

Election Manifestos 2019: The Implications for Housing

December 2019



The Houses of Parliament

Introduction

The political parties have now published their election manifestos for the United Kingdom General Election of 2019. The outcome of the election will clearly have significant implications for housing.

It is generally accepted that Britain is facing a 'housing crisis'. This is described by 'Shelter' as follows:

"The quiet misery of a decade ago has grown into the loud and visible emergency of today. On almost every measure our housing system is breaking. More than 320,000 people are now homeless, including tens of thousands of children being brought up in temporary and emergency accommodation. At the sharpest end, the Office of National Statistics tell us that 726 of our fellow citizens died while homeless last year."

AWICS Ltd., PO Box 17, Appleby in Westmorland, Cumbria. CA16 6YL. Tel: 017683-51498.
Mobile: 07502-142658. Twitter @AdrianWaite. E-Mail: adrian.waite@awics.co.uk. Web: www.awics.co.uk

Managing Director: Adrian Waite MA CPFA CIHM FInstLM. Registered office: c/o Butterworths Solicitors, 3 Walker Terrace, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE8 1EB. Company Number: 3713554. VAT Registration Number: 721 9669 13.

Early in 2019, Baroness Sayeeda Warsi (Conservative) and Ed Miliband MP (Labour) joined other commissioners in publishing Shelter's commission on the future of social housing. Published at a time when the country was building only 6,000 new social homes a year, its call for three million new social homes over the next twenty years represented a major challenge to the prevailing consensus on housing policy. But as Sayeeda Warsi said at the launch, when you look at the evidence you realise how wrong the country has got it. This election is clearly an opportunity for the political parties to re-evaluate their approaches to housing.

This briefing paper summarises the proposals for housing that are included in the election manifestos of the Conservative, Labour and Liberal-Democrat parties. As housing is a devolved matter, this briefing paper does not refer to the manifestos of the Scottish National Party or Plaid Cymru. It also summarises the reactions in the sector and provides some commentary.

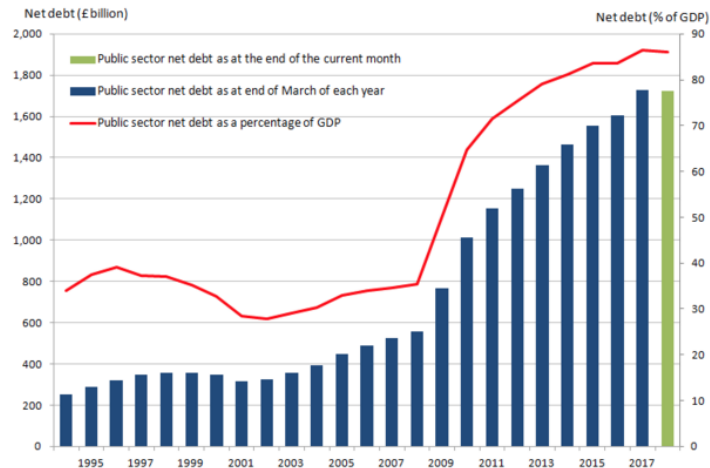
Conservative Party

The Conservative Party manifesto is remarkably light on detail. The housing highlights include:

- Increased borrowing to fund increases in expenditure and reduced taxation.
- Building a million new homes over five years. This is a reduction from the current policy of building 300,000 a year and does not include any target for affordable homes.
- Renewal of the Affordable Homes Programme in the Spring Statement
- Continuing with pilots of the voluntary 'right to buy' for housing association tenants, extending them from the Midlands to other regions.
- A new 'first homes' scheme.
- A Social Housing White Paper, which was originally due in Spring 2019 that would set out further measures to empower tenants and supply social homes
- A continued commitment to Theresa May's promise to end 'no-fault' evictions
- 'Lifetime' deposits for the private rented sector, allowing renters to move the same deposit to a new tenancy when moving home
- A new market for 'lifetime' fixed-rate mortgages that would come with 5% deposits

The Conservatives' financial plans for public services had already been announced as part of the spending review presented by Sajid Javid in September. I have prepared a briefing paper on this. To view or download your copy, please click here: [https://awics.co.uk/files/module_document_pdfs/spending_review_2019 - the implications for public services - briefing paper.pdf](https://awics.co.uk/files/module_document_pdfs/spending_review_2019_-_the_implications_for_public_services_-_briefing_paper.pdf)

The Conservatives' borrowing plans have attracted widespread criticism, not least from the Institute for Fiscal Studies, whose analysis concluded that they were not credible. They certainly represent a departure from traditional Conservative financial policies based on balanced budgets and 'austerity' and would result in increasing levels of public debt. The graph below shows how public debt as a proportion of gross domestic product has increased from 40% in 2008 to 90% in 2018.



United Kingdom Government Debt

The target of a million homes is a substantial downgrade on the previous target of reaching 300,000 homes a year by the mid-2020s that was set in 2017. It is also 41,000 fewer homes a year than the current rate of net supply that reached 241,000 in November 2019 suggesting a belief that this figure represents a peak. The party did not set a target for affordable housing but did pledge to renew the Affordable Homes Programme in the Spring Statement. The manifesto does not mention social housing so it may be assumed that any affordable housing that would be built would be housing with rents set at 80% of market levels. Many in the sector consider that government should set a target to build a significant number of affordable homes including a significant number of social homes.

While the Conservatives plan to renew the affordable housing programme, there is no commitment to increasing the budget. In the Comprehensive Spending Review of 2010, the government's budget for supporting capital investment in housing was reduced by 64%. This led to the abandonment of funding for social housing and the current focus on affordable housing. Without an increase in the budget it is unlikely that any increase in affordable house building could be afforded, let alone any increase in social house building.

The extension of the 'right to buy' scheme to housing association tenants was a controversial 'flagship' policy in the Conservative manifesto of 2015. It prompted the National Housing Federation to propose a voluntary scheme and resulted in the commencement of several pilot schemes. Following the replacement of David Cameron by Theresa May as Prime Minister in 2016, several housing initiatives were either abandoned or downgraded and the extension of 'right to buy' to housing association tenants received a lower priority.

I have written a briefing paper on the extension of the 'right to buy' to housing associations. To view or download a copy, please click here: <https://awics.co.uk/htrack/awics.co.uk/dynamicdata/data/docs/extension%2520of%2520right%2520to%2520buy%2520to%2520housing%2520associations%2520-%2520proposals%2520and%2520implications.pdf>

It is possible that this policy would be prioritised by a new Conservative government. If so, that would raise the question of how it would be paid for. In 2015 the Conservatives proposed that it would be funded by local authorities selling high value council homes and legislation to enable this was included in the Housing and Planning Act 2016. This legislation was never implemented but is still in the statute book. It is therefore possible that a Conservative government could revive this policy. If it didn't it would have to identify another source of funding.

I have written a briefing paper on the sale of high value council homes. To view or download a copy, please click here: <https://awics.co.uk/htrack/awics.co.uk/dynam-icdata/data/docs/sale%2520of%2520high%2520value%2520council%2520homes%2520-%2520briefing%2520paper.pdf>

The First Home scheme would be delivered through a change to the National Planning Policy Framework and through developers' Section 106 contributions that are currently a major route for the supply of affordable housing. The Conservatives believe the discount could apply to up to 19,000 homes by the mid-2020s and would be 'locked into the property'. An income threshold would apply – although this has not yet been revealed.

The Conservatives promise to deliver a new 'First Home' scheme, under which homes would be sold at 30% discounts to first-time buyers sounds like a revival of the 'Starter Homes' policy that the Conservatives introduced under David Cameron. The scheme was designed to arrest the decline in home ownership by subsidising first time buyers, including first time buyers with significant incomes who wanted to buy quite expensive properties. This was likely to have been at the expense of new affordable homes. The scheme was unpopular and complex and was quietly dropped by Theresa May with no starter homes having been provided. If a Conservative government is formed, it would be interesting to see how the 'First Home' scheme would work.

I have written a briefing paper on Starter Homes. To view or download a copy, please click here: <https://awics.co.uk/htrack/awics.co.uk/dynam-icdata/data/docs/starter%2520homes%2520-%2520briefing%2520paper.pdf>

The Conservative government published a Social Housing Green Paper in August 2018. It was wide-ranging and included five chapters as follows:

- Chapter 1 – Ensuring homes are safe and decent
- Chapter 2 – Effective resolution of complaints
- Chapter 3 – Empowering residents and strengthening the Regulator
- Chapter 4 – Tackling stigma and celebrating thriving communities
- Chapter 5 – Expanding supply and supporting home ownership

AWICS responded to the Green Paper to suggest that:

