



Policy and influencing manifesto: 2012 - 2014

London is one of the most vibrant and successful cities on earth. But it is far from immune from the impacts of the global downturn and it faces a renewed and deepening housing crisis. Indeed, research by the London School of Economics commissioned by the G15 confirms that London has the strongest case for additional housing compared to the rest of the country on all the main criteria: the balance between households and dwellings; the expected rate of growth in demand and need; problems of affordability; and the combined impacts of shortages on homelessness, the use of temporary accommodation and overcrowding.

None of these problems are new. But they are intensified by the recession and its impacts on access to private debt for building in the private market, a significant downturn in mortgage availability and a loss of confidence amongst purchasers arising from fears of unemployment and uncertain future job prospects, especially amongst first time buyers. These factors combine to put housing supply in London under more pressure than at any time in the last 50 years.

The effects of the global recession make it hard for government to support public spending even for current commitments, let alone new initiatives. But housing associations in London are responsible for around 40% of new supply and are matching private money with public investment at a ratio of 6:1. Indeed, the G15 collectively will deliver 1 in 4 of all new homes, raising £2 billion to support just £350m of grant to provide 13000 new affordable homes by 2015. This represents fantastic value for government and for Londoners. But it is not enough.

The strength of the G15 comes from our diversity and the choice we offer to Londoners. We will continue to work closely with national and London local government, the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Mayor to find ways of improving housing opportunities for Londoners. We believe there is a case to be made for the economic as well as social and human benefits of providing more and better housing in the capital. It follows that the G15's policy and influencing priorities for the next two years will be focussed on making a better case for housing and for London in the next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR):

G15 policy priorities 2012–2014

1. To press government to deliver on its commitment to release public land for development, preferably on terms that will enable housing associations to take the lead at least until confidence and capacity returns to the wider housing market. We have the skills and capacity to take forward mixed income schemes across the capital, forming partnerships as necessary with private developers and public authorities.
2. To broaden the range of housing we offer to meet the increasingly diverse demands of Londoners. The priority remains to provide more rented housing affordable to low income households but low cost home ownership and other market related schemes will have growing importance as first time buyers are priced out of the conventional market by shortage of supply, high prices and stricter terms for mortgage availability.



3. To work with key partners to make the economic case for investing in housing in London.
4. To press the case for a more comprehensive review of social and Affordable rent policy to deliver a system that is truly affordable, striking a fairer balance between the rents of current and future tenants that recognises also the impact of welfare reform.
5. To track and evaluate the impact of the government's housing and welfare policies on Londoners. In particular, to ensure that the exceptional housing and living costs of lower paid Londoners are properly reflected and understood.
6. To promote the value to Londoners of the wide social mission of independent housing associations and the historic importance of our charitable and independent status. This status has allowed our sector to become the most successful private finance initiative in Europe, and any risk of public sector reclassification must be resisted at all costs if we are to continue our mission to provide housing for Londoners across all tenures

To achieve these priorities, we will support a range of research, wherever possible in conjunction with key partners such as the NHF, CLG, GLA and London Councils. The aim is to influence government and policy makers, especially in the period leading up to the next CSR. Detailed briefs will be drawn up for the following priorities:

G15 research priorities 2012-2014

1. To develop a model that demonstrates the economic case for housing.
2. To develop a funding proposition for affordable housing post 2015. This will include a review of rent policy and the capacity this can create to support investment in new supply.
3. To develop a methodology for tracking the impact of government policies on the 1 in 10 Londoners that are G15 residents.
4. To measure the value to London of the G15's community investment activities.
5. To assess the effectiveness of technologies used to improve the sustainability of new homes and mitigate fuel poverty, initially focussing on the performance of district heating and combined heat and power schemes.

G15 influencing priorities 2012-2014

The aim of the G15 is to support its arguments for policy change by calling upon the track record of its members and the results of its research programme. It will look to maintain and enhance relationships with and seek to influence key opinion formers in London.