Dear

I am contacting you as your local constituent to ask you to write to Angela Raynor in support of the five urgent policy asks of the Manchester Social Housing Commission. You can read about these asks here: <https://www.socialhomes4mcr.org.uk/post/why-we-need-more-sustainable-homes-for-social-rent>.

As an active community member, there are key issues that I am concerned about beyond the obvious need for a massive increase in investment in building sustainable homes for social rent. I have deepened my understanding of these issues by attending events and public talks by Commissioners and the Social Homes for Manchester coalition and I fully support their work and the reforms they are asking for from national government.

1. **Reform the Viability loophole**

Manchester City Council have shared with Community Commissioners that one of the biggest challenges for them is the issue of viability. Even when a scheme originally includes social rent, developers negotiate this down on grounds of viability. When MCC reject developments on grounds that there is not a high enough percentage of affordable or social rent homes, their decisions are often overturned on appeal.

We must have a reform of the 10-20% viability test. This did not used to exist in planning policy. It was introduced in 2012, and it can be reformed or repealed.

1. **Protect local democracy**

As communities, we have no right of appeal on planning decisions and 80% of planning applications are approved already. It is great that councillors will receive more training, but also critical that all proposed new housing developments remain subject to the scrutiny and democracy of communities and ward councillors through the Planning Committee process.

In Greater Manchester, most communities and ward councillors support increased levels of social rent – we don’t oppose them, we campaign *for* them. And this is the tenure we are most in need of – while also recognising the need for mixed tenure communities. In the current context of the viability loophole, the democratic rights of councillors and communities to object to developments and hold councils and developers accountable for levels of social rent are essential to addressing the housing crisis.

1. **Include specific annual targets for social rent homes as part of the NPPF**

We need the National Planning Policy Framework to include not just overall housing targets, but specific targets for social rent which the recent revisions have failed to include. We need an agreed proportion of housing for social rent on all new housing developments annually. Investing in social rented housing is not only socially responsible but also economically sound. Research by Shelter shows that building 90,000 social rented homes per year would pay for itself in just three years, while adding £51.2 billion to the UK economy over the next 30 years.

1. **Ensure Fabric First housing**

When it comes to social rent housing, addressing the climate crisis also addresses the cost-of-living crisis. We need a requirement for all new build social housing to have energy performance standards based on energy use intensity measures. This is critical for reducing fuel poverty among our most disadvantaged households and saves the public purse from expensive retrofitting in years to come.

Many thanks for considering these points.

Yours sincerely,

Name:

Address:

Email: