in workers from everywhere, and more investment. London Planning since 2000 has aimed to grow it further.
- Land values and house prices have been further inflated.
- Regional and class inequalities grow.
- An unsustainable scale of demolition and replacement of the built environment.
- High housing costs cancel out our superficially high average incomes.
- Wages are low for many people. Landlords are paid massive subsidies so people can pay their rents.
- Evictions and homelessness mount as people can't pay. Families forced into temporary accommodation often far from home.



# Strategic London: the Issues



- Boroughs have been bankrupted by the costs of temporary accommodation.
- The escalation of land and property values mostly goes into private wealth of owner-occupiers and corporations.
- No adequate way to capture this value, to run public services, pay for infrastructure or council housing.
- London Plans try to maximise housing production: the Plan is distorted by the incentive to turn everything into speculative housing.
- Constraints on this have been relaxed by central government (use classes, permitted development) or the GLA (density and tall buildings policy).
- Real estate and business interests dominate the planning process.
- Citizens have minimal influence, often being treated with contempt or disregard.
- “Opportunity Areas” are the largest concentrations of development in London, with the worst accountability.



# Strategic London: proposals?



**Degrowth, or stabilise growth: pursue human wellbeing. GDP growth means growth of carbon emissions, damage to the environment.**

**Discourage treatment of housing as a wealth generator via the tax treatment of property value, housing inheritance, capital gains.**

**Land Value Taxation**

**Replace Council Tax with progressive property tax to generate revenues**

**Long-term and secure tenancies to remove a motive for ownership**

**Damp down developer, shareholder, investor expectations to put land prices on a stable or downward trajectory.**

**Aggregate financial gains from development and land value at metropolitan scale.**

**New model of housing development which does not rely on developing high end housing.**

**Large public land holdings could provide 100% affordable housing.**

**Scrap Help to Buy, which inflated prices.**

**Lower the level of profit expected by developers**



**LONDON  
IS A  
CARBON  
FACTORY!**







**Embodied Carbon in Construction: 40% of UK CO<sub>2</sub> emissions come from construction.**

**Why is the Mayor's Whole Life Carbon Assessment in Planning Applications so important?**  
From evidence of submitted and accepted WLCA's in Greater London planning applications so far, it is abundantly clear that the overwhelming proportion of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions occur in the construction of the structural frame of new buildings. These are reinforced concrete frames and substructures.

**Greater London consumes 3.3million cubic metres of concrete annually.**

CONSEQUENTLY, THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF CONCRETE ALONE IN LONDON IS  
**2 MILLION TONNES OF CARBON FROM JUST ONE CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL.**

Worldwide every year cement and concrete production generates as much as 9 percent of all human CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

By Comparison, **London Emissions from ALL Road Transport, Rail, Shipping & Aviation is 6.4 Million tonnes** (GLA Pathways to Net Zero Carbon by 2030) This is dropping rapidly due to policies limiting the use of fossil fuel based transport ( eg: London Taxi electrification, ULEZ, etc..)

**THE CARBON FOOTPRINT OF JUST THE CONCRETE USED IN CONSTRUCTION IS EQUIVALENT TO OVER 30% OF ALL TRANSPORT EMISSIONS ACROSS LONDON, AND IS RISING PROPORTIONALLY, AS CONSTRUCTION IN LONDON HAS CLEARLY EXPANDED RAPIDLY AND IS STILL GROWING.**

