

How Councils can drive affordable, social and public housing gains

September 2023



LESSONS FOR SYDNEY FROM LONDON AND PARIS

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City of Sydney Council

Front cover images

Top left: Taylor Court and Chatto Court, Hackney Council, London, mixed-tenure housing accommodating 45 new homes commissioned at Frampton Park Estate, Winner New London Awards 2021, Photo courtesy from NLA London, at <https://nla.london/awards/new-london-awards-2021-winner-taylor-chatto-courts-wilmott-court>

Bottom left: View from the window of a social housing apartment of the courtyard at De La Caserne Aux Lodgements, Paris 12e, Paris Habitat project, redevelopment of an old army barracks, private rent controlled housing, new green space, community centre, restaurant and health facility, Photo courtesy of Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore

Right: Kings Crescent Estate, London, Karakusevic Carson Architects, Winner 2018 - Best Borough Led Project, Photo by Tim Crocker, at <https://archello.com/project/kings-crescent-estate-phases-12>

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Introduction

The crisis in housing affordability is an international one. The costs to own or rent a home have risen sharply around the world and in Australia, putting home ownership out of the reach of many. However, the scale of Sydney's housing crisis has been increasing, even compared to other international cities. Sydney is now the second most expensive city to live in the world.[1]

In recent years, other expensive, international capital cities have responded to the housing crisis with significant reforms to the way they maintain, regulate and build affordable, social and public housing[2], with Councils playing a leading role.

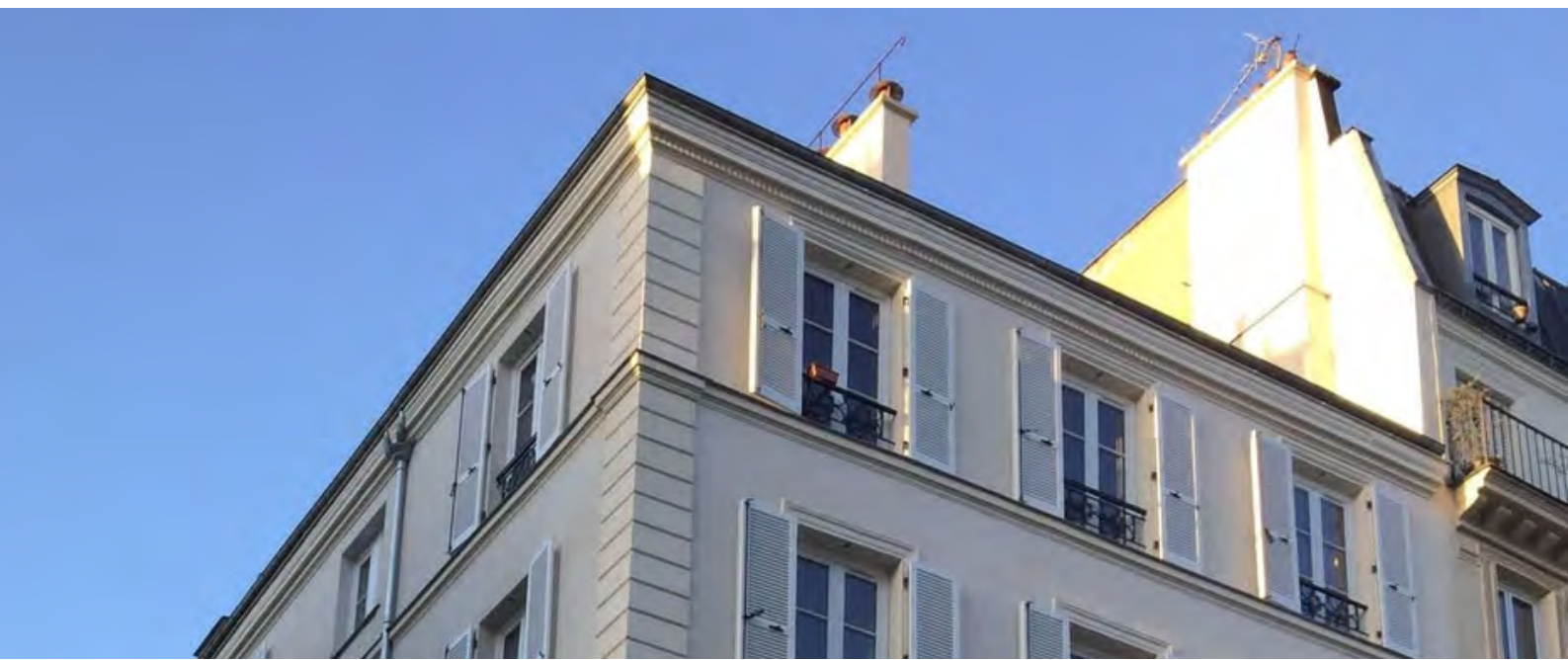
Cities like London and Paris, amongst others, are demonstrating that it is possible to deliver increases in public, social and affordable housing on a large scale, quickly. The efforts of these global cities to address the housing affordability crisis are on a radically different scale than in Australia.

In July 2023, the Deputy Mayor of the City of Sydney, Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore, travelled to Paris and London[3] and met with the Deputy Mayor for Housing for Paris Council, Clr Ian Brossat, and the Deputy Mayor for Housing and Development for London Council, Clr Tom Copley, as well as local councillors and public housing agencies that are delivering new public, social and affordable housing, to discuss their housing strategies.

This summary report provides a high-level overview of some of the key housing strategies Paris and London Councils are implementing, which are having success. It includes examples of recent projects, with a particular focus on the role of local councils.

Lessons are identified which show how the City of Sydney, local Councils and the NSW and Australian Governments could take much stronger and urgent action to address housing unaffordability.

Image 1





Key figures – What public, social and affordable housing gains are London and Paris achieving, and how does inner-Sydney compare?

London

In London, 20% of housing is currently affordable, social or public, with about 10% of greater London’s dwellings being Council-owned housing.[4]

The target set by Mayor Sadiq Khan is that **50% of all new housing be genuinely affordable** (including social and public housing).[5]

Between 2016-2022, across London 91,000 new affordable homes were started[6].

Within this, a target of 10,000 new Council (public) homes underway by 2022 was achieved a year earlier than projected. A new target of 20,000 new Council homes to be underway by 2024 has been set for greater London.

Individual council boroughs in London (which are the equivalent size to a local council in Sydney) have been set voluntary targets for 50% of new housing to be affordable, public or social.

Since 2010, borough councils have delivered between 15%-49% of new housing as affordable, public or social housing. The inner city borough of Tower Hamlets delivered the most new affordable housing between 2016-2022, with 4,751 new affordable housing residences completed (and another 2,000 underway). [7]

Across greater London, 44% of new housing delivered in 2022 was some form of affordable, public or social housing.

Paris

Paris have seen social, public and affordable housing increase from 13% of the city to 25% over the last 20 years.[8]

Having reached its initial target, Paris Council has set a new target of 30% social (including public) and 10% affordable (i.e. 40% in total) housing by 2035.[9]



Image 3

City of Sydney

In 2022, the City of Sydney Local Government Area, which covers the CBD and inner-city suburbs, included 1% affordable housing & 7.9% social (including public) housing - or **8.9% in total**.^[10]

This is a decline from previous years. Social (including public) housing in the City of Sydney has declined by around a fifth in ten years - from 9.5% in 2012.^[11]

The City of Sydney Council has set a target of **15% affordable and social (including public) housing** for the LGA by 2036.^[12]

During the 2021/22 financial year, there was a net decrease of 14 social homes, and a net increase of 56 affordable homes.^[13]

Around 100 new affordable housing dwellings per year are projected to be built over the next ten years, through the City of Sydney's existing affordable housing programs.^[14]

In the City of Sydney affordable housing is projected to increase modestly from 1% to 2.9% through new housing, and social (including public) housing in the City of Sydney is set to decline further, to 7.5%.^[15]

That is, the City of Sydney is projected to achieve 9.4% affordable, social and public housing by 2036.

It is noted that the NSW Government has primary responsibility for housing in NSW.

It has set targets for the delivery of new housing for NSW and local councils – but has not set *affordable* housing targets.

Where affordable housing targets exist, they have been set by individual local councils through local affordable housing plans.

Present and future targets for affordable, public and social housing

	2022 (actual)	Targets
Greater Paris	25% of all housing under construction	40% of all housing by 2035
Greater London	20% of all housing 44% of new housing	50% of all new housing from 2010
City of Sydney	9% of all housing	15% of all housing by 2036

Lessons from London and Paris

The costs to own or rent a home have risen sharply around the world and in Australia, putting home ownership out of reach for many.

