

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PARTY MANIFESTOS

WHAT THEY MEAN FOR HOUSING IN THE NORTH

After the Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Democrat parties have published their manifestos, we look at what their pledges mean for the housing sector in the North.

Housebuilding

Labour

The main manifesto pledge is to **get Britain building** again, with **1.5 million new homes** over the next Parliament. They have also said they will:

- deliver the **biggest increase in social and affordable** housebuilding in a generation
- make changes to the **Affordable Homes Programme** to ensure that it delivers more homes from existing funding
- work in partnership with local leaders and communities to build a **new generation of new towns**
- support councils and housing associations to **build their capacity** and make a greater contribution to affordable housing supply.

Conservative

The main manifesto pledge is to deliver **1.6 million homes** in England in the next Parliament. It has also said it will:

- renew the **Affordable Homes Programme**
- unlock new urban regeneration schemes, by creating locally-led **urban development corporations** in partnership with the private sector and institutional investors
- support local and smaller builders by requiring councils to set land aside for them and **lifting Section 106 burdens** on more smaller sites.

Liberal Democrats

The main manifesto pledge is to increase the **building of new homes to 380,000 a year**. The new homes target includes **150,000 social homes a year**. Their manifesto also says they will:

- ensure that affordable and social housing are included in brownfield projects
- build ten new garden cities
- give councils the freedom to set planning fees to reflect the actual cost of delivering an efficient planning service and building more homes.

NHC reaction

Bold commitments to building more social housing are welcome but all parties lack clarity regarding the planning, funding and delivery of such an enormous task. There are over 420,000 households on housing waiting lists in the North and we know that we need 18,815 new affordable homes in the North each year. However, only an average of 10,491 are built each year, leaving a sizeable annual shortfall of 44.2%.¹ Of these, we need 6,947 new homes for social rent in the North each year, the most affordable tenure for tenants, but only 1,309 are built each year.

It is encouraging to see that the main parties have prioritised house building and re-committed to the Affordable Homes Programme. Labour's commitment to "deliver the **biggest increase in social and affordable** housebuilding in a generation" is particularly welcome, but it is not clear what changes will be made to the Affordable Homes Programme to deliver 'more homes from existing funding'.

The NHC is calling on the next Government to announce a new Affordable Homes Programme in its first 100 days, which has the scale and flexibility to meet the North's affordable housing challenge over the longer-term and deliver the right homes in the right places. Alongside social rent being the main tenure of a new AHP, other changes we are calling for include reforming net additionality rules to support more regeneration projects, long-term certainty over ten years, and grant rates that are sufficient to deliver at the scale required. Party manifestos are silent on these changes which are desperately needed to deliver more homes and great places across the North.

Planning reform

Labour

Labour will:

- immediately **update the National Planning Policy Framework**, including restoring mandatory housing targets
- take tough action to ensure that planning authorities have an **up-to-date Local Plan**
- support local authorities by **funding additional planning officers**, through increasing the rate of the stamp duty surcharge paid by non-UK residents
- implement solutions to unlock the building of homes affected by **nutrient neutrality**.

¹ Northern Housing Consortium (2023), [‘The Northern Housing Monitor 2023’](#)

Conservative

The Conservatives have said:

- National planning protections mean there is never any top-down requirement for councils to remove Green Belt protection and **these will remain in place**

They will:

- provide a **fast-track route through the planning system** for new homes on previously developed land in the **20 largest cities**
- make sure local authorities **use the new Infrastructure Levy**
- **abolish the legacy EU ‘nutrient neutrality’** rules to immediately unlock the building of 100,000 new homes
- do more to boost the availability of **affordable housing** for local people in **rural areas**, ensuring rural exception sites support local people into home ownership.

Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats have said they will:

- expand **Neighbourhood Planning** across England
- **properly fund local planning departments** to improve planning outcomes and ensure housing is not built in areas of high flood risk without adequate mitigation, **by allowing local authorities to set their own fees**
- **create and restore habitats** to guard against coastal flooding and erosion and absorb carbon emissions
- encourage the use of **rural exception sites** to expand rural housing.

NHC reaction

Planning reform is a central focus of manifesto pledges, demonstrating that the planning system is a major part of the solution. However, urgent progress will be needed to restore funding for planning services. Capacity in northern local authority planning departments fell disproportionately by a whopping 65%² in the ten years of austerity and services are still trying to build back resources. Tackling this will help to reduce delays on new developments and ensure the planning system can be administered effectively and efficiently.

