

General Election 2024

Note 2 – Priorities identified by key sector bodies





Introduction

This paper is divided into four main sections, covering the major sector bodies, followed by additional material from others, such as think tanks and non-sector groups.

In each case, I've included a short explanation of the organisation and where you can find out more about their proposals. Where their proposals align with something in the Tpas Ask, I've highlighted it in **green**, and where it's something I think we'd tend to support it's highlighted in **amber**. It's worth noting that CIH, NHF [add others] support the 90,000 annual target for new social homes.

Chartered Institute of Housing

The Chartered Institute of Housing (CIH) is the professional body for housing, set up to promote professional standards amongst its members, but now with a strong voice on policy. Although it works across all tenures, CIH's focus tends to be on rented homes, particularly social rented ones.

CIH speaks for housing professionals, rather than landlords, but is cautious about pursuing policy proposals that could be seen as conflicting with social landlords' commercial interests or priorities.

CIH published their housing manifesto in September 2023. It includes 10 key priorities, each of which is explained in detail, including the changes needed to make them happen. In some cases, the proposed changes are more eye-catching than the headline priorities. They're set out briefly below, and you can get all the detail [here](#).

More homes

1 Invest in more social homes *to be supported by*

- increased investment, redirecting subsidy
- more flexible grant programmes
- a long-term rent settlement
- changes to government debt categories
- Suspending Right to Buy, then reducing the discounts once replacement numbers catch up with sales
- Reducing the number of rented homes lost to Airbnb-style short term lets

2 Reduce homelessness and use of temporary accommodation *to be supported by*

- Increasing LHA rates to match real rents
- Delivering the Renters' Reform Bill (ending 'no fault' evictions)
- Dedicated support for domestic abuse survivors
- Access to decent secure accommodation regardless of immigration status
- Investing in Housing First
- Increasing social housing supply

3 Improve the planning process to speed up new homes, *including*



- Clarify targets and definition of 'affordable' housing
- Maximise developer contributions
- Resource LA planning teams
- Address artificial 'hope value' of land that may one day get planning consent
- Restore strategic level planning, consider Green belt reform
- Make the case for New Towns
- Avoid tinkering with planning policy

4 Invest in more supported housing to reduce the burden on health services *by*

- Investing in a national ringfenced funding stream

5 Invest in affordable home ownership *by*

- Improving shared ownership
- Improving support for mortgage holders through changes social security

Better homes

6 Provide sustainable funding for landlords to maintain decent homes *by*

- **Funding a renewed DHS programme**

7 Improve security and standards for private renters *by*

- **Uprating LHA**
- **Ending no-fault evictions and unfair rent increases**
- Establishing a PRS Ombudsman
- Updating DHS with stricter energy efficiency standards
- Outlawing blanket bans on tenants with children or on benefits
- Strengthening council enforcement powers
- Tackling the way short-term lets reduce supply of private rent

8 **Accelerate a fair and equitable transition to net zero homes** *by*

- **Investing at least £6bn annually in 10-year cross-tenure retrofit programme**
- Making clean energy affordable
- Investing in skills and innovation to support related technology and construction
- Making policy changes to **support a fair transition to net zero**

9 Prioritise building safety *including*

- Supporting the social housing sector to fix problems created by others
- Protecting leaseholders

10 Strengthen the safety net *by*

- **Ensuring the basic benefit rates always cover life's essentials (essentials guarantee)**
- Set up independent panel to decide benefit levels
- **Increase LHA to reflect real rents**
- **Scrap two-child limit and household benefit cap**
- End 'no recourse to public funds' and limits on right to work



National Housing Federation

The National Housing Federation (NHF) is the trade body for housing associations, set up to represent their interests. They have a strong voice on policy but only in relation to housing associations, particularly new homes.

