

There is a dire shortage of affordable housing in Britain. Many of those who would like to own their own home are simply unable to even contemplate it. They are 'locked out' of home ownership.

Social housing waiting lists get longer and longer. The Thatcher era saw a dramatic extension in home ownership, but with a corresponding decline in social housing, as proceeds from the 'Right to Buy' initiative were not reinvested back into community housing.

Only 23 per cent of properties are deemed 'affordable' nationally, but the situation is even worse in the countryside, where only 5 per cent of rural properties are affordable and social housing is more difficult to find. Yet no-one wants to see our green fields concreted over, or the beauty of our rural landscape destroyed.

**UKIP will introduce policies to incentivise the creation of more affordable housing, while protecting rural communities and preserving our precious countryside.**

## **BRINGING EMPTY HOMES BACK INTO USE**

Housing charity Shelter reports there are 279,000 privately-owned long-term empty homes in England alone, while other bodies, such as the Empty Homes Agency, put the figure much higher still. The most obvious way to create new homes is by bringing these empty homes back into use. We will place a statutory duty on local authorities to:

- Include a commitment to bringing empty properties back into use within their broader housing and planning strategies

- Charge those whose homes are empty for more than two years 50 per cent more than the applicable rate of council tax, with exceptions for owners who are in HM Armed Forces.

## **INCENTIVISING BROWNFIELD DEVELOPMENT**

It would be possible to build up to 2.5 million houses on brownfield sites, if developers were less reluctant to take advantage of this rich source of potential housing land.

Problems with remediation of derelict land that has had a previous use and may have contamination issues to address can be off-putting to potential developers. This is despite the fact technology to clean up sites and make them fit for new development is now readily available.

**We will take steps to remove the barriers to brownfield builds with the aim of building one million homes on brownfield sites by 2025 to address the current housing shortage.**

UKIP will require the Environment Agency to compile a National Brownfield Sites Register and provide a remediation assessment where appropriate. The following financial incentives will be offered to encourage developers to build on brownfield sites:

- Grants of up to £10,000 per unit will be available to developers to carry out essential remediation work.
- Properties built on registered brownfield sites will be exempt from stamp duty on first sale, up to the £250,000 threshold.
- A grant to cover the cost of indemnity insurance will also be available to developers of decontaminated land.

To further incentivise brownfield development, local authorities will be allowed to keep the New Homes Bonus beyond six years on brownfield sites.

## **BUILDING AFFORDABLE HOMES**

We will increase the supply of affordable housing by:

- Identifying long-term dormant land held by central and local government so it can be released for affordable developments
- Relax planning regulations for the conversion of off-high road commercial and office space and other existing buildings to affordable residential use.