- The role of tenants in the management of local authority and housing association housing should be enhanced. They should be stakeholders rather than customers with a meaningful role in decision-making.
- Complaints processes should be focused on empowering front-line staff to resolve both complaints and the underlying issues that cause repeat complaints.
- Regulation should become more transparent.
- Housing Association Boards should become more accountable.
- Procedures should be put in place to ensure that housing association mergers follow a more transparent process with meaningful tenant engagement.
- Performance Indicators should focus on tenant satisfaction.
- Community-based housing associations should be encouraged to take over the ownership and management of existing local authority and housing association stock as appropriate.
- The balance of government funding for housing should be changed to provide more support for below-market rented housing and grants to support new social housing should be increased.
- Local authorities should be given more flexibility over the management of 'right to buy' and 'right to buy' receipts should be localised.

- The self-financing settlement should be revisited to take account of reduced rents, the need to spend more on major repairs and to provide 'headroom' to fund new development.

The government intends to respond to the consultation and to follow up the Green Paper with a White Paper. However, this has been delayed. The manifesto re-states an intention to publish a White Paper that will presumably include the policies proposed in the manifesto. Whether it will address any other issues is unclear.

To view or download a copy of the AWICS response to the Green Paper, please click here: https://awics.co.uk/files/module_document_pdfs/social_housing_green_paper_-_awics_response.pdf

The party has pledged to continue with Ms May's promise to scrap 'no-fault' Section 21 evictions. They would also 'strengthen' the grounds for landlords to regain possession as part of the move, 'enabling a landlord to pass their property on to a child or family member, move into it themselves or sell it'.

Private tenants would be offered 'lifetime rental deposits' that would allow them to transfer a deposit to a new property, meaning they would not have to wait for their landlord to return an old one. The party said this was:

"Also referred to as deposit passporting... this will mean renters can have one deposit that moves with them, preventing the need to save hundreds or thousands of pounds each time they want to move".

On lifetime mortgages, the party said it would draw in institutional investors to offer lending at fixed rates, saying that:

"We will bring in institutional investors, such as pensions funds, who desire a long-term stable return, and support homeowners by offering secure and stable mortgages at fixed-rate interest over the lifetime of their mortgage, protecting them from spikes in interest rates. It would allow homeowners to lock in today's historically low interest rates and provide greater stability in their long-term finances."

Other policies include:

- Support home ownership by giving renters access to long term mortgages, discounts for first time buyers, allowing councils to discount homes by a third in perpetuity, maintaining 'right to buy' and 'voluntary right to buy' and extending 'help to buy'
- An 'accelerated' green paper on planning, aimed at speeding up the planning process
- Reforming the Housing Infrastructure Fund to provide greater flexibility to Homes England
- To ensure infrastructure, such as GPs and schools, is provided before new housing is built
- To give local communities the power to write design standards
- To simplify shared ownership by setting a single standard for all housing associations
- An accelerated green paper on planning, aimed at speeding up the planning process
- Reform private renting by enabling portable 'lifetime rental deposits', abolish 'no fault' evictions, protect tenants from revenge evictions and rogue landlords and strengthen 'rights of possession' for good landlords
- Continue the roll out of universal credit
- End the 'benefit freeze' and ensure it pays to work more hours
- Reduce the number of reassessments people with disabilities must go through when a significant change in their condition is unlikely
- Publish a 'national strategy for disabled people' before the end of 2020 to look at ways to improve the benefits system and ways to improve opportunities and access for disabled people in terms of housing, education, transport and jobs

- Take steps to reduce the ‘disability employment gap’

Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister, said that:

“The Conservatives have always been the party of homeownership, but under a Conservative majority government in 2020 we can and will do even more to ensure everyone can get on and realise their dream of owning their home. At the moment renting a property can also be an uncertain and unsettling business, and the costs of deposits make it harder to move. We are going to fix that.”

Jonathan Werran of think-tank ‘Localis’ told the ‘Local Government Chronicle’ that:

“While the national aspiration is understandable, do these broad brushstrokes reflect local target-setting and ambition? And given housing cyclicalities, would a more attainable longer-term ambition, say 1,000,000 extra homes over 10 years, on a rolling basis with headroom for annual additions and corrections, embrace the local/national interdependence?”

“Communities will be asked to set their own design standards to give residents a say in local style and development and councils will be ‘encouraged to build more beautiful architecture’. This is good localist stuff and would benefit from a greater use of principles based planning policies at the local level rather than any rules based approach.”

The Conservative manifesto therefore continues the focus on arresting the decline in home ownership by focusing resources on subsidising first time buyers. It also proposes extending the ‘right to buy’ and relaxing planning controls that are designed to encourage affordable housing. There are neither additional resources nor specific targets for building new affordable or social homes. While the manifesto doesn’t mention it, there is a possibility that the policy of obliging councils to sell high value homes could return as a way of funding the extension of the ‘right to buy’ to housing association tenants or other housing initiatives.

Labour Party

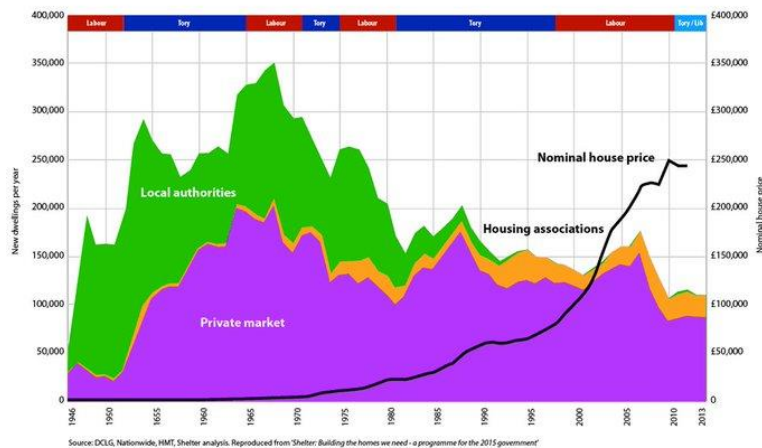
The party’s manifesto confirms plans to earmark half of the £150billion Social Transformation Fund announced by shadow chancellor John McDonnell for housing. The money would go towards building at least 150,000 new social homes a year within five years – with 100,000 of these to be delivered by councils and 50,000 by housing associations. They describe this as:

“The biggest council and social housing programme in decades”.

The 100,000 council homes would represent an increase in council housebuilding of more than 3,500% to become the biggest programme since shortly after World War II, Labour claimed.

A cross-party commission assembled by housing charity Shelter concluded earlier this year that 155,000 new social homes a year are required over the next two decades. Labour delegates voted unanimously to adopt this recommendation as policy at the party conference.

The graph below shows house building in England from 1945 to 2015. It is generally agreed that 250,000 to 300,000 new homes of all tenures are required each year and it will be seen that this level of new build was only achieved during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. It will also be seen that private house building (shaded purple in the graph) has been remarkably consistent throughout the period, that housing association building (shaded yellow in the graph) has never represented more than a small proportion of total building, and that council house building (shaded green in the graph) was significant until the 1970s when enough housing was being built but has been at a low level since the 1980s. Since then, house prices have increased as shown by the black line on the graph.



Graph showing house building in England from 1945 to 2015

Official statistics show that 57,485 affordable homes were completed in 2018/19. Of these, 82% were built by housing associations and only 11% were built by local authorities, with 6,287 for social rent. England has not seen more than 150,000 council and housing association homes delivered since 1967 when Harold Wilson was Prime Minister.

Labour's plan could be described as returning to the situation that existed in the 1950s to 1970s when there were substantial social house building programmes funded by government grants. It would involve a substantial extension to the Affordable Housing Programme and its extension to local authorities.

'Inside Housing' consider that direct comparisons with the Conservative government's current programme are not possible – but the investment for social homes would be far higher than the £9billion available for affordable housing grant through the present five-year cycle.

A Labour source told 'Inside Housing' that shared ownership would be part of the mix but that the party is also looking at other low-cost ownership models, including those for discounted sale and prices linked to income.

The planned homes would be built to 'cutting-edge design and green standards' like the Stirling Prize-winning Goldsmith Street development in Norwich.

However, Labour have not proposed any changes to the local authority self-financing settlement of 2012 that increased the debts and therefore the capital financing costs of local authority housing services. Critics of the settlement point out that it did not provide local authorities with enough resources to carry out major repairs to council homes, that it provided no resources to fund new council homes and that it assumed real increases in council rents that did not happen between 2016 and 2019 because the Welfare Reform & Work Act 2016 enforced reductions in council rents. Therefore, councils lack resources to maintain their existing stock, let alone to build new council homes. It is possible that this led to the policies on major repairs and health & safety at Kensington & Chelsea Borough Council that contributed to the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower.