The NHC is also calling for a ‘Planning Super Squad’ to be set up in every Mayoral Combined Authority to provide expertise, guidance, and capacity directly to local authorities on areas where complex, technical skills are required but are in limited supply.

² Northern Housing Consortium (2020), [‘Time to Level Up Planning Capacity’](#)

Brownfield and Land Use

Labour

Labour has said it will:

- take a **brownfield first** approach, as well as a more **strategic approach to greenbelt land** designation and release
- prioritise the release of **lower quality 'grey belt' land**
- introduce **'golden rules'** to ensure development **benefits communities and nature**
- further reform **compulsory purchase** compensation rules to improve land assembly
- take steps to ensure that for specific types of development schemes, landowners are awarded **fair compensation** rather than inflated prices based on the prospect of planning permission.

Conservative

The Conservatives have said they will:

- deliver a record number of homes each year on **brownfield land in urban areas**
- look at extending **'full expensing'** to the delivery of brownfield housing
- retain a cast-iron commitment to **protect the Green Belt**.

Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats will:

- encourage development of **existing brownfield sites** with financial incentives and ensure that affordable and social housing is included in these projects
- introduce **'use-it-or-lose-it' planning permission** for developers who refuse to build
- allow councils to buy land for housing based on **current use value rather than** on a **hope-value** basis by reforming the Land Compensation Act 1961
- trial **Community Land Auctions** to ensure that local communities receive a fair share of the benefits of new development in their areas and to help fund vital local services.

NHC reaction

We have welcomed earlier Government interventions through infrastructure and brownfield land funding to stimulate development. Despite these interventions, bringing forward brownfield land remains a major challenge and opportunity in the North.

We know there is enough brownfield land in the North to build up to 320,000 new homes,³ making a significant contribution to tackling the housing crisis. But there are significant challenges to overcome if we are to meet the needs for new housing across the North which lock out many sites from being able to provide the new homes people desperately need.

The NHC will publish new research shortly on the opportunities for brownfield funding in the North.

³ Northern Housing Consortium (2023), ['Building the Future of Housing in the North'](#)

Right to Buy and protecting social housing and tenants

Labour

Labour will:

- better **protect the existing stock of social homes** by **reviewing the increased right to buy discounts** and increasing protections on **newly-built** social housing

Conservative

The Conservatives will:

- protect the laws that **ensure the discounts rise with inflation** and **fight any plan** by local authorities **to abolish the Right to Buy** altogether, ruling out what they say is Labour's 'anti-aspiration move' to drastically reduce Right to Buy discounts
- legislate for **new 'Local Connection' and 'UK Connection' tests** for social housing in England, to ensure this valuable but limited resource is allocated fairly
- implement a **'three strikes and you're out' expectation of social housing landlords** for anti-social behaviour. Landlords will be expected to evict tenants whose behaviour is disruptive to neighbours and the local community.

Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats will:

- give local authorities, including National Park Authorities, **the powers to end Right to Buy in their areas**
- protect the rights of social renters, **proactively enforcing clear standards for homes that are socially rented**, including strict time limits for repairs
- **fully recognise tenant panels** so that renters have a voice in landlord governance.

NHC reaction

Right to Buy is a totemic policy, and this is reflected in the different stances of political parties. However, it is unarguable that current Right to Buy rules have impacted on the overall levels of social housing stock in local communities and make it harder to replace social homes that are lost, not least by restricting the amount of money local authorities can keep from sales to reinvest in new housing in their area.⁴ To reflect the different housing markets across the North, in ['Building the Future of Housing in the North'](#) we have argued in favour of allowing local authorities to:

- tailor discount policy to local markets, either by setting discount rates locally or offering a portable discount to tenants
- keep 100% of sales receipts and removing restrictions on how much can be spent on replacement properties.

We also make the case for the next Government to commit to a new Decent Homes Standard which is applied to both rented sectors, and the need to engage and consult with NHC members so that investment is set at the right level.

⁴ CIH (2022), 'UK Housing Review'

Devolution and local authorities

Labour

Labour will:

- **deepen devolution settlements** for existing Combined Authorities
- require all Combined and Mayoral Authorities to **strategically plan for housing growth** in their areas
- give Combined Authorities **new planning powers** along with **new freedoms and flexibilities** to make better use of **grant funding**
- bring in a **new statutory requirement for Local Growth Plans** to cover towns and cities
- seek to **consolidate powers to allow for improved decision making** with local areas able to gain new powers over housing and planning
- **give councils multi-year funding settlements** and end wasteful competitive bidding.

