



MANCHESTER SOCIAL
HOUSING COMMISSION

IT'S TIME FOR A SOCIAL RENT REVOLUTION

FINAL REPORT OF THE MANCHESTER SOCIAL
HOUSING COMMISSION

MAY 2026



www.socialhomes4mcr.org.uk/commission

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FOREWORD

It has been a great joy and privilege for me to chair the Manchester Social Housing Commission. All my life, I have believed in Manchester as a city, and city region, at the forefront of developing policies and practices that listen to the voices of all people. The people of Manchester today are no less innovative, and no less committed to the wellbeing of our communities, than were our forebears who embraced women's suffrage, created Trades Unions, founded the Co-operative movement and built a canal wide enough to bring ocean going ships right to our industrial heartland.

The Social Housing Commission has itself been groundbreaking. I have served on many Commissions, not least on housing, but over the last two years, I have seen a level of inclusion - allowing the voices of local tenants and residents, both as individuals and groups, to rise to the front of the conversation - beyond anything I have been part of before.

That has made a huge difference. The recommendations in our various reports have arisen not simply from partnerships between professionals and academics, they have come from conversations that significantly centred people who, for far too long, have lived in properties and places designed *for* them, but never *with* them.

None of this would have been possible without the enthusiastic support of senior leaders, both officers and members, of Manchester City Council, and the democratising energy of the community champions on the Commission. Their active engagement has enabled the voices of local people to be heard by policymakers without filtering or redaction. My fellow commissioners and I believe we are already seeing early results of our work, not least in terms of more homes now being built for genuine social rent.



I am also very grateful for the time, energy, skills and commitment of my fellow Commissioners. The nature of our working makes it inappropriate to seek to single out individuals for particular note. Indeed, our thanks will lie not in being named, but in the people of Manchester and, we hope, beyond, living better lives in better homes and better communities.

I commend this final report to that end.

David Walker

May 2026

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Walker".

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1. INTRODUCTION

This report sets out the final arguments, recommendations and reflections of the Manchester Social Housing Commission (July 2024 - December 2025). The Commission brought together social housing tenants, grassroots community organisations, senior public and voluntary sector leaders, housing and planning professionals, academics, housing campaigners, politicians and officers at Manchester City Council for a shared purpose: **to achieve accelerated delivery of ecologically sustainable housing for social rent in the City of Manchester by 2030.** Importantly, the Commission also set out to overcome the divide between those with direct experience of the housing crisis and the democratic deficits in our planning system - referred to in this report as Community Commissioners and drawn from four active community coalitions in the city - and the politicians and professionals normally tasked with “solving” the crisis.

1.1. WHY SOCIAL HOUSING?

The Commission was created by the Social Homes for Manchester coalition (SH4M), a network of voluntary and community sector organisations in the city committed to developing a movement for housing justice around a renewed demand for social rented housing. SH4M emerged in 2023 from the grassroots of the city as a call on every level of government to finally take the housing crisis in Manchester (and across England) seriously. Local Manchester communities had had enough of watching “luxury” high-rise towers rising across the city whilst records were being broken for levels of homelessness and households, including children, living long-term in poor quality temporary accommodation and languishing on the social housing waiting list. **For them, the answer was obvious: it was time for a new generation of social rent homes, built on the basis of need not profit, with rents set in proportion to local incomes, and providing a secure, lifetime tenancy.**

1.2. WHY SUSTAINABLE?

SH4M also recognised the importance of both the **climate and cost of living crises**. Given that existing residential buildings in the UK account for over 30% of energy consumption and a fifth of greenhouse gas emissions,¹ we need rapid and radical action to decarbonise our housing stock. Alongside the inflating housing costs, average annual energy bills increased by over 50% in April 2022². This is of particular concern for older people and people with disabilities, who live on fixed low incomes and typically spend more time in their homes, making them more vulnerable to extreme cold, extreme heat, and extreme bills. Building and retrofitting social housing to high energy efficiency standards can make a major contribution to addressing these challenges.

1.3. WHY A COMMISSION?

The idea for a Manchester Social Housing Commission emerged from community activism, particularly in four neighbourhoods: Collyhurst South and Miles Platting; the Aquarius estate in Hulme; Moss Side; and Wythenshawe Central. These are places where residents have spent years organising collectively through social movement-based approaches, opposing demolitions and developer-driven schemes that prioritised gentrification over regeneration, while advocating for accelerated social rent delivery. Many are affiliated with [Community Savers](#), an adaptation of a 30-year strong movement from the Global South called Shack/Slum Dwellers International; and/or with the [Greater Manchester Tenants Union \(GMTU\)](#), a rights-based movement for housing justice grounded in union organising. In 2023, these four neighbourhoods joined forces and connected to other progressive partners across the city to establish SH4M. These included supportive academics and think tanks, such as Steady State Manchester, and anti-poverty,

housing, and homelessness charities like Greater Together Manchester, Mustard Tree, and Shelter GM. SH4M was created to examine the drivers of the housing and cost of living crisis and identify political opportunities. This included lobbying around the Manchester Local Plan, which had gone through a Key Issues consultation in 2021 but had been delayed by protracted negotiations over the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework, *Places for Everyone*.

As the next stages of the Manchester Local Plan were announced, SH4M co-created six key proposals for Manchester City Council (MCC):

1. At least 30% social homes included in all new developments of over 10 units to be enacted in local policy and enforced through the setting and enforcement section 106 obligations.
2. Stronger public accountability and scrutiny for the setting and enforcement of developer obligations to build new social housing.
3. Establish a Commission on social housing for the City of Manchester.
4. Develop a practical strategy for the promotion of community led housing.
5. Develop a practical strategy for the renovation and transfer of empty homes into homes for social rent.
6. Ensure all new build homes of any type or tenure are ecologically sustainable.

To establish the Commission, community coalitions from our four key neighbourhoods (spanning the North, Centre and South of the city) were invited to select their own representatives to act as Community Commissioners. They joined together with representatives from each of the following stakeholder groups to form the Commission:

- Lead Officers for Housing and Planning, MCC
- Executive Director for Housing and Regeneration, MCC
- Manchester Housing Providers
- Academic experts in housing and planning
- Voluntary sector leaders in housing and

planning (national and local)

- Grassroots social/housing justice organisations

Over the 18 month lifespan of the Commission, which was chaired by The Right Reverend Dr David Walker, Bishop of Manchester, the national, regional, and local context for housing, planning, and the climate emergency evolved rapidly. Our original workplan was turned upside down by the surprise announcement of a general election in July 2024 and a subsequent landslide victory for the Labour Party. A flurry of new policy announcements, consultations, and draft legislation forced us to shift from setting our own agenda to becoming necessarily reactive to Government initiatives and fleeting opportunities to influence. The Commission agreed on four key areas of inquiry:

1. Evidencing the importance of increased delivery of sustainable social rent homes.
2. New ideas for how to finance and fund increased delivery and renovation.
3. Empowering tenants to achieve decent homes and landlord accountability.
4. Exploring alternative models for achieving these outcomes that also build community power, cohesion, and wellbeing.

1.4. OUR WORK IN SUMMARY

We launched our first report, [*Manchester's Housing Crisis in Context: Why we need sustainable homes for social rent*](#), in November 2024 at the Houses of Parliament, and followed this up in March and April 2025 with two policy briefs - [*An agenda for Change*](#) and [*How to Fund and Deliver Sustainable Homes for Social Rent*](#). These briefs set out a raft of policy recommendations for the Government on how to radically up-scale social housing delivery, with a [*longer evidence base*](#) published in May 2025. In October 2025, we published our third policy brief, [*Empowering tenants to unlock decent, healthy and safe homes*](#), containing a package of measures to address the current weaknesses within the regulation, rights, and enforcement of rental conditions and tenant organisations. Finally,

In March 2026, we released our fourth policy brief, [Alternative Models for Social Rent](#), which makes the case for the additional benefits that community led development can bring to the provision of social housing -including a higher quality of housing management and better public health outcomes - and more cohesive, empowered communities.

It is important to acknowledge and commend the Government for its recognition, in the June 2025 Comprehensive Spending Review, of the need for increased social rented housing to address the housing crisis. The announcement of a new 10-year Social and Affordable Homes Programme with £39 billion of funding and the aim for at least 60% of this funding to be for social rent, followed by the certainty of a 10-year rent settlement for social landlords, is a major first step in making real change possible. We also commend the Government for making community led housing a national priority in the Social and Affordable Homes Programme and reforms to improve both housing conditions and tenants' rights in the social and private rental sectors with the Renters Rights Act 2025, Awaab's Law, and a new Decent Homes Standard. These are important steps forward and should help to lift standards in both the social housing sector and the Private Rented Sector (PRS).

However, as we discuss in section 4 of this report, the Government must commit significantly more funding and take further action to boost the net supply of social rent, as well as fundamentally rethink ongoing reforms to welfare that contribute to housing, food, and energy insecurity. On tackling climate change, the Government has made some important changes to building regulations, but they will not ensure new and existing homes are sustainable for the future. There remains insufficient support for community led housing while proposed reforms to the planning system threaten to further undermine public participation in development. Finally, the new emerging landscape of housing regulations and rights remains too weak and inadequately resourced to be effective.

1.5. ABOUT THIS REPORT

This final report draws on the full Commission process, incorporating key findings from all our publications as well as wider experiences and ideas shared by visiting speakers, through testimonies submitted as evidence to the Commission, and from local community teams and our Community Commissioners. We have also drawn from our responses to the wide range of local and national Government consultations.

This final report has three key objectives:

- To set out the substantive case for an acceleration of building sustainable homes for social rent.
- To present our key recommendations and assess progress achieved to date.
- To reflect on the process we have followed in order to support more public participation in policymaking and outline how we will take our recommendations forward.

1.6. NEXT STEPS

The SH4M coalition is the legacy structure which will take forward these findings and recommendations and seek to maximise implementation, working always in partnership with community leaders across Manchester, Greater Manchester and England. The SH4M Coalition will publish an annual report tracking progress against these recommendations each year, at least until the next General Election.

You can find further details on the context and evidence for the recommendations in our previous reports here:

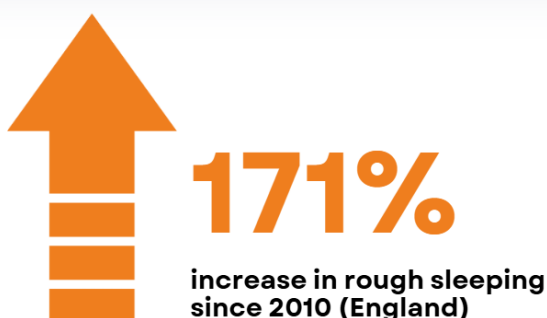
<https://www.socialhomes4mcr.org.uk/publications>.

