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Barcelona Right to Housing Plan 2016-2025



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# A plan for championing the right to housing



#### **Josep Maria Montaner**

Barcelona City Councillor for Housing and Renovation

his issue of *Issues* no. 21, presents a summary edition of the 2016-2025 Plan for the Right to Housing in Barcelona, which was approved by the Full City Council Meeting of 27 January 2017. This is an ambitious plan that multiplies investments in housing; it is strategic, for a ten-year period, the minimum for introducing changes that will result in an important public housing stock; and it is executive, for developing all the tools that Barcelona City Council has at its disposal for housing.

Barcelona is a successful city that, like other desirable cities on the international arena, has fallen prey to the serious problem of gentrification. This, together with the lack of a public housing stock, where such housing has not been built or maintained, makes this plan a more than necessary tool for reclaiming housing as a right for all city residents.

This publication features the plan's most notable points, divided up into four areas: preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion; ensuring the proper use of housing, incorporating empty dwellings; increasing the stock of affordable housing and maintaining, renovating and improving the current housing stock. It is on the basis of these areas that the various initiatives that serve to promote a new housing framework in Barcelona are being designed.

There are many legal and budgetary difficulties we have to tackle if we are to ensure housing is a right and an asset used for people's daily lives, rather than a commodity. Many of these legal difficulties fall outside our municipal jurisdiction. Despite these limitations, we have launched new tools and measures.

And we're going even further. Because the City Council is well aware that housing falls mainly under the jurisdiction of the Catalan regional government and the Spanish State. That is why this plan, besides multiplying and boosting municipal tools, provides for calls on the competent authorities to govern the regulatory framework that affects housing and its economic activity and exercise their powers or delegate them to the City Council which, proportionately speaking, is the authority that has currently been putting the most resources and services at the disposal of the city's residents. Never before in Barcelona have such efforts been made to transform its indecisive and unambitious policies.

Today's government team has put together a plan to radically change how housing is conceived and championed as a right. A right recognised in several local-, regional-, State- and international-level tools that involves a commitment from the various authorities to work to ensure that people can have access to decent housing. The Housing Right Plan is therefore a key tool for implementing policies that serve to guarantee the social function of housing and moving forward in building a public service on a par with the best European practices.

This is a plan drafted for the first time from within the territory, with participation from local residents and invitations to



The plan was drawn up with 59 policy initiatives, some of which are already in progress.

associations, and a particular treatment for each of Barcelona's districts and neighbourhoods, as well as specific collectives.

This is a plan that presents strategic measures for tackling specific problems: increases in rent, tourist flats, an increasingly ageing population, the difficulties young people face trying to leave home and gain access to housing etc.

What is more, in addition to the damaging effects caused by the property bubble and mortgage crisis, along with the central government's decision to bail out banks and abandon hundreds of thousands of families to totally unjust housingeviction proceedings, Barcelona is now seeing a rise in rental prices due to a series of market and legislative developments.

This situation cannot be tackled without a bottom up change and in every direction: by strengthening and increasing rent subsidies; by developing support measures for people at risk of eviction, such as the Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion (UCER); by creating new tools for ensuring empty dwellings are incorporated into the affordable Rental Housing Pool; fighting against anti-social uses of housing, such as empty dwellings in the hands of banks; by multiplying the production of public rental properties which, what is more, follow innovation, flexibility, gender-equality, accessibility and energy-saving criteria; by boosting new forms of housing tenure, such as cohousing under granted right of use; and, finally, by strengthening policies for maintaining the residential housing pool, through proactive measures for allocating financial aid for renovations wherever they are most needed, and through interventions at various levels, from reforms and energy improvements inside properties to urban-regeneration operations, not to mention agreements with owner communities.

This is not simply a document of intent but a plan that is being implemented under 59 initiatives, which can be continued and assessed and which is accompanied by an unprecedented budgetary impetus. The City Council has planned to invest 1,671.8 million euros over the coming ten years, 58% more than in the previous plan. Housing then is becoming a key policy at the City Council, which is coordinating the actions and measures of other areas and combining several tools for the key purpose of redistribution and urban restructuring.

Some of the plan's notable points are as follows:

- Strengthening rent-payment subsidies as a key tool for preventing housing losses. Close to 10,000 households will benefit from this every year during this term of office.
- Extending the public housing pool by acquiring 1,000 flats and making 8,000 brand-new dwellings available from the Municipal Housing and Renovation Institute, the municipal operator and a further 8,000 made in collaboration with other operators, according to the 80% for rent and 20% for building lease ratio.
- Making over 1,000 small-property-owner dwellings available to tenants for affordable rent by guaranteeing rent cover and financial aid for renovations for as much as 20,000 euros through the Rental Housing Pool.
- Impetus from a brand-new renovation policy that prioritises energy saving, by concentrating its efforts where there is residential vulnerability. For the first time, an annual call for grant and subsidy applications for interior home renovations has been incorporated, as have agreements with communities. All in all, more than 50,000 households will benefit from it.

To achieve all of this, in addition to the participatory processes, the plan has been negotiated with associations that champion the right to housing and has been explained to the residential construction sector's main players; this is a plan discussed and debated with each of the political party groups, in order to improve and complete it, with the aim of achieving the highest possible consensus. Such a radical change in housing policies cannot come about in a single term of office or from a few political party groups; it has to be a commitment from the entire city.

None of that could be achieved without a housing plan with a view to the future, agreed with organisations and residents, which multiplies the annual budget that the City Council allocates to housing. That is why we understand that its summarised publication, both for the knowledge of Barcelona's citizens and also to serve as a point of reference in other housing policies and plans, is a useful and necessary initiative.

<sup>\*</sup> The Municipal Housing Trust was reorganised in January 2018 as the Barcelona Municipal Institute for Housing and Renovation



# The new housing path in Barcelona: towards a quality public service





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The Right to Housing Plan for 2016-2025 seeks to reverse the historical deficit Barcelona has suffered with regard to housing, placing it within the framework of the best European practices, which for over a hundred years have been offering a public housing service.

This plan is based on an analysis of the housing reality in the city. Barcelona has a pool of 684,000 main dwellings\*, 31% of which are rental. It is the municipality with the highest percentage in the Spanish State, which makes the city more sensitive to changes in the rental market.

At the same time, the economic power of families for paying rent is much higher than in the rest of the Spanish State. Areas with lower rent are also the ones where price increases and family efforts to make ends meet are proportionately the biggest.

The rental housing market in Barcelona has been suffering from problems of excessively rising rental prices and a supply controlled by too few hands. Regular-residence use of housing is coming under pressure from a foreign-property investment focus, Barcelona's attraction as a city for permanent or temporary residence, illegal tourist flats, poor use by large-property owners, etc.

All this is leading to an emergency housing situation. In 2016, 84% of evictions were over rent-payment difficulties. In addition, the public rental housing pool, capable of providing

\*Data from the 2011 census



Barcelona aims to reverse the historical deficit and put itself on a par with cities that have over 100 years' experience in public housing services.

accommodation for people who cannot access market housing, is only 1.6%. The figure is around 20% in other European cities. Berlin, for example, has a social housing pool of over 30% and Paris of 17.2%. Today's social housing pool in Barcelona is a long way from these cities which have been adopting good public housing practices for years.

This new term of office has ensured public ownership of land in all its housing promotions. We will not sell or lose more

public housing than is built. Building, however, is a long process. That is why there is a need to exploit other avenues to increase the public housing pool and allocate it to the rental market.

Only by using all the tools we have at our disposal, along with some new ones, will we be able to overcome this serious threat. That is, if everyone is responsible for them and if the other authorities meet their obligations too. It's time Barcelona followed this path.

To this end the new Right to Housing Plan provides for every mechanism at hand, such as pre-emption rights, to acquire dwellings for allocation to rental social housing or multiply the production capacity, from an average construction of 200 flats a year to 800, during the plan's ten-year period.

It also considers completely new challenges and mechanisms, such as the creation of the UCER, a unit specialising in mediation and assistance during evictions and the impetus of a metropolitan housing operator, who will enable a multiplied production of new flats for affordable rent, in the style of a *housing association*, tasked with promoting affordable rental housing in many European cities. This operator will be managed as a mixed company that will enable investment capacities for promoting protected housing to be added to those for production.

Another tool we are working on is attracting privately owned flats to the Barcelona Rental Housing Pool. Owners are being offered maximum guarantees and incentives; they are being ensured their flats will pay them rent while being maintained.

This new term of office has ensured public ownership of land in all its housing promotions. We will not sell or lose more public housing than is built.

Financial aid is also being added for renovations and subsidies, in addition to technical and legal advice.

The cooperative assigned-for-use housing model is also being established, along with *urban masoveria* [a leasehold in exchange for maintenance and repair work instead of money] projects and social-entity impetuses in managing and generating rental housing.

Making empty flats available for renting is another of the areas being worked on,

through agreements with banks and locating empty dwellings, by contacting owners and offering them incentives to include their dwellings in the Public Rental Housing Pool.

As for management, all the above would not have been possible without a powerful internal re-organisation. Firstly, the Manager's Office for Housing is becoming answerable to Social Rights, to strengthen social right and service aspects. Secondly, the various managing bodies are integrated into the new Municipal Institute of Housing and Renovation, which will be the body tasked with managing municipal housing policies.

The plan provides for the establishment, within a period of ten years, of a public housing service in Barcelona, so that the city can finally make progress in housing policies that guarantee the rights of its local residents.

Right to
Housing Plan
2016-2025



# Right to Housing Plan 2016-2025. The challenge of turning housing into a public service

The new Right to Housing Plan for 2016-2025 promoted by Barcelona City Council represents a paradigm shift in that it regards living in a decent home to be everyone's right. To ensure that housing is not a commodity but rather a right that all city residents have access to under equal conditions, the plan tackles — from four strategic areas — the current and future needs that the city has in this area: preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion; ensuring the proper use of housing; increasing the stock of affordable housing, and maintaining, renovating and improving the current housing stock.



**Gemma Martí**Journalist and
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ousing is a fundamental right recognised in legislation and the authorities at a local, regional, State and international level. More specifically, Article 26 of the Statute of Autonomy of Catalonia of 2006 stipulates that: "Individuals who lack sufficient resources have the right to a decent home, to which end the public authorities must establish a system of measures by law to guarantee this right, within the terms and conditions determined by legislation".

The new Barcelona Right to Housing Plan (PDHB) launched by the City Council — which is set out for a period of ten years, from 2016 to 2025 — is focused on people and ensures the social function of housing. For this reason, the plan lays the foundation for building a public housing service similar to the ones that already exist for health care and education In this way Barcelona aims to put itself on a par with the best practices in housing seen in other European cities such as Amsterdam, Berlin and Paris.

To do this, the plan — which was drafted by the Councillor's Office for Housing, the Manager's Office for Housing, the Municipal Institute for Urban Planning, Barcelona Gestió Urbanística, SA, and the Municipal Housing Trust — promotes the right to have a decent home and advises people to protect it, while tackling problems that have to be solved imminently, such as the



The new plan is people focused and lays the foundations for building a public similar to the services for health care and education

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housing service

them. At the same time, the plan also provides for new working methods such as financial aid for renovating the interiors of properties or incentives for building-renovation agreements to enable their improvement and make them more sustainable while thereby improving people's health.

One of the distinctive features of the new plan, which was prepared taking into account the needs of the people and from a rights-focused approach, is that the aim was for it to be sketched out through public participation, by organising meetings to discover first hand the problems detected by the neighbourhoods' local residents. That is why the document was created through a participatory process\* and has incorporated most of the proposals made by the municipal political party groups and social associations. Of the 196 arguments presented, more than 75% were accepted.

Another of the unique features of the PDHB is that a chapter on analysing and diagnosing each of the districts has been incorporated for the first time, as has a section with specific initiatives for each of the city's ten districts. The proposals that are made in the city sphere accordingly come from this district analysis.

The Barcelona Right to Housing Plan for 2016-2025 has a municipal budget of 1,671.8 million euros for ten years (58% more in the year than in the previous period), although the total investment that it is expected to generate in the city in housing policies is much higher, since Barcelona City Council is developing them in consortium with the Catalan regional government and, at the same time, the plan also provides for other initiatives that the third and private sectors are also taking part in. By adding all the contributions from other authorities (Catalan regional government and the Spanish State's government), the associated expenditure comes to over 2 billion euros in

residential emergency, the need to increase the public rental housing pool, the need to improve the existing residential housing pool, the need to prevent anomalous uses of housing and the difficulty people with low incomes face covering rent payments, among other things.

Other challenges have to do with situations that could be considered structural, such as the difficulties young people have in accessing housing and recent phenomena such as the replacement of usual-residence flats with touristuse accommodation — which is no longer concentrated only in a few neighbourhoods such as Ciutat Vella, Barceloneta, Dreta de l'Eixample and Vila Olímpica but which has also extended to a good part of the city — and the progressive ageing of the population, a problem that will become more pronounced over the coming years and which has to be taken into account so that elderly people can live as many years as possible in their homes or have alternatives available to

<sup>\*</sup> Explained on page 53



The Barcelona Housing Consortium's Housing Offices are a one-stop citizen help and information centre specialising in this area.

the plan's ten-year lifetime, as the regional and central governments are expected to contribute a minimum of 333.8 million euros during this period, whereas investments from rental associations and operators will be 505.4 million euros.

Furthermore, in economic terms, the policies resulting from this plan will generate around 29,000 jobs linked mainly to financial aid for renovations and new housing promotions\* The PDHB is also promoting incentives for employment plans in

collaboration with Barcelona Activa which will enable unemployed people to find work. Such is the case, for example, with the compilation of a list of empty buildings that was launched in November 2016 and which is being developed under one of these employment plans.

While Barcelona City Council is activating a whole series of new initiatives and allocating more resources than ever to housing policies, the municipal government is aware of the need to collaborate with and involve the other authorities to push for legislative and structural changes,

<sup>\*</sup> The City Council's local development agency



The plan is expected to be implemented over a ten-year time frame.

The plan sets out seven challenges: preparing the population for ageing, increasing the public housing pool and strengthening mediation, among other things, which translate to specific initiatives of commitment to the public

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which enable a new paradigm to be established in the city and a truly public housing service to be constructed. This is why the document incorporates the specific demands that will be formally put to the central and regional authorities, to promote these necessary initiatives — and which are outside the municipality's jurisdiction — so that the right to housing becomes a reality, just as other now established rights have become.

#### Challenges, areas and initiatives

The new municipal plan establishes seven big challenges and, to achieve them, outlines four strategies or areas that come from 59 specific initiatives, which enable the establishment of the plan's specific municipal commitments and facilitate its monitoring.

#### The seven challenges are as follows:

- 1. Stepping up mediation and rent subsidies to enable people to gain access to and keep their housing: Prevention is the best mechanism for tackling situations where people are at risk of losing their home. To bring that about the city has several mechanisms that need to be implemented:
- 2. Preventing the replacement of homes and protecting their residents: Barcelona has to help its residents to keep their usual place of residence and enable them to continue living in their neighbourhoods and homes. Pressure from tourism and other non-residential uses is causing a rise in prices and a reduction in available housing for primary residences.
- **3. Increasing the public housing stock:** Having affordable housing is essential for meeting the needs of residents unable to access the free market. We need to move forward in our capacity to develop new affordable public housing in Barcelona, geared mainly to rental properties.

- 4. Incorporating the private housing stock into the affordable housing market: Making private properties available for rent through subsidies and incentives allows more affordable housing to be available and spread through the various neighbourhoods, in areas where there is a lack of officially protected housing. This helps to avoid concentrations in certain areas of the city of larger numbers of people or families in vulnerable situations.
- 5. Developing an active renovation policy that can improve the most vulnerable areas: The maintenance problems of flats particularly affect households with fewer resources, so the rise in social and economic inequalities has led to increased differences in residential conditions. To counter these effects, we need to focus public subsidies on residents with smaller incomes and on the more dilapidated areas, because housing in poor conditions has repercussions on the health and quality of life of the people who live in it.
- **6.** Helping to ensure the social function of housing and avoiding anomalous uses: Public authorities have to ensure housing fulfils its social function, in other words, that it provides its residents with the necessary space, facilities and material means to satisfy their housing needs. The authorities have a duty to prevent anomalous uses, such as housing in an inadequate state of repair, housing which is permanently and unjustifiably unoccupied or overcrowded.
- 7. Preparing the city for an ageing population
  Barcelona's population is going through
  an ageing process that will become more
  pronounced over the coming years, according
  to demographic forecasts. So we need to
  prepare the city to address this process through
  initiatives that will enable elderly people to live
  in their own homes as long as possible, while

creating housing with services that they can move to when they are unable to continue living in their own homes. To do that, special emphasis is being put on strengthening assistance and exchange mechanisms with citizens, and the need to improve knowledge of the residential housing stock and demand.

