

# CHAPTER 8

## A PLACE TO LIVE: HOUSING

Want to rent? Want to buy? Struggling to do either? It doesn't have to be this way. The Green Party has policies to make housing affordable and sustainable, to make sure there is enough to go round, and to provide better quality and greater security in the private rented sector. A secure and affordable place to live is one of our most basic human needs. But houses and flats are now sites of speculation rather than simply somewhere to call home. They were at the heart of the crash seven years ago, when reckless lending left banks unable to support themselves. We need to return housing to its original purpose: providing us – each and every one of us – with affordable and sustainable shelter.

There are three reasons for the current chaos and unfairness:

- A misplaced faith in the market as the way to meet housing needs, where the market for houses has too often reflected a desire to make an investment rather than buy a place to live, and prices have risen faster than inflation;
- A lack of investment in public housing for at least 20 years, following Right to Buy and restrictions on what local authorities can do; and
- A private rented sector where too often people have insecurity of tenure and are being charged extortionate rents for unsatisfactory housing.

### Caroline Lucas and housing

In July 2014 Caroline Lucas MP introduced a Housing (Affordability, Supply and Tenant Protection) Bill to highlight the problems faced by private tenants.

The Bill required the Secretary of State to commission a programme of research into reducing rent levels in the private rented sector, improving terms and conditions for tenants, increasing housing supply, and providing a large-scale programme of sustainable council housing in England.

Caroline has published a Housing Charter, suggesting how these national policies would help in Brighton. You can find it here: [http://www.carolinelucas.com/assets/files/localparties/brighton/publications/Caroline/Caroline%20Lucas%20Housing%20Charter%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.carolinelucas.com/assets/files/localparties/brighton/publications/Caroline/Caroline%20Lucas%20Housing%20Charter%20(2).pdf); or <http://tinyurl.com/m8xh4g3>