



Planning and Infrastructure Bill – Amendment 141 and 151: ensuring that ‘affordable housing’ means genuinely affordable social rent homes

SUMMARY

Shelter supports amendment 141 and 151, tabled by Lord Best, which can be found [here](#) and is urging peers across the House of Lords to support them at Committee Stage.

Right now, **there are over 1.3 million households on housing waiting lists in England. This includes more than 131,000 households trapped in insecure temporary accommodation.**¹ To meet this urgent need, we need to build homes that are genuinely affordable for people on low incomes. That means building social rent homes.

However, the current definition of ‘affordable housing’ includes social rent, affordable rent, shared ownership, and other low-cost homeownership products. While all are described as ‘affordable’, only social rent homes are affordable by design – because rents are set by a formula that is linked to local incomes.

In contrast, affordable rent and shared ownership products are often unaffordable for people on low incomes. As a result, they do little to reduce waiting lists, prevent homelessness or reduce the use of temporary accommodation.

Since the introduction of affordable rent and shared ownership, the delivery of social rent homes has plummeted:

- **Delivery of social rent as a proportion of ‘affordable homes’ has dropped from 65% in 2010/11 to 16% in 2023/24.**²
- **The number of social rent homes delivered has dropped from nearly 40,000 homes in 2010/11 down to around 10,000 in 2023/24.**³
- **Consequently, over the last decade, we have lost more social homes than we build each year.**⁴

Amendments 141 and 151 to the Planning and Infrastructure Bill ensure that affordable housing delivered through Spatial Development Strategies (SDSs) is genuinely affordable –

¹ Rise in temporary accommodation numbers is calculated using MHCLG statutory homelessness data. Available at: MHCLG, [Statutory homelessness live tables](#), Table TA1.

² Shelter analysis of MHCLG: affordable housing supply (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply>)

³ Ibid.

⁴ Shelter. (2023) 14,000 social homes lost last year, as over a million households sit on waiting lists. Available: https://england.shelter.org.uk/media/press_release/14000_social_homes_lost_last_year_as_over_a_million_households_sit_on_waiting_lists



by requiring that a majority of affordable homes are for social rent, and by defining social rent using the Regulator of Social Housing's Rent Standard. This will ensure that new developments delivered through SDSs always meet the most urgent housing need.

Shelter supports these amendments, tabled by Lord Best, which can be found [here](#) and is urging peers across the House of Lords to support them at Committee Stage.

WHY CHANGE IS NEEDED

- 1.1 England is in the grip of a housing emergency. **A record 169,000 children are growing up homeless in temporary accommodation**, often placed in unsuitable B&Bs and hostels.⁵ **More than 1.3 million households are on the housing waiting list, with waits for family-sized social homes of more than 100 years in some local authorities.**⁶ Meanwhile, private rents continue to rise, leaving nearly two thirds of working renters struggling or behind on their rent.
- 1.2 The only sustainable solution is to build more genuinely affordable social homes that people on low incomes can actually afford to live in.
- 1.3 The current definition of 'affordable housing' includes social rent, affordable rent, intermediate rent and shared ownership. **While all of these products are described as 'affordable', social rent homes are affordable by design, with rents set by a formula that is linked to local incomes.**
- 1.4 The problem with 'affordable' rent is that it is often not affordable for those in greatest need. **Shelter research shows that a one-bedroom home at a social rent is affordable for people on low incomes in 98% of areas in England - compared to just 58% of areas at an affordable rent.**⁷ In places like Lewes, Barking and Dagenham, and Luton, an affordable rent consumes almost 50% of a low wage.⁸
- 1.5 [The BBC has reported](#) that some renters earning over £30,000 a year were deemed ineligible for so-called 'affordable' rent homes, with some social landlords requiring salaries of £35,000 to £60,000 to stand any chance of being accepted.
- 1.6 **Shared ownership is also out of reach for many. It requires a deposit, mortgage eligibility, and monthly costs that often exceed a private rent** - making it inaccessible to households on housing waiting lists or stuck in temporary accommodation. The

⁵ Rise in temporary accommodation numbers is calculated using MHCLG statutory homelessness data. Available at: MHCLG, [Statutory homelessness live tables](#), Table TA1.

⁶ National Housing Federation: 'Over a hundred years' wait for a family-sized social home.'

<https://www.housing.org.uk/news-and-blogs/news/over-a-hundred-years-wait-for-a-family-sized-social-home>

⁷ Shelter (2025) Briefing: affordable rent is not affordable. Available at: [Briefing: affordable rent is not affordable - Shelter England](#)

⁸ Ibid.



average deposit for a shared ownership home in 2023/24 was close to £23,000, which is simply unattainable for people on low incomes.⁹

- 1.7 **According to data published by MHCLG, in the last ten years (2014/15 – 2023/24) just 14% of all affordable homes delivered were for social rent. In the ten years before the introduction of affordable rent (2001/02 – 2010/11), 60% of affordable homes delivered were for social rent.**¹⁰ Over time, other so-called ‘affordable’ tenures have replaced social rent as the main form of affordable housing built in England, draining investment away from delivering genuinely affordable social housing and worsening homelessness.
- 1.8 The de-prioritisation of social rent as the primary affordable housing tenure has meant that England has experienced a net loss of social homes over the past decade, undermining efforts to tackle homelessness, reduce waiting lists and build a sustainable housing system.
- 1.9 **The government must re-prioritise the delivery of social rent homes to ensure that affordable housing policy meets its core purpose:** helping those in greatest need.
- 1.10 The Planning and Infrastructure Bill provides a clear opportunity to do this. By requiring that a majority of affordable homes delivered through SDSs are for social rent, it would ensure affordable housing on new developments meets the urgent housing need in communities as a first principle. It would ensure that the majority of ‘affordable housing’ delivered is genuinely affordable for people on low incomes.

WHAT THESE AMENDMENT DO

- 2.1 Requires that a majority of affordable homes delivered through Spatial Development Strategies are for social rent, ensuring that housing delivery is focused on meeting the most urgent need.
- 2.2 Uses the Regulator of Social Housing definition of social rent, guaranteeing that homes delivered under this category are genuinely affordable for people on low incomes.
- 2.3 Establishes a clear framework for prioritising social rent within the broader mix of affordable housing, without excluding other tenures like shared ownership or affordable rent – but ensuring social rent is no longer sidelined.
- 2.4 Creates a mechanism for rebalancing affordable housing delivery, helping to reverse the long-term decline in social rent provision.

⁹ Average cost is calculated using MHCLG social housing sales and demolitions data. Available at: MHCLG, [Social housing sales and demolitions 2023-24: Shared ownership - GOV.UK](#)

¹⁰ MHCLG, Live tables on affordable housing supply. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/live-tables-on-affordable-housing-supply>



AMENDMENT TEXT

Lead member: Lord Best

Sponsors: Baroness Thornhill, Lord Young of Cookham

Clause 52, page 73, line 18

leave out from "housing" to end of line 21 and insert "of which a majority is social rent housing."

Clause 52, page 74, line 22

at end insert—

"(15)In subsection (5), "social rent housing" has the meaning given by paragraph 7 of the Direction on the Rent Standard 2019 and paragraphs 4 and 8 of the Direction on the Rent Standard 2023."