Major international cities including Sydney, Paris and London are experiencing an affordability crisis, with significant numbers of people being unable to access housing that is affordable. There is also a shortage of housing supply for current and projected future residents, and more people are experiencing homelessness.

However, even compared to other international cities, house prices and rents have been rising more quickly in Sydney.[16]

Over recent decades, both Paris and London have embarked on a significant expansion of affordable, social and public housing, led by or in partnership with local Councils, who are buying, renovating and building housing at scale, and demanding more affordability be delivered by the private market.

The efforts of these global cities are at a radically different scale than in Australia. The City of Sydney Council plays a leading role in housing advocacy and action in Australia, yet even these efforts look modest in comparison to the scale and speed of action being taken overseas to address housing affordability.

This report identifies seven key lessons to meet the housing challenge from Paris and London to meet the housing challenge here in Sydney. The lessons demonstrate what is possible when all levels of government work together, and local councils play a leading role.

1. Raise expectations. Australia's targets and requirements are too low. London and Paris show that if you raise expectations, they can be met, when backed up commitments from all levels of government, real public funding, and stronger requirements of private developers.

2. Keep control. There are lots of ways to support affordable housing, but just as many ways for money to leak out of the system. Housing needs to be permanently affordable. Income streams from rent, to the profits from commercial ventures on public land, to the value of land created from rezoning, needs to be captured and used to build more public, social and affordable housing.

3. Buy, don't just build. London and Paris build new social housing, but they also buy private housing, renovating where necessary and converting it into public and social housing quickly to address urgent need.

4. Affordability is for everyone. Social, public and affordable housing should be available to those on a wider range of incomes. More social housing is more inclusive and more popular, creating the support needed to grow the system sustainably, and more revenue which can be used to create more affordable housing.

5. Tenant control works. London has rules that give existing public tenants the right to say yes or no, over plans to renovate and infill their public housing estates. Requiring governments and developers to win a ballot of tenants has led to better projects for new housing within public housing estates, and the protection of existing local communities.

6. Get creative. Density is much higher in London and Paris than in Sydney. This requires creative solutions to where to build more housing - from identifying disused public buildings, to converting car parks into homes. Good design is at the heart of this. The City of Sydney leads Australia in demanding good design in all housing. Paris and London are leading in delivering affordable housing that is better quality, more sustainable and better designed than private housing.

7. Build capacity. Building the capacity of local councils and public agencies to deliver large-scale affordable, social and public housing takes time and commitment. London and Paris have met their targets, and are projected to achieve more in the future, because they have invested in creating strong public agencies, departments or teams who have the ability and expertise to maintain and deliver new affordable, social and public housing.



Image 4: Councillor Ellsmore, site visit De La Caserne Aux Lodgements project, Paris Habitat, July 2023

Local context - City of Sydney

Current and projected affordable, social and public housing

Greater Sydney is home to approximately 5 million people, compared to London with 9 million and Paris with 11 million. Like London and Paris, Sydney is a growing city, with demand for suitable, affordable housing not keeping up with supply.[17]

The City of Sydney Council area covers the inner city of Sydney, including the Sydney Central Business District, and residential suburbs.

The population of the City of Sydney Local Government Area was estimated to be 214,851 as of June 2021, with 138,184 residential dwellings as of June 2022. The population of the City of Sydney is projected to grow to 339,498 by 2036 – that is, a 50% growth in 15 years, with around 40,000 new dwellings needed.[18]

In all three cities (Paris, London and Sydney) there have been sharp increases in the cost of home ownership and private rentals in recent years. Rents in the inner city of Sydney have increased an average of 25% in the last twelve months. In Greater Sydney, rents have increased by 20% compared to a year ago, increasing the median rent to \$660.[19] This is a much faster increase in rental costs than London or Paris.[20]

As of June 2022, the City of Sydney estimated that 7.9% of housing in the Local Government Area was public or social housing, and 1.01% was formally designated as 'affordable' (that is, controlled affordable rental housing).[21]

In terms of how much housing was being provided at an affordable level by the private market in Sydney, the latest Anglicare 'Rental Affordability Snapshot' found that not a single property advertised for rent in March 2023 was affordable and appropriate for people living on income support payments, without placing them in housing stress.[22]

The City of Sydney's current targets are that, by 2036, there will be at least 173,500 dwellings, with 7.5% of the private dwellings to be social (including public) housing and 7.5% to be affordable housing, with this proportion maintained into the future.

That is, the City of Sydney Council has a target for 15% of housing to be public, social or affordable, by 2036.

Based on current projections, including what housing would be supported by affordable housing levies, it is estimated that 2.9% of housing will be affordable dwellings by 2036. The City of Sydney also projects a decline in public and social housing (currently at 7.9%).[23]

The NSW Government has been progressively reducing the number of public housing dwellings in the City of Sydney LGA. According to the most recent Housing Audit conducted by the City of Sydney (2022), there were 158 less social (including public) housing dwellings in the LGA in June 2022, compared to ten years ago (9,849 dwellings in 2012).

This consistent with a national trend by Australian Governments - to significantly reduce their role in the delivery of public housing in recent decades.[24]

Local Council action to address housing affordability

The City of Sydney is one of the leading Councils in Australia in terms of action to address affordability, and has one of the strongest affordable housing programs of any local council in NSW.

The City of Sydney's long-term plan for a more sustainable, equitable and resilient city is the Community Strategic Plan *Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050*. The City of Sydney established a comprehensive affordable housing strategy - *Housing for All: City of Sydney local housing strategy* (2020). The strategy details how the City aims to meet the housing-related priorities established by the Greater Sydney Commission's Eastern City District Plan, and other targets set by the NSW Government.



Image 5

Key strategies and actions that the City of Sydney is currently implementing to increase social and affordable housing include:

- **Affordable housing levy on development** – The City of Sydney's Affordable Housing Program facilitates affordable rental housing contribution schemes (inclusionary zoning) that require developers to contribute up to 3% of residential, and 1% of non-residential floor area for affordable housing, either directly through the provision of housing or through a monetary contribution.

For the last 25 years, developer levies have been the key mechanism used by the City of Sydney to increase the number of affordable homes in the Local Government Area.[25]

- **Value uplift capture and planning agreements** - The City of Sydney's targets for value uplift (that is, when a property is rezoned to allow more height or density) range from 12% to 21% of new residential floor space depending on the area. The 'indicative' contribution rate is subject to site-specific viability testing, with affordable housing contributions not to exceed 15% of the agreed cost of construction. The City of Sydney also uses planning agreements for affordable rental housing outcomes when changes are being made to planning controls.

- **Contributions to social housing via Community Housing Providers** - The City of Sydney directs all affordable housing levies from private development to Community Housing Provider City West, or the NSW Department of Justice and Communities. The City is currently updating its program to expand or change where the contributions could be directed.
- **Housing grants** - The City of Sydney has a Housing for All fund of up to \$10 million which has provided direct grants to CHPs. Discounted land is also provided, with \$24 million in discounted land provided over the last 20 years.
- **Housing for All forums** –The City of Sydney established a Housing for All Committee, of which all Councillors are members, and a Housing for All Working Group which includes a range of sector leaders and representatives. Both committees were established in 2022.
- **Advocacy**- The City of Sydney Council and the Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore have a strong history of advocacy to both State and Federal Governments, for better action on public, social and affordable housing. Recent advocacy includes but is not limited to, maximising social housing on public land, introducing restrictions on unlimited rent increases for private renters, and for the return of planning powers over state significant developments to local councils.
- **Support for other local councils** - Through the Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils and Resilient Sydney, the City of Sydney is playing a leading role in providing support, advice and research for other local councils seeking to establish affordable housing strategies and grow affordable housing.
- **Homelessness outreach and support** – The City of Sydney is one of the only councils to have a dedicated unit for homelessness and rough sleepers.
- **Public housing and public land** - There are a large number of major State-led projects in the City of Sydney, on public land. These include the Waterloo Estate, Blackwattle Bay, Central Station and the North Eveleigh Paint Shop and Clothing Store Sub precinct. The City has advocated for a maximum percentage of public, social and affordable housing to be delivered on public land in order to address Sydney's housing affordability crisis.
- **Live/work apartments** - The City of Sydney owns eight (8) live/ work apartments which it makes available for artists.[26]
- **Affordable housing team** – The City of Sydney supports its affordable housing work with the support of staff across various teams within council, including in City Planning. In 2023, the council recruited its first dedicated affordable housing position.

Council powers

Local councils in NSW have limited powers to require that affordable housing be included in public and private developments.

