



What's Happening in Housing?

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Ask me again next month!

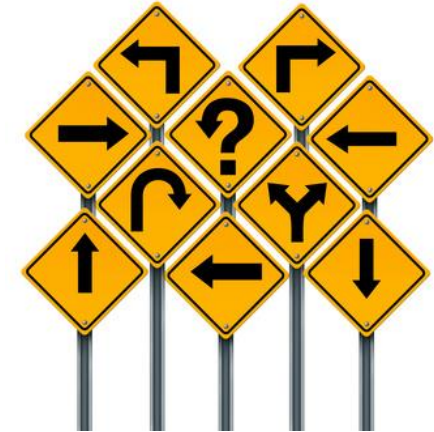
Prime Minister:



EU Membership:



Government policy:



But whatever happens, housing is likely to remain a domestic priority.

If the new Housing Minister calls you...

- Thinking about your role and your organisation, what is happening in the outside world that is affecting what you do?
- List as many as you can
- 10 minute group discussion, then feedback

- **Political**
- **Economic**
- **Social**
- **Technological**
- **Legal**
- **Environmental**

Who's promising what?

- Ensure total housebuilding is 300,000 per year, including at least 100,000 homes for social rent.
- Give local councils full control of Right to Buy
- Introduce a Rent to Own model for social housing that would enable tenants to own the property after 30 years
- New houses will be built to zero-carbon standards and cut fuel bills in a ten-year programme
- Abolish the Vagrancy Act to prevent criminalisation of rough sleeping

- [Lib Dems]

Next one...

- Build 100,000 new zero-carbon homes for social rent a year
- End Help to Buy and Right to Buy
- Introduce rent controls on private tenancies to reflect average incomes and maintenance costs
- Improve the insulation of every UK home in need by 2030 using sustainable materials
- Update the fire safety regulations for all types of insulation in buildings

[Green]

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How about this one...?

- Bring forward a Social Housing White Paper
- Introduce a Better Deal for Renters which will abolish 'no fault' evictions and create one 'lifetime' deposit which moves with the tenant
- Full enforcement of the Homelessness Reduction Act
- Simplify shared ownership products by setting a single standard for all housing associations
- Introduce a First Home scheme, under which properties would be sold at 30% discounts to first-time buyers
- Encourage innovative design and technology to make housing more affordable, accessible, and suitable for disabled, and older people.
- [Conservative]

Who's saying this...?

- Make it easier for councils to borrow money from the Government for council housebuilding
- Increase flexibility on the size and type of units in a development, including more flexibility on the number of affordable homes that have to be included in a development scheme
- Accelerate Universal Credit payment processes so that there is a five-week maximum
- Conduct a 12-week review of Universal Credit and implement reforms within two years

[Brexit Party]

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And finally...

- Build an annual rate of at least 150,000 council and social homes
- Introduce a zero-carbon homes standard for all new homes
- End Right to Buy
- End rough sleeping within five years
- Abolish bedroom tax and increase Local Housing Allowance
- Make sure regeneration can only take place with residents' consent
- Introduce a new English Sovereign Land Trust to buy land more cheaply for low-cost housing

- [Labour]

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What have they got in common?

- [Building more (social?) homes, affordability, homelessness, carbon reduction...]

