



London
Liberal Democrats

**Fixing London's Housing:
Homes, Standards, Communities**

Policy Paper, 2025

Contents

Contents	2
Housing, Politics and the Liberal Democrats	3
Housing as a Basic Right.....	3
A Legacy of Failure.....	3
The Liberal Democrat Response.....	3
The Problems Facing London’s Housing System	4
1. People Need Homes that Do Not Exist.....	4
2. Too Many Homes are Poor Quality.....	6
3. Housing Developments are Putting Strain on Communities.....	10
London Liberal Democrat Solutions	13
1. Building more homes: with and for the community.....	13
2. Holding Developers and Providers to Account.....	16
3. Full Provision of the Community Infrastructure that Residents Deserve.....	19
Conclusion	22
Further Notes	24

Housing, Politics and the Liberal Democrats

Housing as a Basic Right

Access to safe, secure, and adequate housing is a fundamental human right - an idea that is not only defended by countless organisations, but also one that is enshrined in international law, including Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

Housing is more than just shelter. It is the foundation upon which individuals build their lives, access education and employment, maintain health and well-being, and participate in community and civic life. Without adequate housing, other rights – such as the right to privacy, security, family life, and even survival – are compromised. In this sense, the right to housing is not only fundamental in itself but also instrumental to the realisation of many other rights. Despite this, housing in the UK – and in London even more so – is increasingly treated as a financial asset rather than a basic human need, with market forces often prioritising profit over people.

A Legacy of Failure

Yet, in the United Kingdom, a nation with considerable wealth and global influence, millions continue to live in substandard, insecure, or unaffordable housing. And London is no exception: even in the capital, the housing system is not working. Years of poor policy-making and weak government have resulted in insecure housing, low-quality homes and broken communities, all of which have only worsened the living situations of young people and families, key workers, renters and homeowners.

According to [Ipsos](#), this need for a focus on housing matches with the London public's own priorities, with housing affordability being the second most important issue for Londoners (December 2024). Whilst the majority of the public support the need for greater housebuilding, there are some disagreements on specifics, including high-rise builds and private rented vs affordable homes/houses to buy homes, and challenges differ per area in a system that is far from being uniform across boroughs.

The Liberal Democrat Response

Liberal Democrats know that resolving the housing crisis must be a priority for the Westminster Government (and for the London Mayor), and to achieve the best results for residents, must have a Westminster Government that champions homes, communities and infrastructure. That is why the Liberal Democrats passed a comprehensive policy paper on [Tackling the Housing Crisis](#) at its Autumn 2023 Conference, and had the most ambitious manifesto on housing and communities of all major parties.

The national party's policy leadership must therefore be echoed here in London, where Liberal Democrats in City Hall can help find the solution to our broken London housing system and provide affordable, high quality housing for all across London.

The Problems Facing London’s Housing System

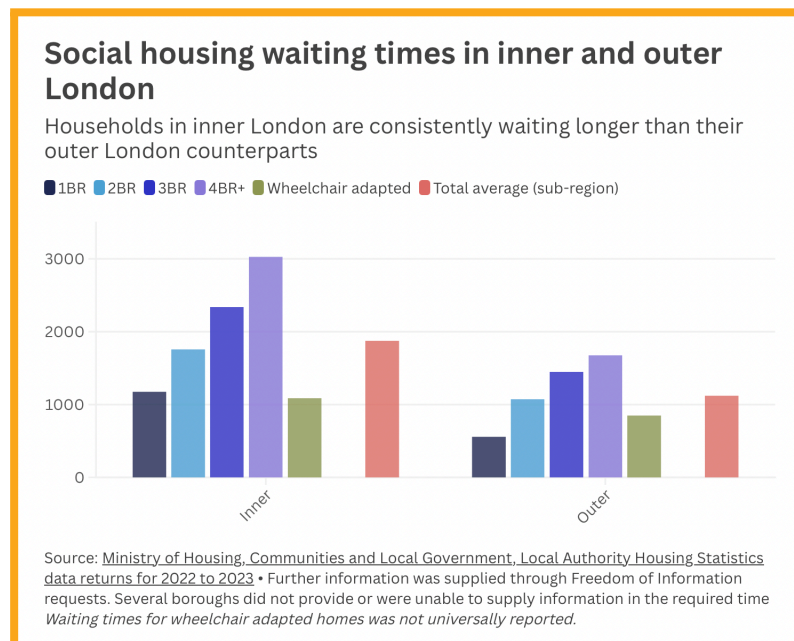
The London Liberal Democrats and Londoners know that the housing system in our city is broken. It is not just a gut feeling or perception but a hard and painful reality.

1. People Need Homes that Do Not Exist

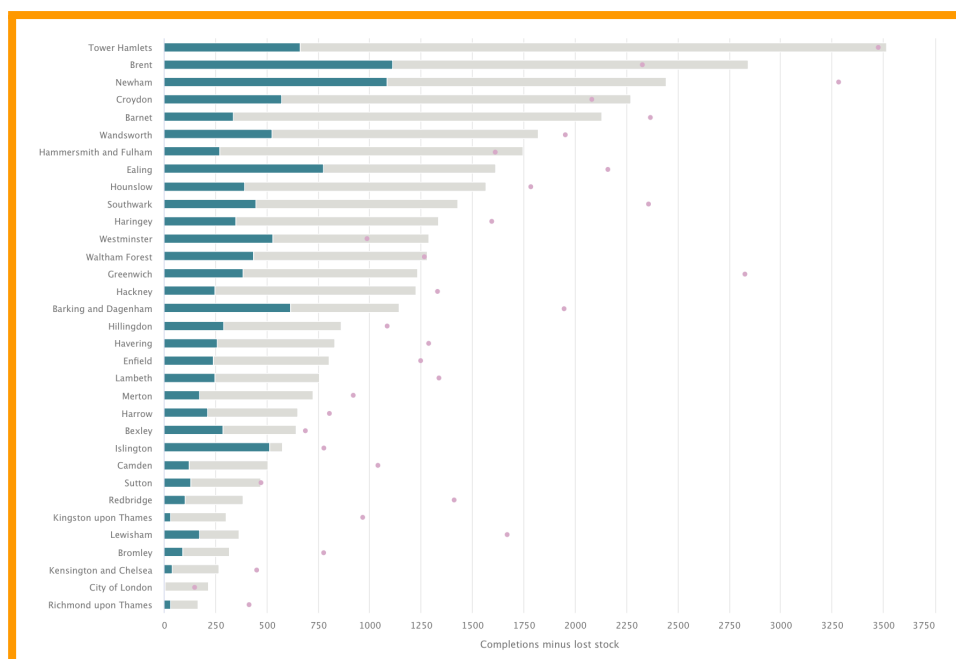
More than 300,000 people currently on London’s social housing waiting list would have to wait [27 years](#) at the current social homes delivery pace to be offered a home, and over a century for family social homes.