2. WHY WE NEED A SOCIAL RENT REVOLUTION

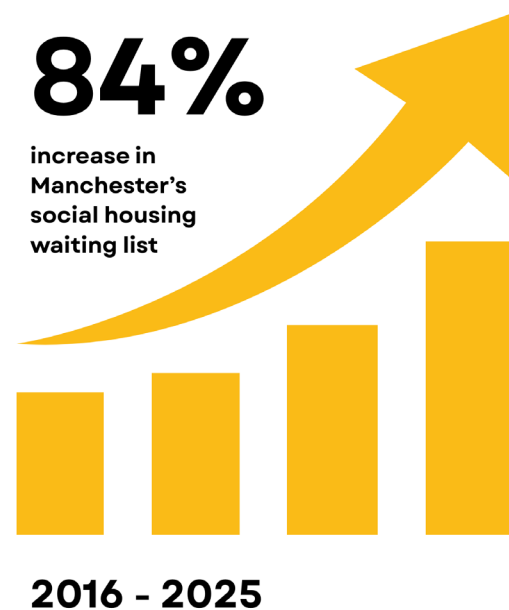
Access to adequate housing that is safe, secure, and affordable is a fundamental human right enshrined in international law. It provides a foundation for many other basic human rights covering health and wellbeing, an adequate standard of living, education and work, and equality of opportunity and outcomes. Historically, **social rent housing has guaranteed access to adequate housing** and performed an essential welfare, health, and redistributive role in achieving social justice and tackling inequality. However, the erosion of social rent as part of a long-term marketisation agenda means **the right to adequate housing is no longer being met for increasing numbers of people**. Whilst the epicentre of this crisis is London, its devastating impact is being felt everywhere. In this section, we set out the broad picture of this crisis, nationally and in Manchester.

2.1 THE AFFORDABILITY CRISIS

As we set out in our [first report](#), communities across England are grappling with an ever-worsening crisis of housing affordability. The most visible aspect of that crisis is **rough sleeping, which has grown by 171% since 2010**, reaching a record high of 4,793 on a single night in autumn 2025.³ Rough sleepers make up only part of the much larger population of homeless households, which totalled 330,410 in September 2025.⁴ **134,700 homeless households were living in temporary accommodation (Sept 2025), including 175,990 children** - once again, these are record numbers since counting began in 1997/98.⁵



Increasing homelessness is driving the upward trend of households on social housing waiting lists, currently standing at 1.34 million households (November 2025), up 19% since 2017/18.⁶ However, strict eligibility conditions for accessing local authority housing waiting lists mask a much higher demand and need for affordable housing of all tenures, especially social rent. This is evidenced by the most recent Office for National Statistics analysis of **housing purchase affordability for 2023/24, which found just 9.1% of local authority (LA) areas in England and Wales (29 out of 317) were affordable to those who worked there, compared to just over two-thirds (69%) of LAs in 1998/99.**⁷



Manchester not only embodies this national crisis, but in many ways is its cutting edge. Despite a booming economy and new residential skyscraper developments exploding across the city skyline, **Manchester hosts the third highest local rate of homelessness outside of London (1 in 61 people⁸), one of the highest local rates of temporary accommodation in England outside London (three times the national average), and the fourth highest number of children living in temporary accommodation in England.**⁹ The rapid growth in people experiencing homelessness in Manchester has driven an **84% increase in the social housing waiting list between 2016 and 2025 to 21,605 households (as of December 2025¹⁰)**. This includes

many households who have already been waiting years and some who will never be offered a social rent property. It is important to note that this list also excludes many more households who are in housing need and deemed ineligible for the register, but who would have been allocated social housing a decade ago.

2.2 THE DANGEROUS WORLD OF RENTING

Sitting alongside this affordability crisis is a crisis of poor housing conditions that we detailed in our [third policy brief](#). Housing is now well established as a social determinant of health and wellbeing.¹¹ However, across England, **a decent and safe home is denied to over 1.4 million households** who are living in poor quality rental accommodation. Sub-standard housing is particularly concentrated in the **(PRS) where 21% of properties are officially “non-decent”** compared to 14% in owner occupation and 10% in the social rented sector. **In Manchester, 1 in 4 households in the PRS do not meet the basic decency standard.**

1 in 5 children in England live in overcrowded, unaffordable or unsuitable homes, which makes up almost a third of people in need of social rented housing.¹² The crisis of poor quality housing is particularly acute for households living in temporary accommodation. Shelter reports that **75% of households in temporary accommodation live in poor conditions**, with more than two-thirds having no access to basic facilities.¹³

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored **how unaffordable housing and poor conditions can contribute to a public health crisis**, as those living in overcrowded housing experienced higher rates of infection and mortality.¹⁴ Those who spend the most time at home, such as people with disabilities, older people, children, and caregivers (who are predominantly women), are the most vulnerable to the physical and mental harm caused by poorly insulated and damp homes.¹⁵ Minoritised ethnic communities in England are significantly more likely to experience homelessness, out of area placements in temporary accommodation¹⁶, and other housing inequalities that are not addressed in national housing policy.¹⁷

2.3 THE RETREAT OF THE STATE

While England’s housing crisis is rooted in several interconnecting factors, it has been fundamentally shaped by the state’s long-term retreat from building and investing in social housing and the stark failures of a predominantly market-based approach to housing development. Over the course of the twentieth century, the state addressed previous housing market failures and war-time destruction of housing by regulating private landlordism and building over 5 million homes for social rent. Social rent has historically performed an essential welfare, health, and redistributive role in achieving social justice and tackling inequality. **Mass social housing contributed to the long-term replacement of poor quality private rental housing and became a mainstream tenure of choice for 40% of the national population - and over 50% in Manchester - by the late 1970s.**



Victoria Square, Ancoats. Manchester’s first council housing scheme built in 1894 as a municipal response to the horrors of the industrial slums is still proudly providing social rented homes to retirement age households. Source: MCC

Since the late 1970s, successive governments (influenced by neoliberal ideas), have overseen decades of public underinvestment in housing provision and the curtailment of local authority house building whilst at the same time encouraging the wider privatisation, deregulation, and financialisation of housing development and consumption.¹⁸ This retreat of the state has left our housing stock ill-equipped for the climate and fuel poverty crises through inadequate standards

for sustainable homes. Moreover, the treatment of housing as a financial asset has contributed to its ever-worsening affordability through a major decline in house building of all tenures. Private house builders, developers, and landowners have prioritised profit maximisation by constraining supply, raising scarcity and capturing monopoly rents.¹⁹ As a result of high land costs, social housing providers struggle to compete in bidding wars with housebuilders and private developers who can offer more for the land when proposing to build for market sale.²⁰ Financialisation has also contributed to rising numbers of homes sitting empty or largely unoccupied (currently over 700,000 across England) alongside rising numbers of people living in over-crowded conditions.²¹

Above all, the neoliberal consensus has led to the catastrophic erosion of social rented housing: **since 1979, the total stock of genuine social rented housing in England²² has fallen by 40% from 5.5 million to around 3.3 million in 2025,²³ whilst the number of households living in England has increased by 41.2% from 17 million to 24 million over the same period.** This means that **the ratio of households to social rent homes has more than doubled, from 3.1 to 7.3, between 1979 and 2025.** In Manchester, there has been a **net loss of over 22,000 general needs social homes** over this same period, representing a 26.5% decline, whilst the number of households living in the city has increased by 35%. Despite new social housing being built again²⁴, **Manchester’s social rent stock is now at its lowest level for 40 years, housing just under a third of the city’s population in 2021 compared to over 51% in 1981.**²⁵

41.2%

increase in the number of households living in England over the past five decades

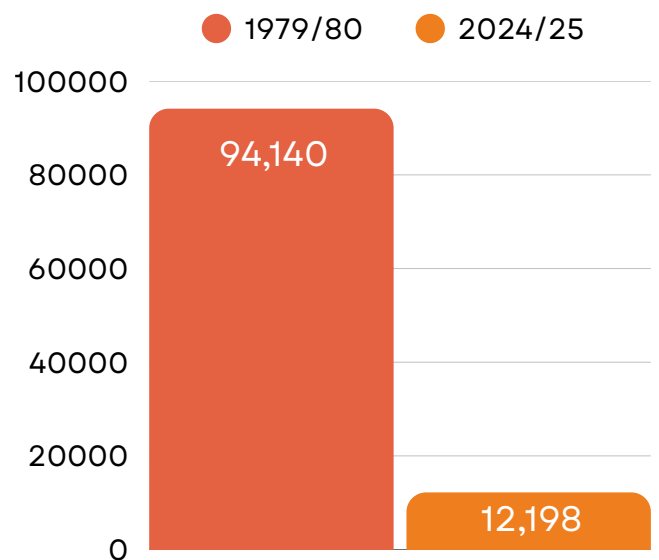


40%

decrease in the total stock of genuine social rented housing in England over same period

This net loss of social rent housing has three main causes:

- **The Right to Buy (RTB)**, introduced in 1980, which allows social housing tenants to purchase their property at a significant discount, has privatised over 2.06 million homes across England²⁶ and 29,000 in Manchester.²⁷
- Government **funding cuts** and the **failure of planning policy to secure public benefit** have seen new social rent housing supply in England fall from **94,140 per year in 1979/1980 to 12,198 per year in 2024/25.**²⁸ In Manchester, social landlords have built just 18,323 rental homes over the past 45 years and nearly 20% of those are for Affordable Rent (which is set at up to 80% of local market rent), not social rent (which is closer to 50% market rent).²⁹
- Significant levels of **demolition**, especially since 1997, **with over 241,000 social homes bulldozed (and not replaced) in England, and 5,827 homes in Manchester.**³⁰



new social rent housing supply in England

Although the Commission welcomes the government’s reforms to curb RTB sales, the scale of the mismatch between need and supply keeps growing. Research estimates that **at least 90,000 net additional social rented homes are needed across England every year for at least the next ten years to address current unmet demand and projected future need.**³¹ Yet over the past decade, **England has averaged just 7,850 new social rent homes a year whilst losing 11,582 annually.**³²