Councils in NSW must seek approval from the NSW Government to implement a mandatory developer contribution scheme for affordable housing. Other than the City of Sydney, only a minority of other councils in Sydney have established any form of mandatory affordable housing contribution scheme, though a number have planning proposals underway, seeking permission from the NSW Government to establish a scheme.[27]

Councils have the ability to invest in and deliver affordable and public housing; local councils including the City of Sydney were responsible for significant council-owned housing in the past. [28]

The NSW Government required councils to transfer the majority of their housing to the NSW Government in the 1980s and 1990s, and the NSW Government now has primary responsibility for public and social housing in the inner-city.

A small number of local councils in NSW have council-owned public, social or affordable housing portfolios, and are looking to expand these, though the number of properties is small.[29] As noted above, the City of Sydney currently owns eight (8) live/ work apartments for artists.

More broadly, the planning powers of local councils to approve developments have been progressively reduced by the NSW Government over time, including by removing the role of the elected local councillors to determine most developments, and creating state approval pathways which give the NSW Minister for Planning the power to determine and place conditions on development.

Delivery of affordable housing by the City of Sydney

In 2021, the City of Sydney became the first Council in NSW to have an LGA-wide affordable housing developer contribution scheme, although there were some affordable housing requirements in place in parts of the City of Sydney since 1995.[30]

Approximately \$40 million per year is collected by the City of Sydney in affordable housing levies from development.

To date (since 1995), the City of Sydney has collected, and passed on, over \$378 million in affordable housing contributions, provided \$24 million in discounted land and \$10 million in grants. [31]

Strategies being implemented in Paris and London

Direct public investment, debt financing and diverse, publicly-controlled income streams

Paris has been investing significantly in public, social and affordable housing for decades, but under the Mayor Anne Hidalgo who was elected in 2014, the Council has significantly scaled up its efforts, directing 500M € (equivalent to \$835M AUS) per year towards public, social and affordable housing.

In London – similarly to Sydney – there had been decades of low investment in public housing, with Councils forced to sell off or transfer large amounts of their Council-owned public housing, under the policies of former conservative national governments, particularly over the 1980s and 1990s.[38] During this period, Council housing departments had been abolished or diminished, with public housing stock not well maintained in many cases.

Under Mayor Sadiq Khan, elected in 2016, the capacity of Councils and public agencies to own, build, renovate, maintain and expand housing has been progressively built up again, with local borough councils in London rebuilding their affordable housing staff and programs.

In both **London and Paris**, grants and favourable loans to not for profit or private charity housing providers (like Community Housing Providers here), are part of the mix, but - unlike in the City of Sydney and Australia more broadly – increasing affordable housing stock by giving grants to community or charity housing providers is not the main focus of government's efforts to expand affordable housing.

Public funding from National and State Governments, alongside significant direct council funding for housing, supports local council programs, and unlike here in Sydney, councils **borrow to invest** in housing long term.

Rents are a key source of income. Income generated from rents of properties owned by Councils, including properties rented to middle class workers, is **reinvested** to sustain and create even more housing. Councils or public agencies often manage the public and private dwellings with public housing estates or residential developments on public land.

Councils or public agencies in Paris and London also build and maintain control over commercial activities like shops in large, publicly-controlled developments, creating further income streams that can be invested in future housing.

In these ways, Council-owned public housing systems in London and Paris are more financially sustainable.[39]

Camden and Hackney borough councils in London's inner city are of similar size to the City of Sydney Council. They are two examples amongst many local borough councils in London who are embarking on ambitious programs to renovate, acquire and build more housing, aiming for 1,000 new affordable, social and public homes in the current four-year council term. Both Camden and Hackney Councils have net deficit operating budgets (i.e. they receive less income than they plan to spend on operations), which are being addressed through long term financial planning.[40]

For London borough Councils, Council housing assets are separately accounted for and reported. Councils are prevented from using income from housing to subsidise other Council activities, and vice versa, so Councils have to develop sustainable financial models to maintain and build new housing.

Primary sources of funding for upgrades and new builds of Council housing are national UK Government grants, Mayor of London funds, re-development of Council land, and in some cases borrowing.[41]



Image 7: Sign outside Camden Council development project, July 2023

Buy private housing and convert it to public, social or affordable housing

Unlike in Australia, where the priority to increase social housing has focused on new builds, often demolishing existing public homes in the process, in Paris most Council investment in new housing is spent on **buying** existing private properties, renovating them, and turning them into public, social or affordable housing.

This brings new public, social and affordable housing online quickly. Development on public land is also part of the policy, with former car parks and disused public buildings converted to residential and infilled where possible.[42]

Stronger requirements on developers to deliver affordable housing

In both London and Paris, private developers are required to deliver between 30% and 50% affordable or social (including public) housing - and 50% or more on public land.[43]

Strong affordable housing requirements do not appear to have impacted supply or the pace of development in those cities.[44] Some fast-tracked planning approvals are available for development that provides an even higher level of affordable housing.

In the City of Sydney, there is a requirement that 1-3% of development be directed to affordable housing, with these levies collected and distributed by the City of Sydney to create permanent social and affordable housing. There are more significant affordable housing contribution requirements if a rezoning increases height or density.

However, even this scale of affordable housing requirement is unusual for a local council in Sydney. The City of Sydney is the only Council in NSW to have a levy across the entire Local Government Area.[45]

Most other councils in Sydney do not have any form of affordable housing requirement. Housing levies that exist are typically 1%-5% or are only imposed when rezoning creates more height or value for developers.[46] The NSW Government recently announced its intention that 15% affordable housing would be required for certain private developments, but for 15 years only, and at 80% of market rent.[47]

In London and Paris, developers are also usually required to build public, social and affordable housing on site, rather than paid out in the form of a cash contribution, which is the current system in the City of Sydney and many other local Councils in NSW. This brings the new housing online more quickly, and ensures affordable, social and public housing is built in all parts of the city.

Greater control by public agencies at all stages of development

Unlike in NSW, where the policy has been to transfer control of public land to private developers to build new housing, on the basis that a minority percentage of social, public housing or affordable housing will be provided back, councils & public housing agencies in Paris and London keep greater control of all stages of redevelopment - and more commonly keep long-term ownership of more of the land following redevelopment projects. This allows more public value to be captured and reinvested.

Where land is sold or part-privatised (for example private housing is built on public land) to fund projects, this is commonly in the order of 25%, rather than 70% which has been the model in NSW for NSW State Government projects or the redevelopment of public housing estates.

Stronger housing capacity within public agencies and councils

Paris is currently delivering more public, social and affordable housing than any other European city. The agency responsible for delivering and managing housing is 'Paris Habitat'. It is a public agency which receives direction from Paris Council.

Paris Habitat is the landlord for residents in the publicly controlled housing. It leads the development of public land, contracting private developers and architects as needed. It manages public funding and long-term loans to finance projects, and the commercial ventures on its sites.

In London, decades of austerity and the policies of the former Thatcher Conservative Government to privatise public housing saw many Councils forcibly reduce their public housing stock and capacity to manage and build housing. The current borough-led public housing boom includes large scale complex public housing estate redevelopments, which are only possible with strengthened Council housing teams.

In London's Hackney Borough Council the housing team has increased from 2 to 90 over seven years. Starting with a small number of development projects, for which there were "many lessons learnt", Hackney Council now manages multiple, complex, public housing renovation and in-fill projects. Hackney Council contracts private developers as needed, but otherwise keeps direct control of projects.

Make affordable and public housing available to a wider range of incomes

There are also significant differences in the way that communities are engaged to create support for housing, with 'affordable' housing provided to a wider range of people. Public, social and affordable housing is available to middle-income households.

Categories of affordable housing such as 'London Living Rent' are used, which is rent based on what an average worker in London could afford. Renting some public properties to middle income workers helps financially sustain other parts of the system, and builds broader public support.

In Paris, there is a specific policy to ensure new public, social and affordable housing is built in all parts of the city.



