

**Social
Democrats**

Homes within Reach: Making housing available, making housing affordable

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Introduction

Housing is the greatest challenge this country faces. For the second time in a generation, we are struggling through a savage crisis in housing affordability. In all aspects of housing policy, Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil seem determined to pursue the most expensive method of delivery. For far too long, housing policy in Ireland has been written by developers for developers.

The results speak for themselves: Rents have almost doubled in a decade. House prices in Dublin have also doubled from their trough in February 2012, while prices outside Dublin have risen by 90% from their May 2013 low point. Large numbers of first-time buyers are effectively locked out of owning a home. More than 8,000 people are currently living in emergency accommodation, and many more are experiencing hidden homelessness.

The Social Democrats believe that **housing is a fundamental right**, needed to ensure people can live dignified lives without undue financial hardship, precarity or stress. We need to **radically rethink public policy, and reimagine the social contract**. As a key overall objective, the Social Democrats want to transform our housing system so that the clear aim is to **deliver good quality housing at the lowest possible cost to purchasers and renters**, rather than the highest possible profit to developers and land speculators.

This housing crisis won't be solved unless we change the direction of the State's housing policy. We need to see an end to developer-led policymaking and move towards a new type of public policy as set out, one that takes a full account of diverse interests. By doing this, we can ensure that everyone in Ireland has a place to call home and is enabled to live their life to its fullest potential.

Our Four Housing Priorities Are:

- Making housing affordable
- **Eradicating homelessness** through a housing-led 'Housing First' strategy
- Fairness for renters, including introducing a **nationwide ban on rent increases** until increased supply drives down housing costs substantially
- Building **sustainable communities**.

Building on Public Land

Central to delivering housing supply is **prioritising the use of public land to build affordable and social housing**. We believe exploiting public land-banks should be the absolute priority of Government.

Time and again we have seen that **the market cannot be relied upon to deliver affordable housing**. The State should, and indeed must, step in. Developing public land banks is the only certain way in the short-to-medium term of delivering housing faster and at affordable prices. Government must take the housing crisis by the horns and deal with it directly. Given the chance, we would:

- Begin an **unprecedented programme of house building**, with a delivery target of **20,000 homes a year**. We would increase capital spending to match this ambitious target.
- **Build a mix of one third affordable purchase homes, one third affordable rent, and one third social homes on publicly owned land**, to ensure sustainable communities and a strong tenancy mix.

This mix can be varied based on local Housing Need and Demand Assessments.
- Legislate to prohibit the sale of state land suitable for building homes.
- Contract builders to build on publicly controlled land to deliver social and affordable homes (for both purchase and rent) in socially mixed communities on **sites that are developed to a masterplan with prices set in advance by the State using a Housing Delivery Agency**.

This gives much greater control of the timing and price of new housing supply.
- **Deliver affordability by driving down the costs of building on public land** by tendering for new housing at scale to take advantage of economies-of-scale, ensuring advanced planning permission, and having funding streams in place.
- These steps in place means that a multiplicity of builders can build on sites rather than developers, keeping costs low.

Delivering Affordability

The Social Democrats would introduce a new **Affordable Housing Scheme**.

- We would use the **extensive residentially zoned public land that is available to public authorities to build homes** that are affordable to rent or buy. The Ó Cualann model, which has delivered affordable housing in Dublin, Cork and Waterford, is an excellent example of what can be done with the right kind of model. We would scale up delivery of housing on this basis.
- We would give far greater commitment to affordable for-purchase housing schemes, alongside **Cost Rental projects** in the vein of the Vienna Model.
- We would also strengthen the hands of Local Authorities when negotiating the cost of Part V housing (both social and affordable) by providing that where developers are stalling in negotiations the local authority will acquire land from within that development from the developer within a specified time period.
- We would also remove leasing as an option for Part V delivery, putting a halt to the scandalous situation where instead of local authorities buying properties as social housing, they are increasingly entering into long-term leasing deals – paying eye-watering rents for up to 30 years – before handing the keys back to the developer or the investment fund.
- Schemes that focus on boosting demand do not make housing more affordable, regardless of what they claim. They serve solely to benefit developers and artificially inflate prices, and should be scrapped.

Why has government failed to deliver affordability?

There have been two fundamental flaws in the Government's approach to affordability to date.