The retreat of the state is also a key factor driving poor housing conditions. The absence of large-scale public house building and sufficient retrofit finance has left England with the oldest housing stock in Europe with **1 in 5 homes (5.1 million) built before 1919**, most of which lack sufficient insulation, proper foundations and damp-proofing. Social landlords, and particularly councils, have faced real barriers to improve and maintain their existing stock over the past 15 years following the end of the Decent Homes programme. Local authority housing revenue accounts (HRAs) are in financial crisis, with a third in deficit this financial year (with the national shortfall totalling £201m), and flailing under **an unsustainable debt of £17 billion**.³³ A key driver of this crisis is the outdated assumptions underpinning the 2012 Housing Revenue Account (HRA) self-financing settlement. Housing associations are in slightly better financial health but have faced similar challenges regarding maintenance and improvements to their existing stock.³⁴

More than a decade of welfare reform amidst a cost of living crisis has created a growing mismatch between policies aimed at improving housing standards and policies that continue to impoverish low-income tenants and undermine the benefits of a decent home. These policies, along with rising energy prices, have contributed to growing fuel poverty in England. The Government has estimated that in 2024, **9 million households in England were fuel poor** based on using more than 10% of their income on energy to provide a satisfactory heating regime.³⁵ Officially, **1 in 5 households in Manchester are in fuel poverty**.³⁶ **Being unable to heat one's home contributes to cold, damp and mouldy homes and the exacerbation of health inequalities.** BRE has identified that the “coldest homes” (9% of homes) are causing the greatest costs, both to occupants' health and wellbeing, as well as the highest bills.³⁷

Since deregulation under the Housing Act 1988, private landlords have effectively been empowered to let sub-standard homes at full market value. Set against a wider housing crisis, major welfare and legal aid cuts, and the introduction of landlord immigration checks under the hostile environment, tenants have been deterred from even making repair requests for fear of “revenge evictions”.³⁸ The Renters Rights Act 2025 will hopefully address this

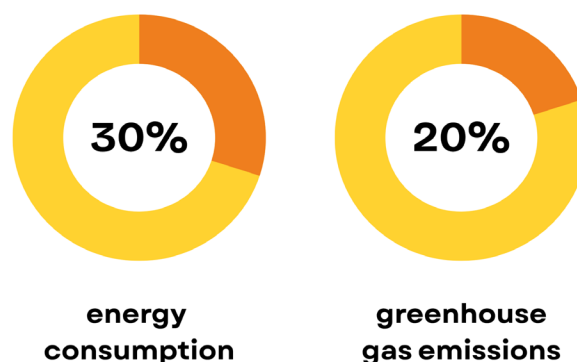
situation, but we have concerns that it does not go far enough (see section 4).

2.4 THE CLIMATE CRISIS

Alongside the housing and cost of living crises lies the environmental disaster of runaway global warming that threatens the future of our planet. The general political consensus on the need to tackle climate change resulted in the Climate Change Act 2008,³⁹ committing the UK to an 80% reduction on 1990 levels of emissions by 2050. Following the legally-binding “Paris Agreement” (2015) to limit global warming to well below 2°C, and preferably to 1.5°C, above pre-industrial levels, in 2019, the Government committed to a 100% reduction by 2050, with an interim target of an effective 78% reduction in emissions by 2035.⁴⁰

Given that existing residential buildings in the UK account for over 30% of energy consumption and a fifth of greenhouse gas emissions, rapid and radical action to decarbonise our housing stock is essential. This was recognised in 2006 when the Government pledged to start building “zero carbon homes” by 2016, followed by the Planning and Energy Act 2008 which empowered local planning authorities to require higher standards than baseline building regulations in order to drive up innovation until building regulations were effectively “zero carbon”.

Existing residential buildings in the UK account for over:



However, the “zero carbon homes” commitment by 2016⁴¹ was scrapped by the next Government in 2015 as part of a move away from decarbonisation in England. As the Committee on Climate Change

(CCC) recommended in 2019, our homes must be built or retrofitted to “ultra high energy efficiency” standards,⁴² approaching and meeting the *Passivhaus* standard.⁴³ **We are nowhere near this target: in 2018, just 1% of homes were registered to Energy Performance Band certificate A** (which itself does not always reach *Passivhaus* standard).⁴⁴ With only 3% of consents overall for new residential properties since 2009 reaching Band A, there remains a huge “energy gap” in new build.⁴⁵



In 2018, just 1% of homes were registered to Energy Performance Band certificate A

This is an indictment of the private housebuilding sector and its influence on successive Governments. The Competition and Markets Authority found that England has a highly speculative market (more so than Scotland and Wales) and that “efforts at improving sustainability are primarily driven by expectations of future regulation, rather than industry momentum.”⁴⁶ **Householders and taxpayers are paying the price twice over - in inflated house prices and inflated energy bills.** Adaptation to climate change is also severely constrained with both overheating and flood risk growing problems for the most vulnerable in society, causing both health and economic issues.⁴⁷



3. SUSTAINABLE HOMES FOR SOCIAL RENT: THE CASE FOR INVESTMENT

The Manchester Social Housing Commission recognises the need for a diverse range of housing tenures and the value of mixed income neighbourhoods. However, our core mission has been to **significantly increase the availability of sustainable homes for social rent in Manchester and other parts of England.** This is because social rent housing plays a unique and indispensable role as the most affordable, secure, and decent tenure, delivered to directly meet social need, and with the highest potential to be built or retrofitted to “ultra high” energy efficiency standards. In this section, we set out the main case for the Government to significantly and urgently boost investment in this tenure.

3.1 AFFORDABILITY

To address the affordable housing crisis in England, we need to build and preserve the most affordable housing we have, which is social rent. On average, social rents (general needs⁴⁸) in England are just over a third of private market rents.⁴⁹

This huge differential is shaped by several factors.

First, social housing rents are lower due to the state’s historical investment in council and housing association housing as a partially decommodified tenure for need, not profit. Second, social landlords are able to pool historic costs and rental income to ensure rents are set fairly across a local area. Third, the Government regulates social rent setting through a policy formula that is linked to local incomes that can only be increased annually. This makes social rents more affordable and rent increases more predictable than in the PRS.

However, it is important to highlight that from 2012, successive governments switched investment from genuine social rent to Affordable Rent, which can be let at up to 80% of local market rents. While this has had a differential impact depending on local market conditions, the overall effect has been to drive less affordable forms of “affordable housing” into

new development. Moreover, as we learned from housing providers during our inquiry, the current rent-setting methodology in the social housing sector is flawed and needs a fundamental review to ensure it is both fair to tenants and providers and that it reflects the economic realities of the places in which social housing is sited.

3.2 SECURITY AND DECENCY

Social housing is the most secure form of housing tenure. It is normally provided on a 12 month probationary period before converting to a lifetime tenancy. Until the Renters Right Act 2025 was implemented, the PRS was characterised by a fixed-term - normally 6 or 12 months - followed by monthly tenancies. In general, social landlords have traditionally evicted as a last resort, in part due to tenants' strong legal protections, whereas eviction has been far more frequent and tenancies far less secure in the PRS, especially since the introduction in the Housing Act 1988 of Section 21 that allowed landlords to terminate tenancies after the initial fixed term without having to give a reason.

Social housing is also by far the most decent tenure in relation to housing fitness standards and health and safety. This is due to the historic social justice purpose of council and housing association housing, the strong role played by the tenants' movement in fighting for better conditions, and major investment during the 2000s under the Decent Homes programme, which brought the vast majority of social homes in England up to a basic minimum standard by 2010. Council and social rent housing are built to a mandatory high standard of design and maintenance. The PRS must currently meet much lower standards, which has led to a "race to the bottom" in terms of housing quality.⁵⁰

3.3 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC VALUE

Investment in good quality social rent homes is an economic multiplier and creates significant economic and social value. Analysis by the Centre for Economics and Business Research (CEBR), commissioned by Shelter and the National Housing Federation (NHF), calculates that **building 90,000 social rented homes a year over ten years would**

yield £3.50 in economic benefits for every £1 spent, a net economic benefit of £51.2 billion, and would pay back the public cost of building it within 11 years.⁵¹

90,000 

social rented homes built a year over



10 yrs

would yield £3.50 in economic benefits for every £1 spent

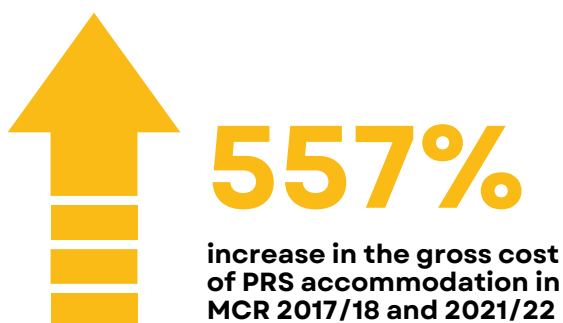
This includes income from construction and employment taxes, and savings to the NHS from healthier residents. It also includes savings on welfare support from lower rents and reducing temporary accommodation costs incurred on households displaced into the PRS. In 2024, **the Government spent four times more on housing benefit for private tenants (subsidising private landlords) than on subsidies to build new homes through the Affordable Homes Programme.**⁵² Part of this cost includes the £1.6 billion spent annually on temporary accommodation, a figure that has tripled since 2010 due to rising homelessness (DLUHC, 2024). Local authority budgets, which have been eroded over a decade of austerity, are increasingly having to cover some of the shortfall between housing benefit and private rents in temporary accommodation from their general fund or reserves, especially in areas reliant on expensive nightly rate accommodation.⁵³ **In Manchester, where 78.6% of temporarily housed homeless households are in the PRS, the gross cost of PRS accommodation increased by 557% between 2017/18 and 2021-22 (from £2.93m to £19.29m).**⁵⁴ Without intervention, these costs will continue to rise.

Social landlords can also be at the forefront of re-using both empty homes and other existing buildings to expand the supply of social rent in a more environmentally friendly way and tackle the blight of abandoned and dilapidated buildings in local communities. In England alone, there are over 303,000 long-term empty homes (vacant for at least

six months)⁵⁵ and around 175,000 privately owned empty non-residential buildings which may have the potential for over 500,000 homes.⁵⁶ Acquiring long term empty homes can offer a way to minimise the carbon emissions that traditional housebuilding brings and expand supply at a much faster pace.

