



LONDON

CITIZENS

HOUSING

MANIFESTO

2016

THE LONDON CITIZENS LEADERSHIP GROUP

The London Citizens Housing Manifesto 2016 has been developed through a rigorous, democratic process led by our 220 member institutions across London. This process has been overseen by the following London Leadership Team:

- **Dr Kaneez Shaid**, Director of Marketing, Monoux College
- **Martin Lupton**, Head of the Imperial College Undergraduate School of Medicine
- **The Right Revd Peter Hill**, Bishop of Barking
- **Rabbi Miriam Berger**, Finchley Reform Synagogue
- **Major Mark Rose**, The Salvation Army, William Booth College
- **Janet Emmanuel**, Assistant Principal, Sydenham Girls
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LONDON CITIZENS HOUSING MANIFESTO 2016

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THE HOUSING CRISIS

London Citizens brings communities together to act for social justice and the common good. We have 220 communities in membership reaching over 350,000 Londoners. Since July 2015, tens of thousands of people across London Citizens' member institutions have been listening to one another about how London's housing crisis is affecting their lives.

The nurses, pensioners, teachers, students, business owners, administrative staff and cleaners of this city have met to share experiences and vote on the housing issues that are most important to them. From stories of a family of six sharing one bathroom with 22 other people in Elephant & Castle to a woman who had her family moved 15 times in seven years in Barnet, the things we have heard make clear the dire housing situation many Londoners are forced to endure.

These stories are the human face of London's housing crisis. However, the numbers also clearly demonstrate the severity of the issue; London is building less than half the number of homes the capital needs to meet both population growth and tackle the backlog caused by decades of undersupply. More than one in ten Londoners sit on council waiting lists, private rents have hit a record high and the average home in the capital costs over 15 times the average salary.

We need to radically change our approach if we are to deliver the sort of housing that all of London's citizens deserve.

In Autumn 2015, London Citizens' member institutions met in their boroughs to hear stories of how the housing crisis is affecting people and vote on the housing issues that are most important to them. The three issues voted as the most pressing across the capital are:

- 1. Affordability – the cost of a home in London is simply too much**
- 2. Bad landlords in the private rented sector**
- 3. Lack of control over local developments and regeneration projects**

All the proposals outlined in this paper aim to tackle the three issues above.

LONDON MAYORAL ELECTIONS, 2016

The London Mayoral Election offers a significant opportunity to make things better. For the first time in decades, housing is top of a major political agenda. Since 2000, London Citizens has used the opportunity of the London Mayor Elections to help communities set the agenda of the incoming Mayor. This has been a critically important tactic in the success of the Living Wage campaign.

This election, housing is our number one focus. On 28th April 2016, just one week before election day, 6,000 organised voters will gather at the Copper Box for London Citizens' Mayoral Accountability Assembly. Those candidates that stand a chance of winning the mayoralty will be on stage and will be asked to publicly respond to London Citizens' radical housing agenda. With that in mind, this agenda focuses on issues that the Mayor has the power to make a significant contribution to.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The London Citizens Housing Manifesto, 2016 has been developed through a rigorous, democratic process led by our 220 member institutions across London. This document outlines the result of that process and makes four proposals to tackle the housing crisis, summarised below.

1. LONDON LIVING RENT

The word ‘affordable’ no longer means what most people understand by the term. We need a new standard of affordability linked entirely to incomes and based on the principle that Londoners should not have to pay more than a third of their income on rent. This will be called a London Living Rent.

- We are asking the Mayor to back the London Living Rent, put it in the London Plan and deliver 10,000 London Living Rent homes by the end of the Mayoralty.

2. ROGUE LANDLORD TASKFORCE

Insecure tenancies, rent hikes, neglected repairs and widespread discrimination can make some people’s lives a misery. By setting up a Rogue Landlord Taskforce, the Mayor of London could significantly increase the number of prosecutions and support tenants and communities to campaign for better landlord practice.

- We are asking the Mayor of London to set up a staffed, permanent Rogue Landlord Taskforce and appoint a Deputy Mayor to oversee it.

3. GOOD DEVELOPMENT STANDARD

In order for people to be able to afford to stay in London we need to double the number of homes built each year each year, but these developments need to benefit ordinary Londoners. The Good Development Standard requires all developments on public land to provide 50% genuinely affordable housing and to prioritise local people.