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Four BIG issues

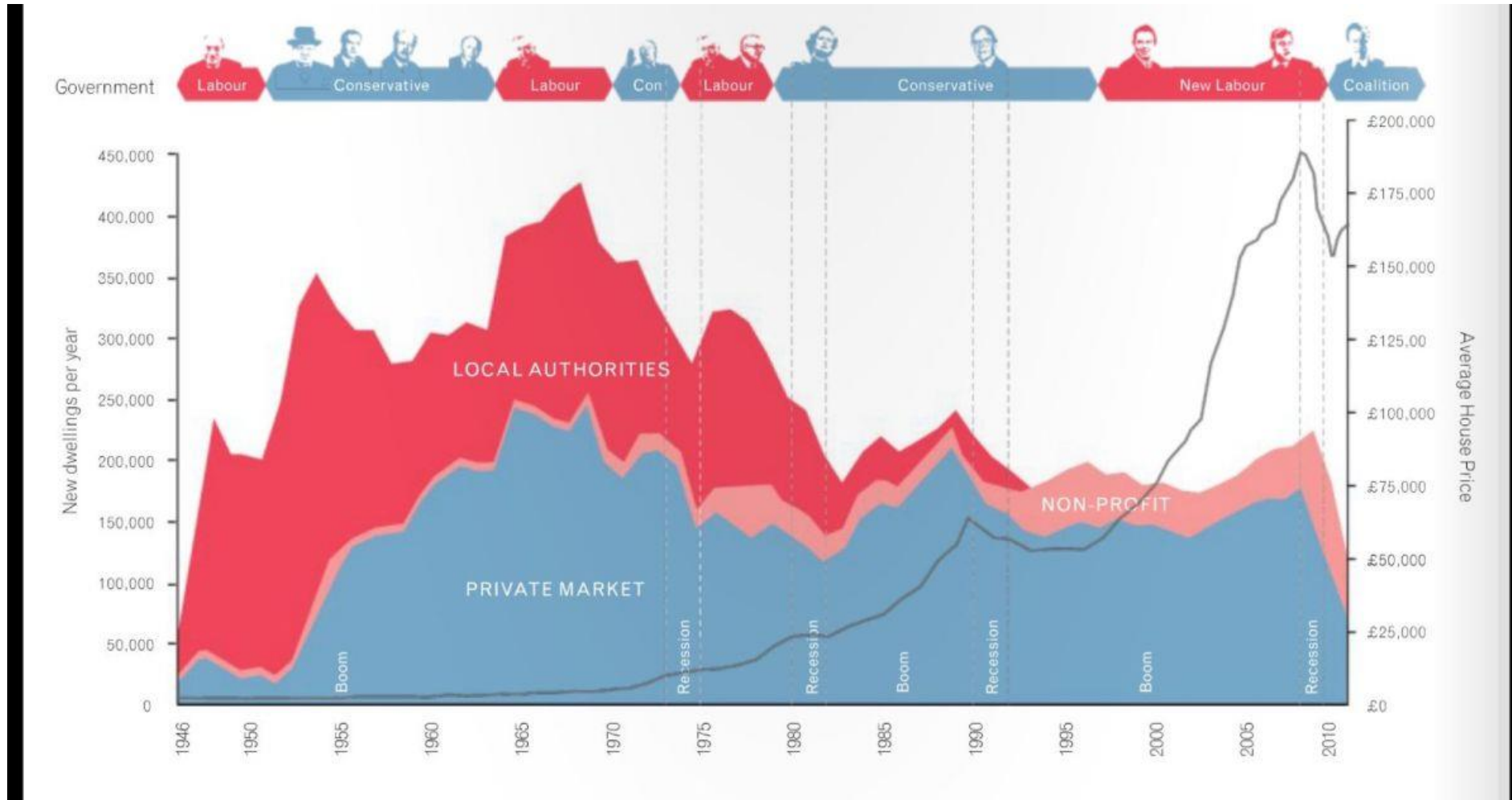
- Housing affordability and supply
- Refocus on customers (and their safety)
- Impact of welfare reform
- Homelessness

Rapidly rising up the agenda

- Mitigating and responding to climate change

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Housing Supply



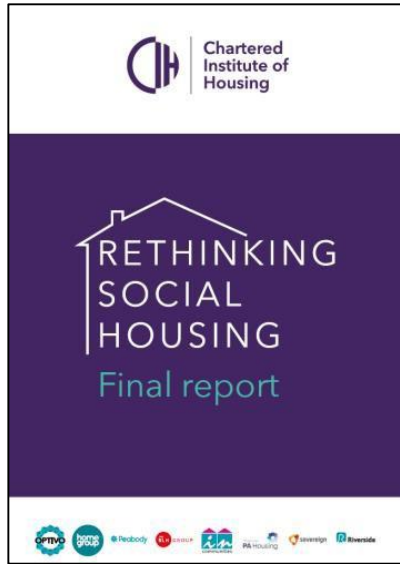
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Need more new homes – that people can afford and want to live in



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Refocus on customers



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Tenants matter again



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Wider social picture



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Impact of welfare reform

UC *Universal
Credit*

Coming soon...



