

## **Plans to promote opportunity and neighbourhood pride in Haringey**

*Richard Merrin welcomes innovative new housing policies to get Haringey moving*

Richard Merrin, Conservative Party Candidate for Hornsey and Wood Green has welcomed plans for a radical overhaul of housing policy, thirty years on from the unveiling of the Right to Buy, which transformed council estates.

Under new Conservative proposals, tenants in social housing across Haringey are to be offered the chance of genuine social mobility and equality of opportunity. Pride will be restored to local neighbourhoods, helping address anti-social behaviour and encourage social responsibility. Local homes will be built for local people, with the community – not bureaucrats in Whitehall – having the final say on the homes they want.

This comes as the latest analysis shows as the average house in Haringey costs £351,327, compared to average earnings of £36,535. This means that the average house is 9.6 times average earnings.

The detailed proposals include:

- **Rewards for good behaviour:** Offering tenants with a record of five years' good tenant behaviour a 10% equity share in their social rented property, which can be cashed in when they want to move up the housing ladder. This will give tenants a direct financial stake in the state of their neighbourhood, and reward law-abiding citizens who pay their rent on time, keep their garden tidy, and ensure their children stay out of trouble. By contrast, Labour policies reinforce and reward welfare dependency.
- **A 'Right to Move':** Introducing a comprehensive national mobility scheme for good tenants who wish to move to other social sector properties, and piloting a scheme which allows good social tenants to demand that their social landlord sell their current property and use the proceeds, minus

transaction costs, to buy (and thereby bring into the social rented sector) another property of their choice – anywhere in England.

- **Cutting waiting lists:** Relaxing the rules that prevent thousands of habitable empty properties being used to house those on local authority waiting lists. 15,095 people are currently on the waiting lists in Haringey, an increase of 185% since 1997.
- **More family homes and stopping garden grabbing:** Reversing the classification of gardens as brownfield land, and allowing councils to prevent over-development of neighbourhoods and stop 'garden grabbing', which has resulted in a glut of flats, the demolition of suburban family homes and concreting over of their gardens.

Richard Merrin said: "Given the average house in Haringey is 9.6 times average earnings, we need to do more to help people get on and move up the housing ladder. We need social housing which promotes opportunity and social mobility, rather than reinforcing welfare dependency. We must also champion the vulnerable and help the 15,095 people on housing waiting lists here.

"I welcome the plans to give an equity stake to social tenants. It will reward the socially responsible citizens who pay their rent on time and keep their kids in check, and help restore a sense of pride to all our neighbourhoods."

### **Notes to Editors**

The Conservative policy paper *Strong Foundations: Building Homes and Communities* can be found at:  
[www.tinyurl.com/strongfoundations](http://www.tinyurl.com/strongfoundations)

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