First, in a number of instances, they have sought to define affordability in terms of a discount on the market price. This is a mistake. The housing market is dysfunctional. Affordability must instead be defined in terms of income and ability to pay. Good quality housing shouldn't cost anyone in Ireland more than 33% (at most) of their take-home pay, including utilities. It is on this basis that affordability should be defined and tested.

Second, instead of reducing costs to make housing more affordable, the Shared Equity Scheme and other policy measures focus on increasing household debt. This is a flawed approach and should fundamentally be re-evaluated.

The Social Democratic view is that the State must take a more proactive role in delivering social and affordable homes. At least 20,000 social and affordable homes should be built each year over the lifetime of this Government. The Ó Cualann model of affordable housing now needs to be scaled up and rolled out nationwide. If this was done with energy and vigour, as social housing developments were built in the 1930s, it could have a significant impact on the cost of housing, resulting in more affordability across the board.

Housing in Ireland is becoming increasingly unaffordable. Dublin is one of the most expensive cities in Europe in which to buy or rent a home. Housing is more expensive in our capital city than in Paris, Berlin or Rome. The uncontrolled affordability crisis now extends to our other cities and towns, as well as villages and rural areas, while spiralling construction costs are helping drive up housing costs. Making housing affordable has to be a top priority for this government.

Ending Homelessness

The current homelessness crisis is an entirely predictable emergency. Yet it is within the power of Government to put an end to it once and for all. What is required is political will and courage. In government, we would:

- Make a **commitment to eliminating homelessness**. This must be the first step.
- Scale up to building **20,000 social and affordable homes** per year.
- Follow international best practice which shows that the **Housing First** approach is key to tackling the problem. We are committed to ensuring roll out of Housing First is doubled so that secure permanent housing with wrap-around supports is provided to all people who sleep rough, as well as long-term users of emergency hostels and shelters.
- Restore and enhance funding to **homeless mental health services and dual-diagnosis services**.
- **End privatisation** of homeless hostels, shelters and services.
- Invest in **homeless prevention measures** to help stop more people becoming homeless.
- Develop and implement a strategy to **eliminate youth homelessness**, with a strong focus on those exiting care. Such a strategy would be LGBTQ+ inclusive and address the issues faced by Travellers and other ethnic minorities.
- Reduce the grounds for eviction and **legislate to ensure that no family is evicted into homelessness**.
- Hold a **referendum** to provide for the **right to housing**.
- **Extend Homeless HAP to the whole country** and ensure the HAP scheme can provide **discretionary uplifts**.
- **End the scandal of families living in hotels and family hubs** for long periods.
- **Increase funding for homelessness spending and services**, including investment in family case managers, and reform of welfare laws in relation to under 25s experiencing homelessness.
- Establish the levels of **hidden homelessness** and take steps to ensure the housing needs of those not presenting to services, but still effectively homeless, are met.

Fairness for Renters

In recent years, private rent prices have increased to an astronomical degree. Figures from the Residential Tenancies Board show that the standard rental property in Ireland cost €1,256 per month at the end of 2020, a 68% increase from their recent low of €745 in early 2012 (€511 difference). During that time, average earnings only increased by 21% over the same period.

The Social Democrats propose a **ban on residential rent increases** for at least 3 years.

The current rent cap of 4% per annum is too high; it was five times the rate of inflation at the time it was set. It does not apply across the whole country and it has been too easily evaded by some landlords. Above all else, it hasn't worked. **Rents remain at record levels and are rising by more than 4%, even in rent pressure zones.** There is no justification for any further increases. This would be key to stopping the flow of families into homelessness.

Other measures to ensure greater protection for renters:

- The Social Democrats would legislate to provide for **tenancies of indefinite tenure**, so that tenancies can't simply be ended at the end of each 6-year cycle.
- We will ensure that REITS and 'Cuckoo' Funds pay a fair amount of tax, greatly reducing their activities which are driving up purchase prices and rents, and depriving many renters who are hoping to buy a home of the opportunity to do so.
- We would introduce the **Deposit Protection Scheme**, a new legal definition of deposit to mean one month's rent, and a rental debt mediation scheme.
- **No-fault evictions must end.** Tenants that pay their rent and are not in breach of their rental agreement should not be subject to arbitrary eviction.
- The Residential Tenancies Board must work for both renters and landlords if the rental sector is to be a functioning sector. There are many good landlords, but we would **strengthen the Residential Tenancies Board** so that it is in a much better position to regulate the rental sector. Too often tenants have found themselves

turfed out of their homes at a whim of a landlord. We need **far better enforcement of the law in relation to rents and security of tenure**, better information for both tenants and landlords, and a far more efficient dispute resolution process to serve tenants and landlords fairly.