Image 8 - Increase in percentage of social housing in two local areas of Paris (8E and 16E arrondissements)

Embed tenant control in public housing redevelopments

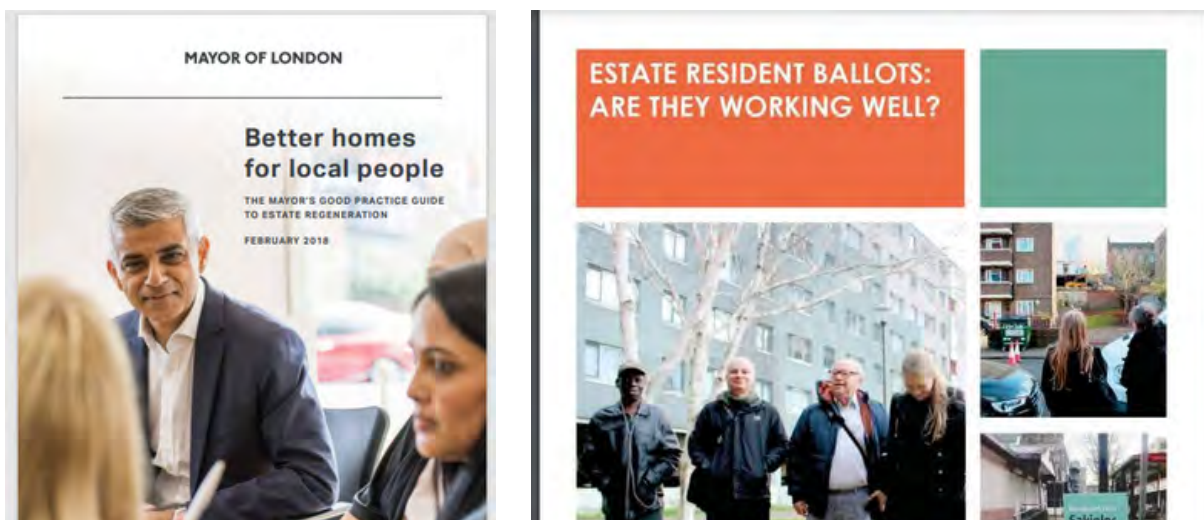
In the case of public housing estates, renovation rather than demolition is prioritised, in both Paris and London – though it is important to acknowledge that this had not always been the case.[48]

Public housing tenants have the right to decide what happens to their estates in London. Since 2018, the London Mayor has imposed a requirement that certain proposals to renovate or redevelop public housing estates must be subject to a binding ballot of tenants, with tenants retaining a right of return if development is undertaken.[49] The rules are enforced through funding, with local councils required to comply in order to access Greater London Authority funding.

The London-wide guide includes requirements for: early consultation and engagement with tenants; an increase in affordable housing measured through floor space; full rights to return or remain for tenants; open and transparent appraisal of the different options including the range of financial, social, economic and environmental costs and benefits; demolition as a last resort; and a 'fair deal' for leaseholders and private tenants who also live on the public estates.[50]

While there remain concerns about how the policy is working in practice, including that there need to be stronger protections against pressure on tenants to vote yes, the policy has generally led to improvements in consultation and engagement with tenants and more support for projects, many of which have old and poor-quality housing.[51] Estate rejuvenation projects commonly involve increased density and in-fill development, and affordable or private new housing included alongside the public council housing, to partly fund the project, delivered in line with plans that have been developed with tenants. London borough councils generally lead these projects, contracting architects and developers as needed.

Since the introduction of the policy in London, there have been 21 public housing estate rejuvenation ballots, 20 of which have passed.[52]



Images 9 and 10- Mayor of London Estate Rejuvenation Guide (2018) (L) and Sian Berry (2022) Survey and Report 'Estate Resident Ballots: Are they Working Well?' (R)

Selected case studies

From Barracks to accommodation in Paris 12e

De La Caserne Aux Lodgements project in Paris 12e is a major social housing project on public land, developed by the council-controlled public housing agency Paris Habitat, completed in 2021.

The project provided 582 apartments – 50 % social (including public), 20% 'intermediate rent' (i.e. affordable for those on middle incomes) and 30% private – plus a crèche, community centre/ arts space, shops on the ground floor, new central garden accessible to the surrounding community and commercial properties, including a health centre. Insulation, sustainability upgrades and disability accessibility was prioritised in the renovation.

The disused army barracks, heritage buildings and surrounding land were granted to the council at a discount by the national government. Paris Habitat contracted seven architects to design different parts of the complex site. Paris Council provided upfront capital, and Paris Habitat supplemented the funding with a long term 30-50 year loan.

Income streams from the project include the rents from the housing and the shopfronts, which help service the loan and keep more of the housing in public hands. One section is private development – but rent capped and after 15-20 years Paris Habitat has the first right to buy. Paris Habitat as the public agency retains control over both the project and the land - they let the commercial shops, they are the landlord for the tenants and they receive income from the rent.[53]



Images 11-13 (clockwise from left): Model of the project; photo taken out of the window of the social housing apartments built inside the heritage barracks, looking into the central garden square; cover of book released about the project in 2021



Images 14-17 (clockwise from left): De La Caserne Aux Lodgements new social housing next to community centre/ art space; Paris Habitat representatives with Councillor Ellsmore and Paris Habitat, heritage barracks in the background and commercial restaurant to the left; two photos inside the social housing apartments inside the renovated barracks.

La Samaritaine – Social housing built above a department store

In 2021, 96 apartments for low- to medium-income tenants were opened over the newly renovated La Samaritaine department store, a massive Belle Époque landmark c 1870 overlooking the Seine, in the centre of Paris.

Consistent with Paris Council’s requirement for affordable housing to be built by private developers on site, especially in wealthy areas that have historically had lower levels of public and affordable housing, the new affordable housing is included on the top floors of the department store and surrounding buildings.[54]



Images 18-20 (clockwise from left): Photo of La Samaritaine department store - gardens on top are the social housing; view from one of the social housing apartment balconies; and view from one of the social housing apartment hallways inside the retrofitted heritage buildings.

Purchasing and renovated existing private housing

Paris Council spends a significant percentage of its recurrent funding to create more affordable and social (including public) housing on purchasing and retrofitting existing private housing. This is a key strategy that has seen Paris create more new affordable and social (including public) housing than any European city, whilst also being one of the most dense cities in the world.

Also, unlike in NSW where mixed tenure projects on public land have focused on introducing private housing into public housing estates, the Paris Council's 'social mix' policy prioritises introducing affordable and social (including public) housing into wealthy areas.



Image 21 (above): 7 Rue de Abesses, Montmartre, renovated in 2016 by the Council and now home to 20 families

Images 22-24 (above): 9 city of Hauteville and 1 rue Robert-Blache, Paris 10e, 2 apartments for families purchased and renovated to create social housing, opened April 2023



Images 25-26: Before and after heritage housing at 76 Labat rue (Paris 18e), purchased by the Paris Council and renovated

Colville Estate, London

The redevelopment of Colville Estate by Hackney Council is a staged project, which began in 2011, and is due to be completed in 2030. The project involved replacing 432 homes with 925 homes on a Council-owned public housing estate. The proposed final mix is 42% social rent (public housing), 10% affordable and 48% market sale. Some existing older Council housing have been retrofitted to become more energy efficient, and some 'shared ownership' homes have been included, targeting people living or working in Hackney who couldn't afford to buy outright but don't meet the criteria to be prioritised for social housing.



Images 27-28: (L) Colville Estate Masterplan, (R) Proposed new homes in phase 2 of the Colville regeneration

At the planning stages, a Residents Charter and Design Code was developed with residents. This included masterplan principles for the creation of medium-rise replacement council homes for residents to reflect existing dwellings and shared and private outdoor spaces.

Also to be delivered in the project is: a new community centre, a communal courtyard garden and garden for residents, new landscaped pedestrian routes with pocket parks, commercial spaces, food growing areas, formal and informal play-space throughout the estate and a new energy centre which will serve the whole of the new Colville Estate.

The architects for the project are Karakusevic Carson Architects (Masterplan, Phase 1 and Phase 2) and David Chipperfield (Phase 3). Awards include: *London Planning Awards 2018 – Best Borough Led Project and Housing Design Awards 2012 – Mayor's Housing Design Guide Award and Community Consultation Award (Bridport House).*[55]

Other examples

Please contact the Office of Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore if interested in other case studies, including:

- (Paris) Jaurès Petit Project – 186 av Jean Jaurès and 858789 rue Petit 75019. Paris Habitat transformation of a parking garage into housing.
- (London) Kings Crescent Estate, London, Karakusevic Carson Architects, *Winner 2018 - Best Borough Led Project.*
- (London) Agar Grove, Camden Council, the UK's largest Passivhouse (sustainable homes) project.

Conclusion

In the face of the crisis in housing affordability, both Paris and London have embarked on ambitious strategies to scale up and reform their housing systems, led by or in partnership with local councils.

The result is that London and Paris Councils have achieved their targets for expanding public, social and affordable housing earlier than expected, so have both moved to set even more ambitious housing targets.

By comparison, under current housing policy settings, affordability in the City of Sydney is projected to go backwards in coming years, with less ambitious targets than London or Paris, and targets not on track to be met.

In Australia, governments at all levels seem fixated on doing things largely in the same way as they have been – but hoping for a different result.

A key point of difference between Australian and overseas housing systems that are genuinely addressing affordability, is how involved governments are in all aspects of the housing system, from regulating private development to directly investing in public housing.

