

Our policy statements – what's needed to bring forward more community-led affordable homes

1. Funding: We call for additional levels of grant, including a renewal of the Community Housing Fund to bring forward community-led affordable housing projects at all stages. No political parties have grasped the funding shortfall that exists in delivering the number of genuinely affordable homes needed. The Resolution Foundation says a new government “will struggle to hit these stretching targets [c. 300,000 homes/year] without significantly more funding in place to boost affordable house building”.¹

2. Affordability: Affordability in housing has become a meaningless word. Besides social housing for rent, all intermediate affordable homes should be genuinely affordable to those on average median incomes as defined by ONS data, and be affordable in perpetuity. Shared ownership has failed² – leaving people economically trapped paying both rents and mortgages. We call for unaffordable shared ownership to be scrapped and changed to be a genuinely affordable Community Land Trust model with homes priced linked to local incomes.

3. Housing as infrastructure: Housing is both a human right and part of our critical infrastructure. Recognition of this could unlock long-term infrastructure investment and encourage a more integrated national approach to development. Not seeing it as such has secondary costs to the NHS, the economy, council budgets, achieving net zero.

4. Oversight: We call for an independent national commission for housing – to objectively oversee the current housing crisis, guide long-term solutions, set long-term targets, and champion realistic budgets and grant support.

5. Planning: We call for structural reform of planning, and appropriate investment support, so that planning can become more proactive and less reactive, leading to reduced risk and faster decision-making. We also call for a specific use class for community-led genuinely affordable housing to bring forward sites that benefit the local community.

6. Policy: Given that housing delivery targets are never met through the private sector alone, alternative delivery partners are required including Housing Associations and Local Authorities. We believe there is also considerable scope for community-led development as evidenced through the recent State of the Community Land Trust Sector report, showing that with the right policy and industry support, there is potential for up to 278,000 additional homes across England and Wales through Community Land Trust delivery.

7. Land reform: We ask for councils to support community-led development through the transfer of development sites, including a first refusal on land that councils are unable to develop. Councils are at capacity and development is stalling; a community right to buy would speed this up and create community wealth building. We support developing brownfield/grey belt sites and new garden city developments – however they must always have genuine community input and support, long-term community wealth building and land stewardship and locked-in affordability.

8. Net zero: Community-led development often builds to higher standards and for the long term because a community cares about its future. We support new projects that are net zero, regenerative and lead to biodiversity gain. We support projects that positively transform neighbourhoods and follow circular economy principles.

¹ <https://www.resolutionfoundation.org/press-releases/britain-has-a-welcome-new-policy-consensus-on-housing-but-it-also-needs-new-cash-to-make-a-lasting-difference/>

² <https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/17/levelling-up-housing-and-communities-committee/news/200679/shared-ownership-is-failing-to-deliver-an-affordable-route-to-homeownership-say-mps/>