The social value of social rent cannot be underestimated. The long-term decline in the supply of social rent combined with the move to needs-based allocation policies has meant that social housing has increasingly become a lifeline for some of the most marginalised and vulnerable groups in society: people aged 65 or over; lone parent households; households with at least one member with a long-term illness or disability; and those within the lowest income quintile; make up a high proportion of those in social rented housing.⁵⁷ Social rent offers a much higher quality form of temporary provision for those experiencing homelessness, reducing the negative health and wellbeing impacts of living in temporary accommodation for extended periods of time.⁵⁸

However, the shortage of social rented housing at a time of growing need has had a significant unequal impact on those who depend on it the most: minoritised ethnic communities, who are the most likely to live in social rent housing,⁵⁹ people fleeing domestic abuse, vulnerable ex-service personnel, people moving on from street homelessness, those with drug and alcohol dependencies, and ex-offenders.⁶⁰ It also means that those who experience multiple exclusions are often unable to engage with the social rented housing system such as refugees, people from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities, those with learning disabilities, and entrenched rough sleepers, to name but a few. Newly recognised refugees now face almost certain street homeless and significant barriers to accessing any form of housing as they do not qualify for social housing - but are also without the deposit, references, or rental history required to access the PRS.⁶¹



3.4 SUSTAINABILITY

Building and retrofitting social rented housing at scale will not only help address the housing crisis, it will also tackle the climate and cost of living crises.

Social landlords own and manage over 4 million homes in England - just under 1 in 5 homes. While these are generally of a higher energy efficiency standard than in the privately-owned and rented sectors, far too many social rented homes remain poorly insulated. While over two-thirds meet EPC C (the entry level for the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards that go live in just 4 years' time), **just 5.3% of social homes reach EPC A or B, while 26% are EPC D or higher.**⁶² That means over 1 million social homes in England must be retrofitted.

The good news is that rather than individual properties to deal with - as in owner occupation and the majority of the PRS - social housing is owned and managed by a relatively small number of medium and large-sized landlords. **In 2025, 17% of Private Registered Providers (housing associations) (227 large housing associations) owned 96% of all stock.**⁶³ Social housing has also been built at scale to standardised models. This makes the sector best placed to achieve economies of scale and beneficial partnerships in both sustainable new build and retrofit. **The cost of retrofitting social housing is also reasonable.** The *Pathways to Healthy Net Zero Housing for Greater Manchester* report states that a combination of heat pumps and cost-effective fabric measures can be used to remove 95% of today's CO2 emissions from Greater Manchester housing, which would require an average investment of £10,100 per home (at 2019 prices).⁶⁴

Social landlords' unique position as highly regulated organisations dependent on public finance gives the government important leverage to push the sector to do this more quickly and achieve significant benefits for low income households, as well as support social housing providers to play a key role **in the development of sustainable construction supply chains** to deliver insulation retrofit across other housing tenures and boost our local economies.⁶⁵ Research has underlined the potential for larger social landlords to use their social investment arms to deliver apprenticeships and training opportunities in decarbonisation.⁶⁶

4. KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

To rapidly increase the supply of homes for social rent that are both decent and sustainable, innovative options for overcoming barriers to delivery must be considered. In this section, we provide a synthesis of the Commission's main recommendations, with updates to reflect Government policy changes and the evolving political and economic situation. We group our recommendations into four main areas: **boosting delivery of social rent; embedding sustainability in rental housing; empowering communities to plan and provide sustainable social rent; and empowering tenants to live in decent homes.** Some of our proposals will require changes at the national scale, whilst others will require commitment and flexibility at the local authority level. The investment needed to implement these measures will pay for itself over the long-term through improved health outcomes, educational attainment, employment, and tackling climate change.

4.1 BOOSTING DELIVERY OF SOCIAL RENT

The Government has taken important steps to increase the supply of social rent that represent a welcome shift from the past 15 years.

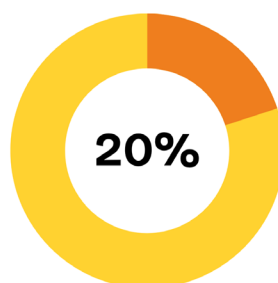
These include:

- the new 10-year £39 billion Social and Affordable Housing Programme (2026-2036) managed by Homes England, with at least 60% allocated for social rent.
- the new definition of "Affordable Housing for Rent" in planning policy that clearly distinguishes between Social Rent and other forms of affordable rent, which should help local authorities to set clear targets for Social Rent delivery and enable communities to hold developers to account.
- £2.5 billion of low-interest loans over four years (2026-2030) to Private Registered Providers of social housing.
- extending the "preferential" borrowing rate for council housebuilding from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) rate until the end of March 2027.

- increasing the threshold for when a council must open a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) from 200 to 1,000 homes to make this more cost-effective.
- launching the Council Housebuilding Support Service and Council Housebuilding Skills & Capacity Programme (CHSCP).
- reforms to the RTB that will dramatically reduce the loss of existing and future social homes and incentivise providers to build new social rent.
- the 10-year rent settlement of CPI+1% plus new rent convergence policy, which will generate higher and more predictable rental income and enable social landlords to make better long-term plans to build and refurbish.

However, these combined measures will not deliver anywhere near the number of social homes we urgently need.

The Government's 10-year funding programme will only deliver 18,000 new social rent homes per year - just 20% of the 90,000 net additional social homes per year we need. Worse, this does not factor in the impact of future RTB sales and demolitions. Should RTB sales return to their pre-2012 level of approximately 10,000 per year, and the current rate of 3000 demolitions per year continues, the Government's target of 18,000 new homes would only generate around 5000 net additional social rent homes per year, **just 5.5% of what we need.**



The Government's 10-year funding programme will only deliver 20% of the 90,000 net additional social homes per year we need.

Achieving 90,000 net additional social rent homes per year will need more than £100 billion additional capital funding, around two and half times the current funding programme.⁶⁷ This is likely to increase due to the turbulent political and economic context that will fuel further inflationary

and supply side challenges. Without this funding, social landlords will not have the financial capacity to both deliver the new social rent homes we need whilst simultaneously meeting the growing investment needs of their existing stock (see section 4.4 on decent homes). At the same time, the Government must address the potential consequences of above inflation rent increases on low-income households, which could include a growth in evictions and homelessness.

90,000 net additional social rent homes per year will need

£100 billion

additional capital funding

Current legislation constrains the ability of local authorities to use public land to subsidise social housing delivery, and to compulsory purchase private land for the development of social housing.

The UK Local Government Act 1972, updated in 2003, allows local authorities to sell land at below best consideration without ministerial consent if they consider this strategic to “economic, social or environmental well-being”. However, the guidance specifies that the undervalue of the disposed land should not exceed £2 million, which is a major impediment to unlocking public land. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA) gave local authorities the power to remove “hope value” when compulsory purchasing land for a development in the public interest, including building affordable housing. Hope value was introduced into compulsory purchase under The Land Compensation Act 1961 and is the value that is added based on the potential planning permission a piece of land could have gained for other uses in the future. Hope value drives up the cost of land by 275 times on average, higher than is viable for most local authorities seeking to build housing for social rent.⁶⁸ However, the Centre for Cities highlights that the current requirement to obtain approval for the removal of hope value on a case-by-case basis

from the Secretary of State creates uncertainty on what exactly the “public interest” constitutes and is deterring local authorities from using their new powers for fear of an expensive legal battle.⁶⁹

New social rent supply does not all need to come from new construction. Empty homes and empty commercial property can be repurposed for social rented homes that meet building safety and decent homes standards. However, the Government has not done enough to support local government to re-use existing buildings.

In Manchester, where there are 1,500 long-term empty homes⁷⁰, the Council has brought 500 such homes back into use over the past two years as part of its 10-year council leasing programme where current or new owners renovate and lease their homes to the council for temporary accommodation.⁷¹ The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) has also launched a new Empty Homes programme to refurbish or lease 400 empty homes for temporary accommodation.⁷² However, leasing empty homes as temporary accommodation is a missed opportunity to acquire, retrofit, and convert them into social rent to help homeless families gain long term, affordable, sustainable and energy efficient homes. Greater funding and powers for local government would transform this agenda.

■ Recommendation 1:

The Government must significantly increase its target for building new homes for social rent from 18,000 new homes per year to 90,000 net additional homes per year whilst protecting tenants from onerous rent increases.

We call on Government to:

- 1.1. Commit an additional £100 billion to the 10-year Social and Affordable Housing Programme exclusively for new social rent.
- 1.2. Cancel the unsustainable £17 billion HRA debt preventing councils from building new homes and retrofitting their existing stock; and to conduct a wholesale review of the 2012 HRA self-financing system to put it on a sustainable footing.
- 1.3. Allow social landlords longer-term access to

the preferential rate borrowing via the Public Works Loan Board to finance new build and retrofitting.

1.4. Work with social landlords and SMEs to develop an alternative social housing supply chain in which they can procure together to generate economies of scale.

1.5. Accompany the new long-term social rent settlement with financial protections to avoid pushing households into rent arrears and homelessness.

1.6. Set up a taskforce with social landlords, tenant organisations and other stakeholders to develop a new rent-setting model that is both fair to tenants and social landlords whilst retaining social rent as the most affordable and secure tenure.

■ Recommendation 2:

The Government should introduce further legislative changes to embed the 90,000 net additional social rent target in national and local planning frameworks.

We call on Government to:

2.1. Further amend the definition of Social and Affordable Housing in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) to define these different tenures in relation to local household incomes.

2.2. Introduce tougher targets and minimum requirements for social rent in all developments based on local housing needs assessments that explicitly calculate the amount of social housing needed to eliminate temporary accommodation and homelessness.

2.3. Ensure private developers make their contribution to social rent delivery by reforming the viability percentages in planning practice guidance and introducing a national requirement for developer contributions to set a non-negotiable minimum target.

■ Recommendation 3:

The Government should take bold action to unlock cheaper land for social housing delivery.

We call on Government to:

3.1. Modernise legislation on land disposal to give local authorities and other public bodies explicit consent to use public land to subsidise social housing delivery.

3.2. Amend LURA 2023 to further specify the conditions under which local authorities and other public bodies can undertake compulsory purchase of both land and existing structures without paying hope value, such as by revising the definition of 'public interest' to include land and buildings for social housing construction and retrofit.

3.3. Require combined authorities to establish city regional 'land commissions' as the Greater Manchester Mayor has done to facilitate cooperation between all public landowners, including utilities, churches, public transport providers and Network Rail for the purpose of social housing delivery.

3.4. Permit local authorities to levy council tax on unbuilt sites after a certain time period in proportion to the number of homes for which permission has been granted to incentivise timely development.