The [London Council](#) highlights over 300,000 people on the social housing waiting lists across Boroughs, with [Centre for London](#) calculating a waiting time of 2 years to 6 and a half years - a damning statistic. The [Trust for London](#) also highlights that provision of affordable, social and otherly discounted housing (the key solution to resolving this issue) also falls short in many Boroughs.

Whilst some perform better in other metrics including total homes being built, and whilst many face reasonable difficulties in housebuilding, the pattern of housing provision regularly falling below 2021 targets means a far weaker chance to resolve the housing crisis.



[Source](#)

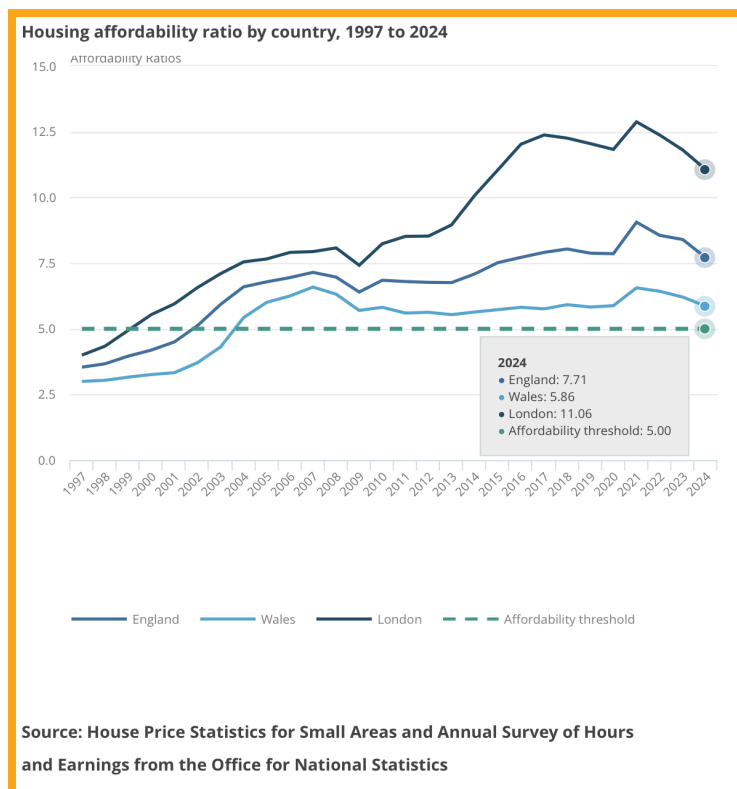


[Source](#)

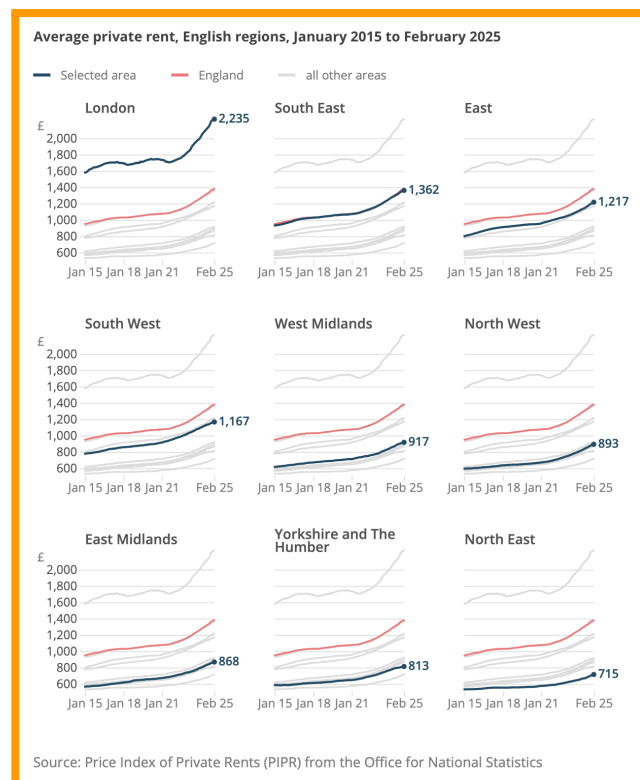
Insufficient affordable housing for students, young professionals, families and key workers is adversely impacting our city’s development, balanced growth and vibrancy.

For those wanting to rent the [ONS](#) highlights the high and accelerating increasing private rents in the London private renting market, meaning Londoners spend much of their paychecks on living in their homes, with little security and an inability to save or spend their money on the wider London economy.

Too many are currently priced out of residential areas - in Inner Boroughs in particular- with an adverse impact on London’s economy and London’s public services (police, health, schools).



[Source](#)



[Source](#)

London Boroughs spend £4 million a day for temporary accommodation. Although critically required in the short term, it is a totally inappropriate solution for the 60,000 families (and 85,000 children) and a very ineffective use of tax-payers money

For those most vulnerable people and communities in our society, vital resources like temporary accommodation and social housing are not being properly provided. According to [Trust for London](#), the proportion of people in temporary accommodation varies wildly across London boroughs, leading to inequalities both regarding how much councils must invest into temporary housing accommodation, and regarding the benefits councils can receive from long-term residents.

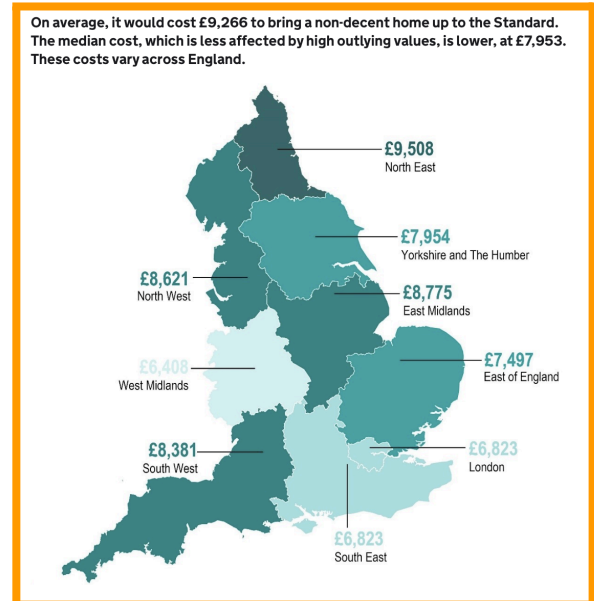
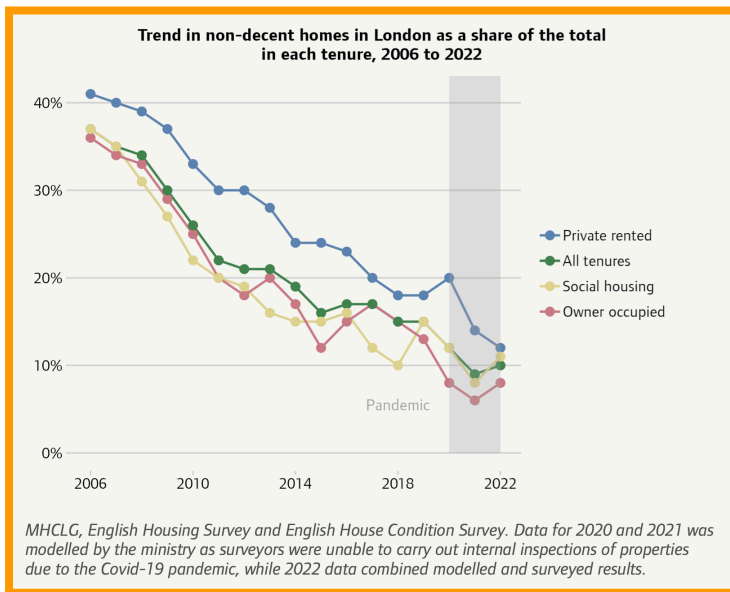
Despite the inadequacies of temporary accommodation for so many, the solution – being that of increasing housing provision – has continued to be resisted by politicians for too long. In particular, successive Mayors of London have failed to use the tools at their disposal to build sufficient accommodation for vulnerable people.

2. Too Many Homes are Poor Quality

1 in 10 Londoners live in a non-decent home

The [GLA's 2024 Housing Report](#) highlights a welcome trend of reduced non-decent homes, but London still sees around 1 in 10 non-decent homes across the capital: around 380,000 homes in total.

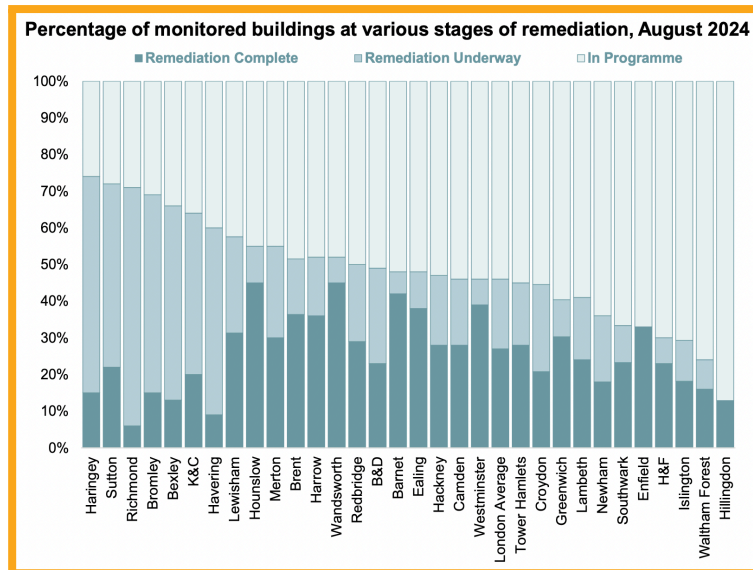
Across the housing system, poor quality homes also need improving. The [English Housing Survey](#) highlights damning data on the poor quality of housing and how it particularly impacts certain demographics including ethnic minorities, those not in full-time employment, and those on lower income. Considering London's relative affordability for upgrading a non-decent home to Standard, this is something the GLA and local authorities must take seriously. This will require the existing gap on the effective control, supervision and oversight of Housing Associations in London to be addressed.



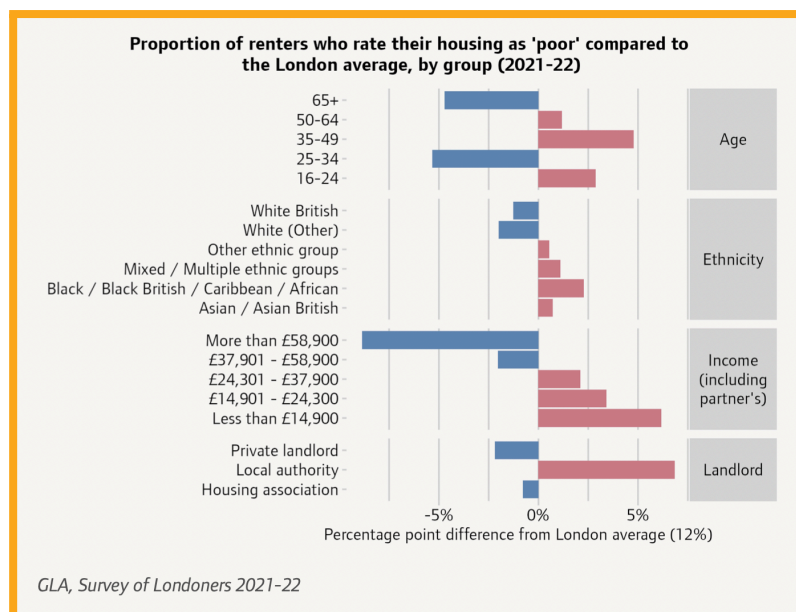
Ongoing work to improve the safety of houses is slow, leaving residents at risk to fire, electrical safety, chemical hazards and crumbling ceilings, floors and walls.

