

London mayor promises rent controls if re-elected

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By Joey Gardiner 3 March
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Sadiq Khan says he will make election a “referendum on rent controls” and demand new powers from government if he wins

London mayor Sadiq Khan has launched his re-election campaign with a pledge to attempt to introduce rent controls in the capital.



Last July Khan issued a blueprint for introducing private sector rent controls in the capital, despite not formally having the powers to do so.

However, he was expected to today promise to make the forthcoming mayoral election a referendum on rent controls which, if he won, would give him a mandate to demand new powers from government.

Developers in the nascent Build to Rent sector fear that the introduction of rent controls could kill off investors interest in the sector, which has grown rapidly over the last five years.

At the launch of his mayoral campaign in Hackney, East London, Sadiq Khan was expected to say: “The case for rent controls is now absolutely undeniable. But Tory ministers have blocked us from introducing our plans for rent controls in London – and

have simply said no.

“They have refused to give us the powers we need to make rent controls happen.

“That’s why today, I am making the mayoral election on May 7th a referendum on rent controls – showing Londoners that I will stand up for renters.”

He added that his re-election would represent an “undeniable and irresistible mandate for the introduction of rent controls in our city.”



Last year's mayoral "blueprint" for the private rented housing sector recommended mandatory registration of private landlords and the establishment of a London Rent Commission to police standards and set out "how rents should be reduced over time to an agreed, more affordable level."

Dean Clifford, co-founder at Great Marlborough Estates said the policy, if enacted, would effectively slam the brakes on the built to rent sector in the capital. He said: "If we want London to be fit for the 21st century, we need to encourage more home building. Rent controls will have the opposite effect and force large investors to think twice before committing to projects in the capital."

Chris Norris, director of policy at the National Landlords Association, told City AM that implementing rent controls would slow investment in new build. He said: "Landlords will have no choice but to take their investment elsewhere, making it harder still for households to access the housing they need."