# The four strategic areas and a general summary of their lines of action:

Both the plan and the specific lines and initiatives that are summarised below can be consulted in detail on: http://habitatge.barcelona/

# 1. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

- 1.1. Preventing residential exclusion
- 1.2. Assisting people in the process of losing their home
- 1.3. Assisting people who cannot get access to decent housing

#### 2. Ensuring the proper use of housing

- 2.1. Improved knowledge
- 2.2. Maintaining the use of housing
- 2.3. Housing discipline

# ${\bf 3.\,Increasing\,the\,stock\,of\,affordable\,housing}$

- 3.1 Acquiring properties
- 3.2. Incorporating private housing into the rental housing pool
- 3.3. Agreement with the third sector for handing over dwellings
- 3.4. Agreements with banks
- 3.5. Promoting officially protected housing

# 4. Maintaining, renovating and improving the current housing stock

- 4.1. Renovation support
- 4.2. Neighbourhood Plan



# 1. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

One of the more serious problems afflicting Barcelona and the metropolitan area is the housing emergency and residential exclusion. Rising unemployment and job insecurity since 2007 have led to a drop in average household income, thereby lowering average family incomes and increasing the weight of the low-income population. Consequently, it has become more difficult for people to gain access to housing and keep their homes.

Added to these difficulties are the lack of flats with rent below market prices — only 1.5% of housing is affordable in Barcelona; the percentage is much higher in other European cities: 17% in Paris; 23% in London; 30% in Berlin and 48% in Amsterdam — and rising rental prices. It should also be borne in mind that the combination of evictions for financial reasons and difficulties in paying mortgages have made it hard for a large number of families to pay for decent housing, and have put them in a situation of energy poverty or facing eviction.

To break this vicious cycle the City Council considers that the capacity to reverse and prevent housing emergencies and to assist the people affected is key to ensuring a socially just and balanced city. To achieve this, it not only has to deal with the current situation but also establish the bases to prevent any repetition of situations seen in the city, where thousands of people have lost their homes or have found themselves living in extremely unstable conditions.

The new plan provides for several initiatives to prevent residential exclusion, assist people who are in the process of losing their home or who cannot access decent housing. In addition, it also proposes a series of essential regulatory changes to stop this situation, which require State or regional processing. Note that there is a co-responsibility,

The Council believes that the capacity to reverse and prevent housing emergencies and attend to the people affected are key to guaranteeing a socially fair and balanced city

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given that the jurisdiction for housing falls to the Catalan regional and central governments, and the City Council is working to extend initiatives for the benefit of the public and make sure large property owners do not shirk their responsibilities towards people.

## 1.1. Preventing residential exclusion

The city has to be able to act to prevent people from losing their flat, to provide access to affordable homes and intervene in situations of inadequate or unsafe housing. That is why the new plan envisages maintaining and furthering social aid for accommodation provided by Social Services, promoting communication and information exchanges between the Housing Offices and the territory's Social Services, and offering social support to those receiving aid.

More specifically, the plan establishes municipal investments in specific areas such as putting housing on the property market (which includes purchases, agreements, Rental Housing Pool), subsidies for renovations, subsidies for rent and housing promotions.

The aid should enable one-off, unexpected difficult situations to be tackled (in the case of long-term problems, steady subsidies will be processed for rent), whether it be paying rent or utility bills, and to adapt public housing rental payments to the income of the household units.

Another of the actions included under the plan, which has already been carried out, was the January 2016 creation of the Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion (UCER), which works to improve mediation and support in eviction cases. Note that, according to data from the General Council of the Judiciary, 35,234 eviction orders were issued throughout the Province of Barcelona between 2008 and 2015. There was a notable increase from 2,661 to 7,779 between 2008 and 2014. This situation has led to an accelerated



The Plan has provided for initiatives, taking the ageing population into account, so as to protect it from potential residential exclusion.

increase in initiatives from the Social Emergencies Committee for assessing awards of housing and welfare resources to the households affected. The increasing number of evictions is not affecting every part of the city to the same extent; over half of the cases have been concentrated in Sants-Montjuïc and Nou Barris, while Ciutat Vella has also had more than its fair share. Hence the plan's aim to work district by district, as the situation is not uniform across the city.

The new plan also provides for strengthening the role of the Barcelona Housing Offices—there is currently one per district— and the mechanisms for providing information, support and mediation that are offered for reaching citizens more clearly and directly and attempting to prevent future situations of risk, loss of housing and evictions.

#### **Housing Offices**

Housing Offices operate according to a "local" model that works by taking account of the unique qualities and features of each of the city's districts. Actions provided for under the plan include bringing assistance staff at the Housing Offices' front office in-house (external management), which

# SERVICE CATALOGUE





Renovation grants



Access to protected and social housing



Grants for rent and rented housing pools



Decent use of housing



Complementary services



# **HOUSING OFFICES**

An office in every district for providing residents with assistance and increasing housing services

will enable data to be shared with other municipal departments and therefore spare the Council the need for applying for information that is already available. An IT app will also be put into operation which enables data to be shared with other departments and authorities, thereby simplifying both internal and external procedures for citizens; it will also allow e-files to be processed through the City Council's procedures portal and Citizen's File. At the same time, e-procedures will also be introduced to Housing Offices, connecting them with the municipal procedures portal to enable a steady incorporation of services into online procedures.

Furthermore, work will also be carried out to expand the services offered by the Offices, to prevent housing emergencies and to attract new members of the public. Staff will also receive training on issues such as gender perspective, detecting situations of vulnerability and alternative housing-access models.

To that end, Housing Offices are being strengthened with insourced management and

The plan is a tool for protecting people, especially the elderly, from residential exclusion

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legal experts; and the legal advice services, made up of new legal experts, have been internalised.

Now that Energy Poverty Help and Information Points are being put up in Housing Offices themselves, they are also becoming points of reference for providing assistance to people in situations of energy poverty and those who wish to optimise their home energy consumption.

The city's ten Energy Advice Points — located in Housing Offices and other municipal facilities — have information officers who provide city residents with guidance for improving their home energy management and efficiency, and optimising their electricity, water and gas services. They also advise residents when they are unable to consume an adequate amount of energy to maintain a decent standard of living in their home or if they have received notice of a default on their payments or their utility supplies have been cut by their supplier.

#### An ageing population.

Other notable initiatives provided for under the plan for preventing residential exclusion are linked to the ageing of the population, a problem that will worsen over the coming years in the city. While 40% of Barcelona's population in 2015 was over the age of 50, by 2032 it will be somewhere between 46.4% and 50%, depending on the source. This increasing number of elderly people will lead to more accessibility and mobility problems, a greater need for renovations, and more difficulties meeting household expenses. Measures provided for under the plan to protect elderly people from having to abandon their homes include detecting household-related problems, improvements and aid for refurbishing housing, provision of services to homes to avoid the need for moving to new accommodation, building new flats with services and expanding home-sharing schemes which enable elderly people to reduce their expenses and enjoy support with care-related tasks.



 $\label{thm:coordination} \mbox{ UCER is a multidisciplinary team working preventively and in coordination with the other municipal services.}$ 



# UCER (Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion)

in providing assistance to people affected by housing-loss processes.

Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion

The Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion (UCER) is made up of socio-residential supervisors, lawyers and experts in building and administrative support; it works preventively in coordination with the other municipal services involved (Housing Offices, Social Service centres and Social Emergencies Centre [CUESB]) to support families affected by eviction processes in the event that they lose their home, and to strengthen the application of legislation to counter the housing emergency and energy poverty (housing discipline).

Working in the unit are 20 people with a range of professional profiles who are tasked with negotiating with housing owners, coordinating the municipal services involved and managing the necessary measures for reducing the effects that losing a home can cause when it finally happens.

The new municipal plan puts the emphasis on maximising efforts to prevent people in a vulnerable situation from losing their usual dwelling

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This unit also manages the fines that are issued against banks and large-scale property owners with empty flats\*.

# 1.2. Assisting people in the process of losing their home

Although it is the Catalan regional government that has most of the jurisdiction, the new municipal plan puts special emphasis on maximising efforts to prevent the loss of housing of people in a vulnerable situation and, where that is not feasible, to halt evictions and ensure decent new accommodation.

To make this possible, a coordinated social and housing intervention is required that brings together the services and support offered by the various agencies, such as the Housing Offices, the territory's Social Services, the Municipal Institute of Social Services and the Barcelona Social Emergencies Centre (CUESB). They all need to be coordinated to find out about the evictions occurring in the city, in order to monitor them and mediate, while supporting the people affected and looking for a solution to the problems they are suffering. Specialist committees have therefore been created in each district to bring about an intensive and coordinated initiative.

The mediation service is key where people have difficulties paying their rent or mortgage. This is why the Housing Office has boosted its team of professionals, so it can deal with situations where people are unable to meet payments before debts arise, and provide flexible one-off or on-going financial aid to respond to a diverse range of situations. The municipal Protection, Intervention and Mediation services have also joined forces for people who have defaulted or are

<sup>\*</sup> For further information, see Section 2.3 Housing Discipline.

having difficulties making their rent or mortgage payments.

#### Rent subsidies

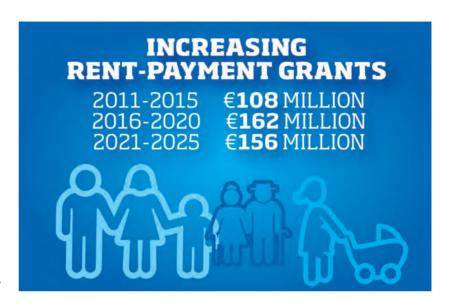
In Barcelona, renting is the housing-tenure system that permits greater access to affordable housing; it has become the most common way for Barcelona's citizens to be able to have a home. Rent subsidies are a basic tool for protecting people against losing their home and they may become a vital tool for facilitating access to housing as well.

Because Barcelona's housing market is considerably different from that of other cities in Catalonia, the plan proposes to simplify citizens' access to information and management by centralising the available subsidies and the design of subsidy lines at the Barcelona Housing Consortium, to create fewer lines or types of subsidy and make the Housing Offices responsible for managing them.

It also establishes an increase of almost 50% in financial resources allocated to subsidies for families for rent payments, incorporating as beneficiaries households that have no income and who were denied subsidies in previous plans because of that situation. So, 318 million euros will be allocated to this over a period of ten years, with an average annual expenditure of 31.8 million euros (108 million euros were allocated during the 2011-2015 period). It is calculated that an average of 15,000 families will be able to receive these types of subsidies annually (some 10,000 families are currently receiving them).

More specifically, and relating to subsidies for rent payments, the plan provides for:

• Establishing specific lines of subsidies for Barcelona, based on transferring the administration of the Catalan government's subsidies to the Barcelona Housing Consortium to start a process for integrating subsidies, as was the case with renovation grants.



- Enabling continuity between emergency grants and ongoing rent subsidies.
- Making part of the subsidies more flexible so they could be adapted to particular situations.
- Facilitating the management so that the Housing Consortium itself can carry out all the procedures irrespective of the Authority that the sources come from.
- Helping with the exchange of information between Social Services and the Housing Offices.
- Moving towards continuous calls for subsidy applications that would meet rent-payment difficulties when they arise.
- Speeding up payments.
- Maintaining a line of support for mortgage payments and the necessary lines of support for rent payments.

The plan highlights the need for designing subsidies that enable access to a rented flat (current subsidies are solely allocated for housing maintenance and not

for providing access) for individuals or households on low incomes or with little guarantee of stable work, even though their situation is very similar to those of other households receiving rent-payment subsidies. The new subsidies for accessing a rented flat would minimise owners' reluctance to let out their properties to such people. Another option is to create a mechanism that enables owners to receive guaranteed rent, as well as a commitment to follow up any disputes or problems that may arise, and other measures that provide an incentive for renting out properties, such as subsidies for improvement work and property tax (IBI).

The formulas stated in the plan where work will be carried out are: launching a guarantee fund or something similar; creating guarantees from the City Council itself; introducing private market insurance policies that would provide guarantees for property owners' income, and linking a line of rent subsidies for housing included in the affordable housing pool (or a figure that is introduced) that allows the Authority to act as a



guarantor through a line of subsidies in the event of any arrears. This mechanism could also trigger a monthly subsidy in the event of non-payment being more than a one-off.





Given that rent is the most usual form of access to housing, the City Council will maintain its commitment to a strong policy of grants in its budget.

# 1.3. Helping people who cannot get access to decent housing

Barcelona City Council is only too well aware that decisive steps need to be taken to ensure the city's housing policies cover people living in housing that is unsuitable or unsafe (such as substandard housing, sublet rooms, overcrowded housing, and squatting and energy poverty), as well as homeless people and people living in settlements, while bearing in mind that each group has very specific problems and that, in many cases, giving them somewhere to live is only the first step in sorting out their situation.

To deal with the various collectives that are unable to access adequate housing, the Plan establishes several initiatives, such as attending to the housing situation in settlements; assisting homeless people, as set out under the 2016-2020 Plan to Combat Homelessness in Barcelona intervening against squatting; acting against

The City Council is aware that providing housing to people who are homeless or live in settlements is the first step towards normalising their situation

substandard housing, understood as renting places that do not meet minimum habitability conditions; acting against overcrowded housing; extending home-sharing schemes and expanding temporary shelters.

Notable among these seven initiatives are intervening against squatting and expanding temporary shelters.

In the first case, the view is that squatting has to be dealt with through housing initiatives — so people who are squatting out of necessity can find a decent housing solution — while mafias have to fought against through security measures. To that end, evictions of tenants without tenancy agreements are included as cases for accessing the Social Emergencies Committee. It also provides for launching a response plan for cases of squatting that enables different types of action to be taken for various situations (squatting that causes a nuisance to the community, squatting as a result of swindles, squatting with the mafia



# **EMERGENCY COMMITTEE**

This has been expanded to include more vulnerable collectives: women victims of domestic violence and people without income.

involved etc.); identifying squatting in the areas where more problems are detected, so coordinated action can be taken to regularise the situations of people at risk of social exclusion and, in some cases, negotiate with the owners of squatted properties to regularise the situation of their residents.

Such regularisation can only occur where the individuals meet stipulated conditions. These include: good integration of the family into the community and the local area or having a favourable social services report.

Expanded shelters are also envisaged. These shelters are temporary accommodation that are allocated to vulnerable groups of people as a preliminary or emergency step before accessing a flat.

The Emergency
Committee is a
mechanism for
responding to
social-emergency
situations that put
city residents at risk
of losing their usual

dwelling

### **Emergency Committee**

An amendment to the Regulation for Access to the Emergency Committee is extending its cover to families with minors living in uninhabitable housing, families living in squats and women victims of gender violence. It also eliminates the minimum-income criterion and raises it to the maxim under Act 24/2015.

The Emergency Committee is a mechanism for responding to social emergency situations that put citizens at risk of losing their usual housing. Losing a home can have a negative impact on the core members of the household, taking people away from their social networks and leaving them with the prospect of a traumatic eviction process.

The Emergency Committee was created by Barcelona City Council and the Catalan regional government, through the Barcelona Housing Consortium, to ensure that housing is a basic right.

For very urgent cases where people face the imminent loss of their home, the Housing Consortium offers social rented accommodation which is allocated through the Barcelona Social Emergencies Committee.

The Committee assesses the cases that are forwarded to it by Housing Offices and awards access to social rented accommodation following assessment of each case. If the demand exceeds the number of places available in the social housing stock, other temporary solutions will be offered.



#### 2. Ensuring the proper use of housing

Housing needs to fulfil the social function that it is created for if its proper use is to be ensured; in other words, it has to meet its original residential function and no other. The plan is a key element for ensuring that all city residents have a decent home to live in, especially in a metropolis like Barcelona where the residential fabric represents 67% of the city's built up area<sup>1</sup>, given that housing is an essential component that gives neighbourhoods their form and identity. To preserve this identity and ensure that everyone has a home in appropriate conditions, the City Council considers it necessary to protect the proper use of habitual housing and prevent dysfunctions in the face of the pressure mounted by the property sector, especially where it attempts to extract greater yields from flats with uses linked to tourism, luxury housing, offices or the replacement of members of the population with others with higher incomes.

To avoid or change this situation, as well as the anomalous uses some flats are being put to, the new plan promotes measures for Barcelona's citizens to be able to continue living in their neighbourhoods and protects families with average and low incomes from being expelled from their local area for financial reasons.

## 2.1. Improved knowledge

We need to know before we can act. It is with this goal in mind that the plan provides for the compilation of a list of empty dwellings, the inspection of the existing public housing stock and the creation of a metropolitan-level housing observatory that would enable, among other things, the establishment of parameters and a rental price index.

1. According to data from the property-tax register, without taking into account the industrial area of the Zona Franca or the facilities on Montjuïc.

