

Subject:	'Living Rent' - Petition Triggering Full Debate		
Date of Meeting:	23 October 2014		
Report of:	Monitoring Officer		
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Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 Under the Council's Petition Scheme if a petition contains more than 1,250 signatures and is not petition requesting officer evidence, it will be debated by the Full Council.
- 1.2 A combined paper and e-petition has resulted in triggering a debate at the council meeting, having exceeded the threshold with a total of 1, 800 signatures confirmed at the time of printing the report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the petition is noted and referred to the Housing Committee for consideration.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION / CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**3.1 The Petition**

"We the undersigned petition Brighton & Hove Council to 1) Acknowledge that the massive increase in private sector rents is causing unacceptable harm to many residents in the city. Some of whom are faced with not having enough to feed their families once their rent has been paid. 2) Make a public statement deploring the hardship caused to residents of the city by unaffordable private sector rents that rose by up to 27% last year forcing many people to move away from areas where they have lived all their lives or live in unsuitable overcrowded accommodation 3) Develop an ethical landlord scheme, whereby landlords voluntarily commit: to charge living rent, to cap increases by inflation, to provide a good standard of property maintenance 4) Support the development of an ethical lettings agency 5) Call on the government to institute rent controls on private sector rents.

Rents are spiralling out of control, especially in Brighton & Hove where an average rent is £959 a month and many of these homes are not up to a decent standard. Faced with paying up to two thirds or more of wages on, unfair letting

agency charges, short contracts and increased evictions the future is bleak for private renters. Please sign this petition.”

Lead Petitioner – Diane Montgomery

3.2 The options open to the council are:

- To note the petition and take no action for reasons put forward in the debate; or
- To refer the petition to the relevant Committee Meeting; or
- To refer the petition to the relevant Committee Meeting with recommendations.

4. PROCEDURE:

4.1 The petition will be debated at the Council meeting in accordance with the agreed protocol:

- (i) The Lead petitioner will be invited by the Mayor to present the petition and will have up to 3 minutes in which to outline the prayer of the petition and confirm the number of signatures;
- (ii) The Mayor will then call on the relevant Committee Chair to respond to the petition and move a proposed response;
- (iii) The Mayor will then open the matter up for debate by councillors and call on those councillors who have indicated a desire to move an amendment or additional recommendation(s) to the recommendation listed in paragraph 2.1 of the report;
- (iv) Any councillor may move an amendment or recommendation, having regard to the recommendation in 2.1 above and any such proposal will need to be formally seconded;
- (v) After a period of 15 minutes, the Mayor will then call an end to the debate and ask the relevant Cabinet Member to reply to the points raised;
- (vi) The Mayor will then formally put:
 - (a) Any amendments in the order in which they are moved, and
 - (b) The substantive recommendation(s) as amended (if amended).