Conservative

The Conservatives say that **by 2030**, every part of England **that wants one will have a devolution deal**.

They will also:

- **offer 'level 4' devolution powers** to areas in England with a devolution deal and a directly elected leader, starting with the Tees Valley
- continue backing **Investment Zones** across the country, giving areas £160 million to catalyse local growth and investment
- **ensure councils provide high quality and value for money services** to local communities. Protect residents from excessive **council tax rises**...[and] **improve standards in councils** by making their performance more transparent through the Office for Local Government.

Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats will:

- decentralise decision-making from Whitehall and Westminster by **inviting local areas to take control of the services that matter** to them most
- launch an ambitious **industrial strategy** and continue to champion investment in the **Northern Powerhouse**.

They add that:

- Given sufficient powers and resources, **local authorities can play a major role in combating the climate and nature emergencies**, whether by **insulating homes** or improving air quality
- They'll tackle the **funding crisis facing local authorities**, with measures including the provision of **multi-year settlements**, boosting the **supply of social housing**, and forging a long-term, cross-party agreement on social care.

NHC reaction

Huge strides have already been made towards greater devolution in the North and this is something the NHC has been calling for over the past few years. It is hugely welcome, then, that the need to further devolve powers to local areas has achieved a form of cross-party consensus.

The NHC believes that even more progress could be made through devolving powers and funding across housing and land initiatives. This includes devolving funding for domestic retrofit for all housing tenures as part of expanded devolution agreements. This will enable a place-based approach to domestic retrofit which meets the needs of the local housing stock, and can be delivered in partnership with housing providers and local authorities.

Labour's proposals to ensure that strategic planning for housing growth can take place over a combined authority area is welcome, but any regional-level planning must be done in effective partnership with existing local authorities. In addition, any attempted reforms in this area will also need to address the chronic shortage of planning capacity within local authority planning departments.

Home ownership

Labour

Labour has said it will:

- work with local authorities to **give first-time buyers the first chance to buy homes** and 'end the farce' of entire developments being sold off to international investors before houses are even built
- introduce **a permanent, comprehensive mortgage guarantee scheme**, to support first-time buyers who struggle to save for a large deposit.

Conservative

The Conservatives have said they will:

- make permanent the increase to the threshold at which first-time buyers pay **Stamp Duty** to £425,000 from £300,000
- launch a new and improved **Help to Buy scheme** to provide first-time buyers with an equity loan of up to 20% towards the cost of a new build home.

They add:

- First-time buyers will be able to get onto the housing ladder with a **5% deposit** on interest terms they can afford.

Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats have said they will:

- help people who cannot afford a deposit to own their own homes by **introducing a new Rent to Own model for social housing** where rent payments give tenants an increasing stake in the property, owning it outright after 30 years.

NHC reaction

The importance of home ownership was brought out in all manifestos, with a focus on helping first time buyers onto the property ladder. The Help to Buy scheme will be seen as a quick win for the Conservatives, but lessons should be taken from the previous programme. While it helped many homebuyers in the North, it had not delivered consistently and the North ranked below its proportion of homes for the programme.⁵ Help to Buy sales since 2013 in the North have been the lowest regional sales at around 20% below the national average.⁶ Experience from past schemes suggests that some of the subsidy may be captured by developers in the form of higher prices and profits and that some who buy would be able to do so without the scheme.⁷

Private Rented Sector (PRS)

Labour

Labour has said that it will:

- immediately **abolish Section 21 ‘no fault’ evictions**
- take steps to decisively raise standards, including **extending ‘Awaab’s Law’ to the private rented sector**
- ensure homes in the **private rented sector meet minimum energy efficiency standards by 2030.**

Conservative

The Conservatives have said they will:

- pass a **Renters Reform Bill** that will deliver fairness in the rental market
- **deliver the court reforms** necessary to **fully abolish Section 21** and strengthen other grounds for landlords to evict private tenants guilty of anti-social behaviour
- introduce a **two-year temporary Capital Gains Tax relief for landlords** who sell to their existing tenants
- ensure **councils have the powers** they need to manage the uncontrolled growth of holiday lets.

Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats have said they will:

- deliver a fair deal for renters by **immediately banning no-fault evictions**
- make **three-year tenancies** the default
- create a **national register of licensed landlords**
- reintroduce requirements for landlords to **upgrade the energy efficiency of their properties to EPC C or above by 2028**

⁵ Northern Housing Consortium (2023), [‘The Northern Housing Monitor 2023’](#)

⁶ Northern Housing Consortium (2023), [‘The Northern Housing Monitor 2023’](#)

⁷ IFS (2024), [‘Conservatives pledge a new Help to Buy equity loan scheme: what does it mean?’](#)

- give local authorities **new powers to control second homes and short-term lets** in their areas, allowing them to increase council tax by up to 500% where homes are being bought as second homes, with a stamp duty surcharge on overseas residents purchasing such properties. They would also create a **new planning class** for these properties.

NHC reaction

365,000 northern private rented homes don't meet the current Decent Homes Standard and more than 1 in 6 have a Category 1 Hazard. The capacity of local authority enforcement teams to proactively tackle poor standards and conditions in the private rented sector is not sufficient.

It is positive to see reforms to rebalance the rights and responsibilities around private renting and tilt the balance further towards tenants. A fair and balanced market should be good for both landlords and for tenants. Constrained social housing supply has contributed to the growth of private renting creating a lucrative business model with little regulation for standards or quality. Removal of 'no-fault evictions' is a key step towards increased protection for private renters and will allow renters to challenge poor practice and unfair rent increases without fear of eviction. Applying regulatory standards in the private rented sector, including higher minimum energy standards, is a positive move and the new government must maintain this commitment to renters.

In ['Building the Future of Housing in the North'](#) we have argued for the next Government to support local authorities to tackle poor quality homes in the private rented sector by:

- removing central Government barriers to new selective licensing schemes
- properly funding local authority capacity to enforce standards, providing an initial 2-year investment for local authorities to set up enforcement teams to tackle poor standards in privately rented homes.

There is a lack of focus on this important area in the parties' manifestos, which will need to be worked through in the detail within Government.

We also need them to commit to a new Decent Homes Standard that places a bigger focus on safety and energy efficiency, and is applied to the private rented sector. We would like the next Government to introduce a property portal, as part of robust local authority regulation of the private rental sector. It is also critical to ensure Local Housing Allowance rates are linked to the 30th percentile of local market rents in perpetuity, which is also absent from any of the manifestos.

Climate Change and Net Zero

Labour

Labour has said that clean energy by 2030 is its second mission. It will:

- create a new publicly owned company, **Great British Energy**
- invest an **extra £6.6 billion over the next parliament**, doubling the existing planned government investment, **to upgrade five million homes**

Labour's **Warm Homes Plan** will offer grants and low interest loans to support investment in insulation and other improvements such as solar panels, batteries and low carbon heating to cut bills.

- Labour will partner with combined authorities, local and devolved governments, to roll out this plan and work with the private sector to provide private finance to accelerate home upgrades and low carbon heating

Labour say they are determined to **create new high-quality jobs and rebuild supply chains at home.**

Conservative

The Conservatives have said they:

- are **committed to delivering Net Zero by 2050**
- will invest **£6 billion in energy efficiency over the next three years** to make around **a million homes warmer**
- will fund an **energy efficiency voucher scheme, open to every household in England**, to support the installation of energy efficiency measures and solar panels
- will ease the burdens on working people... **never forcing people to rip out their existing boiler** and replace it with a heat pump
- will give households the **choice of smart energy tariffs**, which can save them £900 a year.

Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats have said they will:

- cut greenhouse gas emissions to **Net Zero by 2045** at the latest
- launch an **emergency Home Energy Upgrade programme**, with free insulation and heat pumps for low-income households and a central role for local authorities in delivering this programme
- provide **incentives for installing heat pumps** that cover the real costs
- drive a rooftop solar revolution by **expanding incentives for households to install solar panels**, including a guaranteed fair price for electricity sold back into the grid
- invest in **education and training** to equip people with the skills needed for the low-carbon economy of the future
- immediately **require all new homes** and non-domestic buildings **to be built to a zero-carbon standard**
- introduce a new subsidised **Energy-Saving Homes scheme**, with pilots to find the most effective combination of tax incentives, loans and grants

- **introduce a social tariff** for the most vulnerable to provide targeted energy discounts for vulnerable households
- implement a proper, **one-off windfall tax** on the super-profits of oil and gas producers and traders
- **decouple electricity prices from the wholesale gas price**
- **eliminate unfair regional differences** in domestic energy bills

NHC reaction

All the main parties acknowledge the importance of home energy in the wider climate goals, but a lack of urgency, and moving goalposts on funding, could impede home retrofit progress.