The empty-housing list will enable the current situation in the city to be known and empty dwellings can then put on the rental market

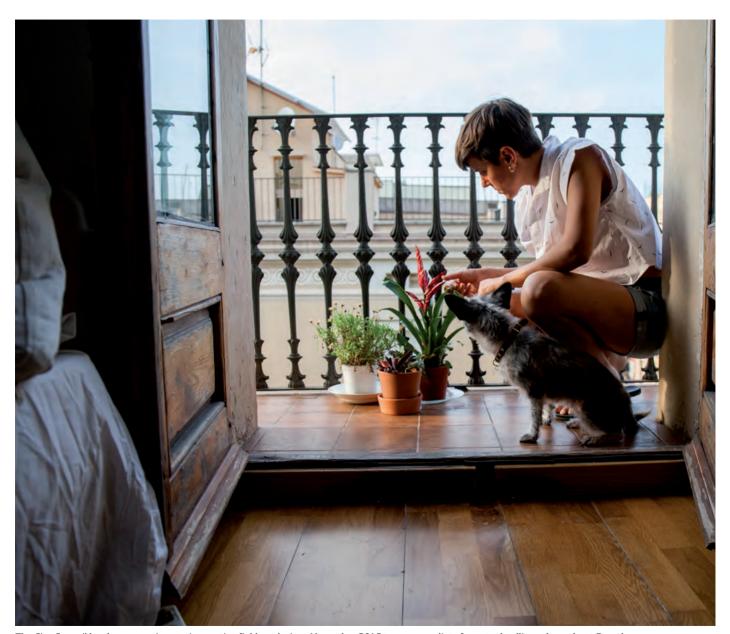
If we are to be able to implement a policy with a greater social return, which gives priority to the most serious situations and to improving neighbourhoods with major problems, we need to have more exhaustive preliminary knowledge so we can adapt the initiatives to the real situation in the city. The new plan sets out initiatives along two lines: on the one hand, collecting and systematising existing information by the Authority, social entities, professional associations etc., and, on the other, generating new information on cases where the existing information cannot be used.

Collecting and systematising information includes data on the state of the housing stock, preparing a map of housing conditions, identifying substandard housing in medium and high rent areas, evaluating and monitoring renovations carried out with public funding and creating a virtual *open data* space on the state of the residential housing stock.



# LIST OF EMPTY FLATS

The municipal government has pledged to prepare a list for the city's 73 neighbourhoods within a 5-year period.



The City Council has been carrying out innovative field work since November 2016 to prepare a list of empty dwellings throughout Barcelona.

#### Empty-housing list

The PDHB also envisages compiling a list to find out about the reality in the city and put empty properties on the rental housing market. The information which it currently has on the number of empty flats in the city comes from two sources. On the one hand, the population and housing census of 2011, which estimates 10.9% or 88,259 units of the city's housing is empty. On the other hand, Barcelona City Council put together a *Study on Barcelona's housing occupancy* in 2015, which offered a fairly different image, with only 3.8% of the city's housing empty.

Faced with a lack of specific data and variable figures, the City Council has been carrying out field work since November 2016 to compile a list of empty houses over the next five years in the city's 73 neighbourhoods. The new list is based on the first part of a statistical analysis, itself based on public authority registers (census and residents) and secondary data (basically, water consumption), while the second part will involve field work. This list will enable mechanisms to be triggered for putting empty housing on the rental housing market and imposing fines.

The list has already been compiled for the city's first six neighbourhoods. The field work was conducted through occupation plans promoted by Barcelona Activa, under which several neighbourhoods in Sant Andreu, Sant Martí, Nou Barris, Ciutat Vella and Gràcia were visited to note and check out on the ground the real situation of each of the flats on a preliminary list and obtain other information.

# Inspecting the public housing stock

To ensure that all public housing has appropriate conditions of use, periodic lists will continue to be promoted for housing managed by the Barcelona Municipal Housing and Renovation Institute (IMHAB, formerly the PMHB), to verify it

The City Council has launched initiatives
– such as the
Housing Observatory
– to have further information on the rental market and be

>>>>>>>>>>

rent prices

able to monitor and

control free-market

is being correctly used by its tenants or users, and to detect and tackle any possible cases of fraud or improper use. It would be advisable to extend these inspection processes being implemented by the IMHAB to the other entities managing the public rental housing stock.

2016 saw 4,708 dwellings visited, representing 70.74% of the entire public housing stock to be visited. Of this percentage, 9% involved registration of incidents involving housing with social risk, death of the owner, residents who could not be found, etc.

#### Regulating the rental market

Despite the fact that rental market regulation falls outside municipal jurisdiction, the City Council has already taken action to ensure it has



# THE HOUSING OBSERVATORY

for managing data on housing and preparing objective studies so as to be able to apply public policies according to real needs.

progressively more information on this market, along with free market rental price monitoring and control measures, which would depend on the creation of a Metropolitan Housing Observatory.

The Metropolitan Housing Observatory is a tool for analysing and studying data on housing to provide authorities with all the information — data, studies and analysis — that enables trends to be detected within the metropolitan sphere and helps to design public housing policies. In fact, the goal behind the Observatory is to become a true aggregate database on housing that avoids unnecessary duplication while assessing the statistical and study work that the various authorities of which it is composed have been conducting.

One of the Observatory's tasks—in collaboration with other players and public authorities — is to prepare a benchmark free-market rental housing price index.

This index is an indicator that measures the price of free-market rental housing according to various housing types — surface area, year of construction, state of conservation, location, services etc., — for a specific area.

These types of indices are used in other countries to monitor the development of private rental prices, given that they enable reliable figures to be obtained and improve knowledge of the rental housing stock. They also serve as a benchmark index for proposing public housing policies.

More specifically, experts from the Metropolitan Housing Observatory have proposed using other indices as a benchmark, including Berlin's Rent Observatory and Paris' equivalent — Observatoire des Loyers de l'Agglomération Parisienne (OLAP) —, which has been assessing benchmark values for 80 of the French capital's districts since August 2015.

The index is extremely useful as it provides a benchmark price, enabling both owners and tenants to know whether what they are receiving or paying is reasonable. There are also plans to promote different The Special Urban-Development
Plan for Tourist
Accommodation
(PEUAT) was
approved in January
2017 and is the city's
first regulation for
all forms of tourist
accommodation

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kinds of subsidies and carry out initiatives to ensure it is to the owner's benefit to keep the price they are receiving for the rent within this benchmark index.

#### 2.2. Maintaining the use of housing

Barcelona has to ensure that the residential use of housing is maintained despite the pressure of other uses, notably tourism. Pressure from this source in recent years, especially the increasing numbers of tourist flats and their concentration in certain areas, have led to a loss of housing and increased pressure on residential rental prices.

With regard to tourist-use flats in Barcelona in 2016, 9,606 were legal and there were an estimated 40% more that were illegal. Such flats offer rental incomes of between 2.35 and 4.07 times higher than the traditional rental market and therefore create strong competition that affects the availability of first homes or main residences in the city. In neighbourhoods such as Dreta de l'Eixample and Vila Olímpica, they represent over 25% of all rental properties and account for more than 14% in the neighbourhoods of Sagrada Família, Poble-sec, Diagonal Mar i el Front Marítim, Antiga Esquerra de l'Eixample, Poblenou and El Parc i la Llacuna del Poblenou.

This dynamic clashes with the city's housing policy because, while considerable effort is put into creating an affordable housing stock and promoting rent subsidies, its effectiveness is being undermined by the flight of flats from the residential market to the tourist sector.

As emphasised above, Barcelona has to ensure that its residents are not forced to leave the neighbourhoods they were born in or grew up in or have chosen to live in. That is why the plan establishes the development of strategies in two directions: assistance for residents under pressure to abandon their homes, which can result in property mobbing, and the establishment of mechanisms for influencing the price of housing.



It is crucial that Barcelona ensures its local residents are not forced to move out of the neighbourhoods they were born or grew up in or have chosen to live in.

Besides detecting and penalising cases of property mobbing, a notable line of action involves amending the regulations so as to prevent the replacement of residential use. We should point out that urban planning regulations are a key tool that the City Council can use to organise and regulate the processes of replacing residential use with other uses.

One example is the Special Urban-Development Plan for Tourist Accommodation (PEUAT), the first city regulation for all forms of tourist accommodation, which was approved in January 2017. PEUT bans new tourist accommodation from replacing housing but allows accommodation to

undergo improvement and renovation work. It is also accompanied by supplementary measures, such as a considerable strengthening of the team dedicated to detecting illegal activity in tourist accommodation, whose number will be increased to 110 in 2018.

#### Awarding social housing

The new plan highlights the impetus for awarding housing to the various collectives applying for it. More specifically, to meet everyone's needs, percentages are being established for awarding housing to the various types of applicants. There is assistance for special cases (financially vulnerable members of the population — households with incomes below 2.5 times the value of the Public Income Indicator with Multiple Effects (IPREM) —, women victims of domestic violence, young people, people with disabilities and elderly people), and general award criteria are being established to ensure some of the social housing available is allocated to these collectives. The plan is to earmark 30% of flats for people under 35 and for women in housing which is neither emergency accommodation nor for special cases.

Where members of the population are not in a special-case vulnerable situation but do have difficulties accessing the free market, flats are being promoted which enable a guaranteed social mix in areas where the promotion of official protected housing is high.

It needs to be stressed here that the number of people registered with the Social Housing Applicants Register (HPO) stands at 53,889, which corresponds to a total of 28,238 households(\*), of which 89.3% have incomes less than 2.5 times the IPREM income index.

<sup>\*</sup> The number of applicants went up to 35,000 in 2017.

Barcelona Social Housing Applicants Register The Barcelona Social Housing Applicants Register (HPO) is a unique register that everyone who wishes to access social or officially protected housing in Barcelona has to register with. It is a temporary register that anyone can apply to if they wish to access officially protecting housing in Barcelona and if they meet the requirements established under the regulations for accessing this type of accommodation.

These requirements are as follows:

- Being of legal age or an emancipated minor.
- Being in need of accommodation.
- Being a registered Barcelona resident.
- Having an income that does not exceed the maximum permitted.
- Not being included in exclusion circumstances.
- Not being declared legally unfit to assume contractual obligations.

This register, which is provided for under the Right to Housing Act and was developed by the Barcelona Housing Consortium, in accordance with the powers granted it by the Municipal Charter, has the following three aims:

- Providing and speeding up the processes for awarding and transferring protected housing.
- Guaranteeing maximum transparency in every process.
- Providing information on the real demand for social housing in Barcelona.

#### 2.3. Housing discipline

Housing discipline is a basic tool for putting an end to anti-social uses of housing, such as substandard, overcrowded and empty dwellings. That is why the Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion (UCER) aims to implement all the measures available to it under the Right to Housing Act of 18/2017 and other current regulations in this area.

The goal behind the Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion is to deploy all the possibilities offered under Act 18/2017 on the Right to Housing

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Barcelona City Council now has an action protocol for situations of substandard housing which is implemented by Housing Offices in coordination with the district. The protocol provides for the following stages: detection, background research, analysis, checking and, finally, action coordination.

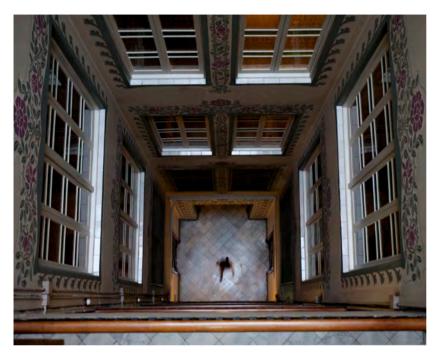
#### Penalising empty dwellings

Initiatives for promoting effective occupancy of housing need to be accompanied by possible monitoring and penalty measures, in accordance with the legislation currently in force, for cases where there is no justification for keeping housing unoccupied and where there is an infringement of the social function of the property under the Catalan Right to Housing Act.



# DISCIPLINE IN HOUSING

The City Council ensures
that the right to housing is
not violated and launches
proceedings to penalise banks
that fail to comply with the
residential function of housing.



The City Council has launched all the mechanisms permitted under the current legislation to put an end to the anomalous use of property.

So, the City Councilhas launched every mechanism permitted under current legislation to put an end to anomalous uses of property and non compliance with its social function, keeping properties empty without justification. To improve the efficiency of these initiatives, files have been systematised and computerised and various procedures introduced, through the Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion, bearing in mind that the initiative to be implemented, once the empty housing has been identified, varies depending on whether the housing has been empty for over or under two years (according to the definition for empty housing established in Articles 3(d) of Act 18/2007 on the Right to Housing).

First, a letter is sent to the banks concerned, explaining the programmes they can access to make their empty properties available on the rental market, under Article 42 of the Right to Housing Act. If the banks still fail to comply, fines and penalties will be issued against those properties that have been empty for over two years.

# Property mobbing

Barcelona has a protocol for dealing with cases of mobbing. This programme offers advice on the rights and duties of the people concerned and responds to the situation through mediation. Housing Offices opened 237 cases of possible situations of property mobbing between 2009 and 2015, although only thirteen of these resulted in sufficient evidence of a crime for submission to prosecutors. In any case, the City Council provides users with legal advice, support when faced with a situation of inequality, proposals for resolving possible disputes through negotiated and mediated channels and, where necessary, formal complaints for identified situations of mobbing or the administrative proceedings that arise from these.

Working groups have also been created for specific cases, coordinated by the district and the legal services for housing. Advisory activities and talks relating to such cases are also being promoted. Examples include the advisory talks to local residents from Carrer de Lancaster, in Ciutat Vella and the workshop on mobbing that was given in Eixample.

At the same time, Housing Offices have been increasing staff numbers and insourcing lawyers so they can attend to the public, not only in relation to issues such as mobbing but also any other housing-related problems.



# 3. Increasing the stock of affordable housing

The need to increase the stock of social and affordable housing in Barcelona compels us to work on all options, such as acquisition and granted right of use, and with several systems of housing tenure such as rental housing, cooperatives under granted right of use or building leases, to name but a few. The aim is to increase the city's capacity to meet the housing shortage at affordable prices.

At the end of 2015, Barcelona was estimated to have 57,000 flats at below-market rental prices, representing 8.38% of the main housing stock. The city had 10,552 social-housing properties, 802 private properties granted to the City Council through various programmes, 488 social-inclusion properties run by various bodies, 10,318 properties that were receiving rent subsidies and 807 flats which banks were letting on social rents to customers unable to keep up with their mortgages. On the other hand, it is also estimated there were about 19,000 officially protected properties on sale which still kept their "official protection" status, and between 10,000 and 20,000 flats with old rentalsystem leases. This stock is clearly insufficient to meet the needs of the city's population<sup>2</sup>.

Under Act 18/2007, on the Right to Housing, and under the Catalan Sector-Specific Territorial Housing Plan (drafting in progress), Barcelona — as a municipality with a strong and accredited demand for affordable housing — requires 15% of the city's main residencies to be allocated to social policies. In accordance with this goal, the city would have to have a minimum housing pool of 100,000 social flats by 2029. The current situation, when it comes to the pool allocated to public policies, does not allow us to predict whether this goal can be reached under the plan.

Barcelona ought to have a minimum housing stock of 100,000 social flats by 2029. Under the current scenario this goal is not expected to be reached

Under the new plan, affordable housing will have to be generated in Barcelona, taking the following determining factors into account:

- The mechanisms for expanding the affordable housing stock (beyond the production of new homes) need to be diversified, so that flats are distributed in as balanced a way as possible through the city's various districts and to avoid aggravating the differences between neighbourhoods in terms of the provision of social and affordable housing.
- New housing has to be able to deal not just with emergencies linked to processes resulting in the loss of homes (through evictions for defaulting on mortgage or rent payments or for squatting) but also people experiencing serious difficulties in keeping their homes (or who have not even been able to access housing and who reside in shared flats or inappropriate spaces or who have no home) and middle-income residents who also have difficulties accessing free-market housing.
- Efforts will focus on forms of tenure that ensure they remain affordable over the coming years. More specifically, the municipal government is focusing its efforts mainly on rental housing.
- The types of promotions to be developed will be evaluated according to beneficiary profiles, number and types of homes, flexibility, materials, origin of the properties and promoting agent, among other things.

The two main action lines that this third area provides for are putting properties on the rental market - which includes pre-emption rights, bringing private housing over to the affordable housing market, use of properties granted by banks and under agreements with the third sector - and promoting and increasing the officially protected housing stock.

# 3.1 Acquiring properties

To supplement initiatives linked to land policies and new housing promotions, the plan provides for the use of several tools to attract and acquire

<sup>2.</sup> Given the population estimates established under the Catalan Sectoral Territorial Housing Plan (PTSHC), as well as in the Barcelona Right to Housing Plan itself, the need rises to 111,000 dwellings.

# PUTTING DWELLINGS ON THE RENTAL HOUSING MARKET GOALS INCLUDED UNDER THE RIGHT TO HOUSING PLAN FOR 2016-2025

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	2011-2015	2016-2020	2021-2025	TOTAL
PURCHASED DWELLINGS ALLOCATED TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING	158	900	500	1.400
PUTTING PRIVATE DWELLINGS ON THE AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING MARKET**	799	2.050*	3.550*	3.550*
TOTAL NUMBER OF DWELLINGS PUT ON THE RENTAL HOUSING MARKET	975	2.950	4.050	4.950

<sup>\*</sup> Includes dwellings already acquired, to reflect the final total of dwellings available in 2025.

housing from the private market. These tools will enable affordable housing to become available in a shorter period than would have been possible from the construction of completely new housing, while generating affordable housing in the city's district where there is currently little or where officially protected housing promotions can be very limited, according to the housing potential provided for in the planning.

So, purchasing flats in the private market will enable two basic goals to be achieved: increasing the affordable rental housing stock in the short and medium term and helping with the distribution of these properties through the city, given that the reserves for building protected flats are highly concentrated in districts where the affordable rented housing pool is already the largest in the city.