18 Blackfriars => 300,000 tCO2

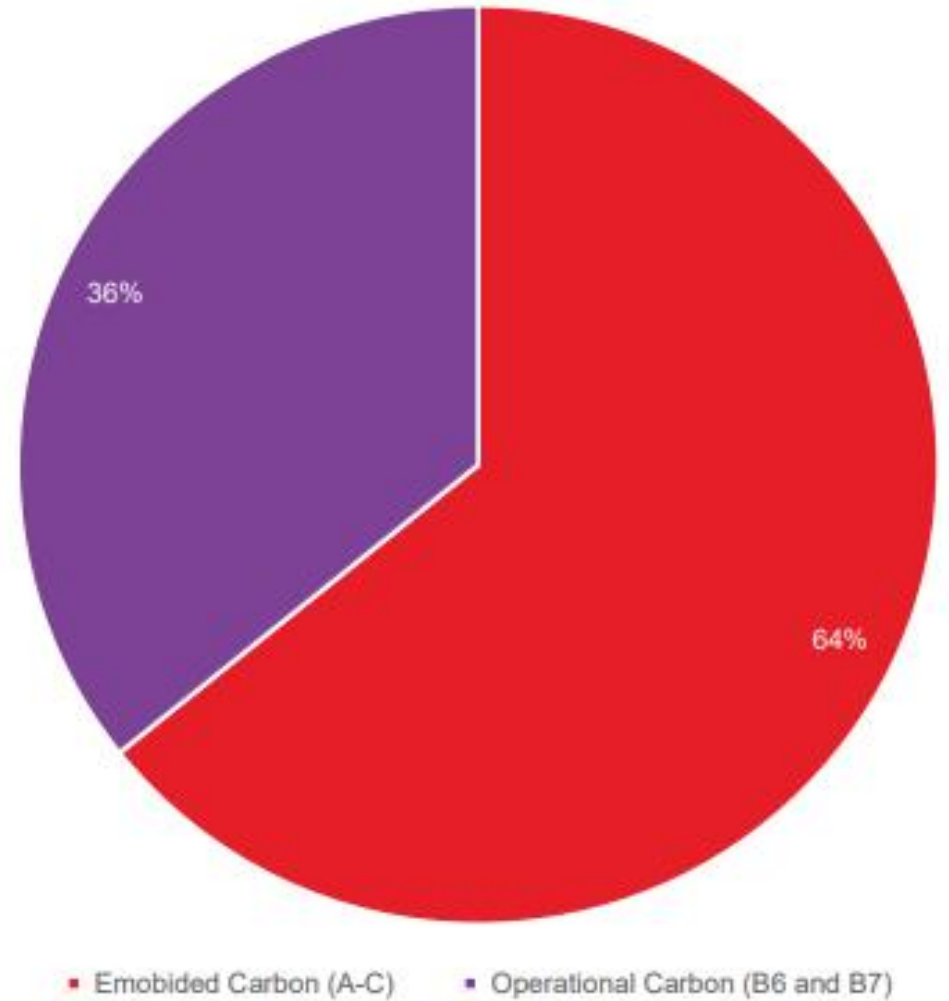


Figure 5: Reported embodied carbon vs operational carbon



### **London's Health consequences - CONSTRUCTION TRANSPORT POLLUTION:**

**Diesel-powered vehicles, vessels, locomotives, and equipment account for over 60 percent of all nitrogen oxides (NOx) and more than 70 percent of all fine particulate matter**

London consumed 3.3 cubic metres of concrete annually. (above)  
equivalent to **550,000 concrete truck journeys per annum.**  
or 2,034 journeys per day

**Trucks are commonly 3.14 miles per gallon,  
Every day concrete trucks burn approx. 4,064 gallons of diesel within London.**

**This is the equivalent 15,000 Tonnes of Co2 every year.**

#### **Particle Pollution:**

Construction lorries have between 12 -16 wheels -

**"52% of all the small particle pollution from road transport came from tyre and brake wear in 2021,  
plus a further 24% from abrasion of roads and their paint markings.**

**Just 15% of the emissions came from the exhausts of cars and a further 10% from the exhausts of vans  
and HGVs. \*\***

\* Tyre wear particles are toxic for us and the environment, Imperial College report 2023

**Lorries, vans and specialist heavy vehicles (all over 3.5 tonnes), and buses, minibuses and coaches  
(all over 5 tonnes) DO NOT NEED TO PAY THE DAILY ULEZ CHARGE. TFL website**



