

TACKLING LONDON'S HOUSING SHORTAGE

Fifty thousand new affordable homes for London over the next three years

By Mayor Ken Livingstone

ONE of the biggest problems facing London and Londoners is the high cost of buying or renting a home in the city.

That's why one of my top priorities as Mayor has been to do everything possible to increase the number of new affordable homes being built for rent and for shared ownership.

In my London Plan, I set a target that 50 per cent of all new homes should be affordable and most local councils have now adopted the same target. Polling shows that over 80 per cent of Londoners support this target.

The target has already started to produce results. This year we will see more than 13,000 more affordable homes delivered for Londoners. That's three times as many as when the Greater London Authority was set up in 2000. As this issue of *The Londoner* reports, thanks to the 50 per cent target and more money from the government,

we are seeing record numbers of new shared ownership homes giving first time buyers a chance to get on the property ladder. But we need to do more, and the new housing powers government has given the Mayor mean I am now in a position to do just that.

First, the government has given me control of the public money used to provide affordable homes and increased the money available to a billion pounds a year.

This has enabled me to set out firm funded plans to provide 50,000 more affordable homes over the next three years in my London Housing Strategy. And many more of them will be homes for families with three or more bedrooms, giving young families the chance to put down roots in the city.

Secondly, I can now intervene to deal with the small number of councils who are letting down their local communities by not insisting that developers provide enough affordable homes.

The top performing councils are

already delivering above my 50 per cent target for affordable homes and building more homes in total than ever before. Their record shows why those who argue that councils should be free to ignore the 50 per cent target are wrong.

That approach would reward and encourage poor performing councils at the expense of the good ones, and at the expense of the many thousands of Londoners looking for affordable homes for rent and shared ownership.

My new programme of 50,000 more affordable homes will see us getting back to levels of building last seen in the 1970s. This is good news for London but we need to maintain this performance for a decade and more to get on top of London's housing problems.

To achieve that we must ensure no-one is allowed to reverse or undermine the tough targets which I have set for affordable housing and which enjoy such strong support from Londoners.

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