

# Tackling the Housing Crisis

England's housing market is profoundly unfair, with a secure home becoming increasingly impossible for millions of people, especially the young, less well off and ethnic minorities.

Successive governments have pursued policies to benefit homeowners, without considering the impact on those without property.

**A fair deal is needed for housing, which provides for the needs of everyone, not just homeowners, and meets the aspirations of millions of younger people and the less well off to have the security that older generations and the wealthy enjoy.**

**Liberal Democrats believe in taking action to tackle the housing crisis.** We're calling for significantly more homes to be built every year, including significantly more social homes. The UK simply hasn't built enough social housing for years, while what we do have has been sold off without replacement.

Liberal Democrats already have a history of sustainably delivering homes, working in partnership with the local community. In Portsmouth, Cumbria and Kingston, Liberal Democrat councils are building thousands of new council and housing association homes. York City Council, when under Liberal Democrat leadership, set in place a programme to deliver hundreds of new zero carbon council houses.

Local authorities need greater powers to **tackle the excesses of big developers**, including ending land banking, as well as being able to build more homes themselves.

**Renters need a fair deal** including finally ending no-fault evictions, extending the length of tenancies and ensuring rent can only increase by a fair amount each year.

And if we believe we need to tackle the climate crisis, **we need a long-term programme to insulate our homes**, to end fuel poverty, cut energy bills and slash emissions. New homes must also be built to zero-carbon standards, ensuring they are good for the pocket as well as the climate.

Today, Liberal Democrat members have passed new policy to tackle the housing crisis. Liberal Democrats are calling for:

- **A national target for building social homes**, aiming for 150,000 a year by the end of the next parliament. With new powers for local authorities to build their own social and affordable housing.
- A ten year emergency programme to **insulate Britain's homes** as well as new standards to **ensure new homes are warm, cheap to heat and produce minimal emissions**.
- **Ensuring developers build appropriate infrastructure** needed for new housing developments.

- **Abolishing leaseholds for residential properties** and effectively ending ground rents by cutting them to a nominal fee.
- **Introducing a fair deal for renters**, including longer default tenancies, rent smoothing over the course of a tenancy and banning no fault evictions.
- New powers for local authorities to **control and manage second homes** and holiday lets.
- **Expansion of Neighbourhood Planning**, more democratic engagement in Local Plans, reforming the Land Compensation Act to ensure land can be bought at a fair price and extending the Liberal Democrat proposed Commercial Landowner Levy to land with planning permission, but not yet built on.
- Building **10 new garden cities** to help tackle the housing crisis.

Read the motion in full

The Liberal Democrats will create a fair deal for housing. Taking on the big developers, delivering new homes, improving renters' rights and protecting our environment – together we can tackle the housing crisis.

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## **Scrap the Voter ID Scheme**

“Voter ID in England led to racial and disability discrimination”  
[Guardian](#)

“Tory Voter ID Law ‘Disenfranchised More People Than It Protected’”  
[HuffPost](#)

“Voter ID: General election could face serious description” [BBC](#)

“Hundreds of thousands face exclusion over voter ID laws” [Guardian](#)

**These are just a few of the shocking headlines from the past weeks – we should not be facing these issues in a modern democracy.**

Being able to vote is a fundamental democratic right. Yet thanks to the

Conservatives, it's now at risk – with millions potentially facing being disenfranchised at the next election. These measures disproportionately impact the young, ethnic minorities and people with disabilities

Jacob Rees-Mogg, who was a Cabinet Minister when the voter ID law was introduced, has described Voter ID as an attempt to 'gerrymander' elections in the Conservatives' favour.

At the 2022 elections, there were 13 cases of alleged personation investigated – and no further action was taken in any of those cases. In the 2023 local elections, at least 14,000 voters were turned away from polling stations because of the new rules. **Voter ID is like using a sledge hammer to crack a nut.**

The Conservatives' Voter ID scheme will cost £120m over the next decade – a massive waste of taxpayers' money.

**Voter ID must be scrapped. Liberal Democrats are leading the fight against this deeply unfair scheme.**

The Liberal Democrats in both the House of Commons and the Lords consistently led opposition to the introduction of the Voter ID law.

Today Liberal Democrat members backed my Elections (Voter Identification Requirements) Bill, which would scrap the Voter ID scheme and stop this attack on our democracy.

Read the motion in full

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## Supporting British Farming

I grew up on a farm and I worked in the farming industry. My parents and my brother still live and work on our farm. I've seen first-hand the impossible pressures farmers are under.

My brother was forced to give up his dairy herd in recent years as it simply wasn't sustainable in the current climate. And he's not alone. Instead of supporting farmers, these Conservatives are driving them out of business and endangering their livelihoods.

The Conservatives have failed to guarantee UK food standards in trade deals, undermining our farmers and risking their very livelihoods.

They are cutting farmers' existing payments before the new Environmental Land Management scheme (ELMs) is even ready.

They have slashed business energy support and failed to class farmers as energy intensive businesses, depriving them of vital support.

Meanwhile, farmers cannot access workers due to the government's botched Brexit deal. In the first half of 2022, £60m worth of fruit and veg went to waste just because of workforce shortages.

