# London faces surge in residents with no credible housing plan, Standard warns



The Evening Standard’s latest commentary makes a stark case: London is being asked to absorb a surge of new residents without a credible, commensurate plan to house them — and that charge lands squarely on the desk of the mayor and the national Labour leadership. The piece argues that an estimated net increase of 973,000 people in London between 2025 and 2030 will press an already strained housing stock beyond breaking point, with renters and first‑time buyers bearing the heaviest burden. Taken together, the analysis suggests policy choices at City Hall and Whitehall risk stoking demand while doing little to protect homes Londoners rely on.

National context matters, too. The Office for National Statistics’ latest population projections flag that growth over the next decade will be driven largely by international migration, with model scenarios assuming long‑term net migration around 340,000 a year from 2028. The ONS is careful to describe these as scenarios rather than forecasts and warns that migration trends are uncertain — a caveat that complicates planning but does not erase the scale of potential housing demand. Downing Street has signalled it will not impose an “arbitrary” cap on migration and plans a White Paper to outline a broader immigration strategy.

Yet the housing pipeline in London is weakening precisely when demand is set to rise. Analysis from the capital’s largest housing associations, compiled by the G15, shows a dramatic drop in affordable housing starts — roughly two‑thirds down over two years — with just 4,708 new homes begun in 2024–25 compared with 13,744 two years earlier; completions have also fallen. Boroughs report growing pressure on social waiting lists. London Councils’ figures show more than 336,000 households on social housing waiting lists as of April 2024, the highest level in over a decade, while boroughs warn of mounting financial and operational strain as they try to respond.

The market consequences are clear. ONS data for April–May 2025 put London’s average private rent at about £2,246–£2,249 per month, with annual rent inflation markedly higher than in most of the country and most acute in inner boroughs. Those price dynamics reflect the basic economics the Standard highlights: when construction stalls and population pressures rise, existing homes soak up the shortfall, pushing rents higher and pushing homeownership further out of reach for many.

In response, the mayor has floated controversial measures of his own. City Hall signals an openness to selective changes to the green belt to unlock housing, arguing that constrained brownfield capacity won’t deliver the roughly 88,000 homes per year some estimates say London needs. He frames such measures as strategic, tied to transport corridors, biodiversity protections, and the provision of social housing; the proposal, however, recognises the political sensitivity and trade‑offs involved in any loosening of green belt protections.

But the core tension remains: migration settings and housing delivery operate on different timescales and under different political controls, yet their effects converge on people’s front doors. The ONS’s caution about projection uncertainty should make ministers and city leaders wary of simplistic fixes, but it should not justify inertia. Housing stakeholders — from the G15 to local authorities — have called for faster planning decisions, clearer funding for affordable supply, and greater devolution of resources so boroughs can act. A credible national strategy will need to align immigration policy with long‑term investment in infrastructure and homes, rather than treating the two as unrelated levers.

The crux of the Evening Standard’s argument remains: creating or permitting significant additional demand without a transparent, well‑funded plan to increase supply risks compounding instability and injustice in London’s housing market. That is a fair warning. But the remedy is not a single policy gesture; it requires coordinated action across Whitehall and City Hall — from a clear migration policy that stops incentivising population growth to practical measures that unblock delivery on the ground — alongside an honest public debate about the choices involved in meeting population and housing change.

For those who believe the solution lies in a reform‑minded approach, the answer is to couple border controls with a serious push to unlock housing supply: faster planning decisions, faster delivery on brownfield sites, and devolution of funding to councils so they can act decisively. It is a line that argues for tightening immigration that fuels demand while accelerating homebuilding, and for a national plan that treats housing delivery as inseparable from population policy. Without that coherence, London’s housing crisis will only deepen, and those most in need will pay the price.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/comment/london-housing-crisis-labour-blame-b1243595.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/nationalpopulationprojections/latest> - The Office for National Statistics' National Population Projections (latest release) sets out projected UK population growth driven primarily by net international migration. It forecasts the UK population rising by around four point nine million between mid 2022 and mid 2032, with assumed long‑term net migration of 340,000 people per year from 2028. The bulletin emphasises that population change at national and local levels is influenced by migration, births and deaths, and stresses projections are scenarios not forecasts. The ONS publishes detailed data and cautions substantial uncertainty around future migration trends and their implications for housing demand. Local planning must respond.
3. <https://www.londoncouncils.gov.uk/news-and-press-releases/2025/londons-social-housing-waiting-lists-reach-10-year-high> - London Councils' 22 January 2025 press release reports that the number of households on social housing waiting lists in London reached 336,366 as of April 2024, the highest in more than a decade. The analysis shows a 32% increase since 2014 and highlights London accounts for about a quarter of England's total households waiting for social housing. London Councils warns of a homelessness emergency and growing financial pressures on boroughs, estimating a funding shortfall in social housing budgets. The release calls for urgent action to build more affordable homes, increased investment and devolution to help boroughs tackle long‑term housing challenges.
4. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c1ldgqvypqpo> - The BBC reports on a G15 analysis highlighting a steep fall in new affordable housing starts in London, noting a 66% drop among the capital's largest housing associations over two years. According to the G15, just 4,708 new homes began in 2024–25, down dramatically from 13,744 two years earlier; completions also fell to 9,200. The report warns this collapse in affordable starts exacerbates London's housing crisis and urges swift government action to remove barriers. City Hall says it is working to build a fairer London; housing groups cite planning delays, funding pressures and construction costs as key obstacles to delivery.
5. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/bulletins/privaterentandhousepricesuk/may2025> - The Office for National Statistics' Private Rent and House Prices bulletin (May 2025) shows London has the highest average private rent and continued strong rent inflation. In April–May 2025 London's average private rent stood at around £2,246–£2,249 per month and annual rent inflation remained elevated compared with most regions. The bulletin explains regional variation in rent inflation and underlines London’s persistently high rental costs, highlighting borough‑level extremes such as Kensington and Chelsea. The release provides charts and tables showing trends in rents and house prices, emphasising the pressure rental inflation places on household budgets and housing affordability in the capital.
6. <https://www.london.gov.uk/media-centre/mayors-press-release/towards-new-london-plan> - City Hall's 9 May 2025 press release announces Mayor Sadiq Khan's intention to explore releasing parts of London's green belt to help tackle the capital's housing crisis. Khan argues that building strategically near transport links could deliver hundreds of thousands of new homes, including social housing, and that relying solely on brownfield land will be insufficient to meet the estimated need of 88,000 homes per year. The statement calls for co‑operation with government on transport investment and planning reform, emphasising the need to balance housing with biodiversity and green access while acknowledging the political sensitivity of green belt changes. Urgently
7. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c05l9y56773o> - The BBC's 28 January 2025 report on ONS population projections records the Government's reaction to projected high net migration. It notes Downing Street ruled out an 'arbitrary' cap on migration, saying previous caps had limited effect, and that a comprehensive White Paper would be published to set out plans to reduce migration. The article explains ONS projections assume net international migration averaging 340,000 a year from 2028 and that migration is the principal driver of projected population growth to 2032. The BBC cautions projections are scenarios, not forecasts, and there remains substantial uncertainty over future immigration trends and policy choices.