

# Ms Natasha Sivanandan comments

Page: [Policy H5 Delivering affordable housing](#)

Section: [N/A](#)

a. Writing as a social scientist and trained lawyer as well as a resident of social housing, I make the following points. Research shows that the current housing disaster / crisis in London has been caused by 4 key problems: (1) the scrapping of the Rent Acts, which set fair rents and protected private tenants; (2) the paucity of homes for rent at social rent for those who are on low or no incomes or on benefits; (3) the sale of council homes under the "right to buy" policy, thus depleting good quality housing stock at social rent; (4) the inability of local Councils to use the money from Council home sales to build new homes. (5) In addition, these problems are being made worse by the Housing and Planning Act 2016 as housing associations get into the business of selling public housing which was bought previously using public funds. **In effect, all these policies transfer public assets into private hands and represent a transfer of wealth from the poor to the rich. The Mayor's Policy does nothing to effectively challenge this.**

b. Therefore what the Mayor should do is scrap all arrangements / deals involving getting out of agreeing to build 50% "affordable" housing. The idea that house builders should be able to get out of the 50% affordable housing agreement is wrong and has led to major problems in the past - eg: Heygate Estate / Elephant Park. Though public assets such as public land are being used, the public don't get a good deal out of the existing arrangements and the Mayor's proposals are wholly inadequate and show a lack of clear analysis.

c. The Mayor's formula for "affordable" housing is simply wrong. The formula ignores the fact that a large part of London's workforce work in jobs that pay minimum wages. Looking at "average" income is statistically and methodologically unreasonable as the massively inflated incomes of rich Londoners distorts the figures. So The Mayor's definition of "affordable" housing is wrong and misleading because it is not actually affordable for many who live and work in London and who the jobs that keep the city ticking over - that clean our schools, hospitals and offices, who care for our elderly and sick, to give just a few examples. Poor people in London can only afford to rent and they can only afford **social rents, not affordable rents. So the Mayor should change the agreement / demand - developers should have to build 50% of homes to be rented at social rent and these homes must not be available to buy. This can be done by making them available to rent at renewable 4-yearly tenancies.**