Increasing supply through private development, and supporting the expansion of housing held by not for profit or community housing providers are important parts of the system in London and Paris, but are not relied on as the main or key policy solutions to housing affordability like they are here in Australia.

The City of Sydney Council has one of the leading affordable housing programs of any Australian Council. Ultimately, however, these efforts are modest compared to the scale and diversity of action being implemented by international cities Paris and London, and even equivalent local borough councils faced with more financial constraints.

As demonstrated in London and Paris, it is the responsibility of every level of government to step up to the challenges of the affordable housing crisis.

The measure of success must be whether housing policies are having the scale of impact on housing affordability they are aiming to have – that is, to lessen - and ideally turn around - the housing affordability crisis.

Notes

Key terms - public, social and affordable housing

It is noted that the terms public, social and affordable are used differently, in different countries.

In Australia 'social housing' is often used to refer to both 'public' housing, and to different forms of 'community' housing, including Community Housing Provider (CHP), not for profit, charity and co-operative housing.

In this report:

- When 'public' housing is used, it refers to housing owned by a government or public agency, including a council.
- When 'social' housing is used, it refers to not-for-profit, charity or tenant-led housing like cooperatives.
- If a government policy is quoted where 'social' housing is used to include public housing, this will be made clear by using the term 'social (including public)' housing.

Similarly, the term 'affordable housing' has different meanings in different jurisdictions.

In the Australian housing policy, affordable housing is generally used to refer to housing that is genuinely affordable for a person on very low, low or middle income, because it costs no more than 30% of their income. This is the definition of affordable housing that the City of Sydney uses.

However, 'affordable housing' is sometimes also used to refer to housing that is cheaper than the market in some way – for example housing that is below market rent, or rent capped. There isn't scope in the report to unpack and analyse the various definitions.

In this report, when 'affordable housing' is used it refers to the housing that is considered affordable housing, according to the policies of the relevant jurisdiction.

Comparing data and finances across different councils and cities

Throughout this report, when there is a reference to Sydney, London or Paris this is to the *greater cities of Sydney, London and Paris*. Where there is a reference to the City of Sydney specifically, this is specified, or a reference to 'inner-city Sydney' is used.

As noted earlier in the report, greater Sydney is smaller than either greater London or Paris. Greater Sydney is home to approximately 5 million people, and the cities of London and Paris are home to approximately 9 million and 11 million people, respectively. The cities of London and Paris are more comparable to the State of NSW, which is home to 8-9 million people.

Paris and London Councils operate at a whole of city level. Paris Council sits above 20 local arrondissement councils and London Council sits above 32 local borough councils, with the local councils each having their own elected Councillors and Mayor. There are 33 local councils within greater Sydney.

In terms of scale & budget the City of Sydney Council is most directly comparable to a local London borough council, though there are some differences in responsibility, most notably that London borough councils receive more national funding to deliver services that would be delivered by State Governments in Australia, including in relation to public housing, police, schools and social services. For more information see 'Council budget and assets' section of this report.

It was outside the scope of this report to collate and compare data across all local councils in Sydney, and compare them to the data for greater Paris and London. Notes are included to specify what data is being compared.

Other housing policy areas

Although this report identifies a wide range of areas where Australian local councils and Australian governments could take stronger action to respond to the housing crisis, it is not a comprehensive review of all the strategies currently being implemented by Paris and London Councils to address housing affordability.

For example, it is outside the scope of this report to consider: the implications of **rental caps**, which have been in operation in Paris for five years and are being considered for implementation in London; **tax reform**, though it is noted that taxes contribute to funding the council housing systems in Paris and London; **regulation of short stay rental accommodation** (such as AirBnB) though this is another area of significant reform for both international cities; or the role of schemes like Build to Rent, or Right to Buy in London.

Social and community housing (such as cooperatives) receive significant support from both Paris and London Councils. The role of **tenant-controlled and cooperative housing** models in the housing mix are more significant in London and Paris than in Australia, and in international cities like Vienna. It was outside the scope of the report to analyse the proportion of public funding and support to public housing, versus other forms of not for profit or community-led housing.

Importantly, it is outside the scope of this report to evaluate in detail who is being provided access to affordable, social and public housing, and whether the housing provided is suitable and accessible for them, including **people with a disability**. Where possible this information has been included. It is an important priority to follow up with further research.

Images used in the report

Cover images: See inside cover

Image 1: View of the roof 7 rue des Abbesses, in Montmartre, in Paris. The building, which dates back to the 19th century, renovated and turned into social housing for 20 families. Photo from Paris Deputy Mayor for Housing Ian Brossat's Facebook page, posted 20 June 2023, at <https://www.facebook.com/BrossatIan>

Image 2: Community centre and social housing at De La Caserne Aux Lodgements, Paris 12e, Paris Habitat project. Photo courtesy of Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore.

Image 3: Social media square reading 'Paris achieves 25% social housing, 2001: 13%, 2023: 25.4%'. Photo from Paris Deputy Mayor for Housing Ian Brossat's Facebook page, posted 19 June 2023, at <https://www.facebook.com/BrossatIan>.

Image 4: Councillor Ellsmore and representatives of Paris Habitat, site visit to social housing at De La Caserne Aux Lodgements, July 2023. Photo courtesy of Sylvie Ellsmore.

Image 5: Front cover of the City of Sydney's *Housing for All Sydney Local Planning Statement*

Image 6: 'Affordable Completions by Borough 2016-17 to 2021-22', at page 25 of London Assembly (2022) Affordable Housing Monitor. Access at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-publications/affordable-housing-monitor-2022>

Image 7: Sign outside Camden Council development project, London, July 2023, Photo courtesy of Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore

Image 8: Social media square reading 'Increase in social housing. Since 2001, in 8E +604%. 16E + 322%.' Posted by Paris Deputy Mayor for Housing Ian Brossat, June 2023, at <https://www.facebook.com/BrossatIan>

Images 9 and 10: Mayor of London (2018) *Better Homes for People: Estate Rejuvenation Guide* (2018) (L) and Sian Berry, London Councillor (2022) Survey and Report - *Estate Resident Ballots: Are they Working Well?* (R)

Images 11 to 13 (clockwise from left): De La Caserne Aux Lodgements in Paris 12e - model of the project from the Paris Habitat office; photo taken out of the window of one of the social housing apartments looking into the central garden square; cover of book released about the project in 2021. Photos courtesy of Councillor Ellsmore

Images 14-17 (clockwise from left): De La Caserne Aux Lodgements- new social housing next to community centre/ art space; with Councillor Ellsmore and Paris Habitat representatives, with the heritage barracks in the background and commercial restaurant to the left; two photos inside the social housing apartments inside the barracks. Photos courtesy of Councillor Ellsmore.

Images 18-20: Photo of La Samaritaine Department store - gardens on top are the social housing; view from one of the social housing apartment balconies; and view from one of the social housing apartment hallways inside the retrofitted heritage buildings. Photos from Paris Habitat.

Image 21: 7 Rue de Abesses, Montmartre, renovated in 2016 by the Paris Council and now home to 20 families. Photo courtesy of Councillor Ellsmore.

Images 22-24: 9 City of Hauteville and 1 rue Robert-Blache, Paris 10e, 2 apartments for families purchased and renovated to create social housing, opened April 2023. Posted by Paris Deputy Mayor for Housing Ian Brossat

Images 25-26: Before and after photos of housing posted by Deputy Mayor of Housing Ian Brossat, on 14 June 2023. The caption reads: "The City of Paris has occupied 76 Labat rue (Paris 18e). The building was derelict... some were without bathrooms. Everything has been re-done. From now on, these are comfortable social housing, opening tonight." At: <https://www.facebook.com/BrossatIan>

Images 27-28: (L) Colville Estate Masterplan, (R) Proposed new homes in phase 2 of the Colville regeneration. Photos from Hackney Council Colville Estate project webpage, at <https://hackney.gov.uk/colville-estate>

Author

Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore is the former Deputy Mayor of the City of Sydney Council (Sept 2022–Sept 2023), and a former Councillor on Marrickville Council (in Sydney’s inner west) (2012-2016). She was elected as a Greens Councillor to the City of Sydney Council in 2021.

Councillor Ellsmore is a founding member and Chair of the City of Sydney’s Housing for All Working Group, and Deputy Chair of the City of Sydney’s Housing for All Committee. She was the Co-Chair of the former Marrickville Council Affordable Housing Committee.

Prior to joining the City of Sydney Council, Councillor Ellsmore worked as a researcher, native title lawyer, community campaigner, and a policy manager for the NSW Government.

Councillor Ellsmore has coordinated and published major independent reviews of government programs on homelessness, cultural heritage, environmental laws, community legal centre funding, native title and land rights, unemployment services and domestic violence.

