



A City to Call Home

Labour's Housing and Homelessness Manifesto for **Brighton and Hove**

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A CITY TO CALL HOME

Years of failed Tory policies have led to a housing crisis affecting millions. People raised in the city are forced to leave because they can no longer afford to live here, while rents and prices keep going up and land sits unused. More people than ever are at risk of homelessness, and standards in many private rented homes are unacceptably low.

Our Labour Council will continue to make affordable housing for all our priority. We will fight against this austerity-driven Tory government, which has caused homelessness, rough sleeping and rising use of food banks in the city.

The Labour Minority Council has:

- Provided almost 200 new council homes with another 90 on the way, plus plans to build 1,000 new joint venture homes at rents and prices affordable to those on the Living Wage.
- Developed the first council-owned temporary accommodation in the city.
- Raised standards for 13,000 renters living in shared homes.
- Provided more resource and stronger regulations to prevent overdevelopment of shared homes.
- Introduced the innovative Rent Smart partnership (www.rentsmartbrightonhove.org), providing information and advice to all renters.
- Brought the council's responsive repairs and empty homes services, currently operated by Mears, in-house from 2020.
- Invested in sprinkler systems in tower blocks, a part of our ongoing work with the Fire Service that started prior to the Grenfell tragedy.
- Reduced the number of rough sleepers in the city through homeless prevention and close working with partners, and

provided new hubs and funding for a year-round night shelter.

- Enabled over 300 new housing association homes at affordable rents or through shared ownership from developer contributions, and put pressure on developers through viability and land value rules to provide more.
- Introduced the Your Energy Sussex energy provider to tackle fuel poverty, and improved energy efficiency in our housing stock.



A Labour Majority Council will:

- Drive an accelerated programme to buy and build homes to meet a range of housing needs, including temporary/emergency accommodation, supported housing, Housing First and general needs housing.
- Aim to buy back all homes put on the market which have been lost through Right-to-Buy, and replace council homes at social rents lost each year, where money can be found to enable this.
- Create innovations to drive development such as a citywide small site and hidden homes strategy, and mixed tenure developments to deliver mixed communities, enable intergenerational living and offer lower rents through commercial income.
- Provide a minimum of 800 new council homes over the next four years, creating jobs in the local economy and making council housing available to more local people.

- Create a dedicated private rented sector enforcement team to proactively enforce housing and energy efficiency standards, including issuing fixed penalties to rogue landlords.
- In the face of government U-turns and legal threats, continue to work towards selective licensing for tens of thousands of private rented homes, driving up conditions for renters. Campaign alongside other councils on shared issues such as proper regulation of short-term lets and business rates for landlords of houses in multiple occupancy.
- Use measures including Compulsory Purchase Orders to target unoccupied and underused properties, and challenge developers harder who are not delivering enough affordable housing. Ensure local home building is providing opportunities for young people to develop skills, for example through apprenticeships.
- Continue to tackle the rising tide of homelessness and work towards eliminating the need for rough sleeping. Consult on and adopt a bill of rights for homeless people and involve homeless people in a wide-ranging review of all support offered to the homeless.
- Within the first six months, identify ten sites in the city suitable for community-led housing and work with community groups to help enable them.
- Expand existing schemes encouraging landlords to offer homes to those on benefits and low incomes, including establishing an ethical letting agency.
- Set up an information/advice hub for private renters to tackle discrimination, ensure renters know their rights, and enable better community involvement.
- Provide specific support for women, BAME tenants and other marginalised groups who often bear the brunt of welfare changes and face higher risk of eviction.
- Improve energy efficiency in social and private rented housing to tackle fuel

poverty and create warmer and healthier homes.

- Drive fire safety improvements in council owned and private sector properties across the city.
- Continue to ensure that leaseholders' voices are heard and that leaseholders are offered financial support where necessary.

With a Labour Government we could:

- Massively expand council home building through government support, such as grants for capacity-building, and provide subsidies for social rents.
- Stop the erosion of council home stock in the city through Right-to-Buy.
- With a reformed planning system that removes developer loopholes, ensure that at least 50% of new building in the city is genuinely affordable.
- Demand that public land and buildings are used for affordable housing instead of being sold to the private sector.
- End rough sleeping within a single parliament with investment in accommodation and other services to support people off the streets.
- Ensure private sector rents are genuinely affordable through rent control and provide security of tenure for private renters with an end to no-fault evictions.
- Set up landlord and property licensing as standard for all private rented homes.
- Regulate letting agents more strongly, tackling referencing abuse, no-go lists and discrimination. End discrimination against benefit claimants by private sector landlords.
- Tackle fuel poverty through grants for energy efficiency improvements, and work towards re-introducing the zero carbon homes target.
- Put a levy on those with second homes and substantially increase the cost of leaving a home empty.