# Pre-emption rights to properties

The intense pressure that has been building up in certain areas in the city to change the use of housing (to other, more profitable uses, such as for tourists and services) and to attract higher-income members of the population has made it necessary for us to establish mechanisms to prevent the expulsion of tenants. Act 18/2007 on the Right to Housing incorporates pre-emption rights to housing as one of the tools that can be used in areas where such pressure is being applied (Article 15.1). It offers mechanisms for intervening in areas that are run-down or affected by property speculation or mobbing which needs to be controlled. It can also enable the affordable rental housing pool to expand in areas where few such properties are available and where affordable housing is not expected to be created through planning.

<sup>\*\*</sup>Includes agreements with social entities, resident-use agreement programmes with banks, the rental housing pool, etc.

Demarcating pre-emption areas involves geographical areas where onerous transfers are subject to pre-emption rights, according to which the City Council can opt to keep the land or properties being sold and purchased by private parties, for the price agreed to, either before (first refusal) or after (setting aside) the execution of the purchase deed. The property owners are under a legal obligation to notify the City Council of transactions that occur in this area.

To apply these tools the City Council will require a considerable financial and management capacity for dealing with possible acquisitions and for analysing and assessing the various notices of properties that are alienated in the area. This initiative will be subject to the forecasts of the annual budgetary period for investments.

# 3.2. Incorporating private housing into the rental housing pool

Planned initiatives linked to incorporating private housing into the affordable rental market include attracting privately owned flats for allocation to affordable leases, either through the rental housing pool or by individuals granting the City Council use of their properties, and their agreements; generating affordable housing through renovations and agreements with banks granting the use of their flats.

A series of adjustments are expected to be evaluated for improving the running and impact of the current acquisition programmes:

- Linking renovation grants to boost flat acquisition.
- Unifying and strengthening the flat acquisition programmes.
- Providing for links to rent subsidies to enable the acquisition systems to become a mechanism that enables people without the means to pay market-rate prices to gain access to a rented flat.
- Establishing a mechanism that will allow the City Council to act as a guarantor through a line of financial aid that is paid to owners in the

"The key is in your hand" is a municipal programme for persuading small-property owners to let out their flats, under full guarantees, through the Housing Pool

event of a default in rent payments or to be able to activate a monthly subsidy, where the tenant's inability to pay is not a one-off event.

- Establishing exceptions to the maximum price property owners can receive in areas where rental prices are much higher than that figure and it is regarded as necessary for obtaining flats.
- Launching a publicity campaign on the City Council's aim to draw private properties over to the rental-housing market.

# Affordable rental housing pool

The Barcelona Rental Housing Pool offers mediation services and guarantees between residential property owners and potential tenants. So flat owners who hand their properties over to the Housing Pool enjoy the security of knowing that the contract's terms and conditions will be complied with. At the same time, people looking for a home can access a pool of affordable housing.

There are presently several programmes in the city for acquiring private housing from small-property owners. The main one is conveyed through the Affordable Rental Housing Property Pool under the "Key is in your hands" campaign.

To be more specific, thanks to the programme, property owners who have empty flats and wish to let them out through the Rental Housing Pool will receive several guarantees and grants, such as rent coverage guaranteed by the City Council; an incentive of 1,500 euros for incorporating an empty flat into the Rental Housing Pool and where there are tenants who do not pay, the equivalent of up to 6,000 euros' accumulated arrears; subsidies of up to 15,000 euros for renovating the property; multi-risk home insurance coverage; a free legal-advice service and access to technical advice for processing habitability or energy-efficiency certificates, as well as a mediation service between the parties and reductions of up to 50% on propertytax payments (not discounted from tax payments but later credited, on request).

In addition, the programme offers a legaldefence insurance policy and support from the Housing Pool's management team; legal and technical advice for the property's owner; social monitoring and mediation service at the request of the parties or a court-appointed lawyer and help and advice with Energy Efficiency Certificate (CEE) and Habitability Certificate (CH) procedures are included (excluding tariffs), conditional on signing the rental contract.

# 3.3. Agreement with the third sector for handing over dwellings

The City Council has renewed its agreement with the Habitat3 Foundation within the framework of the new plan, to continue with the programme for individuals to hand over dwellings so they can be allocated to social rental housing. The renewal of the collaboration agreements, signed with the Hàbitat3 Foundation<sup>3</sup> and promoted by the Catalan Third-Sector Entities Board, will enable the Programme for handing over housing to be implemented over the next few years. This project, which is enshrined in the Citizen Agreement for an Inclusive Barcelona, provides for drawing private properties over to Barcelona City Council's Social Rental Housing Pool.

The City Council's Programme for handing over housing provides for the Hàbitat3 Foundation's management of the empty flats that are handed over.

This programme guarantees owners 36 months' coverage of their rent payments for their flats and at prices very similar to the market rate. It also guarantees that properties will return to their owners in the same conditions they were in when they were handed over to the Housing Pool. On the other hand, management costs not assumed by the Authority

The Programme for handing over dwellings on the part of the City Council establishes that the Habitat3 Foundation should manage the empty flats handed over by individuals for allocation to social rental housing

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the Social Emergencies Committee. 3.4. Agreements with banks

Banks have a large number of empty flats at their disposal which have to help to meet the need for affordable housing in the city. Barcelona City Council has been using agreements with banks since 2013 to ensure they make their empty properties available to the Affordable Rental Housing Market. Such housing is allocated to households in situations of residential exclusion and awarded by the City Council or one of its collaborating social entities.

will not affect the property; nor will decisions on

Some of the housing drawn over to the Rental

Housing Pool under this programme is aimed at

housing-related incidents be passed on.

Under the agreements reached so far, banks have granted the use of their dwellings to the City Council for an eight-year period. The City Council, for its part, has offered monthly consideration for each of the properties, which varies too depending on whether the housing is empty or occupied, for example, by former mortgage holders who are in a pre-eviction or pre-squatter situation.

Where housing is squatted by vulnerable people, the City Council will see to regularising their situation, to prevent them from losing their housing, provided that the report from the social services is favourable and the people concerned are positively integrated into the community. The Council will also be responsible for the management of the properties that have to be up to date with their residents' association payments. It will check that the properties satisfy the appropriate conditions for immediate use and, where they do not, arrange for the necessary interventions whose costs will be borne by the banks.

The plan highlights the need to extend these agreements with banks that have empty residential properties available in Barcelona. In addition, the legal possibilities that are granted under Directive

<sup>3.</sup> Hàbitat is a non-profit entity whose goal is to ensure disadvantaged people have the right to access to decent housing, and thereby free them from residential exclusion, and to enable them to have a social-support plan that facilitates their social inclusion. This work is being carried out in collaboration with other entities and with the public authorities.



Delivering the keys to dwellings with special services to elderly people in the Glòries vicinity.

2014/24/EU [on public procurement] will be explored for the purposes of awarding part of the property renovation work procured by the Council to entities specialising in housing renovation through vulnerable people on work placements.

# 3.5. Promoting officially protected housing

Putting private housing on the rental market and promoting new housing are two basic lines of action for increasing the city's public housing stock, which the plan aims to expand using all the tools at its disposal, such as public promotions and collaboration with social and cooperative entities. More specifically, an average of 1,400 dwellings are expected to be built annually with the various operators, during the lifetime of the plan.

It is clear that before we can build new social housing we need to have the necessary land at our disposal and take account of the terms and conditions required for such work. And we must not forget that there has to be a balanced distribution of such housing throughout the city. With that aim in

New housing will be built on the basis of direct promotions by the City Council through the Municipal Institute for Housing and Renovation

mind, we need to: press ahead with a series of urban development projects (already planned but not yet implemented) and their management; increase the land reserves for officially protected housing in the operations that are made on consolidated urban land, especially in districts with shortages; and promote strategies that generate new protected housing by completing and optimising the existing urban fabric.

New housing construction will be promoted directly by the City Council, through its Municipal Housing and Renovation Institute, and in collaboration with the city's social organisations and cooperatives, to stimulate the growth of a social housing market . Here the Authority will make the land available, while retaining ownership, as it will always remain public, so these operators can build on it and even manage the new affordable housing.

The new Municipal Institute for Housing will step up its annual construction rate considerably, from the 968 dwellings built in the last five-year period to the planned 8,343 for the next ten years.

As for housing-tenure systems, the City Council is firmly committed to affordable rental dwellings, and this will be the most widely used system in the promotions developed by the Municipal Institute for Housing (80% of the total). Twenty per cent of the city's official protected housing will also come under a building-lease system, so the land will in any case remain under municipal ownership. Part of this is expected to be available for purchase by those affected by the urban planning project who so request, as stated under the regulations.

The new Barcelona Municipal Institute for Housing will be the main agency for the production of affordable housing, with 8,854 dwellings. Of these, 44% will be protected rental housing (3,814 dwellings), 27% housing with special services (2,365 dwellings) and 20% building-leasehold housing (1,760 dwellings) whereas 10% will be allocated to people affected by the urban planning



An annual average of 1,400 dwellings are expected to be built among the various operators during the lifetime of the plan.

project (915 dwellings). To achieve that target, the IMHAB will have to steadily increase its production capacity. A total of3,550 flats will be developed in the first five-year period (2016-2020) and an annual production of 1,000 dwellings for the second.

The IMHAB's production will be supplemented by that of other agents, which will also gradually step up production during the course of the Plan.

- Assigned-for-use housing cooperatives:: 500 dwellings, 155 in the first five years and 380 in the second:
- Social promoters, that will promote buildinglease properties in particular: 700 flats in the first five years and 1,150 in the second.
- Metropolitan operator for affordable housing: 750 flats within the first five-year period (expected to be built in 2018) and 1,500 in the second five-year period.

As for private housing, the target is to bring some 200 flats a year into the rental housing market. The number of rental subsidies granted is also expected to rise from 10,000 and stabilise at around 13,000 a year.

The IMHAB is expected to promote the building of 3,550 flats over the first four-year period (2016-2020)

 The average annual amount awarded per subsidy is also expected to rise from 52,111 (during the period from 2008 to 2016) to 52,400 per year. This increase will represent an accumulative expenditure of 5318 million over the 10 years of the Plan.

Co-housing: assigned-for-use housing co-operatives. Barcelona currently has a window of opportunity that makes it both possible and necessary to create a social housing market with an important role in creating affordable housing and searching for new residential models which, above all, can foster the concept of housing as an asset to be used. What is more, the big shortage of affordable housing in the city means there is a need to establish links with other players interested in making housing a basic right.

There is a civil society organised through social entities (cooperatives, foundations, non-profit organisations, etc.,) that aims to continue playing a part in generating and managing social housing through property renting that ensures people on low incomes have access to it. And, at the same time, there are also city residents who are determined to create their own housing projects, based on new models of housing tenure and new ways of living together - such as the assignedfor-use cooperative housing model and urban masoverias — who are ready to talk to and reach agreements with the City Council to bring about these collective and non-speculative proposals for gaining access to housing, based on mutual support and building a community.

It is this line of action that provides the framework for co-housing cooperatives, according to the assigned-for-use cooperative model.

Legally speaking, assigned-for-use housing cooperatives award their members (under a contract granting long-term or indefinite use for an established price) a real right to use the dwelling but retain its collective ownership. The plan establishes that the municipal impetus will be carried out according to certain features:

- Public land will be made available to the cooperative on a leasehold basis for 75 years.
- It will be established on land allocated for officially protected housing, so the status of cooperative member-user will be restricted to households with low or average earnings.
- A more collective residential model will be developed, with spaces for communal use.
- Building and renovation will require high energy rating, passive strategies and the most sustainable materials possible.
- Territorial integration will be promoted.

To facilitate the introduction of these cooperatives, different measures will be adopted to promote the model, to help new projects get off the ground, help ensure the economic viability of the promotions and to improve accessibility.

Other alternative methods are provided for such as *urban masoverias*, where an owner hands over the use of their dwelling for a certain period, in exchange for which its users agree to do certain renovation and improvement work.

It will be mandatory for the people who have been awarded this form of housing tenure to be registered with the Housing Applicants Register, in other words, they will have to meet certain conditions and economic and social criteria.

# Metropolitan operator for affordable rent

These models, which should help to bring about a paradigm shift in the field of housing in Barcelona, will be supplemented by the creation of a mixed ownership company, with public and private equity, to increase the City Council's current capacity for investing in and producing protected rental housing.

So, to increase the technical and financial capacity required to realise the potential affordable

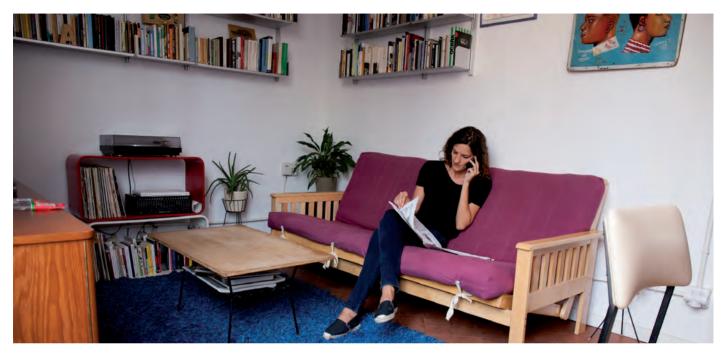
Assigned-foruse housing cooperatives award their members a real right of use of housing, although it remains under collective ownership

housing at the disposal of the City Council, we are considering the need to incorporate new players that can promote officially protected rental housing in the city. It is with this goal in mind that plans have been made to set up a company using public and private capital to guarantee public leadership and promote and manage affordable rented housing in Barcelona. This is a tool that is already being successfully used in European cities such as Amsterdam, Vienna, Paris, Stockholm and Berlin, and which is based on a strong housing service and a powerful public and private collaboration. All these cities emphasise that they would not have the stock of public housing they have were it not for their *housing association*.

In Barcelona's case, the company's shares are owned partly by the City Council and Barcelona Metropolitan Area, as public entities, and partly by a successful tenderer company or group of companies.

To ensure public leadership of the project, the municipal land that is made available will remain in public ownership, as will the flats, and allocations will be awarded by the City Council through the Housing Applicants Register. This is a model that is aimed at bringing incentives to nonspeculative social investments and whose goals include facilitating community participation of local residents.

The new housing developments will have to take account of the specific needs of the new household models, the provision of collective spaces and specific attention to the sustainability of the building. In addition, the operator will have a limited profit that is set at 4%.



The new Right to Housing Plan is firmly committed to promoting new ways of gaining access to housing, from co-housing to dwellings promoted by entities and foundations.

# Other methods for accessing housing

Besides the ones cited above, Barcelona will also be promoting other formulas, as well as the building-leasehold housing cooperatives or cooperatives managed by foundations and non-profit entities. The goal is to mobilise to the full all the possibilities for extending the rental housing stock. And that is because the various formulas meet the same goal:

- To guarantee access to decent and affordable housing.
- To keep the land publicly owned.
- To prevent housing speculation.

Under the model that will be implemented in building-leasehold housing cooperatives, what is sold is the building lease for a period of 75 years, which can be extended to 90 years. Once that period has ended, whatever has been built on the land will become municipal property, just as the land had been. At the same time, a percentage of what the cooperative builds will become municipal for public rent.

As for the new model for foundations or non-profit entities, the City Council will ensure the project's feasibility, as it allows the incorporation of subsidy and grant proposals on the part of the authority to develop its projects and avoid deficits in the implementation of its projects. At the same time, rental housing must offer prices that are limited, equal to or below those that the Act establishes as protected, in other words, up to a maximum of 7.28 euros/square metre.

In all cases, the successful applicants will have to meet the established criteria, that is, the people who are awarded flats will have to be registered with the Register of Applicants for Officially Protected Housing.

# 4. Maintaining, renovating and improving the current housing stock

Having a stock of residential housing in a good state of repair is essential for ensuring the quality of life of the city's residents. The renovation policy in Barcelona has to become a redistributive policy that intervenes proactively to guarantee habitability conditions, minimum services and better public health. At the same time, we need to move towards a policy of providing incentives for preventive maintenance and, therefore, a culture of housing maintenance and ongoing improvement, with the aim of gradually adapting city housing to the needs of accessibility and energy efficiency, while ensuring the quality and safety of our architectural heritage.

Priority will be given to renovating housing and areas with more problems, so that renovation has a greater effect where it is most needed, such as in run-down areas where safety and habitability cannot be guaranteed, or areas where residents are unable to take responsibility for maintaining and improving their homes. Housing discipline is also expected to be used where owners fail to maintain their properties in a good state of repair, a situation that can end up preventing tenants from living in habitable conditions.

If we are to boost renovation work, we will need to provide more grants for home-interior improvements and cohesion and better funding of initiatives, so people with fewer resources can take on such work, as well as identify the urban areas that require preferential treatment, by defining conservation and renovation areas, and signing agreements for improving flats and buildings.

The plan prioritises renovations of dwellings and areas where there are more difficulties, and provides for the use of housing discipline where owners fail to maintain their properties in a good state of repair. It also incorporates measures against gentrification

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energy transition begins which will reduce the risk of energy poverty and improve the city residents' health. To that end, there will be a bigger role for the Housing Offices as a point of information and advice on policies promoting decent housing and improved energy efficiency and savings.

To improve the current stock, the Plan establishes the need to implement various lines of action:

• Extending the housing-maintenance culture

• Extending the housing-maintenance culture to protect against the deterioration of housing stock and establishing an active renovation policy based on the right to housing, where priority is given to identifying the most rundown areas, whose improvements the Authority will promote.