Safety of housing must be a priority, with high profile scandals giving tangible examples of the urgency of this situation. The Grenfell Tower Fire and other similar tragedies have outlined the risks of unsafe cladding, the Balfour Tower Lift Failure has highlighted the need for proper mobility facilities, and the 'Death Trap' Clyde House, bringing to light the severe structural issues. Furthermore, the [Housing Ombudsman](#) outlines the continuing high prevalence of serious flaws in housing quality as a key issue that residents care about, with 'property condition consistently being our most complained about issue'.

Whilst there is clearly, and notoriously, considerable evidence for these issues existing, highlighting a problem cannot be the end of the process. As reported by the [London Assembly November 2024 Report](#) on Housing Stock, the rate of improvement of housing stock, in particular considering fire cladding, remains slow. Meanwhile, a [2022 report on Housing in London](#) brings to light the huge inequality between communities on housing quality, with increasing prevalence of poor quality housing for people of certain age brackets, people of certain ethnicities, those with less income and those with local authorities as their landlords.



[Source](#)



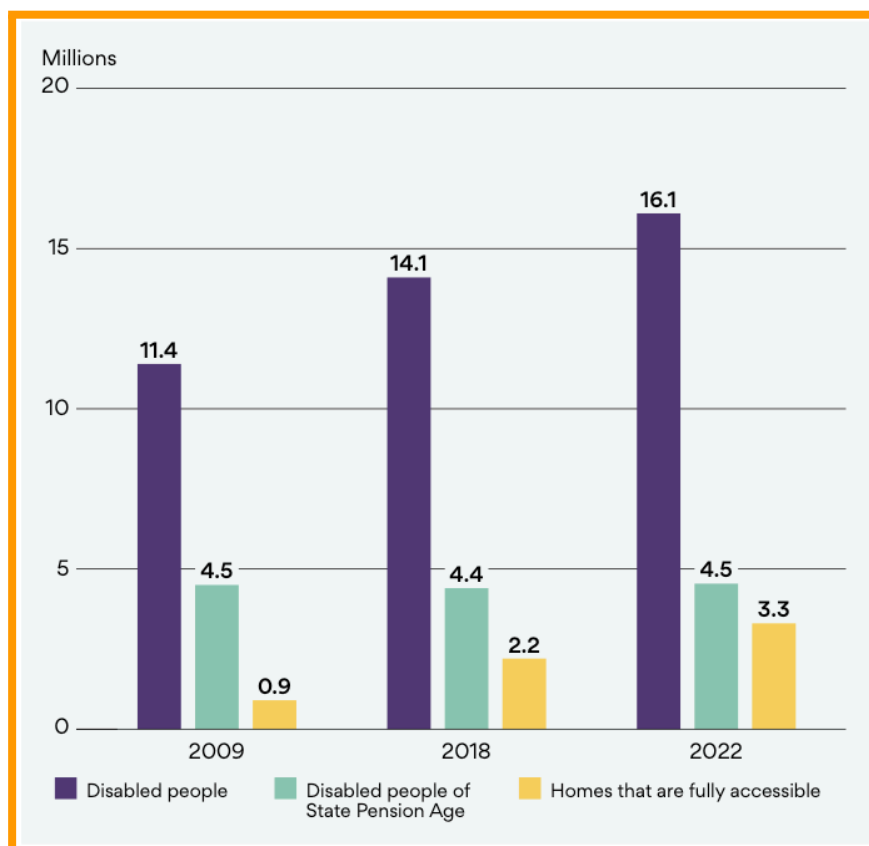
[Source](#)

Accessible Homes are Missing from London's Housing Mix

London's housing system systematically fails Disabled and older people. Only 13% of homes nationally have basic accessibility features, and over 400,000 wheelchair users live in unsuitable accommodation. In London, the shortage is particularly acute, with waits of decades for a wheelchair-accessible social rent home. Recent [GLA reports](#) have outlined that targets are not being met, leaving to a gap in accessible housing.

This is not only a failure of dignity and human rights but also a barrier to equality in work, education, health and community life. Inaccessible homes force many into institutional

settings, keep families apart, and undermine independent living. The failure to embed accessibility into new builds also creates a ticking time bomb as London's population ages.



[Source](#)

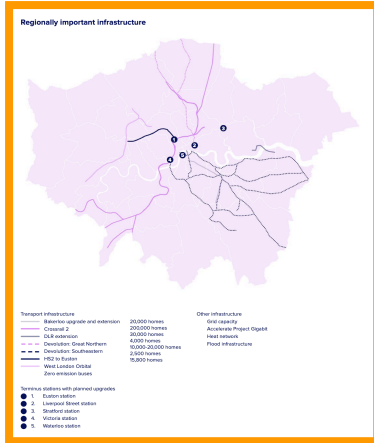
3. Housing Developments are Putting Strain on Communities

Vital, sustainable and long-term infrastructure like Schools, GPs, Water supply and sewage management, and Transport are not seeing sufficient investment, nor being properly funded in our communities, leaving communities neglected and ignored, and leaving quality of life decreasing for many people

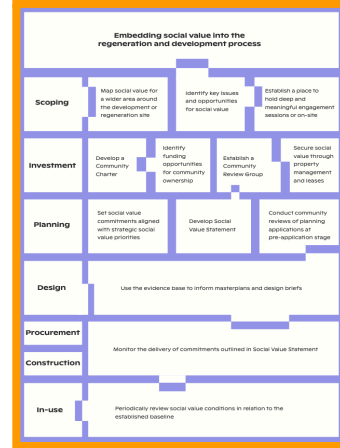
As housing developments increase across London to meet demand, they are often delivered without the vital, long-term infrastructure needed to support healthy, thriving communities. Schools, GP surgeries, water supply, sewage & waste management, public transport links and capacity, green spaces, and community centres – essential elements that turn housing into functioning neighbourhoods and thriving communities – are too often delayed, deprioritised, or missing entirely.

In some areas, families struggle to secure school places or face long commutes to access basic healthcare. In others, lack of housing for families have led to schools closing due to low pupil numbers. Overstretched transport networks lead to longer journeys and increased emissions. Public services buckle under the pressure of rising populations without the resources to match. These pressures not only erode the quality of life but also sow division and frustration within communities who feel ignored in the planning process.

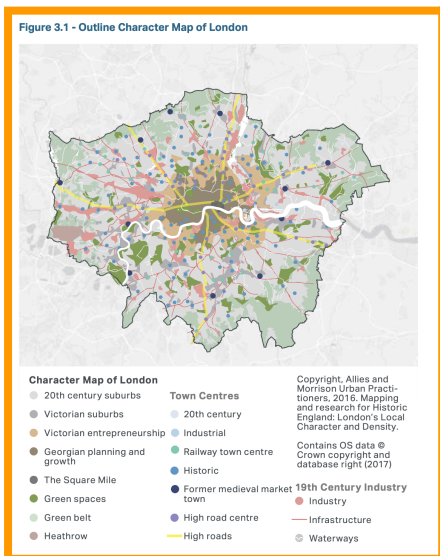
Moreover, the absence of thoughtful, integrated infrastructure undermines the long-term sustainability of development itself. Short-term gains in housing numbers come at the cost of lasting community wellbeing. For many, regeneration has become synonymous with displacement, poor consultation, and the erasure of local identity



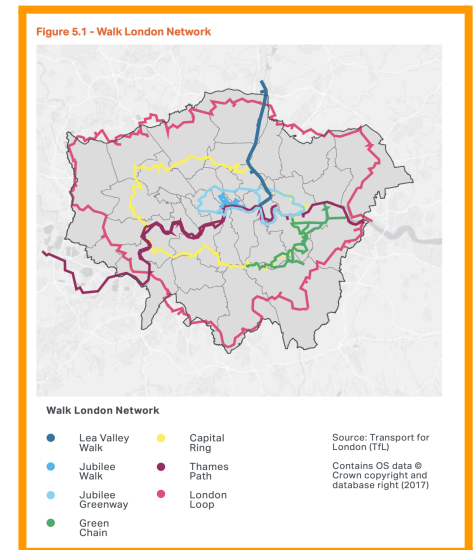
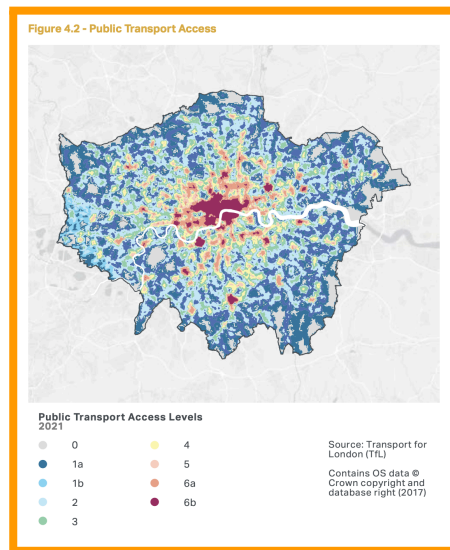
Source



Source



Source



We know this is an ambitious vision given the current condition of our estates

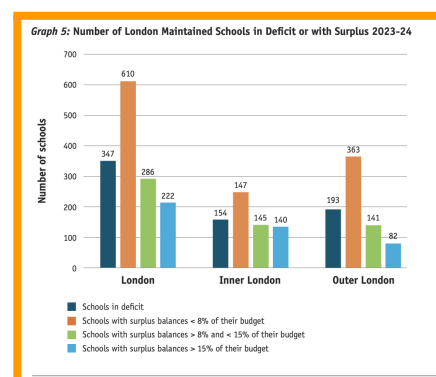
It has been estimated that **1/3** of London's primary care infrastructure needs to be rebuilt with many practices operating from Victorian premises.

Furthermore, **41%** of London's estate was built before **1965** compared to **29%** for the rest of England.

even more tellingly, **21%** of London's NHS estate was built before **1948** whilst for the rest of England this was **just 11%**.

Current estimates indicate that **£8bn** will be needed over the next 10 years to transform the London health and care estate into **fit for purpose** facilities.

Source

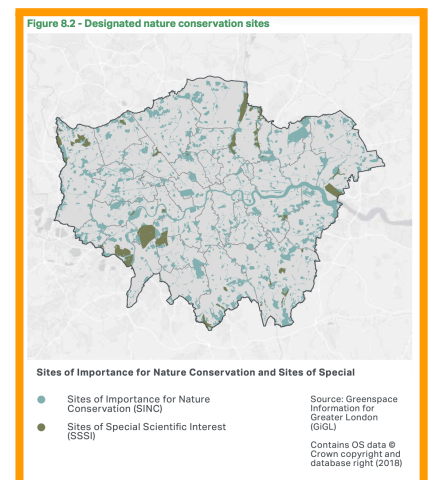
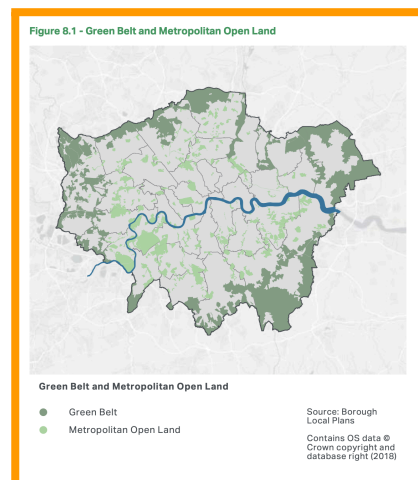
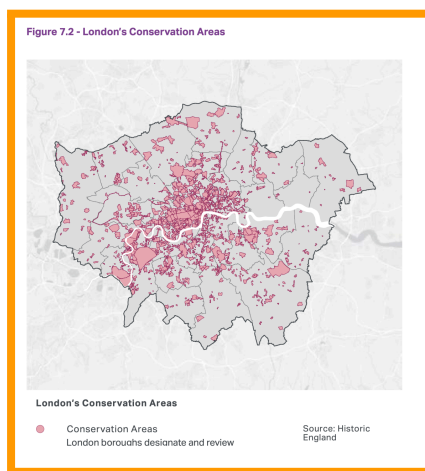


Source

Those developments which are built with profit maximisation as a focus need to also protect the existing natural environment, which particularly impacts outer boroughs. New builds must not destroy biodiverse lands and sites of special scientific interest, and must be built with due consideration of air and water pollution.

In addition to putting pressure on social infrastructure, many housing developments, particularly those driven solely by maximising profit, also pose serious threats to the natural environment. Too often, construction takes place on green spaces, biodiverse habitats, and even designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), resulting in the loss of critical ecosystems and the degradation of local landscapes. This not only harms wildlife but also undermines the long-term health and wellbeing of communities that rely on access to nature for recreation, air quality, and mental health.