- We would significantly **increase penalties for rogue landlords and rogue tenants**.
- We would **limit sale of property as a grounds for terminating a tenancy** by amending Section 34 of the Residential Tenancies Acts and update legislation so tenants of Buy-to-Let properties in receivership are transferred to the receiver and on to a new landlord.
- We would **ban all sales of properties to vulture funds**, legislate to ensure that **no families can be evicted into homelessness**, and change the legal definition of a legal definition of landlord to include banks and receivers.
- We would legislate to afford **greater protections to licensees** in tenancy situations.
- At present, tenants in home share situations where the total rent is above €3,333 per month face stamp duty on top of their rental bill. As rents rise, more and more renters will fall into this category. This is a grossly unfair tax and only makes a bad situation worse. We would **scrap this stamp duty**.
- **Establish a Rent Register** as per our Residential Tenancies (Amendment) Bill 2018.
- Far more inspections need to be conducted, and compliance must be **enforced by an enhanced and empowered** Private Residential Tenancies Board.
- The age profile of tenants is increasing, meaning that people are renting into older age. Long-term leases provide security of tenure for older tenants. As noted above, we will **legislate to provide for tenancies of indefinite duration** so they can't simply be ended at the end of each 6-year cycle.
- Unacceptable practices such as soliciting bids and demanding detailed personal data show the need for strong regulation of estate agents. There must be **penalties for soliciting bids on rental homes**.
- We would **limit ancillary charges that landlords can apply** - such as bin collection and car parking that in some cases are being used by landlords to side-step current rent caps. We would also ban the taking of deposits to view properties for rent.

A role for the Cost Rental model

The Social Democrats believe Cost Rental housing should be an important pillar for delivering affordable rented homes. Cost Rental is secure rental accommodation where rents are set at a level that covers the cost of providing the homes over a period of time, usually several decades. It is a key part of housing in many European countries, including Austria, Denmark and Finland.

Cost Rental should be publicly-provided publicly-owned housing. Whether provided by central government, local authorities or approved housing bodies, the goal should be to provide rental accommodation that is sustainable, high in quality, and affordable for low and middle-income earners.

A move away from rents set only by the 'market' will help to provide many households with a more affordable alternative to the private rental sector, where the focus is on charging maximum rents. Instead, Cost Rental provides greater certainty to tenants, who know that rents will only change based on changes in the cost of providing their home. This is a very different experience to the uncertainty of many renters in the private sector.

In countries like Austria and Denmark, all money raised from rents in the Cost Rental sector must remain within the system. The money is constantly recycled to fund renovations or new buildings. Rents collected from older Cost Rental buildings help pay for new developments, so that over time the need for public capital investment can fall, and the social housing sector becomes more self-sustaining. This would be an improvement on the current situation, as investment continues even when the economy is not healthy. To guarantee the recycling of funds in the Irish Cost Rental system, legislation must prevent providers from extracting funds.

Cost Rental schemes could be potentially funded through the Housing Finance Agency, the European Investment Bank, the Council of Europe Development Bank, or various EU-level funding schemes. Ways to leverage money on deposit at Irish financial institutions should also be examined. The state could also assist through the provision of low-cost finance arrangements, loan guarantees, or preferential access to land.

End preferential tax regime for Cuckoo funds

It is scandalous that a phenomenon that is driving up the cost of housing in Ireland is supported with special tax-breaks from the State. It is high time this ended.

Since 2018, investment funds have spent €4 billion on residential property in Ireland. Ordinary buyers, who have to scrimp and save for years for a deposit, cannot compete with these multi-billion-euro funds. Foreign investors have an advantage over individual and domestic purchasers of property as they can access finance at sometimes very low cost, with Irish mortgage rates closer to 3%.

The various holding structures available for investors to use to purchase Irish property give an additional advantage in that reductions, reliefs and exemptions exist for rental income, capital gains tax and withholding taxes. Both these factors contribute to investors outbidding domestic buyers of land and homes, further increasing prices and affordability for ordinary people.

Government seems to believe that a special rate of stamp duty on bulk purchases of more than nine homes will be sufficient to quell the influence of these funds in the Irish housing market. We say it is not nearly enough.