In my view, the government should revisit the self-financing settlement to take account of actual rents, the need to spend on major repairs as identified in stock condition surveys and to provide resources to build new homes. This would result in writing off some of the local authority housing debt to free up resources to invest in existing and new stock. I am surprised that the Labour Party has not adopted this policy.

'Inside Housing' expects that Labour's £75billion will include Housing Revenue Account borrowing by councils, meaning it would not be purely grant funding. However, without re-visiting the self-financing settlement, Labour would not enable councils to borrow any more than they can already. This may imply that Labour are counting the housing revenue account borrowing that is already taking place in their £75billion of investment. If they are not, I think they would have to re-visit the self-financing settlement.

Labour would end the 'right to buy' and forced conversion of social rented homes to 'affordable rent'. Since the introduction of 'right to buy' in 1980, millions of social homes have been sold under 'right to buy' and have not been replaced with new social housing. The 'reinvigoration' of the 'right to buy' in England with increased discounts in 2012 was intended to result in 'one for one replacement' but it did not. In practice many homes sold under 'right to buy' end up as private rented homes rather than as owner-occupied homes. In Scotland and Wales, the 'right to buy' has already been abolished. Most people in the sector will welcome this proposal.

Labour proposes ending the Conservatives' definition of 'affordable rent' and replacing it with a definition linked to local incomes. 'Affordable rent' is defined as a rent set at 80% of market rents and since 2010, most public funding for sub-market rents has been for affordable rent developments. Many in the sector consider that 'affordable' rents are not affordable. Labour's proposal appears to be to adopt a similar approach across England to that which has already been adopted in London (with the support of the Conservative government), known as the London Affordable Rent.

London Affordable Rent is a shared aspiration of the Mayor and the Government to support both affordable home ownership and much-needed sub-market rented homes. Low-cost rented homes are needed in the capital to help low-income households, typically nominated by London Boroughs, who are unable to secure or sustain housing on the open market. To this end, the Government has agreed the Greater London Authority may use funding to support new homes for Affordable Rent.

I have written a briefing paper on the Affordable Homes Programme in London that includes a section on the London Affordable Rent. To view or download a copy, please click here: https://awics.co.uk/files/module_document_pdfs/homes_for_londoners_-_affordable_homes_programme_2016-21_-_briefing_paper.pdf

Labour is planning to increase public expenditure significantly, to a level close to the average of other European Union states. The increased funding for housing would be part of this. This would be funded through a combination of increased taxation for corporations and people on higher incomes, and public borrowing. Some economists doubt whether such an increase in borrowing would be appropriate, given that government debt is already very high.

If Britain leaves the European Union that could also have an impact. All reputable forecasters agree that this would reduce Gross Domestic Product and therefore tax revenues and this would reduce the ability of any government to sustain its expenditure programmes.

On 4th December, Labour made a further announcement about homelessness. To end rough sleeping within five years, Labour proposes a 'moral mission' to eradicate homelessness, the package includes:

- A £600million Modern Hostels Fund for homeless accommodation with 5,000 additional bed spaces
- A £200million Hostels Transformation Fund to turn existing hostels into places where homeless people can 'turn their lives around'
- A new £100million-a-year scheme for emergency winter shelter, starting this winter

- 4,000 additional 'Housing First' homes – a scheme to get some rough sleepers straight off the streets and into permanent housing, and 4,000 new permanent 'move-on' homes, ring-fenced for rough sleepers moving out of hostel accommodation

The package would be backed by an additional £1 billion a year, earmarked from council budgets to pay for staffing and support.

Other policies include:

- Creating a department for housing to oversee the implementation of housing policy
- Establishing a new duty on councils to plan and build these homes in their area and funding them to do so
- Supporting home ownership by building more low cost homes reserved for first time buyers including discounted homes with prices linked to local incomes, reform 'help to buy' to focus it on first time buyers on 'ordinary incomes', bring empty homes back into use by giving councils new powers to tax properties that are empty for over a year
- Reforming the private rented sector by introducing rent controls and open-ended tenancies and new minimum standards, funding new renters' unions and giving council's power to regulate short term lets through companies such as Airbnb
- Abolishing universal credit and stopping moving people on to it immediately
- Abolishing the 'bedroom tax' and raising local housing allowance rates back into line with the 30th percentile of rents
- Abolishing the benefit cap and the two-child limit

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said that:

"I am determined to create a society where working-class communities and young people have access to affordable, good-quality council and social homes. Everyone knows someone affected by the housing crisis. Labour is offering real change to fix it."