Although they have championed tenants' voices in their Together With Tenants campaign, NHF speaks for housing associations. Sometimes, housing associations interests and priorities are aligned with tenants' interests (for example when they argue for more social housing), but sometimes they're not (such as when they argue for a long transition period to meet a new DHS standard)

The NHF's General Election priorities are set as a series of ambitions for the next government, which they say could be delivered by implementing some proposed policies and funding schemes. These are: end child homelessness; halve overcrowding; provide the security of a social home for one million more people; ensure a warm and decent home for seven million more families; improve affordability; and boost productivity by ensuring every region has the homes it needs to grow.

The notes below focus on the more detailed policies and funding, as the ambitions are quite general and aren't specifically linked to the policies. The NHF's Long Term Plan for Housing is [here](#).

1. Increased grant funding and other incentives which **enable housing associations and others to build a new generation of social rent** and other affordable homes to meet housing need.
2. A long-term, outcomes-based approach to social housing rents [I think we'd support the idea of a long-term settlement, but NHF are likely to be thinking that 'outcomes-based' is about funding newbuild, which probably means higher rents than we'd support]
3. Housing associations as key partners in a new generation of towns and villages
4. **Clear national standards for making England's old and leaky homes warm, decent and more energy efficient (including funding for retrofit, the supply chain and regeneration)**
5. An effective and revitalised planning system which is accountable and delivers more affordable, low carbon housing.
6. Long-term, ring-fenced and increased funding for supported housing and support services,
7. A national strategy to ensure everyone has a secure and affordable home that meets their needs and wants as they get older. (including sustainable revenue and capital funding)
8. Fair funding for social rent homes in need of building safety remediation works



Association of Retained Council Housing

The Association of Retained Council Housing (ARCH) is a trade body for councils that have retained ownership and management of council housing. ARCH's focus tends to be more on good practice than campaigning, which is to be expected from an organisation representing councils with different political leadership.

Like the NHF, they tend to come at things from a landlord perspective, which isn't necessarily aligned with tenants' interests.

ARCH haven't produced and pre-election material, perhaps deeming it inappropriate for a grouping of politically-controlled bodies. However, in the past, ARCH have produced materials (such as consultation responses and evidence submissions) jointly with the National Federation of ALMOs. So it's probably reasonable to assume that their election asks would be similar (except the one related to supporting the ALMO model).

National Federation of ALMOs

The National Federation of Arm's Length Management Organisations (NFA) is the trade body representing ALMOs, non-profit bodies set up to manage council-owned housing. NFA are clear that they represent members' interests, although they do campaign on relevant policy and public affairs issues.

The NFA has produce a manifesto, setting out its asks of a new government. Like the CIH manifesto, it includes headline asks, linked to specific policy or funding changes and these are summarised below. The NFA manifesto is [here](#).

1. Support for the ALMO model
 - This is an opportunity to highlight the efficiency and effectiveness of ALMOs compared to direct management by councils, but there are no specific policy asks
2. Investment in existing homes
 - Full financial support for building safety work
 - Review of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund to increase funding, lengthen programme, and increase flexibility
 - Right to Buy reform – reduced discounts and more regional variation
 - Long-term certainty over rents – at least a five-year settlement
 - Funding for replacement homes in regeneration schemes
3. Funding for new council housing
 - Increased grant rates and overall programme
 - New council homes to be exempt from RTB for 30 years
 - Reform RTB to guarantee one-for-one replacement
 - Equitable and sustainable home ownership offer for council tenants
4. A review of the social security system



- Basic benefit levels to increase so they fund the essentials, plus a minimum income threshold (essentials guarantee)
 - Remove 5-week wait for UC
 - Scrap the two-child limit and household benefit cap
 - Abolish the under-occupancy charge (bedroom tax)
 - Consult on a social tariff for energy
 - Benefits for under 25s to be the same as over 25s
 - Improve UC for those in short-term fluctuating employment
 - **LHA to cover the real cost of rents**
 - An ambitious plan to end employment poverty within five years through localised partnerships
5. A long-term housing strategy for the whole housing market [including]
- A strategic cross-tenure approach
 - A tenure-neutral home ownership support package to balance funding between home ownership initiatives and building more social housing
 - LHA to cover real rents in each area
 - Specific, secure funding to end rough sleeping and reduce homelessness
 - Investment in other tenures to reduce reliance on temporary accommodation

Also of interest

Better Social Housing Review

The Better Social Housing Review was set up by the CIH and NHF in June 2022 and overseen by an independent panel, which included social housing tenants.