We would:

- Implement a complete ban on institutional investors buying houses in Ireland and aim to restrict their activity to the non-residential property sector.
- Ensure that the Irish Strategic Investment Fund is not investing in these funds, effectively using taxpayer money to help 'cuckoo' funds compete with first-time buyers and further deepen the housing crisis.
- Charge REITs and other institutional investors active in the property market tax on income from property rentals, as well as Capital Gains Tax of 33% on profit from disposal of assets.
- Ensure no form of institutional investor is excluded from necessary taxation reforms or best practice reporting requirements.

Challenge our Relationship with Land

We have seen two housing crises in one generation. If we want to prevent more of the same, we need to change our relationship with land.

The 1973 report of the Committee on the Price of Building Land, better known as the Kenny Report, has sat on the shelf of successive governments of all stripes – whether made up of Fianna Fáil, Fine Gael, Labour or Greens – despite each party making promises and commitments around implementing its key points while in opposition. The political establishment has no interest in significant land reform in Ireland.

The State should defend the public interest by having a far more prominent role in land banking, concentration of ownership, and land pricing. This will almost inevitably mean significant Constitutional reform.

To this end, we are committed to a referendum to reform Article 43 of the Constitution to better reflect the common good and ensure that housing is a constitutional right.

Ireland has the lowest population density in Western Europe, but some of the highest land and home prices. This is a sign of dysfunction. We would task our proposed Housing Delivery Agency to examine our land policy and charge it with bringing forward clear recommendations and an implementation strategy for legislative and constitutional changes.

This review would examine:

- Concentration of ownership.
- Windfall taxes from land rezoning.
- Land value capture.
- Vacant units.
- Compulsory purchase and compulsory sale.
- A workable land-use site levy and land-hoarding taxes.
- Public land-banking.
- Community ownership.
- Commercial upward only rents.
- How we could provide a right to housing/shelter.

- The relationship between banks and property.
- Barriers to the introduction of alternative tenure options, for example temporal ownership, and co-operative housing
- Restricting the right of ownership in certain cases - such as foreign ownership, and how all of this fits into Constitutional Reform on property rights and the public good.

Since the Famine, indeed long before, land has been at the heart of so many of Ireland's ills. The single biggest gift we could give to the next generation would be to once and for all resolve our issues with land that serve to undermine social rights and public provision, and that fuel the high cost of living and impact the long-term competitiveness of our country.

End Land Hoarding

It has been clear for some time that land-hoarding has been a significant part of the housing crisis. Land is being held back from development while its value increases. Sites are being flipped from one speculator to another. It is particularly galling to see sites formerly controlled by NAMA or other state entities being traded in this "pass-the-parcel" process with little supply at the end of it. Therefore, the Social Democrats propose to put an end to this by legislating for much stronger anti-hoarding measures.

We would:

- Replace the vacant site levy with an **effective specific tax on land-hoarding, in the form of a site value tax** (with appropriate but limited exemptions) that is variable by local authorities but which must be set at an annual rate that exceeds inflation in land values in the specific local authority.
- Bring more transparency to the system, by legislating to **record and publish statistics on land price inflation**, and introducing a **price and ownership register for all land** so that the extent of land oligopolies can be properly tracked and responded to.

Constitutional Change

Right to Housing

We believe that everyone should have a right to a place to call home. This right to housing should be enshrined in the Constitution in a way that would place a significant responsibility on the Government to vindicate this right through its actions – laws, policy and services. **We would hold a referendum which seeks to put this right to a home in the Constitution.**

Rebalance Article 43

Article 43 of the Constitution seeks to balance private property rights with the common good. The problem is that, too often, the common good loses out. This holds us back on issues such as nationwide rent caps, rent certainty and addressing upward-only rent reviews.

Successive governments hid behind a conservative interpretation of this provision to avoid taking the radical steps needed to deal with our dysfunctional housing sector. If we are to put the common good at the heart of our efforts to bring the housing crisis to an end, we need certainty around Article 43. In the absence of a challenge through legal action, **we would favour bringing forward a referendum to let the people decide if the balance should be weighted more towards the common good.**

Proper Standards in Planning

Slashing building standards and attempts to circumvent the planning process cannot fix the housing market. The Social Democrats have introduced a Bill to the Dáil with the aim of overhauling planning laws which have become a developers' charter under recent governments. Our Bill would undo this damage and restore quality and oversight to the planning process.

These sustained attacks on the planning process began with a reduction in the minimum size of apartments in 2015, and continued with the introduction of Strategic Housing Developments (SHDs), a fast-track process for large projects that was drafted in its entirety by the construction lobby.