**The Conservatives' failure to back British farming is driving up food prices and it's ordinary people who are suffering.**

British farmers are the best in the world, Liberal Democrats want to see them continuing to produce high quality food for our tables while protecting and enhancing our natural environment. That's why today we passed comprehensive new policy to support British farming, protect our environment and secure our food supply:

- **Ending food poverty:** extending free school meals to all children in primary education and to all secondary school pupils whose families receive Universal Credit.
- **Sustainability:** Immediately raise the Environmental Land Management scheme budget by £1 billion, supercharging the transition to environmentally sustainable farming.
- **Supporting farmers:** Funding and support for the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service to assist farmers with the transition.
- **Workforce:** Introducing a proper visa and seasonal worker system which allows our farmers and fishers to access the workforce they need.
- **Protecting the environment:** Rewarding farmers to reduce the use of costly imported and environmentally harmful artificial fertilisers and pesticides and tackling antimicrobial resistance, improving food security and tackling food costs.
- **Cooperation:** Signing a veterinary and phytosanitary agreement with the EU as soon as possible, alongside mutual recognition and alignment on standards and quality to allow farmers trade with Europe easily.
- **Trade deals:** Prevent the undercutting of UK farmers and fishers in international trade deals by mandating proper democratic scrutiny and accountability in trade deals and ensuring all imports meet UK environmental, climate and animal welfare standards. Renegotiating the Australia and New Zealand Agreements to ensure this.
- **Innovation:** Introducing a Research and Innovation Fund to support new

and emerging technologies in the sector.

- **Food safety:** Giving everyone confidence in the security and safety of the food they buy by providing local authorities with greater powers and resources to inspect and monitor food production, ensure goods are properly checked where necessary, introducing robust and clear food labelling.

Read the motion in full

Farmers are at the heart of rural communities, they feed our nation, they are custodians of our landscapes.

The Liberal Democrats are committed to supporting British farming to continue safeguarding our environment and producing the high quality food we all want for generations to come.

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## A fair deal on tax

People across the UK are facing a cost of living catastrophe.

Soaring food, gas and electricity prices. Sky-high mortgage bills and rents.

And all this Conservative government does is make things worse.

Raising income tax for everyone by freezing the personal allowance & 40p threshold. Dragging more low-earners into paying tax.

While inflation soars, the country is paying more tax than at any time since the Second World War.

**We cannot let the Conservatives make the people who can least afford it pay for their mistakes and economic chaos.**

**So it would be wrong for us to raise income tax even further on families struggling to make ends meet** – that's why we won't continue our policy to add a penny to income tax. Instead we've set out other ways to fund our plans for a fair deal.

We will make sure that companies that can afford to pay more in tax, do. We will reverse the Conservatives' multi-billion-pound tax cuts for the big banks. And HMRC will be empowered to collect more of the £36bn in taxes that the Conservatives are failing to collect.

Liberal Democrats are campaigning for a fair deal, and we'll pay for it fairly too.

**A fair deal that gives everyone the opportunity to get on in life**, wherever they start.

**A fair deal that puts power in your hands**, so you can do your bit – for your children, your community, your business and your environment.

**A fair deal that holds the powerful to account**, to make sure they do their bit too. Where everyone plays by the same rules.

**That is the fair deal the Liberal Democrats are fighting for.**

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## Connecting communities

Affordable, reliable bus, tram and rail services connect communities, but for too long the Conservatives have allowed services to decline.

**Almost a quarter of bus routes have been cut** in the last ten years outside London, while fares have risen by 89% since 2005. Rail passenger levels have only just recovered to their pre-pandemic levels.

Meanwhile **rail electrification is at a standstill** with just 101 miles of line due to be electrified this year and a new rail line in Bedfordshire not being built with electric trains in mind.

Buses are often relied upon by the very poorest as well as the old and the young to get to school or work. **Buses are the easiest form of public transport to introduce, improve and expand** because they require minimal infrastructure investment. Improving bus services is essential if the UK is to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and cut air pollution.

Providing bus and rail links **boosts local economies** and enables people to access a wider range of local services. **Public transport widens opportunities** for sporting, social and cultural participation in both rural and urban areas.

Today Liberal Democrat members have passed new policy, calling for action to

improve bus and rail services and bring costs down:

- **Giving local authorities more powers** to support and fund new bus services, including powers over franchising and introducing simpler tickets.
- Removing the ban on local authorities creating **their own bus companies**.
- **Extending half-fares for bus, tram and train tickets to cover everyone up to the age of 18**, while they remain in compulsory full time education.
- Introduce a **Young Person's Buscard**, similar to the Young Person's Railcard, for 19 to 25 year olds, giving them a third off bus and tram fares.
- Establish the new Great British Railways before the next election to act as a "guiding mind" for the railway, ensuring that the **needs of passengers and freight are put first**.
- Establish a ten-year plan for rail electrification to increase the number of passenger journeys covered by electric trains prioritising freight routes in the first five years to move more freight to rail.
- Supporting rural bus services and on-demand services where needed.

Reverse the government cuts to the active travel budget and introduce a nationwide strategy to **promote walking and cycling**, including the creation of dedicated safe cycling lanes.

Read the motion in full

Liberal Democrats have a positive plan to fix bus, tram and rail services – allowing people to access services, boosting local economies and protecting our environment.

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