The Review's dedicated website can be found [here](#), including a link to the report. The key recommendations, made in December 2022, were mostly aimed at housing associations. The recommendations are:

1. Every housing association, and the sector as a whole, should refocus on their core purpose and deliver against it.
2. Housing associations should work together to conduct and publish a thorough audit of all social housing in England.
3. Housing associations should partner with tenants, contractors and frontline staff to develop and apply new standards defining what an excellent maintenance and repairs process looks like.
4. The Chartered Institute of Housing should promote the traditional "housing officer" role as a supported and valued employment opportunity with a Chartered Institute of Housing recognised programme of training and continuing development.
5. **Housing associations should work with all tenants to ensure that they have a voice and influence at every level of decision making across the organisation, through both voluntary and paid roles.**



6. Housing associations should develop a proactive local community presence through community hubs which foster greater multi-agency working.
7. Housing associations should support tenants and frontline staff to undertake an annual review of the progress each organisation is making in implementing this review's recommendations.

London Tenants Federation

London Tenants Federation is a membership group for social housing tenant organisations in London, including Tenant Management Organisations and Co-ops. Their focus is on capacity building, including research and developing tenant-led policy proposals. They're supported by the Oak Foundation, Tudor Trust and Trust for London, all grant-making charities focused on tackling poverty through community-based initiatives.

London Tenants obviously focus on the most pressing issues for social housing in London, which means their priorities are mostly about new homes and regeneration. Their manifesto was devised in 2021, and you can find it [here](#). Their main priorities are:

- Ring-fencing government housing grant and suitable public land for the delivery of new social rented homes and infrastructure.
- Tenant involvement in developing design briefs for new and refurbished homes and designing and maintaining resilient Lifetime Neighbourhoods.
- **Tenant access to archives containing information on the construction, improvements to, and health and safety of, their homes.**
- A new Local Authority Housing Committee model, made up of elected councillors and tenant representatives, who would have the deciding vote on issues relating to their homes.
- An extension of the Right to Transfer and Freedom of Information to housing association tenants, so that all tenants are better able to hold their landlords to account and switch landlords should they wish.

Housing Forum

The Housing Forum is a construction sector group, with members throughout the supply chain including developers, consultants, housing associations and local authorities. They are aimed at increasing the supply of new homes, improving the quality of existing homes, and ensuring affordable housing and choice for all.

The Housing Forum's proposals cover all three of their priority areas. Those that link to Tpas priorities are set out below. You can see their manifesto in more detail [here](#), including links to the analysis supporting key proposals.

Tpas can agree with the Housing Forum on the following areas:



- Reform and update the social rent formula, with [rents reflecting the energy efficiency of the property](#), to incentivise landlords to upgrade properties.
- Commit to a [long-term rent settlement](#) for the social housing sector, to help business planning and leveraging of private sector finance.
- Ensure that [Local Housing Allowance](#) is updated each year to remain pegged to private rents, to ensure that low-income households can rent in the private sector.

New Economics Foundation

The New Economics Foundation is a left of centre think tank, bringing forward policy proposals aiming to 'transform the economy so it works for people and the planet'. Their strength is in economic analysis and their three flagship campaigns are around warmer, more sustainable homes, a minimum income and an increase in genuinely affordable social housing.

NEF haven't published an election manifesto, but their [website](#) includes links to their relevant campaigns, and their most recent publication is a [detailed report about Right to Buy](#) – the impact it has had, and how it should be reformed.