- We are asking the Mayor to back our Good Development Standard, and use planning, land and finance powers to ensure that new developments in London live up to it.

4. COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS

Many Londoners are stuck in a growing gap in the housing market between people who qualify for social housing and people who can afford to buy their own home. Community Land Trusts are a way of providing genuinely and permanently affordable home ownership for those that would otherwise not be able to afford to stay in London.

- We are asking the Mayor of London to back Community Land Trusts and work with us to deliver 1,000 CLT homes by 2020 and 5,000 by 2025.

1. LONDON LIVING RENT

GENUINELY AFFORDABLE RENTS BASED ON LOCAL PEOPLE'S INCOME.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The word 'affordable' no longer means what most people understand by the term. In recent years, the definition of affordability has shifted from being partly linked to people's incomes to being entirely linked to the market rate. We must reconnect the provision of affordable housing to incomes. We propose that a mark of genuinely affordable rents is developed that is linked entirely to incomes. This will be called a **London Living Rent**.

A **London Living Rent** is based on the principle that Londoners should not have to spend more than one third of their income on their rent.

THE DETAILS

Two significant groups of people would benefit from linking rents to incomes. Firstly, there are those on low incomes for whom new 'affordable rents' – defined as up to 80% of the market rate – are largely unaffordable. Secondly, there are those that are trapped in a growing gap in the market between people who qualify for social housing and people who can afford to buy their own home. Newer 'intermediate' and 'sub-market' rents, along with most shared ownership homes, remain unaffordable to the average Londoner.

For those on low incomes, this means linking a **London Living Rent** to the lowest quartile of income (25%) for any given local authority. For those on average incomes, a **London Living Rent** would be linked to the median wage (50%). For example, based on provisional calculations this would mean rents somewhere in the region of the following for London Borough of Redbridge:

no. of beds	A LLR for people on low incomes (affordable rents – Savills & JRF, Living Rent Methodology)	A LLR for people on average incomes (intermediate rents - ONS - all employee jobs 2014 - Gross)
1	up to £85 / week	up to £172 / week
2	up to £110 / week	up to £224 / week
3	up to £136 / week	up to £276 / week
4	up to £163 / week	up to £345 / week

OUR ASKS OF THE NEXT MAYOR

IF ELECTED, WILL YOU AGREE TO:

1. Back our London Living Rent as a mark of genuinely affordable renting, including it in the next London Plan.
2. Deliver over 10,000 London Living Rent homes in London by 2020.
3. Only provide GLA funding to schemes with affordable housing linked to incomes, such as London Living Rent homes.

LONDON CITIZENS WILL:

1. Work with our 220 member institutions to support planning applications that include London Living Rent homes, ensuring protracted planning negotiations do not delay housing supply.



2. A ROGUE LANDLORD TASKFORCE

SUPPORTING LONDONERS TO TAKE EFFECTIVE ACTION AGAINST ROGUE AND CRIMINAL LANDLORDS.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

The current balance of power between landlords and tenants in London is grossly unfair. Insecure tenancies, rent hikes, neglected repairs and widespread discrimination can make some people's lives a misery. However, most landlords provide a good service. Government statistics show that 84% of private renters say they are satisfied with their accommodation, staying in their homes for an average of 3.5 years.

London needs to identify and prosecute the bad landlords without punishing the good. By setting up a **Rogue Landlord Taskforce**, the Mayor of London could actively respond to complaints of rogue and criminal landlords across the capital, significantly increasing the number of prosecutions made and naming and shaming those that are failing their tenants.

THE DETAILS

A **Rogue Landlord Taskforce** would be a permanent team of professionals at the GLA, led by a Deputy Mayor, that meet both regularly and frequently. Their role would be to:

1. Support local authorities and the Housing Ombudsman to follow up complaints about rogue landlords, in conjunction with the police, in order to determine whether they should be prosecuted.
2. Maintain and publish a 'Rogue Landlord Blacklist'.
3. Work with communities to support Londoners to take effective action against landlords and provide material to complainants regarding other services and their rights as tenants.

OUR ASKS OF THE NEXT MAYOR

IF ELECTED, WILL YOU AGREE TO:

1. Set up a fully staffed, permanent Rogue Landlord Taskforce within 12 months of taking office.
2. Appoint a Deputy Mayor to oversee the taskforce.