Anne Worthington, Community Commissioner, teaches Urban Planning students about the impacts of exclusionary planning policy and practice, 2024.

■ Recommendation 4:

The Government should make better use of existing residential and commercial buildings to deliver social rent homes at pace.

We call on Government to:

4.1. Implement Shelter’s 2024 “Home Again: A 10-City Plan”⁷³ to rapidly convert empty homes into social rent homes, which includes a mix of targeted grant funding, stronger Compulsory Purchase powers, tougher and mandatory council tax premiums on empty homes and short-term lets, and ring fencing all second home and empty home premiums for acquiring empty homes.

4.2. Set up a Property Conversion Commission, supported by a National Housing Conversion Fund (as proposed by the Affordable Housing Commission), to identify and enable the acquisition, adaptation or conversion of commercial properties into social rented homes that meet building safety and decent homes standards.

4.2 EMBEDDING SUSTAINABILITY IN NEW AND EXISTING RENTAL HOUSING

The Government has made some important progress towards increasing the sustainability of both new and existing rental housing. These include:

- new build domestic properties will be subject to updated building regulations from March 2027 that require higher standards of energy efficiency and on-site renewable energy production.
- the “Warm Homes Plan” commits £15 billion to upgrade 5 million privately owned (including rented) homes across England with insulation and renewable energy related technology with the aim of taking 1 million households out of fuel poverty.⁷⁴
- a new £1.29 billion round of investment in retrofitting social housing through the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund Wave 3 2025-28.
- new Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) that require rental homes to achieve

new energy efficiency standards by 2030, benefitting up to 1.5 million households, and meet additional energy power standards by 2039.

- new EPC metrics that will provide better information to inform consumers on fabric performance, heating system, smart readiness and energy costs.
- proposed changes to permitted development rights, on top of existing rights around insulation and renewable energy generation, to allow batteries and EV chargers.

Along with the wider Greater Manchester region, Manchester has also made bold moves on climate action. These include:

- declaring a Climate Emergency and committing to becoming a zero carbon city by 2038.
- developing a Local Area Energy Plan (LEAP) with support of the GMCA, which aims to define the extent of the transformation needed⁷⁵ and sets out a number of focus areas, one of which is Fabric Retrofit, or improving buildings’ insulation and heating efficiency to ensure they will lose less energy and reduce energy demand.⁷⁶

It is clear, however, that these combined measures are a long way short of addressing the scale of the challenge of virtually eliminating greenhouse gas emissions from England’s rental housing stock by 2050.

While the majority of new build domestic properties are being registered as EPC Band B, there is a major gap to achieving “ultra high” energy efficiency rates of Band A. The Committee on Climate Change’s latest progress report states that the installation of heat pumps currently stands at only 1% of homes.⁷⁷ New building regulations from March 2027 will only apply to homes consented after this date, and are worded in ways that will potentially enable developers to evade the highest standards by only requiring “reasonable” standards of energy efficiency and on-site renewable energy production “wherever possible”.⁷⁸ There have also been no moves to increase fabric efficiency, largely due to a Government policy choice to favour “better performance to technology such as heat pumps”.⁷⁹

More generally, we are deeply concerned about the deregulatory drive in the land use planning system. While the Trade and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union has committed the UK to remain on a level playing field with long held environmental protection aims - including healthy environments and the prevention of pollution - various Planning Acts in England have diverged from the more sustainable directions taken in Scotland and Wales. The proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (PM13) will prevent local planning authorities from setting standards above building regulations.⁸⁰

The government's reforms to Energy Performance Certificates is a missed opportunity to adopt the LETI approach.⁸¹ Developed by a leading group of local authorities, developers and architects, LETI uses the Energy Unit Intensity (EUI) metric to measure the energy performance of the actual build. This is much more efficient than using the Target Emissions Rate (TER) approach of the previous Future Homes Standard (which is based on a model to predict performance). Measuring the "real world use" of a home is essential to measure the effectiveness of energy performance as it is experienced by occupants. Wales has introduced energy use intensity metrics as part of its uplift to Building Regulations.⁸² Scotland has also committed to introducing a Passivhaus standard to building, which is expected in 2028 following a private members bill and extensive consultation.⁸³

Efforts to adapt England's housing stock are not progressing fast enough nor are being targeted in the right way. Existing rental properties are only required to achieve EPC Band C by 2030 under the new MEES regulations. The Warm Homes plan to retrofit 5 million homes in the private sector does not specifically target the homes and households in most need of support - it only focuses on 1 million households in fuel poverty and is open to middle income households to carry out their own retrofit if they live in deprived postcode areas.⁸⁴ Meanwhile, the comprehensive decarbonisation of the social rented sector is being held back by the staggering of short funding rounds as shown by the Social Housing Fund Wave 3 being oversubscribed by £1 billion.⁸⁵

Once the electricity grid itself is decarbonised from using 100% renewables, there is currently no guarantee that electricity bills will be affordable to

low income households in a privatised electricity market. That is why it is vital that the Government's Warm Homes Plan commits to prioritising the maximisation of building insulation in the lowest income and most fuel poor homes - to both lower bills and reduce the pressure on energy generation and the grid.

The current emphasis of the Social and Affordable Housing Programme on new build and net additional supply is highly restrictive and ignores the urgent need to upgrade existing homes that do not meet environmental and building quality and safety standards. In order to address the retrofit backlog, a joint funding programme between Homes England and the Department of Energy, Security and Net Zero that would support social landlords to engage in a combination of new build, acquisition of existing properties, and upgrading and replacing their existing stock as part of a joined-up approach. Longer term, flexible repayment offers should be created, and the funding should be made available to other prospective housing providers, including housing associations, Community Land Trusts and self-builders who are working in partnership with local authorities and build to the highest sustainability standards.



Zoe Marlow, Community Commissioner, hosting a film screening in Wythenshawe to raise awareness on the Manchester Local Plan, 2025

■ Recommendation 5:

The Government must urgently set higher minimum standards of energy efficiency and on-site renewable energy to more rapidly decarbonise both new build and the existing housing stock.

We call on Government to:

5.1. Seek higher minimum standards of energy efficiency for new buildings in England in line with the approaches being taken by Scotland (Passivhaus) and Wales (EUI).

5.2. Reform the NPPF to empower local planning authorities in England to require higher standards based on energy use in buildings until building regulations are fully comprehensive.

5.3. Strengthen the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards for rental housing from EPC C to EPC B by 2030 in line with commercial buildings.

5.4. Amend the new Decent Homes Standard to place stronger emphasis on climate resilience and thermal comfort by requiring that all homes can be maintained at 18°C to 21°C year-round at a reasonable cost to tenants.

■ Recommendation 6:

The Government must tie all public investment in housing to achieving zero carbon and ending fuel poverty as soon as possible.

We call on Government to:

6.1. Target publicly funded retrofitting schemes such as the Warm Homes Plan on the most energy inefficient homes (those in EPC E, F and G bands) and fuel poor households.

6.2. Abolish all VAT on retrofitting that delivers zero carbon standards.

6.2. Abolish all VAT on retrofitting that delivers zero carbon standards.

6.3. Provide public funding to private landlords to meet EPC B on the condition that they charge social rents for at least 15 years.

6.4. Remove Homes England rules for regeneration

funding that requires net-additionality and instead move regeneration funding to a joint programme between Homes England and the Department of Energy, Security and Net Zero that prioritises the most environmentally friendly forms of social housing regeneration.

6.5. Reinstate the Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) specifically for social and affordable housing providers that install renewable energy systems and ensure tenants benefit from lower energy bills.

6.6. End state subsidies for fossil fuels and switch them to funding a universal basic provision of energy for all that ends prepayment meters and ensures wealthier households pay progressively more for using excess energy beyond their needs.

4.3 SUPPORTING COMMUNITY LED HOUSING, DEVELOPMENT AND PARTICIPATION

We welcome the Government's recognition of the importance of community led housing, whether as communities directly building or managing their own homes collectively, or having a strong voice in planning, design and development of homes in their communities. Specifically, the Government has:

- made community led housing a national priority in the Social and Affordable Homes Programme (SAHP) 2026 to 2036, offering flexible grant rates for community led projects in recognition of their higher upfront costs.
- through its New Towns Taskforce suggested that community led housing should be developed in every New Town.
- improved policies in the National Planning Policy Framework including the definition of community led development and the exception site policy.
- pre-approved Pride in Place funding for community led housing through Community Land Trusts.
- injected £20 million into Resonance's Community Developers Fund providing finance to support more than 2,500 new homes over ten years as part of housebuilding projects led by community groups.
- commissioned a major policy options study on improving long-term access to finance for community led housing.

- introduced the Community Right to Buy in the current Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill.

However, this important progress has been undermined by inaction in other areas and government policies pushing in the opposite direction. There is nothing substantively new either in the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025, the new NPPF under consultation, or the Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill to support community-led development or enhance community participation in local plan-making, planning decisions, and wider local development. In fact, the Government has proposed a new national scheme of delegation for planning decisions that will automatically delegate planning application decisions to officers with only a few exceptions.⁸⁶ Nor has the Government offered anything substantive to improve access to pre-development finance for community led projects, or provide support and funding for the sector’s growth lab to build delivery capacity, or taken action to improve access to public land, or require combined and local authorities to engage with community development and empowerment in planning, housing, regeneration or New Towns. The funded support for neighbourhood planning has also been axed.

Communities, social housing tenants, and those in need of social housing, currently have very little power over housing, planning and developments. In most discussions the focus remains on ensuring that local authorities and housing associations can deliver the social rent homes we need. While we agree that their role is critical, the Commission has also heard from those who believe that **community led models might provide a way to develop additional social housing** as well as give working class communities a much more meaningful voice and role within housing development and management, driving alternative forms of regeneration and governance that go beyond bricks and mortar to build community power, improve social cohesion and address health inequalities. These models will allow communities to hold land, assets and facilities in trust for future generations. **A further key benefit of housing cooperatives and community land trusts is that they are wholly exempt from policies like the statutory Right to Buy, the Right to Acquire and the Right to Shared Ownership, which can lead to the loss of council**

and housing association social rent homes to the open market.

Beyond this, a more participatory approach to planning new social rented homes is needed, one that responds to local geographies of need. Whilst demand for social homes exists across Manchester, it is particularly acute in areas where rents have risen most sharply, including neighbourhoods within and around the city centre and parts of South Manchester. Need is also concentrated in communities **with higher numbers of households with caring responsibilities, people with disabilities or long-term conditions and children with special educational needs.**

This underlines the importance of local citizens having access to user-friendly, locally specific data to inform local participation, decision-making and community plan-making. It is wrong to assume that areas with relatively higher existing levels of social rented housing do not need more of this tenure. In many communities facing multiple forms of disadvantage, residents rely heavily on intergenerational and extended family networks to meet caring needs. These support systems depend on proximity and are reinforced by social ties.⁸⁷ At the same time, such households are often least able to absorb the higher transport costs associated with displacement to more distant areas, particularly where employment is concentrated in lower-paid sectors such as retail, transport and hospitality. **Addressing entrenched socio-economic, health and spatial inequalities across the city requires a more granular understanding of local need, and a commitment to delivering social rented homes in the places where they are most needed.**

All of this requires political will to create reforms at multiple levels of decision-making as well as a change in the culture towards a “people-powered” model where communities initiate, own and manage housing that meets local need.



Capacity building for Wythenshawe councillors, providers, and community leaders on Community Land Trusts, 2025

■ Recommendation 7:

The Government must provide greater legal and financial support for community-led housing development to enable housing cooperatives, community land trusts, tenant management organisations and cohousing projects to flourish.

We call on Government to:

- 7.1. Mandate Homes England to consider how a greater volume of social housing and other forms of affordable housing can be delivered through community-led models.
- 7.2. Revise the NPPF to mandate deeper community involvement across the development process, specifically setting out ways in which local plan-making and decision-taking on major schemes should involve local communities of place.
- 7.3. Revise the NPPF to establish a requirement to deliver consent for community-led schemes.
- 7.4. Revise the NPPF to enable Local Plans to require a defined proportion of community-led housing on large development sites. In parallel, the Community-Led Exception Site policy should be extended to apply within as well as adjacent to settlements, in order to de-risk and accelerate the delivery of small-scale community-led schemes.
- 7.5. Fund the Community Led Housing Growth Lab to develop more delivery capacity within the sector.
- 7.6. Restore funding for Tenant Empowerment Grants, abolished in 2015, that provide the support and training that council tenants need to exercise their Right to Manage.

■ Recommendation 8:

The Government should strengthen community participation rights in both the planning system and regeneration.

We call on Government to:

- 8.1. Amend the current Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill to improve community rights to more power and participation in planning and

regeneration. These should focus the duty on regional mayors and create an obligation for the Government to assess and report on the right to participate in decisions, the right to a healthy environment, and the right to a healthy home.

- 8.2. Safeguard public participation in Local Plans and in decision-making on local development proposals by enshrining in law public speaking rights at planning committee meetings.

■ Recommendation 9:

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority should pioneer community-led development and participation in the Greater Manchester region.

We call on the GMCA to:

- 9.1. Continue to fund Greater Manchester Community Led Homes (GMCLH) as the key enabling body for community-led developments in Greater Manchester.
- 9.2. Explore how housing and land funds could be better used to scale up different models of community-led housing proposed by the Commission.
- 9.3. Work with SH4M, Manchester City Council, and GM Community Led Homes to support the development and implementation of a city-wide strategy that could become a learning base for other GM boroughs to explore similar approaches.
- 9.4. Work with SH4M and Manchester City Council to develop a Greater Manchester Transparency and Accountability web portal through which communities can access key local area data for analysis/advocacy.
- 9.5. Use the Greater Manchester Land Commission to identify potential small sites and empty buildings for community-led housing projects.

■ Recommendation 10:

Manchester City Council should use its planning powers and other legal instruments to give impetus to community-led development.

We call on Manchester City Council to:

1.1. Introduce a policy for community led development into the new Local Plan that: gives weight to developments that result in community ownership and management of buildings and land; and incorporates quantified requirements for community-led homes in sites over a threshold (e.g. 250).

10.2. Consider the use of Local and Neighbourhood Development Orders to de-risk and accelerate community-led development on small sites.

10.3. Incorporate community-led development into MCC's thirteen regeneration projects, providing opportunities for communities to influence, co-design, co-produce, own, manage, and steward assets being developed there.

10.4. Support those communities in receipt of Pride in Place funding to explore establishing a Community Land Trust to develop and take ownership of assets, including social housing.

10.5. Give community-led organisations a right of first refusal on public land or properties prior to disposal on the open market, and that any land or properties offered at a value that reflects best consideration should explicitly take into account the Council's strategic objectives, including the delivery of social housing.

10.6. Review and revise the eligibility criteria for community-led housing groups to allow early-stage groups to explore and develop proposals without being unduly restricted by procedural requirements.

10.7. Work with the community led housing sector to agree Local Lettings Policies for sites that are brought forward as community led.

Recommendation 11:

The Manchester Housing Providers Partnership should support the development of community-led housing in Manchester through:

11.1. Working with GMCLH to develop delivery frameworks for community-led housing, including

on sites and developments currently being progressed by members of the Manchester Housing Providers' Partnership.

11.2. Incorporate models such as Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) into both new and existing social housing, strengthening tenant empowerment and participation in housing management.

4.4 EMPOWERING TENANTS TO LIVE IN DECENT HOMES

Building on previous governments' renewed focus on housing safety following the Grenfell Tower disaster in 2017 and the death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak in 2020, the Government has brought forward a raft of important reforms to tackle existing housing conditions for renters and force landlords to take issues of repair, health and safety more seriously. These include:

- the introduction of Awaab's Law since 27 October 2025 that requires social landlords - and soon private landlords - to take urgent action on all emergency hazards within 24 hours and address significant hazards and serious damp and mould and emergency disrepair to strict timeframes.
- the modernised Decent Homes Standard (DHS) that will apply to all rental housing, including Temporary Accommodation and Supported Housing by 2035
- the Renter's Rights Act 2025 which will extend the DHS to the PRS, bring greater security of tenure through the abolition of assured shorthold tenancies and Section 21 evictions, provide greater accountability through a new Ombudsman service for private renters and a national landlord register, and strengthen powers for local authorities to enforce on unsafe housing conditions.
- increased funding for legal aid solicitors that will help to make legal aid representation for serious housing cases more viable.

However, the new emerging landscape of housing regulations and tenant rights falls well short of what is needed.

The new DHS will only become mandatory by 2035, far too late for those homes in the worst conditions and delaying decency for millions of renters. The new standard also contains significant inconsistencies and anomalies (see [Policy Brief 3](#)). For example, a home can be classed as “decent” whilst lacking essential facilities, because only items that already exist must be in good repair. Vital accessibility components, such as handrails, will not be required nor classed as “key”, meaning there are fewer incentives to provide them or keep them in good repair and landlords will be excused from meeting external public realm requirements. Without new protections and flexibility, the new DHS has the potential to increase the risk of homelessness, instability or unaffordability for renters as private landlords push for higher rents, or as new standards reduce the supply of temporary accommodation.⁸⁸

A key barrier to change is the funding crisis affecting parts of the social housing sector, local authority housing enforcement, and legal aid. The Government is creating new responsibilities on landlords and local authorities, and new legal rights for tenants, but these are not matched by sufficient



resources to achieve them. Beyond the rent settlement, the Government has not announced any additional support for social landlords to meet the new decent homes standard by 2035, which its own modelling suggests will have a mean cost of £5,937 per home; a total of £11.3billion.⁸⁹ However, some social landlords and particularly local authorities are struggling to fund the costs of attaining the current decency standard due to the perilous financial position of their Housing Revenue Accounts (HRAs). As a result, many social housing providers are scaling back the output of new homes, whilst others are bringing forward demolition plans for their more challenging stock, which will worsen the existing housing crisis as well as having a significant impact on the environment.⁹⁰

The Renters’ Rights Act is not abolishing no-fault evictions in the PRS. By allowing evictions under a reformed Section 8 of the Housing Act 1988, landlords will still be permitted to evict tenants for “mandatory reasons”. PRS landlords will be able to evict private tenants if the landlord wants to sell or move in, if they wish to move in members of their family, or where the landlord wishes to complete significant repairs required by the local authority. In addition, the number of defences that tenants can use will reduce, meaning it may be easier for some landlords to evict a tenant for no fault of their own.

Furthermore, the effectiveness of the enforcement mechanisms introduced or strengthened in the Act will rely heavily on local authorities and the tribunal system, both of which face capacity and funding challenges. Whilst the Renters’ Rights Act does broaden the scope of disrepair protections, the practical success of the Act will depend on how “serious hazards” are interpreted and if enforcement mechanisms are robust enough to address issues that fall below the threshold of “immediate risk to health” but still render a property unsuitable to live in.⁹¹

The Government is also not dealing with an overly complex and inconsistent regulatory system that still lacks tenants’ voice. While individual tenants are represented in various advisory groups, including the Government’s own Social Housing Resident Panel, the Government has done nothing to address the crisis of tenant and residents’ associations, Tenant Management Organisations (TMOs) and national tenants’ representation.

■ Recommendation 12:

The Government must address the current weaknesses in tenant rights.

We call on Government to:

12.1. Work with tenants' organisations to co-create a National Tenants Charter that sets out tenants' fundamental rights to decency, dignity, health and safety in their homes, their landlords' obligations around property conditions, and the systems of scrutiny and redress.

12.2. Support the rejuvenation of the tenants' movement by creating a National Tenant Empowerment Fund (part funded by landlord licensing) to support new tenants' organisations, tenant management organisations and an independent, national organisation elected and run by tenants to represent their interests in policy and regulatory conversations.

12.3. Fundamentally reform Legal Aid, along with funding for local Law Centres, to ensure that all tenants have access to affordable legal representation.

■ Recommendation 13:

The Government should simplify and strengthen housing standards across the rental sector.

We call on Government to:

13.1. Consolidate all existing and future housing standards and legal safety requirements, including fire, gas and electrical safety, in the new DHS and extend it to all forms of rental and temporary accommodation, including accommodation for asylum seekers.

13.2. Revise the new DHS before it is introduced to remove inconsistencies, contradictions, and loopholes, ensuring it provides a clear and enforceable baseline for all rented homes.

13.3. Commit to the elimination of all Category 1 and Category 2 hazards in rented accommodation by 2030 to address persistent inequalities in housing conditions.

■ Recommendation 14:

The Government should provide sufficient funding to support landlords to upgrade their homes and tenants to afford to furnish them.

We call on Government to:

14.1. Help social and private landlords to meet the new DHS with private landlords able to access higher grants from letting their homes at social rents for 15 years.

14.2. Introduce a well-funded programme of area-based housing renewal, targeting concentrations of non-decent pre-1919 terraced homes.

14.3. Increase the maximum amount available for each home under the Disabled Facilities Grant, as proposed by the Fabian Society⁹², to cover more complex adaptations, simplify the system of support and allow people with disabilities to stay in their homes.

14.4. Provide funding for all local authorities to set up a Local Welfare Assistance Scheme that provides low-income households with access to essential items of furniture, fittings and fixtures.



Community Consultation on Wythenshawe Town Centre regeneration, 2025

5. OUR APPROACH

In this penultimate section we share details of our coproduced approach and what we have learned in support of wider learning and potential adaptation.

“The model of (a) understanding the need (b) incorporating expert inputs (c) looking at examples from elsewhere (d) engaging in reasoned discussion and (e) coming up with a coherent set of demands, is really powerful and a good model that others could follow.”

*Commissioner, Evaluation Workshop,
December 2025*

5.1. ORGANISED COMMUNITIES

A critical success factor for the Commission’s approach to coproduction has been its foundation in organised communities. Often coproduction fails to be transformative because individuals are “invited in”⁹³ to formal bureaucratic spaces with no collective power and where they have no meaningful influence. In this case, the process was community led with approximately one third of Commissioners comprising leaders from organised community associations and forums.

The Commission was launched in July 2024 by a campaign coalition called Social Homes for Manchester which in turn was established in 2023 in response to community mobilisation and networking across the city. The Commission grew out of a long history of residents, community, and faith groups advocating for local needs, resisting the displacement of lower-income households from the city centre, and the historical loss of community assets, infrastructure and services to private sector-led redevelopment. Many of our Community Commissioners have devoted decades of unpaid labour to defending their community’s “right to the city”.⁹⁴ However, many of the official decision-making spaces have been “invite only” controlled by city authorities where consultation processes have historically given limited weight to community perspectives and local people have had little real influence.



Women of Wythenshawe and SH4M leaders call for 30% social rent homes at IWD March for Women, 2023

■ Recommendation 15:

The Government should revolutionise regulatory enforcement.

We call on Government to:

15.1. Establish a national Housing Standards Agency (HSA) to take over responsibility for housing standards enforcement from local authorities as well as the Housing Ombudsman and operate through locally based teams working in partnership with, or embedded within, Combined and Strategic Authorities.

15.2. Equip this new HSA with comprehensive enforcement powers, including the ability to carry out routine and unannounced inspections, undertake emergency repairs, issue fines, and make repair and compensation orders.

15.3. Introduce a mandatory national registration and licensing scheme for all landlords and housing providers to be administered by the new HSA with non-compliant landlords ultimately facing the revocation of their licence.

15.4. Make the HSA a one-stop-shop for tenants, and their representatives or advocates, to bring evidence of persistent non-compliance with the new DHS, as well as serious or urgent health and safety issues that have been ignored by landlords, to ensure tenant voices are heard and immediate action taken where necessary.

5.2 CLASS, RACE AND GENDER

It is important not to underestimate the class and gender dynamics that have driven this organising history and to be clear that the Commission did not have a strong enough focus on racial justice despite attempts to include key voices and engage with partners working in this field such as with the Centre for Dynamics on Ethnicity (CoDE) and the Institute for Social Policy, Housing, Equalities Research (i-Sphere).

The formation of the Social Homes for Manchester coalition was nonetheless a break from the past. Here were grassroots community groups mobilising together to say to Manchester, Greater Manchester, and national voluntary sector and knowledge institutions: these are our priorities, these are the changes we need; this is how we need you to organise with us. Most of the grassroots campaigns and associational structures were also majority women-led linked to organising models focused on amplifying low-income women's voices as those worst affected by the housing crisis and entrenched socio-economic inequality in the UK. This included mums, carers, women with disabilities, and women from diverse histories and backgrounds who have joined together around their common experiences of the housing, climate, and cost of living crisis in the neighbourhoods where they live. Global majority women living on low incomes are the most likely to be experiencing intersecting forms of disadvantage including housing injustice and although the voices of diverse women were at the forefront of our work, the Commission did not manage to dig deep enough into the dynamics of racial inequality in the housing system which is something that Social Homes for Manchester will need to address going forward. Nevertheless, when reaching out to form the Social Homes for Manchester campaign coalition and the Manchester Social Housing Commission, there has been a conscious and proactive effort to recognise and mitigate class-based inequality in the approach taken and spaces created; to achieve gender balance; and to avoid a gendered division of labour. Community Commissioners felt that this was an important driver for the achievements made for Manchester communities.



Residents, community leaders and councillors in Miles Platting, October 2023.

5.3 SHARED VALUES

In forming the Commission, SH4M aimed to create a majority women-led body, reflecting the composition of the community coalitions. SH4M also invited “professionals” who were known to be genuinely committed to the principle of “social rent as social justice” and to tackling the climate crisis.

In some cases, we were unable to invite individuals directly and instead asked organisations to nominate representatives. Overall, however, we succeeded in recruiting a Commission with broadly shared values and gender balance. Members agreed that dramatically increasing the delivery of social rent homes was essential to addressing the housing crisis, and that these homes must be zero-carbon and well insulated to tackle the cost-of-living and climate crises. Prioritising women also meant centring the priorities and voices of mothers, daughters, carers, families, and children. Some Commissioners noted that this approach contributed to a more cooperative and discursive space.

We were therefore able to kickstart the process with shared goals in sight. Whilst there were differences of perspective – and some Commissioners were unable to stay the course – a strong foundation of common purpose proved critical to the Commission's progress.

5.4 GEOGRAPHICAL COVERAGE AND ‘TYRANNIES OF PARTICIPATION’

We invited community coalitions from four key areas spanning the North, Centre and South of the city to select their own representatives to act as Community Commissioners. This included representatives from: Collyhurst South and Miles Platting; the Aquarius estate in Hulme; Moss Side; and Wythenshawe Central; where residents have spent years organising collectively through social movement-based approaches. These neighbourhoods had already developed their own local coalitions at ward or sub-ward level, bringing residents together around issues they identified as priorities, including the housing crisis and the need for social housing. Many were affiliated with Community Savers, an adaptation of a 30-year strong movement from the Global South called Shack/Slum Dwellers International; and/or with the Greater Manchester Tenants Union (GMTU), a rights-based movement for housing justice grounded in union organising. Both member-led organisations ensure residents themselves set the agenda, develop strategy, and support each other across neighbourhoods, creating autonomous spaces for dialogue and the ability to federate for stronger city-wide, regional and national influence.

The Jam and Justice collective (2019) identify two “tyrannies of participation”⁹⁵:

- The “*tyranny of authenticity*” is when valuing “lived experience” becomes a relentless search for “real” or “ordinary” people, dismissing the experience of those who don’t fit or comply with such expectations. This tyranny also keeps power in the hand of those in formal or elected positions.
- The “*tyranny of bottom up*” privileges popular mobilisation as the route to innovation downplaying the need to harness the resources and power of formal decision-makers to effect real change.

Through the Manchester Social Housing Commission, SH4M managed to steer a course that has mediated between these two tendencies – seeking representation from different areas within the City of Manchester from those most affected

by the crisis, while also recognising autonomous community organising and representation as a valid and critical space from which to accept community experiences and priorities; and drawing in the technical, evidence-, and policy/practice-based experience and knowledge to inform discussions and outputs on the character of the crisis and necessary innovations, investments, and reforms.

“It was a good thing that the Commission’s asks have been reasonable. We could have asked for the earth and been written off, but we tried to understand and respect the economic realities of development and the pressures that the city and developers are under. At the same time, we have believed that change is possible and now is the time to set out a completely different approach to social housing.”

Commissioner, Final Evaluation Workshop, December 2025.

5.5 METHODOLOGY

Our analysis and final recommendations draw on and integrate multiple forms of evidence and knowledge generation including literature review, expertise from diverse stakeholders who came to share their knowledge and expertise during commission meetings, and direct experiences of the housing crisis.

The Commission met monthly from July 2024 to December 2025. The SH4M Steering Group nominated CLASS⁹⁶ to act as the Secretariat for the Commission and with support from unrestricted resources from SH4M steering group members together with funding from the Universities of Leeds, Manchester, and Manchester Metropolitan University; we were able to recruit a Research Associate (Dr Isis Banyei-Guyot) to carry out desk-based review of policy, practice and academic literature to inform our discussions and publications, enabling the Commission to set out an early “Agenda for Change”.⁹⁷

Although meetings began with relationship building and deepening our collective understanding of the workings of housing, regeneration and planning within Manchester City Council; Local

Plan processes; and the spaces for community voice and influence within these spaces; we had to move more quickly than we would have liked into cocreating responses to the rapidly changing policy and legislative environment following the July 2024 General Election. This included successive legislative reform and consultation processes relating to housing and planning including two reviews of the NPPF, the Renters Reform Bill, the Planning and Infrastructure Bill, Right to Buy reforms; and locally, the Manchester Local Plan.

The Commission convened expert sessions including proposed changes to the NPPF; Local Plan policy and process; the Strategic Housing and Planning framework at Manchester City Council; the financial realities of building social rent homes; policy approaches to environmental standards and metrics; Decent Homes, tenant rights, and the current regulatory environment; and Community Led Development. We also received comparative and specific real world case study evidence of housing and planning innovations and approaches to addressing the crisis including from a former Planning Committee Chair at Oxford City Council; Leathermarket Tenant Management Organisation and Community Land Trust; and Four Million Homes. The Commission's engagement with the development of the draft Manchester Local Plan included support to local area teams outside of the main Commission meetings to capacity build local neighbourhood coalitions to understand the planning process and how to engage and codevelop their own local area priorities and consultation

submissions.

Evidence was presented by Community Commissioners and their local area teams to the Commission itself; and to Planning Officers at Manchester City Council on historic experiences of planning and regeneration and current local priorities; to MPs and Lords during a Parliamentary Reception in November 2024; and to a broad variety of stakeholders locally and nationally through a series of publication launch events and housing-themed engagements and conferences; as well as through media exclusives and consultation responses.

Commissioners came together for their final formal session in December 2025 to reflect on the process; evaluate their work together to date; and agree next steps which will be taken forward by the Social Homes for Manchester Steering Group and Community Team with support from a cohort of Commissioners who opted to become Associate Members of the coalition to continue this important work.

“What is difficult to convey is the positive nature of each Commission meeting. It was a joy working together to make a difference to the lives of the people of Manchester.”

Commissioner, Evaluation Workshop, December 2025.



