

## THE 'EN BLOC' CONCEPT

### 1. Introduction:

En Bloc is designed to increase the housing capacity on certain plots by a minimum of 50%. Part of its design is to build up with more storeys in settings already urbanised instead of the construction of new homes spilling onto farm or green belt land.

### 2. Definition:

En bloc is an urban redevelopment strategy involving the revitalisation of residential complexes and built-up areas.

### 3. The Strategy:

The Time Party would legislate to permit a developer to make an offer to owners of residential properties, valuing those properties at a premium of 20% above market price, leading to a 'collective' (or en bloc) sale.

The market price of the properties would be determined by three separate, independent chartered surveyors from a list approved by the ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government.

The condition of this being that 85% of owners of such properties agree in writing to sell to the developer and vacate their properties on a specified date.

If that threshold of 85% is met, the development will go ahead and all owners will need to sell at the designated premium. For Council owned properties, councils are obliged to give current tenants the option of voting as the council's proxy. The council will be permitted to consult and advise the tenants prior to the vote.

Private owners would have all legal costs related to the sale of their property paid by the developer. Council and Housing Association tenants would be offered the option to be relocated to equivalent accommodation in a nearby location, or the choice of a further two alternative locations not necessarily to be considered nearby, all at no expense to themselves.

Such legislation would include a series of clauses which would steer local councils to swiftly agree planning permission for such en-bloc developments, awarded on the basis that the property/properties to be demolished were of no architectural significance.

The replacement development must, by law, improve the environment both architecturally and in terms of quality of life: where possible green leisure space should be incorporated into the development; all developments to include underground car parking facilities for at least one vehicle per unit.

All en-bloc developments must increase the number of residential units by at least 50%. A study, commissioned by the organisation Find Me A Floor, discovered that British families live in some of the most cramped conditions in Europe according to a report published in 2017. In England, floor spaces average just 71.2 square metres, for example. In Spain, it's 91.2, Italy 108.2 and in France 79.6. The Time Party would, therefore, ensure that each en-bloc development delivers minimum floor sizes, on a per-bedroom basis, to ensure that our people are living in ample space.

En-bloc developments have to be habitable and placed on the market within 5 years of the completion of the collective sale. A possible 1 year extension can be applied for under extenuating

circumstances, beyond the control of the developer. Penalty for non-completion within this timeframe would be compulsory purchased by the local authority in which the development occurs with a maximum of 75% costs-to-date reimbursed.

Height restrictions would be in keeping with existing council guidelines. There would be no additional lower or upper limits imposed on the height of an en-bloc development.

Note: Collective sales can either be made of older, architecturally poor apartment blocks or of similarly described housing estates.

#### 4. Comments:

As with all Time Party proposals, we invite members and supporters to comment on the viability of the en bloc concept. Rather than directing these comments at our twitter feed, kindly email the Policy Unit via [policy.development@timeparty.uk](mailto:policy.development@timeparty.uk) to have your opinions heard.

Thank you.