

When will we get the council housing we need?

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One of the most pressing needs in the UK is for more and better social housing. With home ownership beyond the reach of a growing number, and with the prospect that it will remain so for life for many of those now unable (quite reasonably) to find the 30% deposits needed to buy a first home, the availability of long term, stable, affordable social housing in which families can build stable lives rooted in communities is vital. It's depressing in that case that the [FT reports this morning](#) that:

A £3.3bn scheme to reward councils that oversee the building of new homes has so far fallen flat, according to research by a former Labour housing minister. The New Homes Bonus was designed to prompt the construction of vast numbers of homes by distributing grants to councils, which oversee development.

At a time of steep cuts to local government funding, the grant is worth £3.3bn over its first six years, spread unevenly among local authorities. Yet the £1.3bn handed out so far may simply be going to councils where homes would have been built anyway, judging by official figures collated by Nick Raynsford, a Labour MP.

The Conservatives are not committed to helping people: they're the party committed to market solutions to housing that cannot deliver. No doubt this is why, in combination with other cuts, this Labour scheme has not worked.

The big question is though whether Labour will have the courage to commit to delivery on this issue. So far there is little sign of it: the commitment made is small and wholly inadequate to meet the need.

What does have to happen for Labour to realise that only by delivering what people need can it both secure and justify holding power? Modern council housing is a key to demonstrating that it truly understands that.