Her previous roles include as Senior Policy Consultant for Cox Inall Ridgeway, Editor of the Indigenous Justice Clearinghouse and Policy Coordinator for the NSW Aboriginal Land Council.

Most recently she worked as a Policy Coordinator for the Sydney Policy Lab at the University of Sydney, and for Australia’s Mental Health Think Tank.

Thank you for research advice from Associate Professor Ben Spies-Butcher (Macquarie University), Dr Gareth Bryant (University of Sydney) and Policy Advisor Adam Antonelli (City of Sydney).

Use of this report: You are welcome to use this report for not for profit purposes, with citation.

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References

This report draws on: publicly available information from the City of Sydney Council; Australian housing research and data; information from direct discussions with elected representatives and housing bodies in Paris and London undertaken in July 2023; policy, financial and other data about Paris and London Councils; and some information about individual local councils, where this was readily available.

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End Notes

[1] The Urban Reform Institute and the Frontier Centre for Public Policy publishes the annual *Demographia International Housing Affordability Report*, which ranks many international cities in terms of housing affordability. The report ranked Sydney as second least affordable city in the world (after Hong Kong) in 2022 and 2021. For the last ten years before this, Sydney was the third (3rd) least affordable city in the world, and London tenth (10th). Access the reports here: <http://demographia.com/db-dhi-index.htm>

Alternatively, the Committee for Sydney's *Chronically Unaffordable Housing* report identifies that Sydney is the fifth (5th) least affordable city in the world, after Hong Kong, Tel Aviv, San Francisco and Vancouver. The Committee for Sydney reports that over the last ten years Sydney has become less affordable than London. See Figure 4. Report is available to access here: <https://sydney.org.au/policy-library/chronically-unaffordable-housing/>

[2] For the definition of key terms public, social and affordable housing used in this report, see the 'End Notes' section.

[3] The trip was entirely self-funded by Councillor Ellsmore.

[4] A 2022 analysis by the London Tenants Foundation, using data from the Regulator of Social Housing, found that 20% of Greater London's dwelling stock (3,671,000) was some form of 'social rented homes'. This equates to about 10% of Greater London's dwelling being Council public housing, 7.8% housing association (Private Registered Providers) and 2.2% other forms of supported housing. See London Tenants Federation (October 2022) *London's council and housing association social and affordable rent stock 2022*, including data on bedroom sizes, accessed here: <https://londontenants.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/social-and-affordable-housing-stock-in-London-Boroughs-council-and-PRP22.pdf>

[5] The London Plan (2021) includes a target "for 50 per cent of all new homes delivered across London to be genuinely affordable." See Policy H4 – Delivering Affordable Housing – in Greater London Authority (March 2021) *The London Plan*. Greater London Authority, City Hall, The Queen's Walk, London. Access at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/planning/london-plan/>

[6] See 'Key Points' in London Assembly, *Affordable Housing Monitor 2022*, at <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/london-assembly-publications/affordable-housing-monitor-2022>.

[7] The London Assembly, *Affordable Housing Monitor 2022* (above) tracks the number of affordable (including public and social) homes started, and completed. See also Answers to Questions on Notice to the Mayor of London, 'Affordable Housing Targets' (22 February 2016), accessed at <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/questions-mayor/find-an-answer/affordable-housing-targets-10>. Note - figures may include housing that was demolished and rebuilt.

[8] According to the Deputy Mayor of Paris Ian Brossat. See also Chocron (V) (22 Nov 2022) 'Adapting the existing': Paris' plan to reach 40% affordable housing by 2035' in *Le Monde*. Access at https://www.lemonde.fr/en/france/article/2022/11/22/adapting-the-existing-paris-plan-to-reach-40-affordable-housing-by-2035_6005169_7.html. The 25% figure for Paris includes housing that is under construction, but has not yet been completed.

[9] See above.

[10] City of Sydney (2022) *Housing Audit 2022*. Access at: <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/surveys-case-studies-reports/city-monitor-reports>.

[11] See City of Sydney (2020) *Housing for All: City of Sydney local housing strategy* and City of Sydney (2020) *The City of Sydney Local Housing Strategy: Technical Report*. Access both at <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/strategic-land-use-plans/local-housing-strategy>

[12] The City of Sydney's affordable housing targets are included in the City of Sydney (2021) Community Strategic Plan: *Delivering Sustainable Sydney 2030–2050* <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/strategies-action-plans/community-strategic-plan> and City of Sydney (2020) *Housing for All: City of Sydney local housing strategy* (above)

[13] See data on affordable housing and social (public) housing contained in the most recent City of Sydney (2022) *Housing Audit 2022* (above). The *Housing Audit* reports that during the 2021/22 financial year there was a net decrease of 14 social (public) homes, and a net increase of 56 affordable homes. That is an overall increase of 42 new affordable, social or public homes, out of a total of 719 private dwellings (including social and affordable) completed (pp5 & 9).

[14] See detail in the 'Delivery of affordable housing by the City of Sydney' section of this report. The City of Sydney has reported that there are 641 affordable housing dwellings are in the pipeline, and a further 701 projected by 2036, based on the City of Sydney collecting projected affordable housing developer contributions and dispersing them to external organisations to create more affordable housing. This is a total 1,342 new affordable housing dwellings by 2036, or 103 per year average p/a for the next 13 years.

See also report to the City of Sydney's Housing for All Committee (19 June 2023) for item 'Post Exhibition - Planning Proposal - Affordable Housing Program Update.' The covering report from staff summarises the City of Sydney's progress towards affordable housing targets, and projections to 2036. Access at <https://meetings.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/documents/s73492/Post%20Exhibition%20-%20Planning%20Proposal%20-%20Affordable%20Housing%20Program%20Update%20-%20Sydney%20Local%20Environmental.pdf>

[15] See the tracking of delivery of affordable, social and public housing in the City of Sydney's *Housing Audit* (above) and the reports to the Housing for All Committee (above). It was reported to the elected Council through the Housing for All Committee on the 19 June 2023 (see above) that:

"Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050 Continuing the Vision maintains the target in the City's Local Housing Strategy: Housing for All for 7.5 per cent of all private dwellings to be Affordable Housing. Based on a private dwelling target of about 156,000 to 2036, an estimated 12,000 affordable dwellings are required to achieve the City's target to 2036. ... Altogether, about 4,200 Affordable Housing dwellings are forecast under existing programs, being about one third of the City's 12,000 target to 2036. These forecasts will be impacted by how successfully CHPs leverage Affordable Housing contributions funds. More substantial support for the provision of Affordable Housing is required from the Federal and NSW Government if the Affordable Housing targets for the City of Sydney Local Government Area (LGA) are to be achieved." (underline added).

That, the City of Sydney estimates that there will be 2.9% affordable housing in the City of Sydney LGA by 2036.

[16] Estimates for increases of rents in London over the last 12 months are between 5% and 16% (with the highest for inner city suburbs of London). See Boffey, D. (15 May 2023) 'Sadiq Khan hails surpassing of affordable housing target in London', *The Guardian*. Access at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2023/may/15/sadiq-khan-hails-surpassing-of-affordable-housing-target-in-london> & Calcea, N. (29 March 2023) Rent prices: How much have they gone up in your area? *BBC News*. Access at <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-65103937>

Rents in metropolitan Paris increased by 2% between January 2022 and January 2023 according to the *Institut national de la statistique et des études économiques* website at [https://www.insee.fr/en/statistiques/7076491#:~:text=In%20metropolitan%20France%2C%20rents%20\(excludin%20g,%20B1.0%25%20in%20October%202022](https://www.insee.fr/en/statistiques/7076491#:~:text=In%20metropolitan%20France%2C%20rents%20(excludin%20g,%20B1.0%25%20in%20October%202022) . See also Committee for Sydney's report *Chronically Unaffordable Housing* (above) for data about housing prices in international cities.

Rents across greater Sydney are estimated to have grow approximately 23% in the last financial year, with a slightly higher increase in the City of Sydney - 25%. See City of Sydney (August 2023) Submission to the NSW Government's review into improving rental laws, as tabled at the City of Sydney's 21 August 2023 Council meeting. Access here: <https://meetings.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/documents/s75650/Attachment%20A%20-%20City%20of%20Sydney%20Submission%20-%20Improving%20NSW%20Rental%20Laws.pdf>

[17] See NSW Government, Department Of Planning and Environment, 'Sydney Housing Supply Forecast' webpage at <https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/research-and-demography/sydney-housing-supply-forecast>.

