

Brighton & Hove City Council

HOUSING & NEW HOMES COMMITTEE

Agenda Item 47 (c)

Subject: Deputations

Date of Meeting: 24 January 2024

Report of: Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law

Contact Officer: Shaun Hughes
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Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

1.1 To receive any deputations submitted to Democratic Services.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

2.2 That the Committee responds to the deputations.

Living Rent Campaign deputation to Housing & New homes Committee

There is a chronic shortage of social housing in Brighton and Hove. 1,724 households are currently in temporary and emergency homeless accommodation (and the number is rising (1). The number of rough sleepers on our streets is increasing (by 27% between the last official rough sleeper counts) Many people born in the city can no longer afford to live here and move away from family and community. Private rents are far too high and unaffordable (an average 2 bed rent is £1,773 per month (2) and the middle income in the city is only £2,250 a month) and in part as a consequence the greatest cause of homelessness is the loss of a private rented home-) The councils' recent decision to compel some homeless households into the private rented (despite previously making a move to the private rented sector voluntary) is a step backwards.

In order to tackle the housing crisis, we need a return to rent controls in the private rented sector, an end to the loss of social housing through the right to buy and a return to investment in council housing by massively expanding social housing grant to deliver a significant programme of additional council homes. Sadly, both conservative and labour governments since 1989 have failed to do this. However, in Scotland and Wales the Right to Buy has been abolished. In Scotland rent controls have also been introduced and are being considered in Wales. In 2012 over £8 billion of government debt was taken on by councils under the self-financing settlement (3) This money, now equivalent of approximately £11.7 billion, is desperately needed and should be returned to councils as social housing grant to enable around 120,000 additional council homes at social/living rents.

We ask that the Housing committee agree to write to government and the 4 main opposition parties in England calling for:

- 1) Rent controls in areas like ours where private rents are unaffordable
- 2) An end to the right to buy
- 3) £11.7 billion provision of social grant to enable over 120,000 additional council homes at living/social rents

Locally there are measures that the council can take we ask that the housing committee to:

- 1) Press ahead with the Moulsecomb hub project which has planning approval to deliver 200 + new council homes
- 2) Review rent policy to make new and additional council homes more affordable
- 3) Abandon the policy of forcing homeless people into the private rented sector and instead give them a choice of whether the home is suitable

From Living Rent Campaign (signed by):

S. Rimmer
D. Montgomery
L. Knott
I. Needham
M. Gordon-Walker
S. Gorton
D. Gibson

Sources: (1) BHCC Q2 stats, (2) BHCC website, (3) DCLG self-financing final determination