

Green Party: Housing Minister's plans a slap in the face for people who can't afford a home



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***Jonathan Bartley, co-leader: 'We must end our narrow obsession with home ownership and meet people where they are – by investing in social housing and improving the private rented sector'**

The Green Party has branded the Housing Minister's new housing strategy [1] a "slap in the face" for people struggling to afford the cost of their homes.

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said the Government should instead focus on:

- Setting up a Living Rent Commission to bring down rents
- Introducing a Land Value Tax to reduce property speculation
- Expand the use of community land trusts and co-operative home ownership
- End tax breaks for buy-to-let investors and use the money for social housing

Bartley said:

"The Housing Minister's plans are a slap in the face for the millions of people in this country desperate for bold plans to reduce rents and make their housing affordable.

"People are living in desperate insecurity and we need to end our narrow obsession with home ownership and meet people where they are – by investing in social housing and improving the private rented sector. Any plan to help renters which doesn't have at its heart a clear intention to reduce the amount tenants are paying is doomed to failure.

"It is scandalous that many people are paying up to two-thirds of their income on rent, and often living in sub-standard accommodation. The

Government should immediately set up a Living Rent Commission to work out what rent is truly affordable and take action to bring down costs for tenants.

“With Britain suffering such an acute housing crisis – and with property developers earning such huge sums for simply holding onto land – it’s also clear that idea such as a Land Value Tax should be explored. Such a tax could reduce property speculation, revitalise inner city areas and raise revenue – there’s no excuse for failing to investigate it as an option.

“We need to start talking seriously about expanding the use of community land trusts and co-operative home ownership. If the Government wants to take the heat out of the housing market it must end tax breaks for buy-to-let investors, and use the money to create a new generation of social housing.

“Housing should not be a speculative commodity and we must move beyond piecemeal tinkering with a broken market to ensure that everyone has a place they can call home.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-38884601>

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