[18] The City of Sydney's June 2022 *Housing Audit* (above) reported that: "As of June 2022, it is estimated that there were 22,090 buildings in the City of Sydney local area that contain residential dwellings (either private or non-private dwellings). Within these buildings there were a total of 138,184 residential dwellings counted. There were 122,444 private dwellings (private ownership and rental dwellings, social (including public) housing, affordable rental housing). There were 15,740 non-private dwellings (boarding house rooms, student accommodation rooms, residential care services)." (at page 5)

[19] See End Note 16 and Tenants' Union NSW. *Rent Tracker Area Tool*. Access at <https://www.tenants.org.au/tu/rent-tracker-area-tool>

[20] See data about Paris and London rents at End Note 16.

[21] See targets and tracking data for the City of Sydney at End Notes 14 to 18.

[22] See the Anglicare *National Rental Affordability Snapshot 2023*, including regional reports, at <https://www.anglicare.asn.au/publications/2023-rental-affordability-snapshot/>. In March 2023, within the greater Sydney basin, less than 1% properties advertised for rent were affordable.

[23] See End Note 18.

[24] As reported by Professor Nicola Gurrán (University of Sydney) in the *Sydney Morning Herald*: "The proportion of homes built by the public sector has fallen from well over 10 per cent in the mid-1980s to about 2 per cent today." Gurrán, N (22 August 2023), Opinion 'The real reason housing supply isn't keeping up with demand' in *Sydney Morning Herald*, at <https://www.smh.com.au/national/nsw/the-real-reason-housing-supply-isn-t-keeping-up-with-demand-20230821-p5dy40.html>

[25] See reports to the City of Sydney Housing for All Committee (above) and Morris, A and Hanckel, B (18 September 2017) *Local government and housing in the 21st century: The City of Sydney's approach to the supply of affordable housing*. Report prepared for ARC Linkage Project: *Local Government and Housing in Australia for the 21st Century*. Access at <https://localgovernmentandhousing.com/>.

[26] See City of Sydney's Housing for All Committee paper (11 September 2023) 'Affordable and Diverse Housing - Opportunities for City Owned Land'. Available at: <https://meetings.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/documents/s76191/Affordable%20and%20Diverse%20Housing%20-%20Opportunities%20for%20City%20Owned%20Land.pdf>

[27] Examples of recent affordable housing levies established or proposed by other councils in Sydney include but are not limited to: Randwick City Council - affordable housing contribution in the city centre is 5% of the total floor area of the development used for residential purposes; Inner West Council - 50% of the increase in residual land value from value uplift; Parramatta Council - developer contributions equivalent to 50% of the land value uplift outside of the CBD, with 10% of the value uplift to go toward affordable housing.

[28] The City of Sydney Council built much of the first public housing in the inner-city, for Council workers. See Note 30, below. During a period when the Council was run by appointed commissioners (1987-1988) all worker housing built by Council was transferred to the NSW Government. Other local Councils in NSW were also forced to transfer their housing to the NSW Government for a nominal sum. Successive State Governments sold some of this housing. It is estimated that the former NSW Government sold \$3 billion in public housing across NSW since 2016, including inner city housing at Millers Point and in Glebe. See McGowan, M (16 October 2022) 'More than \$3bn of social housing sold by NSW government since Coalition took power', *Guardian Australia*. Access at <https://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2022/apr/16/more-than-3bn-of-social-housing-sold-by-nsw-government-since-coalition-took-power>

[29] Examples of local councils in Sydney that own affordable housing portfolios today include but are not limited to: Randwick Council, Waverley Council, Canada Bay Council, Willoughby Council and the Inner West Council.

[30] The first inner-city Council affordable housing scheme was established in Ultimo/ Pyrmont in 1995, when the former industrial harbour area was undergoing a process of intense redevelopment, including the loss of much of the existing low income and worker housing. In 1999, the Green Square Affordable Housing Scheme was implemented, largely modelled on the existing Ultimo/Pyrmont Program, and again in a context of 'urban renewal'. A limited scheme for State Significant Development in Redfern Waterloo was established in 2006, and an updated scheme for an area around and including Green Square (the Southern Employment Lands area) in 2015. See overview of the schemes in report to the City of Sydney Central Sydney Planning Panel (21 June 2022). At <https://meetings.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=139&MIId=3978>

[31] See reports to the City of Sydney Housing for All Committee, as referenced above, at End Notes 14 and 15.

[32] See reports on delivery of affordable housing to the City of Sydney Housing for All Committee, at End Note 14.

[33] See Office of Local Government, comparative financial information across all local councils in NSW, for 2021/22, published on the website 'Your Council Report'. In particular see excel data file entitled 'Time Series Data 2021/2022' which is available to download from <https://www.olg.nsw.gov.au/public/about-councils/comparative-council-information/your-council-report/>. It reports that the City of Sydney Council (listed as 'Sydney') has the highest total revenue of any local council in NSW.

[34] See 'City of Sydney Operational Plan 2023/24' available to view at <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/strategies-action-plans/operational-plan>. In 2023/24 the City of Sydney will dedicate 0.6% of its operating budget on public, social and affordable housing, though this does not include the resources of planning, social support and other staff towards activities such as negotiating planning agreements that may deliver affordable housing, lobbying for policy reform, and providing homelessness services, or the \$40 million that it is estimated will be collected from private developers through the affordable housing levy.

See the 'Housing for All' line item of \$4.1 million in the City of Sydney Operational Plan 2023/24 – Income Statement (p74), Detailed Income Expenditure (pp75-79) and Summary of income and expenditure by Principal Activity – Housing for All (p80) as above.

[35] See City of Sydney (18 September 2023) Answers to Questions on Notice 5. 'Council Investments and Financial Position - August 2023' by Councillor Ellsmore, tabled at the 18 September 2023 City of Sydney Council meeting, available here: <https://meetings.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/documents/b14519/Item%2010%20-%20Questions%20on%20Notice%20with%20Answers%20Monday%2018-Sep-2023%2017.00%20Council.pdf?T=9>

See 5(2) Question: "(a) Of the total cash investments currently held by the City of Sydney (\$817.51M), how much in total is considered 'unrestricted'? (b) Of the total cash investments currently held by the City of Sydney, how much of the 'restricted' revenue will be needed for projects or operations: (i) in the current four years 2023/24 to 2027/28? (ii) from 2028/29 onwards?"

Answer: "(a) ... the City's cash and investments portfolio is substantially restricted in both internal (\$235.5M) and external (\$90.8M) cash reserves. The unrestricted portion of the portfolio is therefore \$491.2M. Note that "unrestricted" does not mean uncommitted. (b) "Based on anticipated expenditure per the City's 10 year Long Term Financial Plan (LTFP), restricted cash and investments are to be utilised by projects/operations in the following timeframes: • Four years from 2023/24 to 2026/27 (inclusive): \$220.2M • 2028/29 to 2032/33 (inclusive): \$53.1M ..."

That is, there is a minimum of \$271.2M currently held in cash reserves by the City of Sydney that are not needed for any other purposes, for at least the next four years. This figure does not take into the impact from the projected average \$100 million p/a operating surpluses, projected by the Council for each year, for the next 10 years.

[36] See estimated surpluses for the current 2023/24 year included in the City of Sydney Long Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2032/33, included in the City of Sydney (July 2023) *Resourcing Strategy 2023/24*. Access here: <https://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/strategies-action-plans/resourcing-strategy>

See also: Answer to Question on Notice about the City's debt, in City of Sydney (18 September 2023) Answers to Questions on Notice 5. 'Council Investments and Financial Position - August 2023' By Councillor Ellsmore, tabled at the 18 September 2023 City of Sydney Council meeting, available here: <https://meetings.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=133&MIId=4191&Ver=4> . And – Office of Local Government, 'Your Council – Measuring Council Performance' website, at <https://www.yourcouncil.nsw.gov.au/nsw-overview/finances/>. It reported that in 2020/21 only five councils in NSW reported having no debt.

[37] See: London Borough of Hackney *Budget Book 2023/24* accessed at Hackney Council 'Council finances' webpage at <https://hackney.gov.uk/finances> and London Borough of Camden *Budget Book 2023/24* accessed at Camden Council 'Council strategy' webpage at <https://www.camden.gov.uk/financial-strategy>.

[38] The UK has a strong traditional of public housing, most of which is Council-owned housing. Following the election of the conservative Thatcher Government in 1979, public home building policies were replaced with encouraging private home ownership. 'Right to buy' policies required Councils to see public housing to their occupiers and much of the remaining stock was transferred to the housing association sector (that is, not for profit or charity-run organisations, like Community Housing Providers here in Australia. In the 1980s, rental protections in the private market were also removed, for example landlords became able to evict tenants at will. See Ryan-Collins J, Lloyd T and Macfarlane L with the New Economics Foundation (2021) *Rethinking the Economics of Land and Housing*. Zed Books. Bloomberg Publishing.

