



Housing – A Critical Perspective.

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Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:

1. Paper / Proposal Title: Austerity Urbanism's Final Frontier: The Housing and Planning Act 2016

2. Format: Written paper

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4. University or Company Affiliation:

5. Abstract (300 words):

The Housing and Planning Act received Royal Assent on 12th May 2016. Processes that have been in train for four decades have culminated in a single piece of legislation that could transform the housing and urban policy landscape. Far-reaching measures in the Act include the introduction of means testing, ending of permanent tenancies, sell-offs of 'high value' council homes as they become empty, extension of Right to Buy to housing association (HA) tenants, replacement of social rented homes with 'Starter Homes' on new development sites, deregulation of HAs to allow more commercial activities, relaxation of local planning controls and re-designation of council estates as 'brownfield sites'.

The Act precisely addresses the question of 'Government and Housing in a Time of Crisis: Policy, Planning, Design and Delivery'. Before it was passed, there were many criticisms of the legislation by politicians, academics, policy makers, housing campaigners and above all, by those who will be most adversely affected by it. However, a critical phase is now before us as the many questions of practical

implementation come to the fore, with multiple implications for national and local government.

This paper will explore the ideological and policy issues around the Act and consider its possible consequences. It will do so from the practical perspective of the manager of a council estate in inner London, but within an academic framework that places the Act in the wider context of the neoliberalising metropolis. Pre-existing tensions centred on the availability of genuinely affordable housing and the ability of people on low and medium incomes to live in urban areas in a time of reputed 'austerity' will be exacerbated by the Act.

The Housing and Planning Act marks a potential watershed moment, not just for housing policy but for the development of Britain's cities – as austerity urbanism's final frontier.

7. Author(s) Biography (200 words each):

Glyn Robbins
Manages a council estate, London

Glyn Robbins has worked in, campaigned on and written about housing and urban policy for 25 years. He currently manages a council estate in a rapidly changing part of inner London. Glyn has held a variety of positions within the public, non-profit and private sectors. He received his PhD from London Metropolitan University in 2013 for a thesis on 'Mixed Use Property Development and its Place in UK Urban Policy'. As well as several peer-reviewed academic papers, Glyn's writing has been published by The Guardian, Town and Country Planner, Roof, Red Pepper and he writes regularly on housing for The Morning Star. Glyn has been closely involved in the campaign against the Housing and Planning Bill/Act and subject to a successful funding application, will be participating in academic research on the impact of the legislation. Glyn is also a regular visitor to the USA and is due to publish a book about the convergence of US and UK housing policy. He has spoken at numerous academic and housing-related conferences and is regularly interviewed by the media on housing policy.