We were told these changes were necessary to boost supply and make housing more affordable, but the result has been lower quality housing at vastly inflated costs.

A large part of the problem is the SHD process, which was supposed to accelerate housing delivery but has served only to boost the value of developers' sites. Of the 110 SHDs in the Dublin region that were granted planning permission from 2017 and April 2021, construction had started on fewer than 30% of sites by that point. A 'use it or lose it' provision, to stop developers hoarding planning permissions, was supposed to be introduced but never materialised.

As a sign of how inefficient the entire system is, those wishing to appeal SHD planning permissions must take a judicial review – a hugely costly option that is out of reach for most ordinary people. It is notable that, of the judicial reviews that have been taken since the SHD process began, a majority have been successful.

The Social Democrats will restore confidence in the planning process.

Older People's Housing

Most older people wish to stay in their communities. However, there often comes a point when many find their homes are no longer suitable for their needs. They should then have the choice to downsize if they wish, yet there are often no alternative options for them within their local community.

As a result, it is not uncommon for older couples or single people to continue living in three- or four-bedroom houses. For many, this is a choice, but for those who wish to downsize, facilitating this is simply good policy.

By providing better housing options to older people, they could continue living independently for longer, enjoy better health, and stay in their communities among friends and family. In turn, the existing stock of family homes that are larger than needed, expensive to maintain, or ill-suited to changing mobility needs, could be freed up for the thousands of families searching for a suitable home.

We would introduce a range of new measures to provide these options, including:

Designate housing for older people:

Designated developments for older people could be built on many of the small infill sites in our cities and towns, while new estates could include a mix of older people's homes. This would enable people to move to more suitable, affordable accommodation within the same neighbourhood, or even the same estate. There are some models of dedicated housing schemes in Ireland, but there is no standard,

consistent model in place. However in Germany, housing estates designate 10% of their stock for older people, which makes it easier for empty-nesters to downsize within their own estates. Close to a third of older people would feel positively about moving if it better suited their needs. Purpose-built, designated homes would address mobility challenges and safety concerns, as well as enabling longer

independent living and better social inclusion.

We would meet the clear demand by introducing such a **designation for purpose-built homes for older people** by reforming the planning law to ensure that **older persons housing is provided as part of every new development** and the supply of privately built step-down housing is improved.

Renewed Step-Down Housing Scheme:

The models for both sheltered housing and the Financial Contribution Scheme already exist in Ireland, and they could be easily resumed. Both have the added advantage of freeing up family homes for council use, which could be refurbished and let to families on the housing waiting lists.

We would **activate and extend the Financial Contribution Scheme for**

Older Persons so that older people who want step-down housing in a sheltered housing setting can do so - currently several hundred people are on a waiting list for such a scheme in Dublin.

Revise Fair Deal Scheme:

The Fair Deal Scheme provides financial support to help pay for the cost of care in a nursing home. Right now, there are over 13,000 homeowners on the scheme but only 740 of them lease their home. Some properties are occupied by partners or family, but that still leaves thousands of vacant houses. More often than not, they are left empty because rental income is assessed as part of the means test for the scheme.

We would **introduce new legislation to remove the barriers to letting a vacant home**, if one wishes.

Building Sustainable Communities

The Social Democrats believe in building affordable homes as part of diverse communities that are socially and environmentally sustainable.

Good community facilities help to create strong communities. These include playgrounds, parks, community centres and other places where people can gather and connect. The provision of community facilities must be a central plank of Government policy and will require an all of Government approach.

To achieve socially sustainable communities, we must also create new housing options that meet the needs of people of all ages and people with disabilities. This can be done using universal design standards, expanding downsizing and sheltered housing schemes for older people, and ringfencing funding for accommodation for people moving out of congregated settings. The State must end its violation of Travellers rights and provide adequate housing. Own-door accommodation must also be provided for those seeking asylum and international protection.

Housing is also key to environmental sustainability. The Government's housing policies must align with its stated climate ambition. To achieve this, the State must build homes that are fit for the future. This must take into account micro energy generation, rainwater harvesting, and carbon-neutral buildings.

It also means increasing tree planting and biodiversity projects in new developments, providing for allotments and community gardens, and connections to sustainable transport options including cycling infrastructure.

In addition, building standards must be set high and rigorously enforced. Every house should have excellent ventilation, and every household should have a garden, balcony or outdoor space of its own. We must also ensure all housing standards are set suitable for a future where more of us will be working from home.