# Carbon: our proposals

**Retrofit First:** This is already proposed in the London Plan. But it's generally disregarded in favour of demolition and new build due to the systematized and entrenched development routine within the industry. ... But in the light of the High Court decision to overturn Michael Gove's refusal of the M&S Oxford Scheme - **the law on retrofit URGENTLY needs to change!**

**Low carbon construction alternatives:** For almost 20 years it has been possible to construct buildings in structural timber up to and beyond 10 storeys high. This contemporary technology using Cross Laminated Timber (CLT) is being used increasingly commonly across Europe. Timber sequesters Carbon - it stores CO<sub>2</sub> – it is the only current viable method of carbon capture and storage. As an alternative to materials like concrete and steel, it is a solution rather than a problem. The UK has already hundreds of new buildings using this. However, in London its use is still resisted despite its huge potential to drastically reduce the carbon footprint in London.

**Good design:** commissioning appropriate advice from those who are experienced in low carbon design and construction: selecting designers who have true and honest knowledge of sustainable design, each project would be analysed according to the potential of the individual brief and context. Filtering out those who see sustainability as 'a good fee earner' is absolutely essential.

**Whole Life Carbon Regulations :** These have to be rigorously checked. There is no useful purpose in having policies unless they are both verifiable or enforceable. At present this is not the case, and the longer this is not addressed, the more entrenched the abuse becomes, and soon it will become normalised.

# Carbon: our proposals 2

**The Mayor could incentivise low carbon construction, especially in medium scale developments under 10 storeys. This would reduce the impact of CO2 emissions significantly across London:**

**A Common material baseline in Whole Life-Cycle Carbon Assessments (WLCCA):** methodology needs both updating and rigorous checking. e.g. currently timber is calculated as being close to zero carbon, where it should be considered as sequestered material.

Timber structures are assumed to be burnt at end of life, whereas all other construction materials are credited for 'recycling'.

Concrete, for example, is credited for carbonation process where the material reabsorbs CO<sub>2</sub> during its lifetime. This process is extremely slow: at 100 years of exposed carbonation, only about 25% of the emitted carbon can be recarbonated.

Steel also is credited as it can be 'recycled', yet recycled steel requires it to be processed and reheated in furnaces to 3,000 degrees which requires a huge amount of energy.

These misplaced assumptions badly distort the entire WLCCA calculations to give credit where credit is not applicable. The obscene levels of greenwashing in the industry must be called out. C.RE-ASSESS

**The current distorted fire regs:** Grenfell did not burn due to any timber in the construction, it was overwhelmingly due to its use of flammable cladding. Modern Solid timber construction methods such as CLT have been used throughout Europe without any incidents of fire. It is a rigorously tested technology which is highly predictable in how it responds to fire. It is more predictable than steel



*Aerial View*









**DOORSTEP GREEN COMPARATIVE PROFILES**

# DENBY COURT: CARBON FOOTPRINT COMPARISON



## HOMES FOR LAMBETH:

### PLUS 5,860 TONNES OF CO<sub>2</sub>\*

\*the lowest of several contradictory figures stated in HFL's submitted Energy Report and Whole Life Carbon Statement

*\*A modern 2 bed flat would typically emit 1T of Co<sub>2</sub> eq. PA  
5,860 tonnes = 41.5 years of energy usage for the proposed 141 flats*