Furthermore, insufficient environmental oversight means that new developments may contribute to air and water pollution through poor planning, excessive car dependence, or inadequate waste and drainage systems. In the context of a climate and ecological emergency, London cannot afford to support or endorse construction practices that sacrifice environmental integrity for short-term gain. Future housing must be environmentally responsible, community-led, and designed to enhance, not erase, our shared natural resources.



[Source](#)

London Liberal Democrat Solutions

1. Building more homes: with and for the community

London is one of the most culturally, socially, and economically diverse cities in the world. It follows that its housing system must reflect this diversity – not only in the types of homes available but also in how they are accessed and financed. A one-size-fits-all approach no longer suffices, if it ever did. We must build more homes across the city, and we must make sure that they model that prioritises choice, flexibility, increased provision of housing, and suitability, enabling Londoners from all walks of life to find a home that fits their needs and aspirations.

Social homes remain a critical foundation of this model. They provide stability and affordability for those in vulnerable or low-income situations, but demand has significantly outstripped supply. A commitment to increasing the number of social homes built annually, supported by both government and housing associations, is essential. Similarly, affordable housing schemes, such as shared ownership, intermediate rent, and discounted market sale, must be expanded and better integrated across boroughs to prevent the clustering of low-income housing in less desirable areas.

The rental market also requires reform and diversification. While private rental is the only viable option for many, it is often insecure and unaffordable. Rent-to-buy schemes can bridge the gap between renting and homeownership, helping individuals build equity while maintaining mobility. Simultaneously, housing associations and community land trusts offer models of more democratic, community-driven management, often producing better outcomes in terms of maintenance and tenant satisfaction.

An often-overlooked part of the housing ecosystem includes houses in multiple occupation (HMOs), Airbnbs, and hotels. The rapid proliferation of short-term lets and unregulated HMOs has strained local communities and reduced long-term housing supply. Regulation should ensure these sectors contribute positively to the housing mix without displacing long-term residents or destabilising neighborhoods. Planning frameworks must be updated to manage these uses more proactively, especially in boroughs facing acute housing pressures. The GLA must also ensure that the provision of HMOs, Airbnbs and hotels, which are themselves useful to filling certain gaps in the housing system, do not erode the foundations of London's housing system.

Ultimately, a diverse housing system must be deliberately designed, not accidentally assembled. This means planning for diversity not just in housing type but in tenure, affordability, and location. London must embrace a housing strategy that reflects the multifaceted nature of its population.

Recommendations:

- 1. Release underused GLA land to build over 500,000 homes across London, alongside a binding, annual Public Land Housing Delivery Plan**

Currently, the Mayor and GLA bodies (TfL, police, fire etc.) own large amounts of underused land, but its release is slow, fragmented, and lacking transparency. While individual TfL schemes have delivered housing, there is no citywide schedule of land disposal, nor accountability for delivery.

The Mayor should publish a binding annual Public Land Housing Delivery Plan, setting out a rolling pipeline of sites, with clear housing start and completion targets. This should require dense, car-free development with at least 50% affordable housing on public land, using long leases and affordability covenants. The Mayor should use CPO powers and Mayoral Development Corporations to accelerate land assembly and avoid borough-level delays.

2. Implement a ‘Smart Density’ design code for areas with high Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTAL 4-6 zones).

The London Plan encourages boroughs to optimise sites, but in practice most inner-city boroughs under-zone and resist higher-density housing in well-connected areas. Developers often face protracted design negotiations.

The Mayor should issue a mandatory London-wide design code through London Plan Guidance, requiring a default of 3 storeys, corner plots and shop-top housing in areas with good transport connectivity (PTAL 4) and a default of 8 storeys in areas with top-level transport connectivity (PTAL 6). This would standardise acceptable forms, reduce planning disputes, and prevent boroughs from blocking modest but essential mid-rise development. The Mayor should also tie GLA funding streams to boroughs that adopt and apply the code consistently.

3. A Fast Track that works and delivers for Communities across the Capital

The Mayor’s Fast Track Route for affordable housing is meant to speed approvals where schemes meet affordability thresholds. But in practice, schemes still face lengthy viability debates, late-stage reviews, and long waits for GLA decisions. This undermines developer confidence and slows delivery.

The Mayor should publish service-level agreements committing to Stage 1 decisions within six weeks for compliant schemes, and guarantee no late-stage review where the policy thresholds are met. An online dashboard should track borough and GLA officer compliance. This would give developers and housing associations certainty, cut red tape, and accelerate dense affordable housing schemes.

4. Establish a GLA Urban Housing Delivery Unit

One of the biggest bottlenecks in London is borough planning capacity. Many boroughs lack in-house expertise on viability, fire safety, daylight standards, or dense design typologies, leading to delays and refusals.

The Mayor should fund a GLA Urban Housing Delivery Unit, made up of planners, architects, viability specialists, and engineers, who would embed within boroughs to support complex

infill and intensification schemes. The unit would help boroughs process high-density proposals quickly and confidently, while ensuring consistent application of London Plan policies. This would raise housing delivery without waiting for boroughs to build up capacity themselves.

5. Improve accessibility across London's Housing

London's housing remains inaccessible for too many Disabled and older Londoners. Compliance with M4(2) and M4(3) standards is inconsistent, with "viability" frequently used to dilute requirements, while adaptation of existing homes is slow, under-funded, and fragmented across agencies. New developments still exclude step-free routes and inclusive design features, and the city lacks clear, borough-level data on accessible supply and unmet need, all making effective planning and accountability difficult.

The Mayor must do better to improve accessibility in our housing system, by:

- a. **Guarantee Accessibility in All New Homes:** Require all new builds in London to meet the M4(2) accessible and adaptable standard, and mandate at least 10% of homes to meet the M4(3) wheelchair user standard.
- b. **Accessible Housing Delivery Plan:** Alongside the Public Land Housing Delivery Plan, publish annual accessibility targets and borough-by-borough reporting on delivery of accessible homes.
- c. **Retrofit for Independent Living:** Expand the Retrofit Accelerator to cover accessibility adaptations as well as energy upgrades, enabling Disabled and older Londoners to stay in their homes safely.