[39] This report includes selected information from Paris and London, about the financial models used to fund affordable, social and public housing. See for example financial details for Hackney Council included below. It is beyond the scope of this report to include a comprehensive review of funding models.

For more information and case studies about the model used to sustainably fund social (including public) housing in France and other European countries, see report by the Housing Europe Observatory (Pittini, A, Turnbull D and Yordanova, D) (13 Dec 2021) *Cost-based social rental housing in Europe*. Access at: <https://www.housingeurope.eu/resource-1651/cost-based-social-rental-housing-in-europe>

See also #Housing2030, which is a United Nations supported research project and online repository of best practices in affordable housing, including in relation to: affordability, effective governance, strategic land policy, sustainable (circuits of) investment and climate neutral housing. Access at <https://www.housing2030.org/>.

[40] As above: London Borough of Hackney *Budget Book 2023/24* accessed at Hackney Council 'Council finances' webpage at <https://hackney.gov.uk/finances> and London Borough of Camden *Budget Book 2023/24* accessed at Camden Council 'Council strategy' webpage at <https://www.camden.gov.uk/financial-strategy>

[41] Hackney Council's cross-subsidy model to fund the construction of new public, council housing involves: some council homes they build sold outright, some 'shared ownership' homes, and some council-owned homes rented out at a 'Living Rent' level. That is, homes are rented to the general community (with locals prioritised) on long term leases, with rents set at 1/3 the average household income in London. This allows the council to cover the estimated £100,000 gap in funds for every new social home built.

In Hackney, between 2011 and 2018 the Council completed 660 new and refurbished homes, including 360 for social rent and 64 for shared ownership, with 236 for outright sale (managed directly by the Council) to help pay for the new homes, in the absence of government funding for social housing.

Hackney Council does not finance its projects through external debts, but does 'borrow' reserves earmarked held by the council for other council activities, to help fund new and renovated housing. Its projections are for new council housing to have paid for itself over a period of 30-40 years.

[42] See for example: Chocron (V) (22 Nov 2022) 'Adapting the existing': Paris' plan to reach 40% affordable housing by 2035' in *Le Monde*. As above. London councils' purchase of existing housing is focused on buying back former council homes, that the councils had been forced to sell to tenants under former governments' 'Right to Buy' policies. In the case of Hackney Council a target has been established to buy 100 former council homes over 2022-2026.

[43] Local borough councils in London set local affordable and social (including public) housing targets consistent with the London Mayor's requirements.

For major developments, the threshold level of affordable housing on gross residential development is set by the London Mayor (through the Greater London Authority) at: a minimum of 35 per cent; 50 per cent for public sector land where there is no portfolio agreement with the Mayor; or 50 per cent for "Strategic Industrial Locations, Locally Significant Industrial Sites and Non-Designated Industrial Sites appropriate for residential uses in accordance ... where the scheme would result in a net loss of industrial capacity." Affordable housing provision should be provided on-site as part of residential and mixed-use schemes. In exceptional circumstances, off-site and cash in lieu contributions can be provided in line with the affordable housing contribution scheme. A 'fast track' route is available where more affordable housing than the minimum threshold is provided. See Policy H4 and Policy H5, in Greater London Authority (2021) *London Plan* (above).

France has been using affordable housing contributions from development (inclusionary zoning) since the 1990s. A national french law (Loi Solidarite et Renouvellement Urbain or SRU) required 20% or 25% of all housing to be social. Paris Council's current (2016) local urban master plan [Plan local d'urbanisme] includes an obligation of a 30% of FSR of developments over 800 square metres to be social (including public) housing, in the areas lacking social housing, and a 30% intermediary (ie middle income/ affordable) housing outside of these areas. See English language version of Mayor of Paris (2016) *Local urban planning plan*. Access here: <https://cdn.paris.fr/paris/2020/02/26/16107d9c38a049046444a7b6301df1aa.ai>

[44] Both the Deputy Mayors for Housing for Paris and London Councils advised that the requirements have not had an impact on the pace of development.

There are limited independent studies specifically on the impact on private development arising from mandatory affordable housing contributions. A 2021 study by Li, F and and Guo Z, 'How Does an Expansion of Mandatory Inclusionary Housing Affect Housing Supply? Evidence From London (UK)' found an shift towards developing smaller apartment blocks after - between 2005 and 2008 - each of the 33 local authorities in Greater London extended their affordable housing requirements, previously for housing projects with 15 or more units, to those with 10 to 14 units. However, overall this do not impact supply.

See also discussion of impact of social housing policy on France's housing sector in Schaefer, J for Conseil National des Villes, Paris, France (2017) 'The French Social Housing Sector at the Crossroads of Budgetary Constraints and Social Missions' in *Critical Housing Analysis*. Vol 4, Issue 2 (2017) pp29-38. Access here: [https://www.housing-critical.com/data/USR_057_DEFAULT/04_The_French_Social_Housing_Sector_at_the_Crossroads_of_Budgetary_Constraints_and_Social_Missions\(1\).pdf](https://www.housing-critical.com/data/USR_057_DEFAULT/04_The_French_Social_Housing_Sector_at_the_Crossroads_of_Budgetary_Constraints_and_Social_Missions(1).pdf)

[45] See details of the City of Sydney's affordable housing contribution schemes in the 'Local context- City of Sydney' section of this report.

[46] Examples of Sydney councils with current or proposed affordable housing levies include: Waverley Council; Randwick City Council; Inner West Council; and Parramatta Council. Further details in noted above.

[47] In early 2023, the NSW Government announced it was considering proposed changes to its State Environment Planning Policy (SEPP) that would introduce a state significant planning pathway for development proposals over \$75 million. The proposed changes would enable developments to exceed floor space and height limits imposed by local planning laws by 30% in return for 15% of the floors space being dedicated for the purposes of affordable housing for 15 years.

[48] See history of British public housing in Ryan-Collins et al (above). For a brief summary of the history Paris public housing see: De Souza, D (2022) 'The history of the Cité Balzac and the vicious circle of social housing', in *Comunidades e Territórios*, Spring 2022(Sp22):89-101

[49] Greater London Authority (2018) *Better homes for local people – the Mayor's Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration*. Access at <https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/better-homes-for-local-people-the-mayors-good-practice-guide-to-estate-regeneration.pdf>

[50] See Greater London Authority (2018) *Better homes for local people – the Mayor's Good Practice Guide to Estate Regeneration* (above) and supporting documents including 'GLA Capital Funding Guide: Section Eight – Resident Ballots for Estate Regeneration Ballots', at https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/gla_cfg_section_8_resident_ballots_-_18_july_2018.pdf. The rules includes that all residents over 16 can vote, and an independent body must oversee the process.

[51] City Hall Greens – Office of Sian Berry (2022) *Estate Ballots, Are they Working Well?* An investigation by Sian Berry AM Green Party member of the London Assembly. Access at: <https://www.sianberry.london/news/housing/are-estate-ballots-working-well-new-report>. The report includes recommendations to improve the ballot process.

[52] Mayor of London, Estate Regeneration Data webpage, at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/housing-and-land/increasing-housing-supply/estate-regeneration-data>. See also City Hall Greens – Office of Sian Berry (2022) *Estate Ballots, Are they Working Well?* An investigation by Sian Berry AM Green Party member of the London Assembly (above) which includes a list of all ballots conducted, turnout and vote results, at Table 1.

[53] See also: Éditions du Pavillon de l'Arsenal in partnership with Paris Habitat, Under the direction of Fanny Légis (September 2021) 'De La Caserne Aux Lodgements Reuilly Paris 12e (book); Paris Council (26 Nov 2019) 'Housing: the new life of the Reuilly barracks', News item on the Paris Council website, at <https://www.paris.fr/pages/la-nouvelle-vie-de-la-caserne-de-reuilly-7310>; and Paris Habitat (26 July 2021) 'De La Caserne Lodgements' page. Access at <https://www.parishabitat.fr/a-la-une/sortie-livre-caserne-de-reuilly-210726/>

[54] See also: Paris Habitat 'La Samaritaine' project page, on the Paris Habitat website, at <https://www.parishabitat.fr/nos-programmes/la-samaritaine/>

[55] See: Hackney Council 'Colville Estate' project page, including resident consultation documents and resident newsletters. Access at <https://hackney.gov.uk/colville-estate>; Housing Design Awards (2012) 'Bridport House, Hackney - Colville Estate Phase 1' 2012 Winning Schemes. Access at https://hdawards.org/archive/2012/winning_schemes/completed_winners/bridport_house.php; and Karakusevic Carson Architects (various) 'Colville Estate' project stages. Access at <https://www.karakusevic-carson.com/projects/>