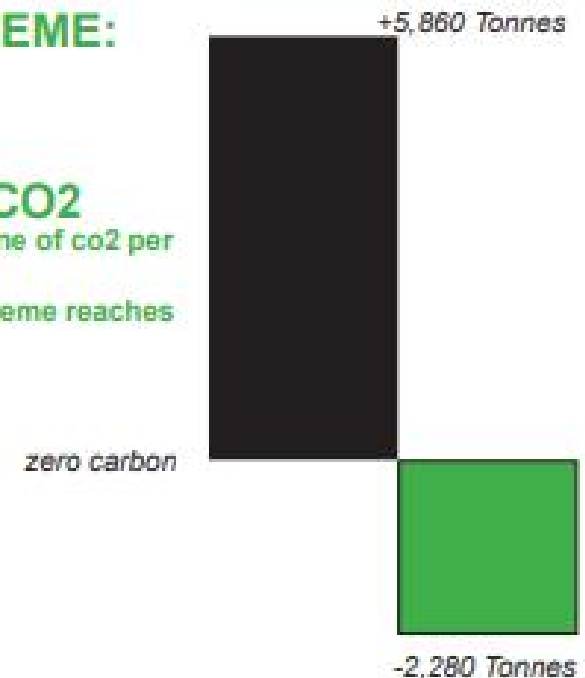
*Lambeth Council has declared a climate emergency and has committed to being carbon neutral borough by 2030*

## SAVE LAMBETH WALK SCHEME:

### MINUS 2,280 TONNES OF CO<sub>2</sub>

2,280 cubic metres of CLT which sequesters 1 tonne of co<sub>2</sub> per cubic metre

ie 16 years of carbon sequestration before the scheme reaches zero carbon



MORE TREES  
LESS WANKERS



# Biodiversity, green space: our proposals?



- *Policy 28 Biodiversity Achieve a positive gain*
- *Policy 29 Biodiversity Review Panel*
- *Policy 30 Natural Capital Accounting*
- *Policy 31 Reduce Inequalities in access to green space; target boroughs with the worst access.*
- *Policy 32 Charter for Parks*
- Effective Public consultation and co-production
- Public Open Spaces Audits - Community-led
- Play facilities for new housing must not steal existing green space
- Properly protect SINCS 'Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation'
- Stop paving-over of front gardens
- Require local authorities to protect/maintain green open space for biodiversity

# London's front garden paving epidemic:

- regulations
- problems
- policy proposals

Christine Eborall

Ealing Front Gardens Project

A project begun in 2000 by Ealing Local Agenda 21

Now hosted by London National Park City:  
<https://frontgardens.nationalparkcity.org>



# Regulations

Front gardens = 6% of total area of London

They greened residential roads until .....

1995: pavement crossovers allowed as “permitted development”

➔ entire front gardens paved / concreted for parking

2008: surface must be “porous” or have “provision for runoff”

Entire front garden can still be paved over

Runoff requirements often ignored or ineffective



# Main problems caused

1. Less climate change resilience
  - Surface water flooding
  - Over-heating (heat island) - health, nature, infrastructure
  - More air and water pollution – dust, no hedges or trees; run-off picks up pollutants
  - Subsidence – soil dries out
2. Less biodiversity
  - Less space for nature: biodiversity loss – plants, soil; less food for pollinators
3. Mental health and community cohesion: lack of green space, unattractive neighbourhoods, less social interaction.





# Surface water flooding from front gardens

Run-off from paving marketed as “permeable” but after a few years becomes ineffective in heavy downpours



A commonly-marketed drainage system unable to cope with downpours (despite being weed- and debris-free)



# Where are we now?

Probably  $\frac{3}{4}$  of London's total front garden area now paved

Pressure for electric vehicle charging

Lower VAT at home

Boroughs like Richmond reducing size and safety criteria → allowing **more** front garden car parking

Concern from National Infrastructure Commission, Ofwat, Thames Water, others

Costly SuDS and rain gardens to mitigate surface water flooding ....

Yet Government still doing nothing about front gardens!



# Policy proposals



Mayor should seek powers to change the national front garden regulations for London → minimal green parking surfaces



SuDS and rain gardens funding conditional on front gardens being de-paved and restored at the same time



Public information campaign (with stakeholders) + incentives and advice to householders to de-pave and restore, while still parking



Mayoral funding for major depaving and restoration projects across London

# It can be done!

## Greenford restoration project 2017

**Before**



**After**





**LUNCH!**