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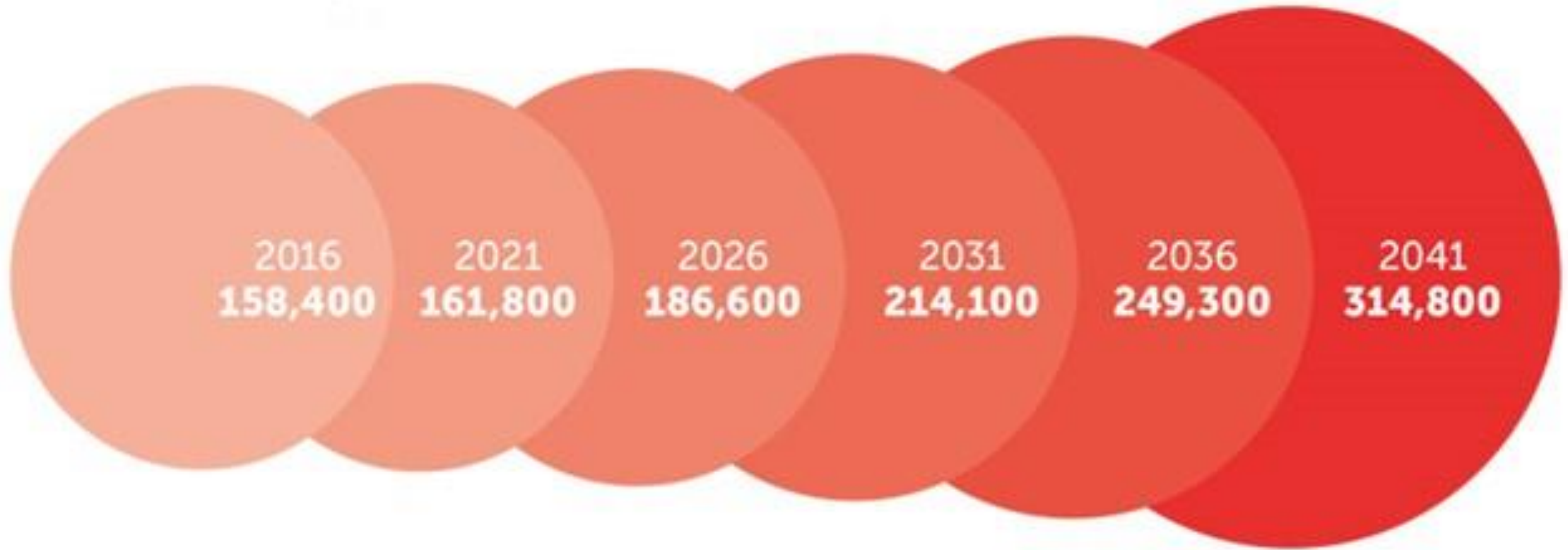
Welfare reform

- Already seen significant changes, including:
 - ✓ Bedroom tax
 - ✓ Overall benefit cap
 - ✓ Welfare freeze
 - ✓ Early roll out of Universal credit
- Evidence of real impact
 - ❖ Increasing rent arrears
 - ❖ Worrying levels of personal hardship and debt
 - ❖ Higher levels of eviction (social and PRS)
- More to come
 - ❑ Full roll out of Universal Credit through 'managed migration' – from 2019
 - ❑ With real cuts: over 3 million households could be +£2k pa worse off

Homelessness

Why now?