2. Holding Developers and Providers to Account

A safe, healthy, and energy-efficient home is a basic right. Yet across London, thousands of residents, particularly in the private rented and HMO sectors, live in substandard conditions. The Grenfell Tower tragedy exposed the catastrophic consequences of lax enforcement and weak regulation. The city must respond not only with empathy but with a comprehensive strategy to ensure such failures never happen again.

Housing standards must be rigorously enforced and consistently updated to reflect current knowledge on health, safety, and sustainability. Fire safety inspections, energy efficiency ratings, and minimum space standards must be non-negotiable, with clear, effective penalties for non-compliance. Landlords and property managers must be held to account through a combination of licensing regimes, tenant feedback mechanisms, and public reporting.

A city-wide Property Quality Register, accessible to tenants and homebuyers, could provide transparency and incentivise compliance. Such a platform would allow users to see inspection results, outstanding violations, and landlord performance histories, thereby introducing a new level of consumer protection into the housing system.

Energy efficiency is also central to a sustainable housing future. Retrofitting older homes with insulation, heat pumps, and solar panels should be a major public investment priority. These improvements not only reduce emissions but also cut energy bills—an essential consideration amid rising living costs. Targeted support should be available for landlords and owner-occupiers alike, particularly in low-income areas where upfront costs can be a barrier.

Resident associations also play a key role in maintaining quality and accountability. They offer a collective voice for homeowners and tenants, providing forums for shared decision-making, dispute resolution, and improvement projects. Local authorities should be encouraged to support and expand these associations through funding, training, and legal support.

High-quality housing is about more than aesthetics—it's about dignity, safety, and opportunity. London's housing strategy must embed these values at every level, from planning and construction to occupation and management.

Recommendations

- 1. Establish a London Housing and Planning Authority (LHPA), to act as a pooled resource to properly enforce housing across the Capital.**

London's current enforcement of housing and planning standards is fragmented. Each borough maintains its own teams, systems, and priorities, leading to uneven performance and leaving gaps that rogue landlords exploit. The Mayor should propose the creation of a

London Housing and Planning Authority (LHPA), a pooled city-wide body to lead enforcement across all 32 boroughs and the City of London.

The LHPA would be governed by a board including London Councils and GLA representatives, ensuring local accountability but with the critical mass of resources to act effectively. It would answer to the GLA's Housing Committee, giving it democratic oversight while being independent enough to act decisively.

This new LHPA would support councils in their enforcement of housing and planning regulation by:

- a. Ensuring consistent standards and resourcing across London to deal with the patchy enforcement across Boroughs
- b. Reduce the total costs of enforcement by reducing the duplication of admin, legal or IT systems through shared platforms and staff
- c. Develop a highly-trained, specialist city-wide team, retained full-time, who could offer further expertise than what many small borough teams offer.
- d. Harmonise the fragmented intelligence, which particularly allows rogue landlords to operate across Borough boundaries, through a single, city-wide intelligence database which vets qualities including:
 - i. Inspection results
 - ii. Violations
 - iii. Landlord performance records
 - iv. Safety Failings
- e. Ability to fine housing providers, working with the Regulator of Social Housing to enforce fines.

2. Launch a London Retrofit Accelerator for Homes

London's ageing housing stock is a major source of carbon emissions and high energy bills, particularly in low-income neighbourhoods. Retrofitting progress has been slow and fragmented despite urgent need.

The Mayor should create a dedicated Retrofit Accelerator for Homes, offering bulk procurement, technical guidance, and grants for insulation, low-carbon heating, and solar panels. Targeted support for landlords and owner-occupiers in deprived areas would cut bills, tackle fuel poverty, and help meet net-zero goals.

3. Introduce a Tenant Complaints and Redress Service for London

Tenants often face confusing or ineffective complaint routes when dealing with unsafe conditions or unfair treatment, leaving many without redress or forced to accept poor housing, as evidenced by a [July 2024 Insight Report](#) by the Housing Ombudsman.

The Mayor should set up a London-wide Tenant Complaints and Redress Service. This single point of contact would allow residents to report unsafe conditions quickly, escalate complaints to enforcement authorities, and track outcomes. Accessible online and by phone,

it would build trust and ensure housing failings are addressed promptly. It would also act as a greater incentive for those housing providers and associations which fail to deal with cases efficiently, to do so.

3. Full Provision of the Community Infrastructure that Residents Deserve.

Housing does not exist in a vacuum. For homes to be livable, accessible, and sustainable, they must be supported by robust infrastructure, from transport links and healthcare to schools and digital connectivity. In London, infrastructure is not merely a supporting act but an integral component of the housing strategy and wider economic development.

To meet growing demand, we must direct investment towards expanding transport networks, especially in underserved boroughs. Projects like the Elizabeth Line demonstrate the potential for integrated transport and housing development, unlocking previously inaccessible land for new homes and enabling more equitable economic participation across the city.

However, investment must not stop at physical infrastructure. Social infrastructure – such as libraries, childcare facilities, parks, and GP surgeries – is equally vital. The development of large housing projects must be contingent on tangible plans for these services, with funding mechanisms that tie developer contributions directly to the communities they affect.

There is also a pressing need to ensure that the wealth generated by London's housing system stays within the city. Currently, significant volumes of housing investment flow from overseas buyers and corporations, with profits often extracted rather than reinvested. A strategic review of foreign investment policies could help ensure that this capital supports affordable housing development, community infrastructure, or skills training for Londoners.

Mechanisms such as land value capture, community wealth-building initiatives, and local authority development companies can ensure that value stays embedded within communities. These tools can help local councils reinvest surplus revenues into public services and long-term infrastructure, rather than losing value to absentee landlords or speculative investors.

Inwards investment should be welcomed, but it must be directed, shaped, and held accountable. Infrastructure investment must be both a prerequisite for and a product of new housing development.

Recommendations

- 1. Reviewing the Mayoral Community Infrastructure Levy to raise close to £100m a year for city-wide transport infrastructure projects, including improving sustainable travel, public transport and new links to central London.**

Since 2012, the Mayoral CIL (MCIL) has not had its benefits maximised, despite evidence proving that CIL has “limited impact on development viability and does not make, on its own, a viable scheme unviable”.