We need to continue doing our utmost to improve

accessibility, not just of buildings —basically

by installing lifts — but also of dwellings, as the

- Providing grants and funding systems for their improvement and renovation, through which the total cost of the work (100%) will be funded where property owners do not have the capacity to go ahead with it.
- Where property owners fail to take on their conservation duties, they will be subject to a disciplinary process.
- Seeking funding mechanisms so that residents with more resources can bring about improvements to housing stock without having to use public funds.
- Changing the scale of interventions by planning initiatives not just at housing-unit level but also at the level of groups of buildings, blocks or superblocks.

Renovation also needs to provide for measures for protection against gentrification. Grants for renovation have to prioritise small-property owners with few financial resources and to activate mechanisms so that improvements made with public funds cannot lead to disproportionate rises in rental prices that then force out local residents.

On the other hand, we need to promote the role of renovation as an economic driver that enables the creation of decent jobs and growth of the local economy. The plan states that renovation may offer a possibility for creating decent jobs and provide job opportunities for young people, the long-term unemployed and elderly people with problems getting into the job market, whether through existing companies, entrepreneurial impetuses through Barcelona Activa — with plans for employment in the area of renovation — the creation of cooperatives or the promotion of public procurement. If we bear in mind that ten new jobs are created for every million euros that are invested in completely new work (and twenty jobs in the case of renovation), through the investments scheduled to be made by the Council under the new Housing Plan, 29,000 jobs are expected to be created over the coming ten years.

# Better knowledge of the state of the residential housing stock

If we are to improve the housing stock we will need to have a better knowledge of its state. A specific analysis of the housing stock will take a deeper look at particular areas such as Ciutat Vella, where the percentages of housing in a poor or bad state of repair are much higher than the city's average; the Sant Martí housing estates which have specific problems over the public interventions carried out; and high-income areas such as the Eixample district, Les Corts and Sarrià-Sant Gervasi, where substandard housing is less visible.

Initiatives relating to the need to improve knowledge on the state of housing include systematising information on the state of the housing stock, mapping the conditions of the housing, identifying substandard housing in average- and high-rental areas, assessing and monitoring renovation work carried out through

public funding and creating an *open data* virtual space on the state of the residential housing stock.

The city is implementing a project through its Barcelona Observatory for Architectural Renovation (OBRA) to gather all the information that is generated that will provide knowledge on the state of the current residential housing block; it will be crucial for such information to be structured and organised so it can be used. The first stage of the project includes technical inspections of buildings, habitability certificates, building renovation and redevelopment work, grants for renovations, lift installations and public building and neighbourhood improvement projects.

# 4.1. Renovation support

The Right to Housing Plan distributes the budget for renovation into grants, interventions linked to renovation agreements and direct intervention by the Authority in improving dwelling interiors. The budget will be kept stable at 5000000 million a year by Barcelona City Council and 500000 million and entire Plan). More specifically, a total of 500000 million euros will be allocated to it, in other words, an average of 50000 million euros a year, practically double the budget of previous plans.

# RENOVATION GRANTS 2013 3.316 7.246.775,38 € 2014 1.607 3.708.423,10 € 2015 8.408 23.978.791,25 € 2016 12.337 25.431.083,56 €

This budget will gradually be transferred from renovation grants, which represented 90% of investment in 2016, to agreements and intervention in dwelling interiors. So, while both renovation agreements and interior-building grants for dwellings represented 5% of last year's total public investment, agreements and grants will represent 35% and 30% of such investment respectively in 2025. So, investments in renovation grants will fall from 90% to 35% over ten years. That way, the initiative will move from being "passive", linked to renovation grants, to proactive, linked to agreements and interior-dwelling grants, and aimed at households with fewer resources.

These changes will mean a reduction in the number of flats and buildings with improvements linked to public investment, given that the investment for flats will be very different due to the type of intervention and the percentage contributed by the public authorities. So, the average investment is estimated to be  $\pm 0.000$  per flat for interior interventions,  $\pm 0.000$  per flat for agreements and  $\pm 0.000$  per flat for grants. Investments in grants for improving accessibility will be kept stable at 30% of total investment.

# Agreements with communities

Renovation policies will steadily centre on the renovation agreements that are established between the Authority and the community or communities involved. These agreements enable the Council to work directly with communities that require greater attention in terms of renovation and to attend to their needs from a cross-cutting strategy. The areas where it is appropriate to apply these agreements will be identified through a study, already conducted, which analyses the population's main economic and social data, together with the state of the housing. That way interventions can be adapted to the economic capacity of a community, improvements dealt





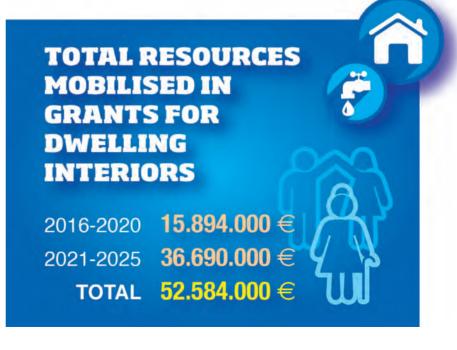
with gradually and properties put on the rental market, among other things.

This involves a change: it is not the residents who apply for such a grant but rather the Authority, which works with communities, that puts forward a series of initiatives and subsidies to that end. This is a proactive and comprehensive initiative in the architectural and social spheres that is meant to enable the improvement of communities with specific problems to be tackled.

# Grants for promoting renovations for dwelling interiors

The city's renovation policy has been centred on renovation grants awarded by various authorities since 1985. Under the slogan "Barcelona, posa't guapa", renovation grants have basically been centred on improving the city's urban landscape, made up of public spaces as well as the exterior elements of buildings, housing façades and a background of citizen activity. This goal to improve the urban landscape led to the implicit standardisation of grants and consequently lack of discrimination over the income of residents or the dwellings' needs for intervention. Considerable attention has been placed on what is built, which has focused on the buildings' common elements, in particular facades, accessibility and structural safety; however, it has dealt, to a lesser extent, with the needs of people living in the housing and the difficulties of intervention arising from their social and economic situation. It is this point of departure, together with interventions in public spaces, that has enabled considerable improvements to the state of the housing stock. Whilst the 1991 census detected 21.9% of the housing stock in a ruinous, poor or defective condition, the figure for the 2011 census had dropped to 10%, though the main problems relating to the state of dwellings are still concentrated in certain parts of Barcelona with low-income residents.





If we are to respond to this situation, we will need to develop new action mechanisms, given that defective maintenance of dwelling interiors causes a twofold problem. First, it has negative effects on the health of residents, as highlighted by the report drawn up by the Barcelona Public Health Agency on health in the city's various neighbourhoods. Second, it leads to the deterioration of the building, a situation that causes a loss of quality to public spaces and therefore a loss of quality of life to the community.

Of course, renovations of existing housing interiors will need to facilitate the right to decent housing. To that end dwellings must be safe, meet habitability conditions, be accessible, have comfortable heating levels and acoustic insulation and have suitable facilities free of pollutants. On the other hand, we need to embark on the path to an energy transition that enables a reduction in water and energy consumption and the introduction of renewable energies.

The new plan authorises new lines of subsidies for small property owners who need support for renovating the interior of their dwelling, grants that can cover as much as 100% of the costs of the improvement work.

Embarking on the energy transition and preventing energy poverty

City residents need to cut down on their energy consumption if we are to reduce our energy bills and costs to the environment. Barcelona has made several international pledges in the fight against climate change, notable among which are the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate & Energy, which encompasses consumption mitigation, climate-change adaptation and guaranteed energy access.

The city's dwellings have a large potential for energy saving and a long way to go in introducing renewable energies. Improvements to the residential The new plan
authorises new
lines of subsidies
for small-property
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costs of the work

housing stock will also enable a reduction in the residents' energy-poverty risks and an improvement in their health, given that the poor state of repair of dwellings, linked to poverty, creates health problems and reduces life expectancy.

To that end, the role of the Housing Offices will be strengthened as information and advice points for city residents on the policies that promote decent housing and improved efficiency and energy saving, and will give more information on the requirements for energy improvements linked to renovation grants and for results in the interventions that receive public funding. Finally, the use of local-origin materials made from waste products will be promoted in renovation work\*.

# Improving accessibility

Note that accessibility has improved considerably over the last few years, although half of the city's dwellings still fail to meet accessibility conditions: 27.1% of the city's housing stock had no lifts in 2011 . The main difficulties for installing lifts are threefold: technical impossibility; lack of financial resources and management difficulties within the property's residential community.

Renovations must enable the installation of lifts and ensure accessibility, both to buildings and inside the dwellings. On the other hand, physical improvements must not be blocked because communities fail to reach agreements on them, so our current mediation mechanisms need to be strengthened.

As for physical initiatives, grants will be maintained for installing lifts and boosted for cohesion, so that financial difficulties are not the main problem. We will also need to bring about the necessary planning adaptations, through public initiatives, to enable the installation of external lifts.

<sup>\*</sup>You will find extensive information on the Energy Poverty Help and Information Points in Chapter 1, inside Housing Offices.

Where lifts cannot be installed, we will have to establish programmes to seek solutions to mutual needs, for example, with the Housing Offices as active-mediation meeting points between city residents.

# 4.2. Neighbourhood Plan

The considerable effort made by Barcelona to improve the housing stock through renovation grants has not had the same effects throughout the city. Renovation watchdogs have promoted renovation among communities with financial capacity or which already had a renovation initiative; the more dilapidated and socially vulnerable areas, where there is a need for proactivity for carrying out improvements, have remained at the margins. Added to this is the difficulty of unincorporated communities' having to deal with building improvements.

Proactive action is therefore necessary in such areas, action that facilitates improved safety, habitability, accessibility and energy-efficiency conditions of the buildings and dwellings. The Neighbourhood Plan has been in operation for that very purpose since January 2016, seeking to secure active involvement from the community to improve their dwellings and support in this process. This plan is being created with a ten-year horizon, during which strategic areas and an application will be defined through specific four-year plans. The goal behind the Neighbourhood Plan is to take action to tackle the inequality of some areas of the city, in a cross-sectional and comprehensive way, through measures for promoting both economic reflation and social cohesion in these territories.

The Neighbourhood Plan has four main goals:

- To revive and boost economic activity in the neighbourhoods.
- To address urban-planning deficits, poor quality of housing and lack of facilities, and to increase accessibility and centrality.



- To establish initiatives for attending to and improving the population's living conditions.
- To empower residents so they organise themselves and establish goals and initiatives for improving community life in the neighbourhood.

These initiatives will require work on three fronts: detecting problems; establishing a technical support system that facilitates the detection and definition of initiatives and the performance of interventions through mechanisms that promote employment of people in the areas affected and activating their commercial and service networks.

The specific work area corresponds to what has been called the "Besòs Area", "Mountain Area", "Marine Area" and "Ciutat Vella Area". The Besòs Area includes the districts of Sant Martí, Sant Andreu and Nou Barris. The Mountain Area includes the districts of Horta-Guinardó and Sarrià-Sant Gervasi. The Marine Area is wholly located in Sants-Montjuïc. Initiatives will be carried out in the neighbourhoods where there

The Neighbourhood Plan seeks active involvement from the community to improve its members' dwellings and support them throughout the process

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is a high concentration of socially vulnerable situations, arising from urban-planning deficits, low-quality housing, shortages of facilities or lack of economic activity, which is why comprehensive and cross-cutting policies will have to be implemented.

As for housing, initiatives are expected to be implemented along the following lines:

- Mediation and support programmes for positive communal life and running local residents' communities. A programme is planned that will be similar to "Escales: per una convivència saludable", which is already being implemented in Clot-Camp de l'Arpa. Its goal is to increase community-contact spaces that help to build links between the neighbourhood's residents, as well as offer support and resources for promoting community mental health, especially in dwellings and adjacent flats in residential blocks where communal life is put to the test.
- Support programmes for people who have been rehoused.
- Technical-recourse boosting programmes at Housing Offices to enable various tasks to be carried out: technical building inspections, rehousing projects, obtaining grants and signing agreements with owners / owner communities for renovations, and facilitating procedures, among other things. Purchasing / obtaining empty dwellings. Intervening in "vulnerable buildings", with a particular focus on habitability, enhancing communal spaces, harnessing renewable energies: facilities, bathrooms and kitchens, carpentry and double glazing. As for lifts, the city's general grants will be supplemented, where necessary. Agreements with job-placement companies and Barcelona Activa to boost local employment.

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Barcelona City
Council has made a
commitment to its
residents to create
a powerful public
housing service. This
ambitious plan is a
good tool to that end

# **Final note**

To conclude, then, we should point out that the new Right to Housing Plan for 2016-2015 is aimed at reversing the historical foot-dragging in housing policy that the city has suffered and to make having a home a right in Barcelona. That is why the plan has been conceived as a longterm tool that will affect four strategic areas, all of which are key in the short-, medium- and long-term: preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion at a time when there has been an increase in housing evictions due to the crisis and large numbers of mortgages taken out, as well as the sharp rise in housing prices, especially in rent; guaranteeing the proper use of housing, especially at a time like the present, when there is a high demand for tourist flats and an increase in rent prices; expanding the affordable housing stock to meet the needs of city residents experiencing hardship, and maintaining, renovating and improving the current housing stock, with a particular focus on the most run-down areas and, in particular, on the households with the lowest incomes, to ensure the habitability of the dwellings themselves, given that this will all help to increase the quality of life and health of Barcelona residents and create jobs.

The City Council has made a pledge to its citizens to create a powerful public-housing services and a good tool for making that possible is this ambitious plan. But this will require involvement from the various authorities — especially if legislative and structural changes are to be carried out —, institutions and players linked to the sector for promoting and defending the right to housing.



# CHAPTER



# The Plan's drafting process A starting point

ommissioned by Barcelona City Council's Area for Housing, the Lacol and Celobert cooperatives began coordinating and drafting the Barcelona Right to Housing Plan in November 2015.

This plan was developed at a particularly unique time, marked on the one hand by a long housing-crisis period that started in 2007 when the property-market bubble burst, leaving Barcelona with thousands of housing evictions and people in vulnerable situations, going through difficulties meeting their most essential basic needs, including access and maintenance of a decent and suitable home.

On the other hand, it took place in a city which, even though it had been making progress in its implementation of housing policies since 2004, had a long way to go to reach the level of such benchmark European cities as Amsterdam, Vienna, Paris and Berlin, especially in the availability of a significant public housing stock allocated to social policies.

We therefore find ourselves in a context that raises an urgent need for attending to, reversing and preventing housing emergencies in the city, though also working with a longer-term view that allows policies and mechanisms to be designed for advancing towards a city with more and better tools for guaranteeing the right to housing and to





**Núria Colomé** Architect at the Celobert Cooperative

# **Arnau Andrés**Architect at the Lacol Cooperative

the city. A decision was then made to draft a tenyear plan that would enable the incorporation of goals with this double time frame and provide the city with a powerful public housing service.

We highlight two starting-point decisions below that determine the plan's drafting process and frame its development.

- 1. In the first place, the aim is for it to be a plan developed with considerable collaboration from city residents. Defining the participatory mechanisms will therefore be one of the aspects that the work process's initial discussions and debates will focus on.
- 2. In the second place, in contrast to the previous plans, it opts to bring housing-policy planning to the district level. A level closer to neighbourhoods and citizens, where diagnoses can be established and initiatives considered that are more adapted to the specific needs of the various territories.

For all that, the Plan includes four sections:

# I. Analysis and diagnosis

**II. Right to Housing Plan-** Challenges, strategic lines, action lines, initiatives and economic and financial study.

III. The situation in the districts. Analysis and diagnosis on the district level, including the



Can Travi Housing with Services for Elderly People, Barcelona.

initiatives described in Part II which have to be boosted in the district sphere in accordance with the specific needs of each territory.

**IV. Collectives.** Analysis and diagnosis of the situation of especially vulnerable collectives, including the initiatives described in Part II that have to be boosted to meet the specific needs of each collective. These collectives are: young people; immigrants; female single-parent households; elderly people and people with a disability.

# Step by step

Work began on preparing an analysis and diagnosis for the city's ten districts between November 2015 and January 2016. A meeting was held with each of the district teams throughout January 2016, taking part in which were the heads of the district council, the manager's office, social services, technical services, the Housing Office and the district's housing council. These meetings enabled the analysis and diagnosis to be rounded off with knowledge from the territory itself and the first proposals to be collected on the housing policies that would have to be developed. The territorial analysis enabled the statistical data from the analysis to be built up and completed at a city level.

At the same time, starting from the initial analysis and diagnosis, it considers the system that the housing initiatives which feature in the plan are expected to be structured on. These initiatives will be classed under four strategic lines: a) preventing and attending to housing emergencies; b) ensuring the proper use of housing; c) expanding the affordable rental housing stock and d) maintaining, renovating and improving the current housing stock, along several lines of action.

