

Subject: Homelessness Policy Petition - Extract from the proceedings of the Council Meeting held on the 24 March 2016

Date of Meeting: 15 June 2016

Report of: Executive Head for Strategy, Governance & Law (& Monitoring Officer)

Contact Officer: Name: **Caroline De Marco** Tel: **29-1063**
E-mail: caroline.demarco@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Wards Affected: All

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

Action Required of the Housing & New Homes Committee:

To receive the following petition:

Homelessness Emergency Accommodation (Submitted by Daniel Harris)

"We, the undersigned request the council to consider the 10 point action plan listed below to address this matter:

1. Homemove Allocations for vulnerable persons in priority need with a duty of care should be awarded a higher banding than band C (the general band) when placed in Emergency Housing. I am looking for a band A priority.
2. More inspections of Emergency Accommodation to ensure the living standards meets the needs of the people occupying them.
3. The council to adopt a plan to bring emergency housing into public ownership by 2020. They MUST pledge to stop funding private landlords who only have an interest in profit.
4. I want the council to ask all applicants to complete surveys with all emergency housed people to ensure they have a voice.
5. The right to food, is a human right protecting the right for people to feed themselves in dignity, The council must ensure that emergency housing adequately meets the individual's dietary needs. The current conditions do not allow for a healthy diet which can be a huge issue for vulnerable people.
6. I want the council to be radical and rather than spend millions of tax payers money in private sector emergency and temporary housing, they should build more storage container homes after the success of the BHT scheme in Brighton.
7. I want the council to ensure that all persons in emergency accommodation have access to the internet for free.
8. To revoke the rules on no visitors. Vulnerable people are isolated enough and this in my opinion is discrimination. Even Prisoners are allowed visitors.

9. For persons who are vulnerable the council MUST provide them with secure social housing to ensure they are able to live life free from FEAR and outside the Private Sector Property Scam.
10. Ensure hot water is available in emergency housing for persons to wash in comfort.

Recommendation:

That the Housing & New Homes committee give due consideration to the following:-

- **An increase in the frequency of inspections of emergency accommodation and report on the outcome of these inspections at regular intervals to Housing & New Homes Committee;**
- **That satisfaction surveys are undertaken with residents moving into emergency accommodation and the results reported back;**
- **Exploring along with other relevant committees as a matter of priority the identification of sites and explore the development of council owned low cost emergency accommodation, either through a council owned company or directly owned by the council. That this exploration focuses on non-traditional, quick to build, construction such as the Y cube and containers be considered for these sites;**
- **Undertaking a review of the no visitor rules and consider the outcome at a future meeting;**
- **Adopting a policy of only using emergency accommodation in which hot water supply is guaranteed.**

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL

4.30pm 24 MARCH 2016

COUNCIL CHAMBER, BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Hyde (Chair), West (Deputy Chair), Allen, Atkinson, Barnett, Barradell, Bell, Bennett, Bewick, Brown, Cattell, Chapman, Cobb, Daniel, Druitt, Gibson, Gilbey, Greenbaum, Hamilton, Hill, Horan, Inkipin-Leissner, Janio, Knight, Lewry, Littman, Mac Cafferty, Marsh, Meadows, Mears, Miller, Mitchell, Moonan, Morris, Nemeth, A Norman, K Norman, O'Quinn, Peltzer Dunn, Penn, Robins, Simson, Sykes, Taylor, C Theobald, G Theobald, Wares, Wealls and Yates

PART ONE**98 PETITIONS FOR COUNCIL DEBATE**

98.1 The Mayor stated that the council's petition scheme provided that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at a Council meeting. She had been notified of three such petitions which had sufficient signatures to warrant a debate and therefore would call on the lead petitioner to present their petition before opening the matter up for debate.

(a) Homelessness Policy

98.2 The Mayor invited Mr. Harris to present the petition calling on the Council to adopt the ten point plan to address the issues related to emergency homelessness accommodation outlined in the petition.

98.3 Mr. Harris thanked the Mayor and presented the petition which called on the Council to consider the proposals listed to address issues associated with emergency accommodation for homeless people. He explained that he lived in emergency accommodation which comprised of a privately operated building with 60 rooms that were let at £28 per night – this equated to over £900 per with together a £50 service charge. Mr Harris highlighted some of his own personal background and added that the poor facilities, including inadequate kitchens, no laundry facilities and the exclusion of guests, as well as the cost of this accommodation added to his own levels of personal stress and impacted on his wellbeing. He highlighted, from a Freedom of Information Request, the amount that the Council had spent annually on this type of accommodation annually and argued that residents needed secure tenancies and

improvements to accommodation standards. He asked that the Council consider the points put forward in his petition.

98.4 Councillor Meadows thanked Mr. Harris for presenting his petition and extended her concern that the housing process had caused Mr Harris this level of stress. She went on to highlight that the Council was building new homes across the city, and noted that Mr Harris had provided a number of areas for the Council to consider and revisit. She stated that with a lack of social housing in the city there was a necessity to use stock from the private rented sector, but added that the Council always sought feedback and undertook proactive work such as inspections and she provided assurance that she would personally visit Mr Harris's accommodation. Finally she highlighted that the Council already provided free Wi-Fi in libraries and civic buildings and there was work being undertaken to see if this could be extended to low-income households.