If energy efficiency and heat decarbonisation in the domestic sector are to make an appropriate contribution to the overall Net Zero ambition, there is a need for both the pace and the scale of activity to increase in the early years of a new government. The 2022 edition of the Northern Housing Monitor assessed that 3.8 million homes in the North fall beneath the key energy efficiency standard of EPC C, with only six years now remaining to achieve the target.

But there are significant challenges to overcome if we are to retrofit at scale and pace, not least building the skills and supply chain we need. Pledges such as Labour's plan for good skilled jobs for tradespeople in every part of the country is a positive step.

The first year of a new government will be critical to shift up a gear in the delivery of an holistic, whole-house approach, establishing transformative retrofit programmes.

The NHC wants to see the next Government commit to a ten-year programme of retrofit funding, by:

- improving the energy efficiency of the North's social housing – through providing a minimum of £500 million a year in grant funding to get northern social homes to EPC C by 2030 and start the journey to Net Zero.
- making meaningful progress towards fully decarbonising all northern social housing – committing a minimum of £1 billion a year from 2030 to 2035.

Providing this long-term certainty now will give providers, contractors, and suppliers the confidence they need to make long-term plans.

Homelessness

Labour

Labour will develop a **new cross-government strategy**, working **with Mayors and Councils** across the country, to put Britain back on track to ending homelessness.

Conservative

The Conservatives will:

- **continue with plans to end rough sleeping** and prevent people from ending up on the streets in the first place
- deliver commitments under the **Local Authority Housing Fund** and **review the quality of temporary accommodation**.

Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats will:

- urgently publish a **cross-Whitehall plan** to end all forms of homelessness
- end rough sleeping within the next Parliament and immediately **scrap the archaic Vagrancy Act**
- exempt groups of homeless people, and those at risk of homelessness, from the **Shared Accommodation Rate**
- introduce a **'somewhere safe to stay'** legal duty to ensure that everyone who is at risk of sleeping rough is provided with emergency accommodation and an assessment of their needs
- ensure **sufficient financial resources for local authorities to deliver the Homelessness Reduction Act** and provide accommodation for survivors of domestic abuse.

NHC reaction

There are increasing pressures on the availability of temporary accommodation. There were 10,790 northern households in temporary accommodation in June 2023, an increase of 50% since 2019. In the North, 1,760 households were relocated to temporary accommodation in another local authority area with the consequent impacts on education, family support, isolation and often, poor quality living conditions.⁸

The use of temporary accommodation is also having a big impact on the budgets of northern local authorities. In 2022/23 across the North almost £164 million was spent on temporary accommodation.

These manifesto commitments to address homelessness are to be welcomed, but to fully tackle the challenges around homelessness we need to build many more social homes, and in the immediate term ensure that the welfare system enables people to afford to find a home by through linking Local Housing Allowance to the 30th percentile of local market rents permanently.

⁸ Northern Housing Consortium (2023), [‘The Northern Housing Monitor 2023’](#)

Health and Social Care

Labour

Labour will aim to tackle the social determinants of health, **halving the gap in healthy life expectancy** between the richest and poorest regions in England.

On social care, Labour has pledged to reform social care and deliver care under a principle of 'home first', aiming to ensure people receiving care can live independently as long as possible.

They will:

- make an additional **40,000 NHS appointments** available each week
- undertake a 'programme of reform' to **create a National Care Service**, underpinned by national standards to deliver a consistent level of care
- establish a **Fair Pay Agreement** in adult social care to address staff shortages
- publish regular, **independent workforce planning** across health and social care
- recruit an additional **8,500 mental health staff**
- aim to deliver **health and social care closer to home**, with reforms to GP surgeries, more prescribing powers for community pharmacies, trials of Neighbourhood Health Centres which bring together existing medical services within one local facility, and an increased emphasis on preventative health interventions.

Conservative

The Conservatives have said that the **NHS Long-Term Workforce Plan** will help shift care away from hospitals and into local communities.

They will:

- **expand Pharmacy First**
- build or modernise **250 GP surgeries** (focused on areas of **new housing growth**)
- build **50 more Community Diagnostic Centres**, including in underserved areas, resulting in an additional 2.5 million checks a year
- implement plans to **cap social care costs** from October 2025 and **provide local authorities with a multi-year funding settlement** to deliver the social care reforms from the 'People at the Heart of Care' White Paper at the next Spending Review.

Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats will:

- increase the **Public Health Grant**, with a proportion of the extra funding set aside for those experiencing the worst health inequalities to co-produce plans for their communities
- establish a **'Health Creation Unit'** in the Cabinet Office to lead work across government to improve the nation's health and tackle health inequalities
- **expand social prescribing** and invest in **community projects** that bring people together to combat loneliness
- tackle air pollution and poor air quality in public buildings with a **Clean Air Act**

- create a **National Care Agency** to set minimum national standards.
- recruit more staff to the care sector with a **social care workforce plan**
- trial **personal health and social care budgets** so individuals are in control of what care they receive
- establish an **Independent Living Taskforce** to help people independently live in their own homes
- roll out **digital platforms for care users**
- **increase the Carer's Allowance** for unpaid carers and increase eligibility.

NHC reaction

All parties have made pledges to improve the health of local communities. Good quality housing is an important determinant of mental and physical health that could affect improvement in healthy life expectancy. Housing providers are now, more than ever, responding to a wide range of support issues beyond the home as constraints elsewhere in public finance, for example, in mental health services and other health related pressures are placing significant burdens on housing services.

Devolution has enabled health, social care, and housing to work together across the North, but more could be done to ensure person-centred, integrated support that enables people to live a healthy, independent life is the norm.

The NHC would like to see support for local areas to provide good quality local public services that help people and communities to thrive, by the next Government:

- delivering a sustainable, long-term funding settlement for local authority finances that represents a real-term increase in spending power to ensure community-based services are there when they are needed
- supporting Integrated Care Boards and Mayoral Combined Authorities to work more closely with housing, including by actively seeking out opportunities to co-design and commission new person-centred services and interventions, as well as better utilising data to target interventions.

Welfare and poverty

Labour

Labour will:

- **review Universal Credit** to ensure that it 'makes work pay' and tackles poverty
- develop a **strategy to tackle child poverty**
- introduce **free breakfast clubs** in every primary school
- retain the pension triple lock.

Conservative

The Conservatives have claimed that spending on social security and benefits is on an unsustainable trajectory. They have claimed that they will **save £12 billion** through reducing benefit fraud and making changes to the existing welfare system.

The Conservatives will:

- **reform disability benefits** so they are more targeted ‘and reflect people’s genuine needs’
- accelerate the **full rollout of Universal Credit**
- reform the **work capability assessment** and **fit note processes**
- introduce **tougher sanctions rules** for people who refuse to take up suitable jobs after 12 months on benefits.

Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats will:

- **reduce the wait** for the first payment of Universal Credit from five weeks to five days
- **abolish the bedroom tax**
- replace the sanctions regime with an **incentive-based scheme** to help people into work
- **ensure parents aged under-25 receive the full rate of Universal Credit** regardless of age
- bring **Work Capability Assessments** in-house
- reform **Personal Independence Payment assessments** to reduce reassessments and make the process more transparent.

NHC reaction

Many NHC members have extensive experience working with the UK’s complex benefits system, including supporting residents with applications and assessments processes to ensure that they receive all income entitled to them. Members also make significant efforts to support residents into employment through comprehensive employability support initiatives. The welfare system could do more to support organisations such as housing associations to deliver these programmes, but none of the major parties have yet committed to delivering additional funding to do so.

What is more disappointing is that none of the major parties have anything to say on the freezing of Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates. The freezing of these rates means that support for private rental sector tenants will become increasingly insufficient as rents rise. This has been a significant driver in increases in homelessness and the rising expenditure by local authorities on expensive temporary accommodation. To ensure that the social safety net remains intact for these tenants, LHA rates should be pegged to the thirtieth percentile of local market rents in perpetuity.

NHC final thoughts

While the political parties' manifestos provide their high-level commitments, there remains a lot of detail that has to be worked through with the next Government.

Regardless of the outcome of the election, there will be a new Secretary of State after 4th July, with the Rt Hon Michael Gove announcing he will step down as an MP. There will also be many new faces in Parliament.

We stand ready to work with them and support members to engage with Government over the next Parliament.

The Northern Housing Consortium recently published ['Building the Future of Housing in the North'](#), which outlines our offer to work with UK Government and Parliamentarians to:

- **Build new social homes and transform the North's communities** – creating great places where people love to live.
- **Create a new generation of green jobs in housing** – getting the North's existing homes to Net Zero, making them warm, dry, and energy efficient.
- **Make sure everyone across the North has a good quality, safe home** – upgrading social and private rented homes to help people create the lives they want in the places they call home.

The NHC will continue to make the case for housing in the North and will publish further detailed evidence over the summer to support our offer to work with UK Government, MPs and Peers.

Look out for our on-the-day election results briefing on Friday 5th July.