The participatory process was held between the months of February and March. This was Two participatory sessions per district were held in February and March XX, in two different neighbourhoods, as a means of gaining knowledge of different realities and proposals

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integrated into the same process planned for drafting the current Municipal Plan and the district action plans. Two participatory sessions were held per district, in two separate neighbourhoods, as a means of gaining knowledge of different realities and proposals. A joint diagnosis was prepared during these sessions to detect needs and challenges in relation to housing, and priority was given to launching initiatives in the various neighbourhoods according to a series of initial proposals presented by the municipal housing team for the Municipal Action Plan. The participatory process concluded on 2 April, at a city-wide meeting that took place in Les Cotxeres de Sants, where the results of the twenty participatory sessions held in the districts were shared and a discussion was held with local residents and the heads of the municipal team on strategies and proposals for the city.

Besides these sessions, a participatory session open to all municipal experts was also held as were specific meetings with individuals from several areas of the City Council and representatives of specially vulnerable collectives who, as stated above, would have their own specific section in the Plan.

The entire Right to Housing Plan was completed between April and July 2016. This stage was notable for the development of 59 initiatives, which structured the proposal and were thought up with the aim of meeting the municipal pledges undertaken under the Plan, as well as enabling subsequent monitoring by the political party groups, social entities and city residents. In addition, the quantitative goals envisaged under the Plan were established, as were their timetable, management and monitoring. These decisions were established in a cross-cutting way with the manager's offices of the various bodies developing the housing policies, as well as the expert staff in charge of managing, coordinating and implementing the various initiatives.



Under these circumstances there is an urgent need to attend to, reverse and prevent housing emergencies in the city, while working with a longer-term approach. Picture of a Full Barcelona Social Housing Council Meeting

The Right to Housing Plan went into operation in November 2016, a period when challenges to the proposal were being gathered and the resulting document was presented to the various political party groups and all the districts' housing sectors. The Plan received its final approval at the Full City Council Meeting of 27 January 2017.

Note, finally, that the Plan's drafting involved, first and foremost, an analysis and diagnosis of the housing situation in Barcelona carried out by IERMB and the researchers Carles Donat and Albert Cónsola. Also taking part in the drafting process were the economists Sara Mur and Joaquim Clusa, specifically in preparing the economic and financial study, as well as the Administrative Law lecturers at the University of Barcelona, Juli Ponce and Domènec Sibina, whose contribution was the drafting of the Plan's legal report. Another collaborator was the lawyer Dolors Clavell, who monitored the drafting process.

A big step forward in promoting housing policies The approved Barcelona Right to Housing Plan represented the activation of an extremely broad range of tools in housing available to local governments. Barcelona's particular situation, with an exclusive economic and operational capacity in the Catalan region, enables all these tools to be exploited to the full. For example, reinforcing the creation of an affordable rental housing stock through the IMHAB, as well as the territory's other social players; detecting the empty housing stock, increasing housing discipline and improving the incentives for putting private properties on the affordable rental housing market; promoting the renovation of the housing stock under social return and distribution criteria and, logically, putting all the necessary resources into attending and reversing housingemergency situations in the city.

A participatory session open to municipal experts was also held, along with meetings with representatives of collectives and local resident entities.

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

It is true, however, that emergency situations, population-replacement dynamics, tourist pressure, speculative operations and increasing prices are also strongly felt in Barcelona, hence the need for all these planned measures, as well as initiatives at several institutional levels, from the regional government of Catalonia and the Spanish State, to authorise other tools, outside municipal jurisdictions, that enable the defence of the fundamental right to housing and to the city.

We will then need to keep the bar very high, by pushing ahead with the measures and goals provided for in the Plan while also updating, improving and expanding municipal action, in collaboration with all the players — social entities and movements, political parties and city residents —, to meet the needs of a reality where the dichotomy between right to housing and the concept of housing as a commodity at the mercy of market dynamics is becoming increasingly pronounced.

# 

Annexe

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# Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

# **A1.** Preventing residential exclusion

A1.1

**A1.1 Social grants for accommodation provided by social services** 

Time scale: 2016 - 2017

### STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion STRATEGIC LINE

A.1. Preventing residential exclusion

- Drets Socials [Social Rights] allocates part of its budget every year to grants for housing payments: grants for accommodation and maintenance allocated to households monitored by social services; grants for tenants of dwellings included in the social housing fund and grants for paying off the social fund's housing arrears.
- For the purposes of offering comprehensive assistance to residents in a situation of residential exclusion or at risk of social exclusion, we will need to strengthen coordination between the Housing Offices and the territory's social services.
- Coordination mechanisms will enable transfers of information between the two services, so as to spare the individuals attended to from having to carry the same information twice, determine that everyone in receipt of grants from the Social Rental Housing Fund has access to social support and establish housing boards in the districts to allow exchanges of information.

A1.2

**Boosting the role of the Housing Offices** 

Time scale: 2016 - 2018

# STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

# STRATEGIC LINE

A.1. Preventing residential exclusion

- Housing Offices are the public's point of contact with the city's housing policy.
- We need to raise their profiles, given that only 27.2% of the people surveyed for evaluating the services offered by Drets Socials actually knew of their existence. By age bracket, the collective that knew least about the Offices were elderly people. As regards resources, immigrants were the group that knew the least about the Offices.
- We will need to launch a city-scale information campaign while taking into account the particular features and needs of each district.
- A few measures:
  - Extending the Offices' help and information opening hours, which are currently every morning and one afternoon, so that everyone in the population has access to them.
  - Improving IT coordination between the Housing Offices and other municipal services such as Youth Information Points), the social services and the districts.
  - Encouraging the e-processing of grants and subsidies.
  - Boosting the Offices' team by strengthening their coordination and improvement roles and technical- and legal-advice roles, among other things.
  - Offering training to the offices' staff in areas they aim to promote, such as alternative housing-access models and the right to housing.

# A1.3

# **Energy poverty help and information**

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

# STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

# STRATEGIC LINE

A.1. Preventing residential exclusion and homelessness

- Given that the Housing Offices are benchmark spaces for attending to people in a situation of energy poverty, it has been decided to integrate these services there as Energy Poverty Help and Information Points.
- Services that are offered:
  - Processing grants and subsidies for utility-supply payments and negotiating with suppliers
  - Advising and training people who wish to optimise their energy consumption.
  - Advice on improving energy efficiency in dwellings.
- An energy-poverty help and information call service has been introduced.
- These points are spaces that should enable initiatives to be launched in the field of efficiency and responsible consumption in dwellings that can be reproduced citywide.
- A process is also under way to enable dwellings owned by IMHAB to have energy supplies from companies that respect the social and environmental standards defined by the City Council, with preference for cooperatives and, above all, prosumers.

# A1.4

# **A1.4 Measures relating to the ageing population**

Time scale: 2016 - 2018

# STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

# STRATEGIC LINE

A.1. Preventing residential exclusion

- Demographic projections point to an intensification in the population ageing process, which means special attention needs to be given to this collective. More specifically, to ensure they have the quality of life they deserve.
- The fundamental intervention criterion will be enabling people to keep their own home wherever possible.

  To achieve that, the following will be promoted:

  Improvements to current housing: Where there is a lack of resources, the costs involved in installing a lift, for example, or other problems, the City Council can subsidise it through cohesion grants or the grants that the Barcelona Housing Consortium offers for improving dwellings.
- Boosting the possibility of sharing housing that helps people to cover these expenses through programmes such as "Viure i Conviure" [Living and getting on together].
- Providing individual dwellings with services typical of housing for elderly people, to prolong people's independence.
- Where it is not possible for a person to continue living in their own home, new residential spaces must be created, whether accommodation with special services or places in old people's homes.

# A1.5

# **Measures for receiving refugees**

Time scale: 2016 - 2020

# STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

# STRATEGIC LINE

A.1. Preventing residential exclusion and homelessness

- As a result of the international humanitarian crisis that the world is experiencing, according to data from the UNHCR in 2014, close to 14 million people abandoned their homes because of armed conflict or natural disasters, among other things.
- Over half of the world's refugees come from Syria, Afghanistan and Somalia.
- The "Barcelona, a refuge city" campaign has been in operation since 2015, to prepare the city for receiving refugees by giving and guaranteeing them services to meet their needs.
- A few measures:
  - Defining the strategy and reception model
  - Attending to refugees who are already in the city
  - Coordinating volunteer, awareness-raising and educational work.
  - Promoting coordination and support between European cities and municipalities

# A2. Helping people in the process of losing their home

A2.1

Mediation service for people who have defaulted or are having difficulties in paying their rent or mortgage

Time scale: ongoing management

### STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

### STRATEGIC LINE

A.2. Helping people in the process of losing their home

- Defaulted housing payments can be over rent or mortgage payments, so it is here that the Housing Offices offer mediation services.
- Mediation over defaulted rent payments depends as much on strengthening staff numbers as it does on grants for rent payments and arrears, which will have to be sufficiently flexible to be able to deal with the diversity of situations.
- There are two alternatives when it comes to mediation over defaulted mortgage payments:
  - To take on one-off arrears by activating, through the Housing Offices, the corresponding grant, provided the beneficiaries are able to continue paying the mortgage.
  - Where a bank has to be negotiated with over improved mortgage terms and conditions to enable households to keep their homes, it will be presented with a proposal through the Ofideute service in coordination with the Catalan Housing Agency (AHC).
- Promoting the unification of services linked to defaulted rent or mortgage payments, through the eviction programmes and public housing stock, so as to offer a comprehensive service.

# A2.2

# Eviction follow-up and support mechanisms

Time scale: ongoing management

# STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

# STRATEGIC LINE

A.2. Helping people in the process of losing their home

- Extending the action protocols to protect against and attend to evictions.
- The district's Eviction Board enables the players intervening in the eviction process to be coordinated and the most appropriate action determined for each case. The Board is made up of an expert from the district, the Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion (UCER) and the Housing Office Department as well as a representative from Social Services.
- The action procedure will depend on:
  - A vulnerability-determining report coordinated with Drets Socials.
  - The Housing Offices will issue a residential-exclusion report.
  - UCER will be tasked with identifying and grouping all housing-eviction situations, defining and classing them.
  - Once the eviction cases are identified, the mediation process will be activated
  - The Housing and Squatting Intervention and Mediation Service (SIPHO) supports households throughout the eviction process. Priority is always given to the agreement and, where that fails, families are supported.

# A2.3

# Fines for large-property owners that do not offer social rental housing

Time scale: ongoing management

# STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

# STRATEGIC LINE

A.2. Assisting people in the process of losing their home

- Act 24/2015 on urgent measures for dealing with housing emergencies and energy poverty establishes that owners have to offer a social rental housing proposal to the people concerned where:
  - They do not have their own alternative housing.
  - They are within the parameters of residential exclusion.
- Owners will have to make social rental housing offers to stop Barcelona City Council from penalising them.
- The Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion (UCER) will be tasked with supervising this process.

(Since the approval of the PDHB, the Articles that allowed this process have been suspended).

# Attending to the housing situation in settlements

Time scale: ongoing management

# STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

# STRATEGIC LINE

A.3. Helping people who cannot get access to decent housing

- According to data from the Office for the Unauthorised Settlements Plan, there were 56 settlements in Barcelona with 463 people living in them in December 2015. Mostly located in the Sant Martí district.
- The Unauthorised Settlements Plan was approved with four goals:
  - 1. Offering inclusive alternatives to vulnerable people: training and legal and social resources, among other things.
  - 2. Ensuring the dignity and safety of these people.
  - 3. Preventing social conflict
  - 4. Centralising information on settlements
- The Office for the Unauthorised Settlements Plan (OPAI) will be focusing its attention on the needs of residents and working above all to prevent the settlements from being re-used.

# A3.2

# **Attending to homeless people**

Time scale: ongoing management

# STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

# STRATEGIC LINE

A.3. Helping people who cannot get access to decent housing

- Data from 2016 indicate that there were 1,907 people sleeping in the street in Barcelona, and the "Barcelona Plan for Fighting Homelessness for 2016-2020" was approved to tackle this situation.
- The plan proposes, among other things:
  - 1. To eradicate long-term street homelessness, by improving the Social Integration Service, expanding the Housing First programme and putting the right to housing at the centre of the assistance model.
  - 2. Boosting the Housing First programme, which enables collectives to regain their independence and socially integrate.
  - 3. To improve living conditions in residential resources.
- The diagnosis indicates that the first way out of homelessness is having a home with guarantees for keeping it.
- It also opts for a change of model, stepping up action in the following areas, among others:
  - Enhancing existing infrastructures
  - New services such as individual accommodation
  - Planning new accommodation places for homeless people in housing developments that are officially protected or with special services.

# **Intervening against squatting**

Time scale: 2016-2017 implementation. Ongoing management.

# STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

# STRATEGIC LINE

A.3. Helping people who cannot get access to decent housing

- Barcelona City Council has worked extremely hard to update data for detecting the number of cases of squatting in the city.
- The main consequence of this situation is the difficulty these households have accessing help from the City Council and protection during evictions.
- Initiatives embarked on by the City Council to resolve this:
  - Coordinating several of the City Council's entities to obtain and organise data on cases of squatting.
  - Amending the Regulations of the Social Emergencies Committee, allowing responses to squatters who have to be evicted from their homes.
  - Different types of intervention according to the various forms of squatting that occur.
  - Detecting cases of squatting that cause social conflict.
  - Promoting negotiations with owners to regularise the situation

# A3.4

# **Action in cases of substandard housing**

Time scale: Ongoing management.

# STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

# STRATEGIC LINE

A.3. Helping people who cannot get access to decent housing

- Act 18/2007 defines substandard housing as properties which, despite having no habitability certificate (for failing to meet the conditions required for obtaining one), are allocated to housing.
- Barcelona City Council takes action here through the Housing Offices in coordination with the district.
- The action process consists of five stages:
  - 1. Background detection and research
  - 2. Analysing and verifying the substandard housing situation
  - 3. Coordinating initiatives between Housing Office and
  - 4. Mediating and penalising, where substandard housing is confirmed, in coordination with the district's Department of Permits and Inspection, which could put an end to the property's use as housing. At the same time, a decent residential solution is sought, according to the situation.

# **Action in cases of overcrowded housing**

Time scale: 2016-2017 implementation. Ongoing.

### STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

# STRATEGIC LINE

A.3. Helping people who cannot get access to decent housing

- Act 18/2007, defines overcrowded housing as a residence where an excessive number of people live, taking into consideration the housing services and surface area per person habitability standards.
- Decree 141/2012 which governs the minimum habitability conditions for housing sets the maximum number of occupants per dwelling according to its number of rooms.
- The City Council's detection protocol depends on censustaking data; for example, 751 residences were detected in Barcelona in 2015 where at least 10 people were registered with the electoral roll.
- Initiatives are launched by the Housing Offices in coordination with the district and consist of the following stages:
  - 1. Detection, through several channels from the people concerned on the City Council's register.
  - 2. Background research, analysis and verification of whether or not there is a situation of overcrowding.
  - 3. Coordinating initiatives between the Housing Office and the district to detect the origin of the situation, to determine whether or not to give a social response.
  - Finally, the Permits and Inspection Department will aim to be stop overcrowding through enforcement orders.

# A3.6

# **Extending home-sharing programmes**

Time scale: 2016-2017 implementation. Ongoing management.

### STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

# STRATEGIC LINE

A.2. Helping people who cannot get access to decent housing

- Home-sharing has become a necessity for households with low incomes having difficulties covering their housing needs individually.
- The City Council believes it is appropriate to study mechanisms here for:
  - Disseminating social and legal aid and support through Housing Offices
  - Launching programmes such as "Viure i Conviure" [Living and getting on together] and "Compartim pis" [Let's share a flat].
  - Introducing a public rental housing system.
- The "Viure i Conviure" programme is based on elderly people and young university students living together. Its goal is to boost mutually supportive relationships.
- The "Compartim pis" programme developed by the Poble Sec Social Services Centre by creating household units for accessing shared housing.
- Public rental housing aims to enable people who need to, whether for financial or social reasons, to partially rent out their home.

# **Increasing the availability of shelters**

Time scale: 2016-2020 implementation. Ongoing management.

# STRATEGIC AREA

A. Preventing and attending to housing emergencies and residential exclusion

# STRATEGIC LINE

A.2. Helping people who cannot get access to decent housing

- These shelters are temporary residential resources allocated to vulnerable collectives of people as a preliminary or emergency step to accessing housing.
- They are temporary resources where residents are offered support.
- There are plans to build new accommodation for families at risk of residential exclusion, vulnerable collectives, people with addictions and the collective of people with mental health problems. This new accommodation will be built in:
  - Specific floors of officially protected housing buildings.
  - Ground floors and currently existing unused building spaces, to diversify the location of spaces in the city.
  - A study will be made of the feasibility of introducing reserved spaces for social accommodation in touristuse buildings.



### Ensuring the proper use of housing

### **B1.** Putting empty dwellings on the rental housing market

**B1.1** 

### **Compiling lists of empty dwellings**

Time scale: 2016 - 2020

#### STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing STRATEGIC LINE

B.1. Putting empty dwellings on the rental housing market

- Act 18/2007 defines empty housing as a dwelling that remains vacant without interruption for more than two years and for no justified reason.
- We need to coordinate the compilation of an emptyhousing list so we can embark on a decisive initiative for imposing sanctions on empty dwellings and find out which areas experience the most problems. This list will be compiled from neighbourhood to neighbourhood.
- It will also enable proactive initiatives for offering mechanisms to promote the use and improvement of these dwellings.
- It will consist of an initial statistical-analysis part, based on data from the electoral roll, property-tax register and water-consumption and rubbish, and a second part, based on a direct analysis through field work.