98.5 Councillor Gibson moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group to the report's recommendation to add a further recommendation:

That Brighton & Hove City Council recommends that Housing & New Homes committee give due consideration to the following:-

- An increase in the frequency of inspections of emergency accommodation and report on the outcome of these inspections at regular intervals to Housing & New Homes Committee;
- That satisfaction surveys are undertaken with residents moving into emergency accommodation and the results reported back;
- Exploring along with other relevant committees as a matter of priority the identification of sites and explore the development of council owned low cost emergency accommodation, either through a council owned company or directly owned by the council. That this exploration focuses on non-traditional, quick to build, construction such as the Y cube and containers be considered for these sites;
- Undertaking a review of the no visitor rules and consider the outcome at a future meeting;
- Adopting a policy of only using emergency accommodation in which hot water supply is guaranteed.

Councillor Gibson took part in the debate and thanked Mr Harris for his bravery in coming forward and speaking to the Council. He noted that the petition was a very clear message that more needed to be done to reduce rough sleeping, build more social housing and urgently look into the quality of the accommodation used by the Council in the private rented sector. He noted that agreeing the proposed amendments would ensure they formed the basis of the consideration of the petition when it was referred to the Housing & New Homes Committee. Councillor Gibson noted that for some the temporary housing options were inadequate and pushed people into becoming rough sleepers, and he highlighted that the Council needed to speed up its efforts to look into alternative temporary housing solutions.

- 98.6 Councillor Druitt formally seconded the amendment.
- 98.7 Councillor Mears took part in the debate and thanked Mr Harris for bringing his petition to the attention of the Council; she went on to add that the Council needed to ensure that temporary accommodation was fit for purpose and had facilities such as adequate kitchens and running hot water as set out in the HMO guidance. Councillor Mears noted that the Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee had given a clear steer that the matter would be discussed at that Committee in full; however, she added that she would not support the amendment as she was of the view there were additional matters that needed to be considered above those put forward in the amendment.
- 98.8 The Mayor called on Councillor Meadows to respond to the debate.
- 98.9 Councillor Meadows stated that the Labour & Co-Operative Group would accept the proposed amendments and ensure they were part of the discussion at the next Housing & New Homes Committees; she also stated that there needed to be a clear pathway in place for those in need.
- 98.10 The Mayor noted that an amendment had been moved and put it to the vote. This was **carried** by 48 votes with 1 abstention as detailed below:

		For	Against	Abstain		For	Against	Abstain
1	Allen	✓			Mac Cafferty	✓		
2	Atkinson	✓			Marsh	✓		
3	Barford	<i>Absent</i>			Meadows	✓		
4	Barnett	✓			Mears	✓		
5	Barradell	✓			Miller	✓		
6	Bell	✓			Mitchell	✓		
7	Bennett	✓			Moonan	✓		
8	Bewick	✓			Morgan	✓		
9	Brown	✓			Morris	✓		
10	Cattell	✓			Nemeth	✓		
11	Chapman	✓			Norman A	✓		
12	Cobb	✓			Norman K	✓		
13	Daniel	✓			O'Quinn	✓		
14	Deane	<i>Absent</i>			Page	<i>Apologies</i>		
15	Druitt	✓			Peltzer Dunn	✓		
16	Gibson	✓			Penn	✓		

17	Gilbey	✓			Phillips	<i>Apologies</i>		
18	Greenbaum	✓			Robins	✓		
19	Hamilton	✓			Simson	✓		
20	Hill	✓			Sykes	✓		
21	Horan	✓			Taylor	✓		
22	Hyde			Ab	Theobald C	✓		
23	Inkpin-Leissner	✓			Theobald G	✓		
24	Janio	✓			Wares	✓		
25	Knight	✓			Wealls	✓		
26	Lewry	✓			West	<i>Absent</i>		
27	Littman	✓			Yates	✓		
					Total	48		1

98.11 The Mayor confirmed that the amendment had been carried.

98.12 The Mayor then put the recommendation to refer the petition to the Housing & New Homes Committee for consideration at its meeting on the 15th June 2016, to the vote, which was agreed.

98.13 RESOLVED: That the petition be referred to the Housing & New Homes Committee for consideration at its meeting on the 15th June 2016 and that the Council recommends that Housing & New Homes committee give due consideration to the following:-

- An increase in the frequency of inspections of emergency accommodation and report on the outcome of these inspections at regular intervals to Housing & New Homes Committee;
- That satisfaction surveys are undertaken with residents moving into emergency accommodation and the results reported back;
- Exploring along with other relevant committees as a matter of priority the identification of sites and explore the development of council owned low cost emergency accommodation, either through a council owned company or directly owned by the council. That this exploration focuses on non-traditional, quick to build, construction such as the Y cube and containers be considered for these sites;
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