Shadow housing secretary John Healey added:

"The next Labour government will kick-start a housing revolution, with the biggest investment in new council and social homes this country has seen for decades."

Labour's investment plan was welcomed by several bodies across the social housing sector.

Kate Henderson, Chief Executive of the National Housing Federation said that the proposals would be 'a real game-changer for social housing' and called it the 'type of investment needed to fix the housing crisis'. The National Housing Federation believes that £12 billion in grant a year is needed to end England's housing crisis through 145,000 new affordable homes annually.

Terrie Alafat, Chief Executive of the Chartered Institute of Housing, said that:

"We think the scale of Labour's proposals are a welcome step in ending our housing crisis."

Polly Neate, Chief Executive of Shelter, described the plan as 'transformational for housing in this country' and said that building homes at this scale would do more than any other single measure to end the housing emergency.

Liberal-Democrats

The Liberal Democrats pledged to build 300,000 homes a year, of which 100,000 would be for social rent. The commitment is part of a £130 billion capital infrastructure budget that would also see investments in public transport, broadband, schools and hospitals.

The manifesto includes a pledge to introduce a new Rent to Own model for social housing, through which tenants would gain an increasing stake in their property through renting, that would allow them to own it outright after thirty years. However, it is not clear how the party would ensure that homes bought by tenants through this scheme would be replaced with new social homes.

The party has committed to ensuring all new homes and non-domestic buildings are built to a zero-carbon standard by 2021, rising to a more ambitious Passivhaus Standard by 2025. This would have implications for capital costs.



Artist's impression of new council houses that Liberal-Democrat led City of York Council plan to build at Lowfield Green in the City

A Liberal Democrat government would end rough sleeping by 2025, two years earlier than the current government's 2027 target by placing a duty on councils to provide emergency accommodation. Central government would hand the duty to end rough sleeping to local authorities and provide them with the necessary funds for the accommodation as well as support for victims of domestic abuse. Plans also include a promise to scrap the Vagrancy Act, abolish section 21 'no fault' evictions and increase housing benefit that has been frozen since 2015. The number of rough sleepers in England has increased by 31% since 2015 to 4,677 in autumn 2018. Last year 1,320 people were prosecuted under the Vagrancy Act.

Tim Farron, Liberal Democrat shadow secretary for housing, communities and local government, accused the government of:

"Sitting on their hands, failing to protect the most vulnerable people in society... They haven't built enough social housing, their benefit cuts have made poverty worse, and they blocked Liberal Democrat efforts to repeal the cruel, Dickensian law that criminalises people just for sleeping rough."

Jon Sparkes, Chief Executive of homeless charity Crisis, told 'Public Finance' that:

"The promises made, including scrapping the Vagrancy Act and increasing housing benefit, will be transformational in moving our country towards ending homelessness. It is absolutely possible to end all forms of homelessness, not just rough sleeping. We need to see the next UK Government implementing the essential steps needed to ensure that no-one in our society has to live without somewhere safe and secure to call home."

Other housing policies include:

- Cutting energy bills, ending fuel poverty by 2025 and reducing emissions from buildings by providing free retrofits for low-income homes, piloting a new energy-saving homes scheme, graduating stamp duty land tax by the energy rating of the property and reducing VAT on home insulation.
- Devolving full control of Right to Buy to local councils.
- Urgently publishing a cross-Whitehall plan to end all forms of homelessness.
- Legislating for longer-term tenancies and limits on annual rent increases.
- Allowing local authorities to increase council tax by up to 500% where homes are being bought as second homes, with a stamp duty surcharge on overseas residents purchasing such properties.
- Helping young people into the private rental market by establishing a new Help to Rent scheme to provide government-backed tenancy deposit loans for all first-time renters under thirty.
- Requiring all new homes and non-domestic buildings to be built to a zero-carbon standard rising to Passivhaus standard by 2025
- Reforming the private rented sector by establishing a new 'help to rent' scheme to provide government backed deposits for all first-time renters under thirty, promoting longer tenancies of three years or more with inflation linked annual rent increases and improving protections against rogue landlords
- Improving social renting by setting clearer standards for social homes, requiring complaints to be dealt with in a timely manner, proactively enforcing regulations and recognising tenant panels to give tenants a voice
- Making the welfare system work by reducing the wait for a first payment to five days, removing the two-child limit and benefits cap and increasing work allowances and introducing a second worker allowance
- Increasing local housing allowance in line with average rents in an area
- Abolishing the bedroom tax and introduce positive incentives to downsize
- Introducing an incentives-based scheme to replace the current sanctions system