Additional Housing Priorities

There are a range of other actions which the Social Democrats would prioritise to ensure that we had a functioning, effecting housing system that was fair, accessible and affordable. These include:

New Measures to free up Vacant Homes

At a time of crisis, it is unacceptable that thousands of homes lie vacant, often for years, that would be suitable for long-term renting. The Social Democrats would:

- Introduce a **vacant house levy** for vacant homes (duration to be set by each local authority with appropriate but limited exemptions applying) and set down a higher levy the longer the home remains vacant;
- Recruit a **vacant homes officer in each local authority** where there is a housing shortage to work with home owners to get vacant stock back into use as quickly as possible.
- As already noted, we would **introduce new legislation to remove the barriers to letting a vacant home whilst on the Fair Deal scheme**, if one wishes.

End use of long-term leases

We have noticed an increased reliance by local-authorities on long-term leasing to provide social housing solutions.

Under these arrangements, the State is effectively paying a developer's mortgage on a property by entering into a 20-25-year arrangement, with four-yearly rent reviews built in and no asset to show at the end.

After the term of the lease, the property is refurbished by the council and handed back to the developer. This means that local authority tenants have no security or protections after the term of the lease has expired and can just be thrown out of their homes.

Perhaps most disgraceful has been the absence of independent valuations of these for multi-million euro leases the State has entered into in some cases with developers. This lack of due diligence is indefensible.

We must end the situation when social housing is being sold as a financial product.

Assisting AHBs

Approved Housing Bodies (AHBs) are crucial partners in building social homes, and homes that are affordable to buy or rent, at the scale that they are now needed. One of the key difficulties they encounter is raising the funds necessary to build at the scale they would like to. The borrowings of the main AHBs is considered by the EU as part of Government borrowing. This must be addressed urgently.

We would work towards reclassification of Tier 3 AHBs to 'off balance sheet' status to enable additional funding to be raised by AHBs for the delivery of homes.

HAP & Rent Supplement:

HAP needs to be thought of as a short-term measure – a very costly measure – that must be phased out by an ambitious home building programme. By the end of the 2021, it is projected that €1.4 billion will have been spent on HAP payments since the scheme began in 2015, with a payment that started off costing half a million a year reaching around half a billion euros every year.

In the immediate term we would **improve HAP and Rent Supplement levels, improve tenancy sustainment interventions and make Homeless HAP available nationwide.**

However, while these income supplements are necessary to support people in accessing housing during the current crisis, we recognise that the system of paying public money to private landlords is unacceptable. Our proposal for a nationwide ban on rent increases in conjunction with a vastly increased delivery of social and affordable homes will reduce and remove the need to rely on the private rental market.

Additionally, there are significant delays in accessing and processing HAP. These delays are unfair on both tenants and landlords. We would **resource Local Authorities to ensure they process new HAP payments speedily.**

Fire Safety

The Social Democrats wish to see several measures to improve fire safety standards for existing and future housing stock:

We commit to the re-instatement of a rigorous independent building control inspection system by local authorities - this system can be self-financing as is the case in the UK and can arguably reduce the costs of construction by reducing the BCAR costs. We further commit to a national audit of social housing stock to ensure compliance with Part (B) of the fire safety regulations, which should be risk based with a particular emphasis on higher density developments built over the last 10-15 years including timber frame estates.

Taking estates in Charge

There remains a very significant problem across the country with housing estates not yet taken in charge by the local authority at all, or in a timely manner. A legacy of the crash there is a job of catching up to do. Resources need to be allocated to local authorities to deal with these estates.

Ensure the housing needs of people with disabilities are met

We commit to ensuring a minimum of 7% of social housing to meet universal design standards and ensure that every social housing

pipeline project demonstrates at Capital Appraisal Stage the inclusion of a minimum 7% of fully wheelchair accessible housing with higher percentages applying for areas of higher need.

We would promote the uptake of adaptation and mobility aids grants to enable independent living for persons with disabilities as too many Councils don't spend their full allocation.

Spend funds on Traveller Housing

We would ensure that funding allocated for Traveller housing is spent by Local Authorities, and implement the report of the Traveller Accommodation Expert Review Group.

Apartment and Estate Management

We would undertake a review of apartment and estate management, and work to develop a sustainable model.

Review Social Housing Income Limits

We would review the income limits applied to social housing so that more people can qualify, and ensure they are reviewed in line with inflation.



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