B1.2

### **Penalising empty dwellings**

Time scale: Ongoing management

#### STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing STRATEGIC LINE

B.1. Putting empty dwellings on the rental housing market

- Control and penalisation measures will apply to dwellings left empty without justification, as a breach of their social function.
- UCER (Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion) will be the one that systematises the proceedings. It has implemented a series of procedures to that end:
  - Procedure for declaring anomalous use of housing and imposing penalty payments (Article 41, Right to Housing Act).
  - Penalisation procedure for anomalous uses due to uninterrupted non-use (Article 42, Right to Housing Act).

### **B2.** Maintaining residential use and residents

**B2.1** 

### **Detecting and penalising property mobbing**

Time scale: Ongoing

### STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing STRATEGIC LINE

B.2. Maintaining residential use and residents

- Act 18/2007 on the Right to Housing defines property mobbing as "any action or omission with abuse of right that is aimed at disturbing the harassed person's peaceful use of their dwelling".
- Such cases can be difficult to report given that they usually affect households in a vulnerable situation.
- Spain's current Penal Code requires the people affected to produce evidence (putting the burden of proof on them) that they are suffering from a situation of property mobbing.
- Three areas of action are suggested:
  - 1. Facilitating the detection of cases of property mobbing
  - Implementing the Right to Housing Act's protective mechanisms.
  - 3. Monitoring cases to prevent any harm.

**B2.2** 

Amending planning regulations to prevent residential uses from being replaced by other uses

Time scale: 2016-2020

### STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing STRATEGIC LINE

B.2. Maintaining residential use and residents

- There is strong pressure in Barcelona over the appearance of new uses and the City Council is working to prevent residential uses from being replaced with others, whether or not the latter is linked to tourism.
- An evaluation will be made of the suitability to launch new tools for ordering, regulating and protecting housing.

B2.3

### Incorporating the proposals of the plans on tourist uses

Time scale: 2017-2019

### STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing STRATEGIC LINE

B.2. Maintaining residential use and residents

- Tools for planning tourist uses in the city:
  - Special Urban Development Plan for Tourist Accommodation (PEUAT)
  - 2. Strategic Tourism Plan (PET)
- PEUAT is meant to be a tool for making the city's tourist accommodation compatible with a sustainable urban model, by defining not just conditions that are common to the entire city but also four specific territorial areas with their own regulation. Conditions that are common to the entire city stipulate that no type of accommodation may replace pre-existing housing uses or specific conditions.
- PET aims to implement a set of proposals for managing tourism in the city over the coming years under responsibility, sustainability, cohesion and redistribution criteria
- There is also a Shock Plan for Combating Tourist-Use Housing which includes detection, inspection and penalisation measures, inter-authority collaboration, regulations and awareness-raising, to which end, longterm activity is planned.

**B2.4** 

### Establishing a benchmark index for free-market rental housing prices

Time scale: Establishing a benchmark rental index for 2017. Implementation of initiative: 2016–2020. Ongoing.

#### STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing STRATEGIC LINE

B.2. Maintaining residential use and residents

- Given the difficult economic situation, renting is the most affordable method for accessing housing today.
- This essential role for renting makes it crucial for us to consider mechanisms for controlling rent prices that enable housing access to all city residents.
- Of course, the rental housing market's regulation falls outside municipal jurisdiction but the City Council will be working to:
  - Launch a rental price observatory and the publication of its results.
  - Link renovation agreements to the establishment of rent capping.
  - Establish the concept of abusive rents.
  - Push for a change in legislation.

### B3. Improving knowledge and management of the public housing stock

**B3.1** 

Inspecting, regularising and penalising the public rental housing stock

Time scale: Ongoing

### STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing STRATEGIC LINE

B.3. Improving the knowledge and management of the public housing stock

- Inspecting the rental housing stock, to ensure that all public dwellings are in proper conditions of use, and verifying their correct use (cases of fraud or improper use).
- Introducing improvements to the state of repair of dwellings, by planning maintenance, renovation and energy-efficiency initiatives.
- Establishing coordination mechanisms between the social services and housing managers so that they are notified and coordinated to act jointly in cases of social assistance or local-resident conflicts.

B3.2

Redefining the Register of Officially Protected Housing Applicants (HPO) Time scale: 2016-2017. Ongoing management

### STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing STRATEGIC LINE

- The HPO is a tool that enables access to officially protected housing or housing with special services, though it also offers a snapshot of the features of the applicant household units.
- It considers the need to optimise the system for awarding housing, given that there are high numbers of waivers and withdrawals which implies a high volume of management, requiring housing-award mechanisms to be reviewed and made faster and more appropriate.
- We will need to strengthen the information that is obtained from the HPO's registered demand, so that this information allows mechanisms to be offered for achieving further information to enable the planning of Barcelona's housing policy. We also need to increase the number of people registered so we can have a closer idea of the overall demand.

B3.3

### Awarding public housing to the various collective applicants

Time scale: Ongoing

### STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing STRATEGIC LINE

B.3. Improving the knowledge and management of the public housing stock

- Because of the high number of evictions, most of the few social dwellings available are being allocated to rehouse people who have been evicted from their properties and referred on from the Social Emergencies Committee.
- This has led to a reduction in the availability of housing resources for other housing applicants who are at risk of residential exclusion, such as:
  - Attending to special quotas
  - Attending to the general quota
  - Attending to special collectives
- We need to boost the allocation of housing to the various collectives registered with the Register of Officially Protected Housing Applicants (HPO).

B3.4

### Broadening the scope of the Social Emergencies Committee

Time scale: Implementation: 2016-2017. Ongoing management

#### STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing STRATEGIC LINE

- The Social Emergencies Committee is tasked with assessing the proceedings conducted by the Housing Offices and with awarding the Social Rental Housing Fund's available dwellings.
- Under Act 24/2015 on emergency measures for dealing with housing emergencies and energy poverty, public authorities are required to ensure family units at risk of eviction from their home are rehoused.
- Established to expand the Social Rental Housing Fund, the "pisos buits" [empty flats] programme is aimed at owners who wish to hand over the use of their empty or uninterruptedly vacant dwellings to the city's social rental housing pool.
- The Social Emergencies Committee's regulations have been amended, to extend the range of cases that can access it, such as helping squatters who are being evicted, eliminating minimum income criteria and raising the maximum income threshold, as well as access for dwellings in a poor state of repair where children live.
- A study will also be conducted on ways to simplify and speed up the accreditation processes for situations of gender violence or single parenting.
- These improvements are being accompanied by the introduction of social and educational support mechanisms for household units, such as SIPHO.

**B3.5** 

### Providing the Committee for Accessing Inclusive Public Housing with dwellings

Time scale: 2016-2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing STRATEGIC LINE

B.3. Improving the knowledge and management of the public housing stock

- Inclusive housing means publicly or privately owned dwellings that are managed mostly by entities included in the Barcelona Inclusive Housing Network (XaHIB).
- The City Council has established a "Barcelona social-entity access protocol for applying for protected housing allocated for social inclusion", by determining the elements of the application and access criteria, among other things.
- It is also promoting the signing of a collaboration agreement between the promoter and the entity for temporarily handing over the use of the dwelling, where a contractual framework will be established, laying out, among other things, the reasons and conditions for terminating the contract.
- A monitoring agreement will also be established by the Area for Social Rights.
- The subsequent possibility of accessing protected housing is one of the options that helps these people make the leap to regularised housing. Of course, resources for emergencies are being overstretched and transitions from inclusive housing to protected housing are becoming increasingly difficult. This means that the entities need a larger number of inclusive dwellings.
- So we will have to evaluate the real need for inclusive housing while having to increase the number of dwellings allocated to special quotas, so that the households that have completed their re-integration process can gain access to new dwellings.

B3.6

### Co-responsibility from the public housing stock's tenants

Time scale: Ongoing

### STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing STRATEGIC LINE

- Barcelona's social rental housing stock includes not just protected price-regulated rental dwellings but also dwellings included in the social fund, where residents pay according to their respective incomes and never more than 30% of their income.
- The Housing Protection, Intervention and Mediation Service (SPIMH) was set up to deal with the possible resident disputes that may arise in such dwellings). The goal will be to expand this service to attend to collectives that reside in other dwellings that come from the public housing stock or which are managed by the public authority.
- A social contract has also been created to protect and facilitate agreements that provide incentives to coresponsibility from tenants.

B3.7

# Expanding the initiatives of the Public Housing Protection, Intervention and Mediation Service

Time scale: 2016-2018. Ongoing

### STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing STRATEGIC LINE

B.3. Improving the knowledge and management of the public housing stock

- Created in 2014, the Public Housing Protection, Intervention and Mediation Service (SPIMH) is aimed, above all, at dwellings included in the Social Rental Housing Fund, although it can cover all publicly managed dwellings.
- This service enables us to find out about the situation of the public housing stock and maintain contact with its users, especially those living in social rental housing, and in a more vulnerable situation.
- Its work over this period is regarded as positive and we will have to weigh up the possibility of extending it to the entire public housing stock, including rental housing and home-sharing models, such as rent subsidies, public housing rent and the Rental Housing Pool.
- Finally, there are plans to unify the Public Housing Protection, Intervention and Mediation Service (SPIMHP) with the Housing and Squatting Intervention and Mediation Service (SIPHO) in coordination with legal advice from the mediation service for cases of defaulted payments and difficulties in making rent and mortgage payments.

**B3.8** 

### Implementing a tool for managing the demand for affordable housing

Time scale: 2016-2018

#### STRATEGIC AREA

B. Ensuring the proper use of housing STRATEGIC LINE

- Barcelona City Council has several applications at its disposal for managing the various services that are offered in the field of housing. That is why a study will be conducted on implementing a new application that allows the various services to be managed.
- This application will have to include:
  - The functions of the Barcelona Register of Officially Protected Housing Applicants.
  - The management of the officially protected housing.
  - The Housing Pool or system for attracting private housing that replaces it.
  - Rent subsidies.
  - Social emergencies.
  - Renovation.
  - General management in Housing Offices
- This application will enable more detailed information on applicants and therefore a more efficient operation, it will provide a portal for accessing online procedures as well as a more accurate evaluation of the service.



### Increasing the stock of affordable housing

### C1. Increasing the current stock of public housing

C1.1

Generating new land sites for housing that is officially protected and with special services

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

C.1. Increasing the current stock of public housing

- Implementing a strategic land-site policy for promoting urban-development planning, to make land available for building housing that is officially protected and with special services
- The building potential is not distributed uniformly and there is greater potential in districts that already have a much higher number of affordable homes today (Sants-Montjuïc, Sant Andreu, Sant Martí).
- To promote social mixing and ensure the right to the city, a study will be made on:
  - defining the new areas for building affordable housing in
  - expanding the qualifying threshold for officially protected housing in plans that are implemented in the city's central districts.
- The new urban-planing housing developments will have to meet a minimum target of 50% of officially protected housing, preferably for rent.
- It will not be possible to withdraw a dwelling's officially protected housing status.

C1.2

Implementing new housing models with official protection and special services

Time scale: 2016 - 2020

#### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

C.1. Increasing the current stock of public housing

- The new public-initiative residential projects will have to meet several criteria:
  - To meet current social requirements
    - $\cdot$  Gender perspective, non-androcentric dwellings that can include areas for community life and children's games etc.
    - · Sustainability and sustainable mobility and use of natural and recycled materials, as established in point 3, Article 86 of the Municipal Charter.
    - · Accessibility.
    - · Others with cultural adaptation of dwellings, adaptation to the household unit, compatibility of residential and productive uses.
  - To meet the management needs of the housing stock:
    - $\cdot$  Flexibility for adapting dwellings to the various users and situations of household units.
- So, several lines of work are being considered:
- Developing pilot projects to analyse new arrangements of people living together and from a gender perspective.
- Developing pilot projects to evaluate the level of finishes necessary and the possibility making plans for dwellings that can be improved.
- Extending energy-efficiency and bio-construction criteria.
- Promoting innovation throughout the project's drafting and implementation process, as well as in the renovation systems, and introducing equality, accessibility and energy-efficiency policies, among other things.

C1.3

### Promoting new housing with official protection and special services

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

C.1. Increasing the current stock of public housing

- The Plan provides for the building of new housing with official protection and special services on publicly or privately owned land. It will combine public building from the Barcelona Municipal Institute for Housing and Renovation (IMHAB) with private building from non-profit or limited-profit promoters.
  - Public land will be made available to social promoters, such as cooperatives, so that they develop new officially protected housing, thereby increasing the production provided for by the IMHAB.
- Most of the promotions will be rental (80% in the IMHAB's and 69% overall). So:
  - There will be guaranteed maintenance of dwellings as affordable housing stock.
  - It will move over to housing-use value instead of value as a possession, thereby realising the general-interest service (Art. 4 of the Right to Housing Act).
- Priority will be given to the building of officially protected housing for special quotas and housing with special services allocated to young and elderly people.
- As for housing that is awarded, a percentage will be reserved for the area's population, to ensure social networks and community ties are maintained and to enable residents of new housing promotions to integrate into their new place of residence, protecting against gentrification and moving towards the goals of the Act on the Right to Social-Cohesion, Territorial-Balance and Socially Mixed Housing.

C1.4

### Purchasing housing and buildings for allocation to public rental housing

Time scale: 2016 - 2020

### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

C.1. Increasing the current stock of public housing

- The City Council plans to use various means for acquiring dwellings from the private market, including:
  - Purchasing dwellings by exercising its pre-emption rights. By applying Executive Decree 1/2015, of 24 March, on extraordinary and emergency measures aimed at banks, for putting dwellings on the rental housing market that come from mortgage foreclosure processes; and by applying Act 18/2007, of 28 December, on the Right to Housing and the Catalan Urban Planning Act, aimed at all kinds of property owners.
  - Purchasing dwellings from banks through agreements.
  - Purchasing empty dwellings from the private market. Detection work will be carried out and a specific protocol applied under the regulations.

### C1.5

## Creating housing that is officially protected and with special services on consolidated urban land

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

C.1. Increasing the current stock of public housing

- At present, most of the land sites that allow the building of new housing with official protection in Barcelona are plots of land resulting from the application of urban-planning reserves. To be able to generate officially protected housing on consolidated urban land we will have to launch the mechanisms provided for under Act 18/2007 on the Right to Housing and under Act 8/2013 on urban redevelopment, regeneration and renovation. This will enable the activation of two channels:
  - Planning amendments: these will enable changes in the percentage for tertiary use, the use of business premises for housing, occupation of the public domain for installing lifts, increased volume for energy-efficiency improvements, possible increases in building potential and density, the establishment of total or partial classification for official housing protection as well as amendments intended for creating housing with special services.
  - Optimising consolidated urban land: by identifying vacant land plots and plots where building potential and residential density have not been exhausted and can still generate affordable housing.

### **C2. Extending and improving rent subsidies**

### **C2.1**

### **Subsidies for rent payments for housing maintenance**

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

C.2. Extending and improving rent subsidies

- Rent-payment subsidies are conceived as a basic tool for dealing with the huge strain on income that housing payments represent for many households. They help to protect against situations where people are evicted from and lose their main dwelling for financial reasons.
- As for emergency grants, these are conceived as one-off financial aid.
- The diversity and specific features of the grants and subsidies require the establishment of certain lines of work that help to:
  - Start a process for integrating grants and subsidies, as was the case with renovation grants.
  - Maintain continuity between emergency grants and ongoing rent-payment subsidies.
  - Make part of the subsidies more flexible for adaptation to particular situations.
  - Make management procedures more straightforward so that the Barcelona Housing Consortium itself can carry them all out, irrespective of the public authority that the funds come from.
  - Encourage information exchanges between Social Services and the Housing Offices.
  - Move towards ongoing calls for grant and subsidy applications that respond to rent-payment difficulties when they arise.
  - Speed up payments.
  - Maintain a line of support for mortgage payments and the necessary lines of support for rent payments.

### **C2.2**

### **Support for accessing rental housing**

Time scale: Implementation: 2016 – 2018. Ongoing.

### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

C.2. Extending and improving rent subsidies

- Certain profiles have many more difficulties than others in accessing the rental housing market. We need to provide guarantees that owners will receive rental income to thereby encourage the signing of rental-property contracts, without the need for the City Council itself to act as the tenant. Work will therefore be carried out on:
  - Opening a guarantee fund or something similar.
  - Creating guarantees from the City Council itself.
  - Introducing private-market insurance policies that enable guaranteed income for property owners.
  - Linking a line of rental subsidies for dwellings included in the Affordable Rental Housing Pool (or whatever body is introduced).

### C3. Putting private housing on the the affordable rental housing market

C3.1

# Registering empty land sites and promoting affordable housing on vacant sites

Time scale: Implementation: 2016 – 2018. Ongoing.

### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

- Several initiatives will be launched to enable the building of affordable housing on the city's empty land sites:
  - An analysis of the city's empty land sites and their location and potential for generating affordable housing.
  - Fostering the generation of new affordable rental housing on these empty land sites, through grants and subsidies for promotions or agreements for managing future housing.
  - Where the identification and promotion initiatives fail to yield results, the Municipal Register of Undeveloped Plots will be activated, enabling the City Council to enforce work to be carried out on the property or, if necessary, subsidiary enforcement on the part of the City Council.