There are almost 160,000 households experiencing the worst forms of homelessness in Britain. If we carry on as we currently are, this is expected to almost double in the next 25 years: (Crisis, Ending Homelessness)



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Ending homelessness

- Massive and visible rise in rough sleeping
- Related to: ending of tenancies in private rented sector, mental health crisis, overall lack of housing.
- Government commitment to end rough sleeping by 2027, £100m of funding. Labour commitment too.
- Greater duties placed on local authorities – Homelessness Reduction Act.
- Particular emphasis on advice and prevention. ‘Duty to refer’ for other public bodies
- New models being tested – ‘Housing First’ – pilots in Liverpool and Manchester, whilst review of hostel accommodation
- Role for housing associations:
 - ✓ Provision of specialist accommodation and services
 - ✓ Nominations
 - ✓ Commitment to refer

Déjà vu?

New push on rent arrears urged

The Audit Commission and the Association of London Authorities issued reports this week urging improved management practices to stop steeply escalating rent arrears. Both reports blame housing benefit changes for sharp increases in arrears.

The Audit Commission survey reveals that rent and rate arrears went up by a third last year to £450 million. In 17 authorities arrears almost doubled and in inner London nearly two out of three tenants were in arrears.

The Commission warns that the situation could worsen next year as

community charge officers and water authorities will have more direct powers of debt recovery, creating a tendency for rent to be the last debt settled.

Also, ring-fencing of the housing revenue account means that uncollected rents will necessitate a surcharge on paying tenants, increasing the sensitivity of rent arrears.

Audit Commission controller Howard Davies said: 'The 1988 benefit changes undoubtedly caused major problems for local authorities, but they should by now have had time to overcome the initial administrative difficulties. It is up to them to

put a high priority on bringing arrears quickly under control.'

The ALA report, *Action on debt*, shows that rent arrears in London total £130 million. ALA figures suggest that London authorities collect 97 per cent of the rent due, based on averages over five years, and excluding rates. ALA housing officer Will Tuckley pointed out that the accumulated arrears were high partly because many inner London authorities had large housing stocks and had not written off any previous arrears, particularly where they were rate capped.

For reports see page 3



ARCHIVE



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Looking through a wider lens: changing ways of working



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Have I missed anything?

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If/when Brexit happens

Threats?:

- Reduced tenant employment and income in an economic downturn
- Impact of market fluctuations on finances
- Labour and material supply chain problems
- Higher build costs, reduced sales
- More social discontent and fracturing?

Opportunities?:

- Developers liquidating private sale assets
- Government investment to stimulate the economy and bridge construction skills gap
- Future investor and partnership opportunities?

Back to you

- Four scenarios (choose one)
- Twenty five minutes to discuss (as the senior management team of your organisation)
- Five minutes to present some recommendations – more practical the better.

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Scenario 1: new homes

- There is a housing crisis.
- We are under a lot of pressure to build more affordable homes. Homes England have asked us to double our programme.
- What issues and challenges will that present us with?
- How do we overcome them?
- How do we make sure the homes we build are affordable?

Scenario 2: customer satisfaction

- Customer satisfaction has slipped – especially around with how we deal with complaints
- Government are about to publish league tables, including figures on complaints satisfaction
- Tenants are telling us we don't listen, are defensive and don't learn from our mistakes
- What practical steps can we take to drive change and improve the customer experience?

Scenario 3: Universal Credit

- The roll out of Universal Credit has been accelerated. Managed migration is about to start.
- Our early experience of UC has been very mixed. Rent arrears are rising, and we often find out that someone is claiming UC far too late in the process.
- We know its coming, so how can we prepare out existing tenants for migration to UC.

Scenario 4: homelessness

- Homelessness is a growing and visible problem in our area
- Under the Homelessness Reduction Act, local authorities are under huge pressure to do more and are looking for housing associations to help
- We are not specialist providers, so what can we do that is practical to help local authorities in their new duties to prevent homelessness?

In conclusion...

- We operate in a changing world – lots of uncertainty. New challenges – and opportunities - every day.
- Change is a fact of life!
- As housing professionals, we need to embrace it, adapt to it and create it. Don't be frightened.
- As individuals:
 - Keep yourself informed
 - Think about the how as well as the what
 - See change as an opportunity – create our future
 - Get involved in change projects – your involvement is important