Andrea Lowman, Commissioner & Executive Director of Development at Wythenshawe Community Housing Group welcomes participants to 'Community Powered Neighbourhoods', Wythenshawe, 17 March 2026

6. ACHIEVEMENTS AND NEXT STEPS

In this final section, we set out and reflect on the many achievements of the Commission and look to the future.

6.1 NATIONAL POLICY AND PARTNERSHIPS

Attribution in the field of national policy influence and systems change is always a complex challenge. Collectively, we have a shared sense of having made an important contribution to both the body of evidence and the voice of a wider movement on the need for extensive investment and reform to accelerate delivery of sustainable homes for social rent and achieve stronger powers for tenants, regulatory bodies, and communities in deciding the future of their own neighbourhoods. Together, Commissioners have met with Ministers, ministry teams, representatives of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Greater Manchester, and special advisers; have submitted written evidence to successive national consultations and audit committees; and have presented evidence to Lords and MPs. Partner organisations such as Mustard Tree met directly with Angela Rayner in 2024 to share on the extent and impacts of the housing and homelessness crisis in Manchester in advance of the April 2025 budget.

Importantly, throughout these engagements we have developed new connections and relationships that have supported ongoing advocacy, parliamentary questions and ministry negotiation on community rights in planning, and new opportunities for joint working, including: the Women's Budget Group on the gendered impacts of the housing and climate crisis; and the Lloyds Local Collaborations programme. A key request to the GM APPG is to work with SH4M to establish a working group to advocate for the reforms needed nationally to enable accelerated delivery of ecologically sustainable social rent homes across Greater Manchester.

6.2 CITY-REGIONAL PARTNERSHIP

Commissioners have met with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor for Greater Manchester to share learning and recommendations on more than one occasion throughout the Commission process to look at the relevance of our findings for the city-region. On community rights in planning, a key challenge that emerged from our discussions was the lack of transparent, accessible, and functional area data at a granular enough scale to be useful to communities seeking to understand trends and advocate for their needs and priorities at a neighbourhood level. This problem is particularly acute in relation to housing need and planning data in the context of a fragmented and marketised housing provider landscape. GMCA has now committed to working with Commissioners from the University of Leeds and Manchester Metropolitan University in partnership with SH4M to develop a prototype online data portal as a first step towards addressing this need that can be piloted for two urban areas. As we launch this report, Community Commissioners are also calling on GMCA to work with them to establish a Social Homes for GM Scrutiny Panel able to ensure the Commission's recommendations have impact across the city-region, and to hold quarterly meetings until the next General Election.

6.3 MANCHESTER LOCAL PLAN

As noted earlier, Social Homes for Manchester [was launched](#) partly in response to the announcement of the Manchester Local Plan review.

The most significant achievement to date – though a revised Local Plan will soon be published for Regulation 19 consultation and this work continues – is that Manchester City Council has increased its targets for social rent delivery from less than 5% (N.B. only 2% of homes delivered from 2012-2022 were homes for social rent in Manchester) to 21% (30% affordable housing of which 70% must be for social rent). The Commission and SH4M continue to call for a target of 30% social rent in all new

housing developments of ten homes or above in the Local Plan following the Government's April 2025 announcement of £39 billion for social and affordable homes of which at least 60% must be for social rent. This target also now seems achievable given the laudable progress made by Manchester City Council since 2024 with 644 social rent homes delivered of which 278 have been low or zero carbon, and 65.9% of expected affordable housing delivery for 2026-27 ringfenced for social rent. The draft Local Plan also raises the bar on required justification for demolition.



Miles Platting leaders launch SH4M following a net loss of 500+ social homes, 2023

Community Commissioners are also delighted that some of the local area team's own priorities have been listened to and recognised in the draft Local Plan published for Regulation 18 consultation in the summer of 2025. This includes the removal of the Aquarius estate in Hulme from the city centre planning zone with recognition of the estate as a residential area. There are a whole series of measures where progress remains to be seen within the Regulation 19 version of the plan including the continued **obfuscation of statistics and priorities through the term affordable housing** rather than specifying tenure type; and **the lack of a pragmatic and progressive policy on community led development** to bring Manchester up to speed with comparatively more innovative cities like Leeds and Liverpool.

Disappointingly, the current draft plan does not include any new policy provisions for increasing Housing and Planning Information Transparency nor any clear policy on health infrastructure or how key sections of the Plan and proposed area developments will advance positive health

outcomes in a city with some of the worst health inequalities in England.

6.4 LEGACY PROJECTS

SH4M and the Commission process have catalysed a whole series of exciting new partnerships and initiatives including new neighbourhood planning processes in Hulme and Moss Side; work to explore Community Land Trust pilots in Miles Platting and Wythenshawe; a network of organised communities with a deeper understanding of housing and planning systems and potential community led placemaking innovations just as five Manchester Pride in Place areas have been announced; the transparency and accountability data portal project with GMCA; and a hoped for Social Homes for GM scrutiny panel and parliamentary working group as described above. A new Social Homes for Trafford coalition has also launched and we are keen to share learning with groups across the city region and nationally.

6.5 NEXT STEPS

The SH4M coalition is the legacy structure which will take forward these findings and recommendations and seek to maximise implementation, working always in partnership with community leaders across Manchester, Greater Manchester and England. The coalition will publish an annual progress tracker against these recommendations each year at least until the next General Election.

You can find further details on the context and evidence for the recommendations in our previous reports here:

<https://www.socialhomes4mcr.org.uk/publications>.



GLOSSARY

Affordable Rent

A rental tenure offered by social housing providers set at no more than 80% of market rents in the private rental sector.

Consumer Price Inflation

The rate at which prices paid by consumers rise or fall over time using a representative basket of goods and services.

Council Housebuilding Skills and Capacity Programme (CHSCP)

A programme aimed at supporting councils to increase their levels of housebuilding.

Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)

Compulsory purchase is a legal mechanism by which local authorities can acquire land without the consent of the owner. Compulsory purchase powers can support the delivery of a range of development, regeneration and infrastructure projects in the public interest.

Energy Performance Certificate

Records a property's energy use, typical energy costs, energy efficiency, and steps that can be taken to improve a property's energy efficiency and reduce energy costs.

Financialisation

Refers to how housing is being increasingly treated as a financial asset for investors rather than a human right and a social good.

Future Homes Standard

A UK government commitment for all new build homes by 2025 to be future-proofed with low carbon heating and high levels of energy efficiency.

Fuel poverty

A household is in fuel poverty if living in a poorly-insulated home and the required amount of time to heat their home leaves them with an income below the official poverty line.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA)

A regional governing body in England, established in 2011 to unite ten local councils—Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Stockport, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan.

Greater Manchester Housing Providers Partnership (GMHPP)

A partnership between housing providers in Greater Manchester which is part of a "[Tripartite Agreement](#)" between the Housing Providers, the GMCA and the Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership.

Hope value

Hope value is the premium added to the current market value of a particular plot of land based on the future expectation of securing planning permission for a more profitable use.

Housing Association

Not-for-profit organisations that own, let, and manage social rented housing as well as other housing tenures. Also known as Private Registered Providers.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System

A method for local authorities to assess the health and safety risks in housing introduced under the Housing Act 2004.

Homes England

The government's housing and regeneration agency that allocates funding for housing and construction.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

A mandatory, ring-fenced financial account that records income and expenditure for council-owned housing, legally separating it from the authority's general budget.

Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA, 2023)

A law aimed at reducing regional economic and social disparities by devolving power, streamlining planning, and regenerating areas outside London.

Local Area Energy Plan (LEAP)

A non-statutory, whole system approach to delivering

net zero in a particular region that maps energy supply and demand to outline the most cost-effective way to decarbonise.

Local Housing Allowance (LHA)

LHA rates are used to calculate Housing Benefit for tenants renting from a private landlord based on the level of private market rents being paid in a given area.

Local Plan

All local authorities are required to produce a Local Plan to guide decisions on future development proposals to address local needs and opportunities including where development should take place and where it should be restricted.

Manchester Living Rent

A relatively new rental tenure introduced by Manchester City Council distinct from both Affordable Rent and social rent, 'set at or below the Local Housing Allowance level'.

Manchester Move

A website used to advertise and bid for ready-for-rent social homes let by around 18 not-for-profit landlords in Manchester.

Manchester Housing Provider Partnership (MHPP)

A partnership between private registered providers of social housing (housing associations) and Manchester City Council focused on integrated working on housing, transport, skills and education, health and social care.

National Housing Federation

An umbrella body representing England's housing associations.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The UK Government's planning policies for England. It outlines how these policies should be applied to local and neighbourhood plans, and to planning applications.

Private Rented Sector (PRS)

Rental homes let by a private landlord (a person or company that owns the property you will be living in) on a for-profit basis, and subject to particular legal regulations.

Public Works Loan Board (PWLb)

A UK statutory body which provides low-cost, long-term loans to local authorities for capital projects like housing, schools, and regeneration.

Retrofit

Retrofitting consists of changes to a home that will make it more energy efficient and environmentally friendly.

Right to Acquire

Enables some housing association tenants who have had a public sector landlord for 3 years to buy their housing association home at a discount of between £9,000 and £16,000.

Right to Buy (RTB)

Enables council tenants who have had a public sector landlord for 3 years to buy their council home at a discount set by how many years a tenant has lived at a property and the region it is located in.

Section 106 / Developer Obligations

Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) allows for agreements focused on site specific mitigation of the impact of development - often referred to as 'developer contributions' – and include contributions to affordable housing.

Shared Ownership

Shared Ownership allows you to buy a share of between 25%-75% of your property and pay rent on the remaining share usually charged at 2.75% of the property value. There is an option to buy more shares as and when you can afford them.

Social Rented Housing

Low-cost, secure tenancies rented out by local authorities or housing associations to those deemed to be in priority need. Rent is set through the National Rent Regime in England at around 50% of market rents.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

An annual assessment of land suitable for housing development that the local authority expects to deliver housing over the next 15+ years. Alongside the SHLAA is a Five-Year Supply Statement which assesses how many homes the local authority expects to be built in the next five years, setting this figure against Government housing requirements.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment

An evidence-based picture of current and future housing need over the next 20 years for different groups calculated through a government-guided methodology.

Temporary Accommodation

Temporary housing for people assessed as homeless by a local authority and eligible for assistance including B&Bs or hotels; private flats/houses; council or housing association properties.

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Enquiries about the work of the Commission can be directed to sophie.king@class-uk.com

Please also see the below webpage for further information:
www.socialhomes4mcr.org.uk/commission

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