C3.2

### Attracting private housing over to the affordable rental housing market

Time scale: Redefining: 2016 - 2018. Ongoing.

#### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

C.3. Putting private housing on the affordable rental housing market

- Private housing in Barcelona is brought over to the affordable rental housing market through two basic programmes, one aimed at handing private dwellings over to the City Council and the other at attracting dwellings for incorporation into the Rental Housing Pool.
- Several lines are envisaged for improving current systems:
  - Linking renovation grants to boost the acquisition of private properties.
  - Establishing exceptions to the maximum amount property owners can receive in areas where rental prices are much higher than this value and it is considered necessary for obtaining dwellings. Unifying and strengthening systems for attracting private housing over to the rental market.
  - Providing for links to rent-payment grants so that residents unable to access market rental prices can access rental housing.
  - Having the Authority act as a guarantor through a line of financial aid which, where there are arrears, is paid to the owner.
  - Launching a publicity campaign on the City Council's desire to attract private housing over to the rental market.

C3.3

### Generating affordable housing through renovation

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

- Boosting initiatives linked to renovation which enable existing liveable spaces to be reclaimed for allocation to affordable housing through:
  - Renovation grants for incorporating empty dwellings into programmes for attracting private housing over to the rental market.
  - New measures for renovating buildings with empty dwellings which can then be handed over for allocation to affordable rental housing.
  - Reclaiming liveable spaces intended for other uses for allocation to affordable rental housing.
  - -Marking out areas for action to increase building potential and density with the aim of generating affordable housing, mainly publicly owned.

### C3.4

### Agreements with banks for handing over housing

Time scale: 2016 - 2020

### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

C.3. Putting private housing on the affordable rental housing market

- The City Council aims to use agreements to ensure banks make their properties' empty dwellings available for allocation to the affordable rental housing market
- It is the City Council that allocates these homes.
- Under the agreements established so far, the banks have handed over the use of their dwellings to the City Council for a period of eight years. The City Council, for its part, has offered to pay a monthly sum for each of the dwellings (which differs according to whether the property is empty or squatted).
- Dwellings included under agreements may be empty or squatted. The City Council will be responsible for regularising the situation where possible and thereby prevent potential evictions from occurring.

### C4. Boosting the social market

C4.1

### Promoting the assigned-for-use cooperative model: cohousing

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

- The City Council has launched the Co-housing Committee as part of the Social Housing Council. At the same time, several invitations to tender will be put out to boost this type of model.
- Public land will be made available to the cooperative on a building-lease basis for 75 years.
- It will be for officially protected dwellings, that is, household units will have to meet certain medium- and average-income requirements.
- It will develop a residential model with community-use areas.
- It will promote the establishment of roots in the territory, the creation of areas for collective use, sustainability and high-energy rating.
- Several measures will be worked on to spread the model, enable new projects to get off the ground, promote the economic feasibility of the promotions and improve affordability.
- The model will be promoted as an alternative access route to housing.
- Technical support will be provided to initiate promotions by new organisations and grants and subsidies will be established and provided by guarantees, aid lines and property-tax relief.

### C4.2

### **Promoting** *urban masoverias*

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

C.3. Putting private housing on the affordable rental housing market

- Under the *urban masoveria* contract, the owner of a dwelling hands over its use, for a specific period, in exchange for which its user takes charge of any renovation and improvement works they have agreed to. Three basic lines of action are planned for establishing this model:
  - Training and publicity: basic technical training for staff at the Housing Offices and publicity to attract dwelling users and owners
  - Application to public properties: this will help to raise the profile of and give confidence to owners.
     It will be performed under rental contracts and with comparable rent terms and conditions set as a maximum in officially protected housing.
  - Application to private properties: the type of properties the initiative is aimed at will have to be defined.

### C4.3

### Setting up an Affordable Housing Association to produce and manage housing

Time scale: 2016 - 2017 Ongoing

### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

- This provides for the creation of a mixed public and private capital company for promoting and managing affordable housing.
- This is a similar model to the one used in other European countries (Austria, Germany, the United Kingdom etc.,) for promoting a stock of affordable housing.
- This model will help to increase public rental housing through collaboration with private limited-profit players.
- The land will remain publicly owned.
- This is a model that aims to incentivise non-speculative social investments in the housing.
- At the same time, it will also promote values such as sustainability, energy saving, innovation, community participation and good management.

 $85\,000$ 

**C4.4** 

### Social entity promotions of affordable rental housing

Time scale: 2020 - 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

C. Increasing the stock of affordable housing STRATEGIC LINE

- We need to create mechanisms for social entities, especially foundations and cooperatives, to continue generating the housing the city needs.
  - Given the current context, it will be necessary for the housing that is created to be rental and for the entities to have the capacity not just to promote it but to manage it as well.
- So, mechanisms will be established such as building-lease assignments or agreements.



# Maintaining, renovating and improving the current housing stock

### D1. Increasing our knowledge of the state of the private housing stock

D1.1

### Systematising information on the state of the housing stock

Time scale: 2016 - 2020. Ongoing

### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock STRATEGIC LINE

D.1. Increasing our knowledge of the state of the private housing stock

- To improve the planning and implementation of housing policies, we need to have a good knowledge of the residential housing stock, along various lines:
  - Systematising the information of the municipal technical services, technical housing inspections, energy-efficiency and accessibility certificates etc.
  - Systematising the Housing Offices' information.
  - Drawing up a ,map showing the state of the housing stock that includes the features detected.
  - -Transferring information from the social services to the Housing Offices.
  - Housing inspections. Establishing a collaboration so that when social services need to visit a home, they will be accompanied by an expert who can assess the state of the dwelling.
  - -Creating the Metropolitan Housing Observatory which enables existing information on housing to be summarised, new information gathered and evaluation work performed.

D1.2

### **Map of housing conditions**

Time scale: Start of pilot project: 2017

### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock STRATEGIC LINE

D.1. Increasing our knowledge of the state of the private housing stock

- The initiative will start in Ciutat Vella given that, according to the Population and Housing Census of 2011, 30% of dwellings were found to be in a poor or defective state, a percentage well above that of the city's other districts.
- It will be carried out in four stages:
  - Pilot housing-analysis carried out by the territory's players.
  - Publicity campaign.
  - Map of housing conditions
  - Systematising information on the state of the housing stock.

D1.3

### Identifying substandard housing in medium- and high-income areas

Time scale: 2017. Start

### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock STRATEGIC LINE

D.1. Increasing our knowledge of the state of the private housing stock

- This provides for making a specific identification in highincome areas, given that the problems in these areas prove to be especially invisible.
- This will be based on the information extracted from the D1.1 initiative's implementation, which will be supplemented by an identification of the dwellings lived in by people monitored by social services. An information campaign will also be launched to present the possibilities for improving housing.

D1.4

### Virtual open data space on the state of the housing stock (OBRA)

Time scale: 2017-2019

### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock STRATEGIC LINE

D.1. Increasing our knowledge of the state of the private housing stock

- Initiating a project, through the Barcelona Observatory for Architectural Renovation (OBRA), to gather information on the state of the housing stock in an open data bank. This will enable the integration of information such as:
- Technical building inspections.
- Habitability certificates.
- Renovation and alterations work.
- Renovation grants.
- Liftinstallation grants.
- Publicly prepared projects for improving buildings or neighbourhoods.
- etc.

### D1.5

### Assessing and monitoring renovations carried out with public funding

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock STRATEGIC LINE

D.1. Increasing our knowledge of the state of the private housing stock

- An exhaustive analysis will be made on the state of the dwellings and buildings constructed and renovated with public funding, to ensure they comply with the required conditions
- The necessary improvements will be considered, not just in the interventions already carried out but also in the awarding and performance mechanisms for future interventions.
- This will start in the Sant Martí district, with a particular focus on the La Pau estate.

### D2. Establishing a renovation policy with a more social focus

### D2.1

### Promoting the culture of housing maintenance and renovation

Time scale: 2017 – 2018 Ongoing

#### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock STRATEGIC LINE

D.2. Establishing a more social renovation policy

- Barcelona has a fairly old stock of residential housing and that is why we need to get city residents involved to tackle ongoing housing improvements and renovations. Various initiatives are being considered to achieve this:
  - -Publicity campaign, focused on habitability, structural safety, accessibility and energy improvements.
  - Activating existing regulatory tools to ensure dwellings and buildings are adapted, in particular by carrying out technical building inspections

(ITE) and operating building records.

- Introducing top-level expert teams that will be tasked with mediating, advising and serving city residents and will be able to offer support and take action to safeguard the rights and duties of individuals over the property.

### Disciplinary action over lack of conservation of dwellings

Time scale: Ongoing

### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock STRATEGIC LINE

D.2. Establishing a more social renovation policy

- For the purposes of improving the implementation of measures and ensuring that owners comply with their conservation duties, the Unit to Counter Residential Exclusion (UCER) has systematised and digitised its case files and introduced the following procedures:
  - Issue of an uninhabitable notice, under Article 33 of the Right to Housing Act, and imposition of penalty payments.
  - -Penalisation procedure for transferring, renting or handing over the use of dwellings that do not meet basic quality conditions for safety. Very serious offence, under Article 123(1)(b) of the Right to Housing Act (LDH).
  - Sanction procedure for habitability conditions under Article 3 of Executive Decree 1/2015 on Extraordinary and Urgent Measures for Occupancy of Residential Units Acquired in Foreclosure Processes (linked to conservation orders). Very serious offence, Article 123.1(f) of the LDH.

D2.3

### **Renovation grants**

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock STRATEGIC LINE

D.2. Establishing a more social renovation policy

- We need to focus financial aid on renovations under new criteria:
  - -Focusing financial aid on individuals and local residents' communities that have fewer resources. Priority will be given to individuals and communities incapable of carrying out the work required without municipal help.
    - The available funds will be expanded to include cohesion grants and a specific publicity campaign on these grants will be launched for people with financial difficulties.
    - · At the same time, we will also work on the availability of resources to meet the demands of communities and individuals that have more resources but still need funding.
  - Focusing grants on resolving structural, habitability, accessibility and energy-efficiency problems. The grants will be extended to cover dwelling interiors. The City Council will carry out both the projects and the work.
  - Linking the renovation policy to resident loyalty. A study will be made on setting up a gentrification office that would monitor the interventions carried out through subsidies and other municipal renovation-support programmes, to assess their effects on the population.
  - Linking the renovation policy to the creation of affordable housing. Stronger initiatives will be launched to enable existing habitable dwellings to be reclaimed for allocation to affordable housing (initiative C3.3 "Generation of affordable housing through renovation").

### Establishing active renovation mechanisms

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock **STRATEGIC LINE** 

D.2. Establishing a more social renovation policy

- A proactive and comprehensive initiative will be launched in the architectural and social sphere to enable the improvement of more problematic areas to be tackled. These initiatives will require: the detection of problems; establishing a technical support system to facilitate detections, definitions of initiatives and the performance of interventions through mechanisms that boost employment among the population in the areas affected; and activating their commercial and service networks.
- The initiatives planned are as follows:
  - Conservation and renovation areas: application of pre-emption rights. Property owners are under a legal obligation to notify the City Council of any transactions that occur in this area.
  - Establishing conservation and renovation areas: This mechanism applies to areas that are rundown and subject to property speculation and mobbing that needs to be controlled.
  - Renovation agreements. Agreements between the City Council and residents' communities that allow the intervention to be adapted to the community's economic capacity, improvements to be steadily dealt with and dwellings handed over for rental housing, among other things.
  - Interventions in blocks and superblocks. Increasing the scale of the intervention allows us not only to adopt a global approach to renovation and thereby eliminate empty housing but also to exploit home-sharing possibilities, increase building potential for push ahead with work and dwelling exchanges and so on.
  - Subsidiary intervention by the City Council. The City Council's intervention capacity will have to be improved where it needs to be applied.

D2.5

### **Housing-estate renovations**

Time scale: 2016 – 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock STRATEGIC LINE

D.2. Establishing a more social renovation policy

- The City Council plans to launch a proactive initiative to enable these estates to be improved:
  - Agreements will be signed with the various authorities responsible for the initiative in each of the estates taking part, under the model used for the Canyelles and Sud-oest del Besòs estates.
  - We need to keep up initiatives for improving the city's various estates, which will be implemented under the framework of the Neighbourhood Plan, especially in the estates located in the Franja Besòs, such as Ciutat Meridiana, Trinitat Nova and Sud-oest del Besòs.
  - This will allow a comprehensive initiative in areas where there is often a higher concentration of socially and economically vulnerable situations.
  - It will be especially important to maintain the current high percentages of subsidies, which come to as much as 85% in publicly promoted estates
  - We need to provide for a large amount of cohesion grants.

### **Neighbourhood Plan**

Time scale: 2016 – 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock STRATEGIC LINE

D.2. Establishing a more social renovation policy

- This Plan is intended to enable us to tackle inequality in some areas of the city (Eix Besòs, Eix Muntanya, Marines and Ciutat Vella) and it establishes four main goals: recovering and boosting economic activity in neighbourhoods; tackling urban-planning deficits, low-quality dwellings and facility shortages and boosting their accessibility and centrality; establishing initiatives for attending to and improving the population's living conditions; empowering local residents so they can organise themselves and establish goals and initiatives for improving collective life in the neighbourhood.
- The following initiatives are being considered within the housing framework:
  - Mediation and support programmes for positive community life and the running of local-resident communities.
  - Support programmes for people who have been rehoused.
  - . Technical-boosting programmes for Housing Offices.
  - Purchasing/obtaining empty dwellings.
  - Intervening in "vulnerable buildings", with a particular focus on habitability and enhancing communal spaces; harnessing renewable energies and adapting dwellings.
  - Agreements with job placement companies and BCN Activa, to boost local employment.

D2.7

### Intervening in areas with urban-planning changes to land uses and classifications

Time scale: 2016 - 2018

Ongoing

### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock STRATEGIC LINE

D.2. Establishing a more social renovation policy

- Urban development has major repercussions on residents; such changes need to be assessed to enable mechanisms to be developed that will allow the affected areas to be improved and minimise future effects on housing. The plan is to:
  - analyse the current effects on dwellings to set out the requirements for intervention;
  - establish an intervention protocol for urban-planning changes to land use and classification which enables the processes to be carried out under known and acceptable terms;
  - provide for the necessary reserves, whether for new work or for awarding existing dwellings, to meet rehousing needs.

### **Improving housing accessibility**

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock STRATEGIC LINE

D.2. Establishing a more social renovation policy

- If we are to improve housing-accessibility conditions we will need to implement initiatives along several lines:
  - Grants for improving accessibility and installing lifts: this includes improving accessibility for buildings and dwelling interiors, as well as installing lifts.
  - Amendments to planning for lift installations.
  - Mediation to facilitate agreements in communities: Disagreements often prevent improvements from being carried out. The Housing Offices will have two basic tools at their disposal for establishing these agreements:
    - · Cohesion grants.
    - · Customised grants and subsidies.
  - Changing over from private housing to a publicly owned dwelling: to facilitate the re-housing of people with mobility problems.
  - Privately owned housing exchanges: we will need to assess the possibilities for this

### D3. Improving the intervention capacity of the renovation policy

D3.1

### Implementing new mechanisms for providing renovation funding

Time scale: 2016 - 2018.

Ongoing

#### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock STRATEGIC LINE

D.3. Improving the capacity for intervention

- In many cases, if a renovation is to be carried out, the necessary funding will have to be available to enable it to be done and protect local residents from having to make a payment in advance. So, then, we will need:
  - To set up a guarantee fund for housing operations.
  - Funding and involvement from the energy suppliers in implementing housing-related energy measures.
  - Agreements with professional guilds and associations to reduce the initial economic outlay involved in renovations, so that the subsidies are paid directly to the companies, without the community of owners having to make any payments in advance.
  - Agreements with the banks so that they offer lowinterest-rate funding to communities of owners carrying out renovation initiatives.

D3.2

### Creating decent employment through renovations

Time scale: 2016 - 2025

### STRATEGIC AREA

D. Maintaining, renovating and improving the housing stock STRATEGIC LINE

### D.3. Improving the intervention capacity

- Renovations can provide an opportunity to create decent work and also offer an opportunity to the long-term unemployed and elderly people encountering difficulties entering the labour market. This is a sector that requires new jobs with specific and varied knowledge as well as manual labour.
- One of the goals behind renovation policies will be to train workers so they have the necessary knowledge to be employed in this sector. It will affect young people and people who have been out of work for a long time, as an entrepreneurship impetus through Barcelona Activa for creating cooperatives and promoting public procurement.
- To that end collaboration agreements will be promoted with Barcelona Activa, Third Sector entities and the cooperative economy working in the areas of renovation and energy efficiency to boost quality employment.
- A series of initiatives are planned: creating employment plans in the area of renovation, promoting dual-training plans, setting up workshop schools, vocational training and establishing standardisation centres for foreignnational workers who have expertise in building but no recognised qualifications.
- To ensure decent wages for construction workers intervening in publicly funded work, present and future possibilities offered by social clauses in the State's Act on public contracts will be used to the full.