In April 2012, Mayor of London Boris Johnson set MCIL rates to between £50/m² to £20/m², depending on the local authority where developments were taking place. In 2019, Mayor of London Sadiq Khan increased some MCIL rates, to between £80/m² to £25/m². Currently the MCIL rates (after accounting for inflation) sit at between £95/m² to £30/m².

The range of MCIL rates means that developers in outer boroughs (who pay the lower rates of MCIL) are able to avoid paying their fair share into community infrastructure. Harmonising the MCIL's Band 3 rates to the Band 2 rates, as a first step, would have raised an extra £81m from 2019 to 2024, which could have been spent on better transport links for these outer boroughs.

Furthermore, the specific Office, Retail and Hotel Development in the Central and Isle of Dogs Charging Areas offer preferential rates to both retail and hotel developments. By removing this preferential rate (thus harmonising MCIL rates for office, retail and hotel construction prices at the current office rate of £185 per square metre), an estimated £2.5m from 2019 to 2022.

2. Expand the Healthy Streets and Active Travel Fund

Many outer boroughs remain poorly connected by sustainable transport, locking residents into car dependency and limiting housing density potential. New schemes often add pressure without improved local mobility.

The Mayor should dedicate a ring-fenced fund for active travel (walking, cycling) prioritising areas of major new housing growth. Funding could be drawn from developer contributions and matched by GLA transport budgets to ensure that infrastructure keeps pace with new homes.

3. Introduce a Community Infrastructure Guarantee

Residents frequently fear that promised infrastructure (parks, play areas, GP clinics) will not materialise once housing is built. Developers sometimes deliver late or not at all.

The Mayor should establish a Community Infrastructure Guarantee, requiring developers to place contributions into an escrow fund before construction begins. If obligations are not delivered on schedule, the GLA or borough can draw down funds directly to complete works.

4. Pilot Integrated Housing and Health Hubs

London faces both a housing crisis and severe [NHS capacity issues](#), especially in primary care. Residents of new developments often struggle to register with GPs, and the correlation between health and housing challenges is supported. academically.

The Mayor should pilot integrated housing and health hubs in large regeneration schemes, where new GP surgeries, pharmacies, and community health services are embedded directly into the design of housing blocks. Developer contributions and NHS capital funding could be combined through Mayoral brokering.

5. Conduct a Strategic Review of Foreign Housing Investment

Significant investment flows into London's housing system from overseas buyers and corporations, and this has provided a number of houses, with evidence highlighting that foreign housing investment has been a net gain in terms of housebuilding in the capital. However, higher demand from wealthy foreign sources for non-residential purposes, and profits often leaving the city to move abroad, rather than being reinvested into communities, can lead to an imbalance in the city's housing market.

The Mayor should lead a strategic review into how foreign investment in London housing can be better aligned with social goals. Options could include levies on empty homes, incentives for overseas investors to fund affordable housing, or requiring a percentage of investment to be reinvested locally in infrastructure and skills training.

Conclusion

London's housing crisis is solvable, but only if City Hall uses every lever it already has, builds smart partnerships with boroughs, and relentlessly focuses on quality, safety and community as well as numbers. Housing is a basic right and the platform for health, education and prosperity; our plan centres on that right and turns it into deliverable action for Londoners.

The scale of the challenge is stark: more than 300,000 Londoners are on social housing waiting lists and around one in ten homes remains non-decent, with the greatest harms falling on lower-income, disabled and minority communities. That is intolerable in a city of London's wealth and potential.

This paper sets out a practical, GLA-led route to change. We propose a binding Public Land Housing Delivery Plan to unlock under-used GLA/TfL land for affordable schemes; a London-wide 'Smart Density' design code so well-connected places grow gently and mid-rise by default; a genuinely fast Fast Track route; and a GLA Urban Housing Delivery Unit to boost borough capacity and consistency. Together these measures will deliver more of the right homes, in the right places, faster, without compromising safety, daylight, access or design standards.

We match delivery with accountability and lower bills. A London Housing & Planning Authority will pool enforcement muscle across boroughs to drive up standards and close the gaps which rogue landlords exploit; a Retrofit Accelerator for Homes will cut emissions and fuel poverty at scale; and a simple Tenant Complaints & Redress Service will give residents one clear, efficient and accountable route to fix hazards.

And because homes work best when communities work too, we reform how growth funds infrastructure: modernising the Mayoral CIL so outer boroughs get a fair share from developers; expanding a ring-fenced Healthy Streets & Active Travel Fund; guaranteeing timely delivery of parks, play space and GP surgeries through an escrow-backed Community Infrastructure Guarantee; piloting integrated Housing & Health Hubs; and aligning foreign capital with social goals so investment builds communities, not just assets.

Some powers, over benefits, Right to Buy or rent levels, sit with Westminster. Where they do, the Mayor and Assembly should campaign hard for reform. But the GLA already has significant tools through the London Plan, funding programmes, land ownership and strategic planning powers. This London Liberal Democrat plan uses them fully, transparently and fairly. It will build the homes Londoners need, raise standards and safety, and deliver the infrastructure that lets communities thrive. Now is the moment to act.

The London Liberal Democrats also reflect on the intersection between housing and other vital services for people, many of which falling under the Mayor's direct and indirect powers. That is why, further to this housing policy paper, the London Liberal Democrats should further develop policy on areas including:

- The emergency services, including

- Fire Department and Fire Regulations
 - The policing and wider security system including the Met Police
 - Cross-city health inequality reduction and the London Health Board
-
- Accessible Transport
-
- Proper social support for those with SEN and Disabilities

Further Notes

Housing, Policy Paper 1

This paper has been approved for debate by the Regional Conference, by the Regional Conference Committee in accordance with the terms of the Regional Constitution.

Within the policy-making procedure of the Liberal Democrats, the Regional Party determines the policy of the Party in those areas which might reasonably be expected to fall within the remit of the London institutions in the context of a federal United Kingdom.

This Policy Paper was drafted under the 2025-26 Policy Committee, with the following members:

- Ulysse Abbate (Chair)
- John Armah
- Finlay Dargan
- Katie Mansfield
- Christophe Noblet
- Johan Prinsloo
- Guy Russo

Note: Membership of the working group should not be taken to indicate that every member necessarily agrees with every statement or every proposal in this paper

Contact policy@londonlibdems.org.uk for questions about this Policy Paper

Promoted by the [London Liberal Democrats](#),
1 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PN.