

London
Council
Tenant
Manifesto
2006

The majority of London's council tenants live in poverty. Up to 75% in some boroughs are unable to meet the cost of their rent without claiming benefits. Benefit dependency has increased as a result of a national rent setting policy that in part reflects property values, particularly detrimental to London tenants.

The policy will continue to hike up rents and coerce the most excluded to move from London's more 'desirable' areas, potentially creating ghettos. With each £1 a week rent increase 750 London households in low paid employment are pushed out of work and into benefits.

Many council tenants live in poor housing, suffering the legacy of decades of under-investment. Under investment has frequently been compounded by closures and sell-offs of the very things that help to sustain our communities; amenities such as community centres, libraries and play spaces.

There is severe need for low cost rented homes in London. Over 150,000 London homes are overcrowded and 61,000 severely overcrowded. Over 60,000 homeless households are living in temporary homes leased from the private sector and 301,000 are registered on London council waiting lists.

30% of London's council homes have been sold under the Right to Buy yet only 25% of the proceeds from the sales are fed back into investment in council housing.

Numerous policies promote tenant involvement in decision making about our homes and communities, but frequently only lip service is paid to real involvement. Telephone surveys and unaccountable focus groups are frequently being used in preference to consultation with democratic tenants organisations.

We want -

- 'Affordable rents' to be defined as rents that the majority of

tenants can genuinely afford.

- Investment in existing council homes to bring them to a decent standard as defined by tenants.
- Decisions about management of council homes to be made by tenants about what structures perform best, prompted by neither financial need nor existence of preferential funding arrangements.
- All rent payments to be used on management, maintenance and repair of our homes, ending government robbery of our rents (almost £1.5 billion nationally in '05 / '06).
- Sustainable and cohesive communities defined by tenants and residents not politicians or professionals.
- Existing and new housing developments to include social amenities accessible to all.
- Public investment in community centres, amenities for young people, well-designed and maintained play and green spaces.
- An end to private development on council owned land.
- Construction of new council housing to address the chronic need for low cost rented housing in the capital.
- All right to buy receipts to be allocated to building new council homes.
- Real tenant involvement in decision making about our homes and communities, from initial ideas to final product - bottom up solutions.
- Tenant involvement to be carried out in an accountable and democratic fashion.

London Council Tenant Manifesto 2006 has been produced by the London Tenants Federation (LTF), an umbrella organisation bringing together London's borough wide council tenant's federations and organisations.

The LTF is a non party political organisation, our remit is to represent the collective views of our member organisations and provide a strong voice for London's council tenants.

The manifesto contains a list of demands which London's council tenants, their associations and borough wide federations and organisations can ask candidates in the May 2006 local elections to pledge their support to.

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