Conclusions

When the election was announced, the National Housing Federation launched a campaign called 'Let's Fix the Housing Crisis for Good' that called on the next government to commit to five priorities. These are:

- Building 145,000 social homes a year
- Setting up a building safety fund to cover the cost of making homes safe
- Establishing a 'Great Places Fund' to drive growth in left-behind places
- Delivering a new deal for social housing by responding to the long-delayed Social Housing Green Paper
- A "fair and effective" welfare system through improvements to the controversial Universal Credit.

The Chartered Institute of Housing said that it wants an incoming government to commit to building 1.5million social homes over the next ten years, with at least 90,000 of these for social rent each year. Their spokesperson said that:

"We would also want any future government to get rid of the benefit cap and bedroom tax and to restore Local Housing Allowance to cover the lowest 30% of private rents across the country."

The parties are offering different visions for housing. For the Conservatives, it is all about arresting the decline in home ownership. For Labour, it is all about building more new homes – especially affordable homes – through councils and housing associations and funded mainly by increased central government grants. For the Liberal-Democrats it is also about building more homes but with an emphasis on environmental sustainability.

Shelter have said that:

“Both the Liberal Democrats, pledging 100,000 social homes per year, and Labour, pledging 150,000 (of which at least 100,000 would be social rent), have set out ambitious but credible plans to begin to deliver on this vision. In doing so, they have laid down the gauntlet to others – including the Conservatives.”

However, despite the ‘housing crisis’ and the fact that each of the three main parties have published manifestos that include housing policies that show some recognition of the need to build more homes, the ‘housing crisis’ has not achieved prominence in the campaign.

I will leave the last word to Polly Neate, the Chief Executive of Shelter, who told ‘Inside Housing’ that:

“We are in the grips of a national housing emergency that is leaving hundreds dead, thousands homeless and millions on the verge of losing their home. This is a crisis that no politician should be allowed to ignore during this election. Vague promises and piece-meal policies just won’t cut it anymore – which is why we want to see an ambitious renewal of social housebuilding.”

Adrian Waite
December 2019

About ‘AWICS’

‘AWICS’ is a management consultancy and training company. We specialise in providing support in finance and management to clients in local government and housing in England, Scotland and Wales. We are well known for our ability to analyse and explain complex financial and management issues clearly.

Our mission statement is ‘Independence, Integrity, Value’. We therefore provide support to clients from an independent standpoint that is designed to help the client to achieve their objectives. We are passionate about working with the utmost integrity. We believe that we offer the best value for money that is available today!

For more information about our services and us please visit our website at www.awics.co.uk or contact Adrian Waite at Adrian.waite@awics.co.uk. Services that we offer include:

- Management Consultancy – <http://www.awics.co.uk/ManagementConsultancy.asp>
- Interim Management – <http://www.awics.co.uk/interimmanagement.asp>
- Regional Seminars - <https://awics.co.uk/seminars-2020>
- In-House Training - <http://www.awics.co.uk/inHouseCourses.asp>
- Webinars - <http://www.awics.co.uk/webinars.asp>
- Independent Residents’ Advice – <http://www.awics.co.uk/IndependentTenantAdvice.asp>
- Technical Books - <http://www.awics.co.uk/publications.asp>
- Information Service - <http://www.awics.co.uk/aboutUs.asp>

AWICS Ltd., PO Box 17, Appleby in Westmorland, Cumbria. CA16 6YL. Tel: 017683-51498.
Mobile: 07502-142658. Twitter @AdrianWaite. E-Mail: adrian.waite@awics.co.uk. Web: www.awics.co.uk

Managing Director: Adrian Waite MA CPFA CIHM FInstLM. Registered office: c/o Butterworths Solicitors, 3 Walker Terrace, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear, NE8 1EB. Company Number: 3713554. VAT Registration Number: 721 9669 13.