LONDON CITIZENS WILL:

1. Work with our 220 member institutions to report rogue landlords and support vulnerable tenants affected by the conviction of rogue landlords.



3. GOOD DEVELOPMENT STANDARD

A MARK OF WHAT GOOD DEVELOPMENT MEANS IN LONDON, INCLUDING 50% GENUINELY AFFORDABLE HOMES.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

In order for people to be able to afford to stay in London, we need to double the number of decent, secure and affordable homes built each year. 73% of Londoners want more homes built and yet it is those against building new homes that have their voices heard most. If we are to build the number and type of homes London needs, we must ensure the voices of this majority are heard. However, Londoners will only support building more homes if they know that those developments will benefit local people. Londoners must be given a greater say over how those homes are built, how much they cost and who they are for.

A **Good Development Standard** provides a way for developers, local and regional government and people of London to work together to deliver the homes we need.

THE DETAILS

If a development is over 50 homes, it must meet the **Good Development Standard**. This would mean:

- 50% affordable homes for developments on public land, including **London Living Rent** and **Community Land Trust** homes as examples of best practice.
- If 50% affordable is deemed unachievable on private land, an Independent Public Viability Assessment must be carried out reaching the same conclusion to justify delivering any less.
- Local people to get priority for affordable homes, including local waiting lists and key workers.
- Estate regeneration schemes must include a right to return and the provision of a home at an equivalent or greater standard in the same local authority boundary in the meantime.
- A decision-making steering group made up of local people affected by a development must be included to work alongside the developer.

OUR ASKS OF THE NEXT MAYOR

IF ELECTED, WILL YOU AGREE TO:

1. Back our Good Development Standard as a mark of good development, including it in the next London Plan.
2. Ensure all developments in London over 50 homes meet the Good Development Standard.
3. Work with us to deliver developments that meet the Good Development Standard across the capital, starting with the 15 sites already identified by London Citizens' members.
4. Only provide GLA funding to schemes that meet the Good Development Standard.

LONDON CITIZENS WILL:

1. Work with our 220 member institutions to support planning applications for developments that meet the Good Development Standard, ensuring protracted planning negotiations do not delay housing supply.



4. COMMUNITY LAND TRUSTS

GENUINELY AND PERMANENTLY AFFORDABLE HOMES THAT ARE OWNED AND RUN BY LOCAL PEOPLE

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Increasing pressure on local authority provisions and exponentially increasing house prices mean that many people are having to choose between living in inadequate housing conditions or leaving their friends, family and community for good.

Community Land Trusts (CLTs) are a way of providing genuinely and permanently affordable home ownership, offering one way to address the growing gap in the housing market between people who qualify for social housing and those who can afford to buy their own home. Furthermore, it does so in a way that does not require government subsidy or a reduced profit margin for developers.

THE DETAILS

The total cost of a CLT home is never more than one third of median income. CLT homes are about providing people with a home, not just an asset. The contract signed upon moving in makes sure that residents sell the home to the next household again at a price according to local earnings, making the homes permanently affordable.

From June this year, London's first CLT residents will move into the St Clements site in Mile End to homes sold at just one third of the current open market value. For example, this would mean homes sold at the following price in London Borough of Redbridge:

no. of beds	Cost of a CLT home
1	£111,000
2	£156,000
3	£202,000
4	£247,000

OUR ASKS OF THE NEXT MAYOR

IF YOU, THE NEXT MAYOR OF LONDON, AGREE TO:

1. Back CLTs as a way to build genuinely affordable homes, including them in the next London Plan.
2. Deliver 1,000 CLT homes in London by 2020 and 5,000 by 2025.
3. Facilitate the growth of CLTs by:
 - a) Setting up a community housing unit to allocate loans and provide guidance on starting up, land and possible development partners.
 - b) Having a 'presumption in favour of communities' on public land, ensuring that CLTs are not forced to compete against one another and instead play a key role in the selecting a development partner and the subsequent development itself.

LONDON CITIZENS WILL:

1. Work with our 220 member institutions to identify land and support planning applications for Community Land Trusts, ensuring the supply of genuinely affordable homes across London.
2. Encourage London CLT to offer technical advice based on their experience of delivering CLT homes in London.





LONDON CITIZENS MAYORAL ASSEMBLY 2016

THURSDAY 28TH APRIL
6:30PM - 8:30PM
THE COPPER BOX ARENA



