

Labour amendment to motion E - 17 March 2016

The amended Motion will now read as follows:

The Housing crisis and the impact on homelessness:

Proposer: Adam Jogee

Seconder: Stephen Mann

This council is concerned by the effects of London's housing crisis on local people in Haringey and across London particularly with respect to homelessness.

This council is concerned that:

- After years of declining trends, all forms of homelessness have risen due to the shortage of housing and ongoing effects of the economic recession combined with Government policies - particularly welfare reforms and cuts to housing benefit. Independent research carried out for Crisis and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, shows that homelessness is likely to increase further still.
- Almost one in ten people say they have been homeless at some point, with a fifth of these people saying it happened in the last five years.
- In the UK, over 54,000 people were accepted as homeless and in 'priority need' in 2014/2015 – an increase of 36% since 2009/10.
- According to Government figures, rough sleeping has increased by 55% since 2010.
- 7,581 people slept rough at some point in London during 2014/15, a 16% rise on the previous year and more than double the figure of 3,673 in 2009/10

This council notes:

- Local Authorities have statutory duties towards homeless households these are broadly; providing advice and assistance free of charge to prevent homelessness, providing temporary accommodation while making enquiries into whether a main homelessness duty is owed and when this is accepted, accommodating the household until a suitable offer of settled accommodation is made.
- The Council currently provides a dedicated Housing Advice and Options service which focuses on homelessness prevention and a Homelessness Assessment service which is accessed when homelessness cannot be prevented.
- In Haringey, the Council prevented 647 households from becoming homeless in 2014/15, 96 (17%) more than in 2013/14 and 28% more than in 2012/13.
- In England, the biggest single recorded reason for homelessness is now the loss of an assured shorthold tenancy (AST)- the type of tenancy most commonly held by private renters
- The percentage of homelessness acceptances in England recorded as being due to the loss of an AST has doubled over the last five years, from 13% in 2008/9, to 26% in 2013/14.

This council further notes:

The Housing and Planning Bill currently being debated in Parliament, will (if it receives Royal Assent) have significant, far reaching and adverse implications for local residents, the supply of truly affordable housing and the Council, specifically:

- A requirement for the Council to sell 'high-value' council homes on the open market;
- The imposition of a levy or 'housing tax' on the Council to fund Housing Association right to buy tenant discounts, which could be anywhere in England;
- A requirement that the Council charges market or near market rents where households renting from the Council have an annual income of £40,000 or more;
- A new restriction on the Council to offer 5 year or shorter tenancies for new tenants;
- The introduction of 'starter homes' as new form of 'affordable' housing tenure.

The Bill in its current form will...

- undermine the Council's ability to comply with its statutory homeless obligations resulting in families staying longer in temporary accommodation.
- place further pressure on the Council's overall temporary accommodation budget.
- result in additional Council expenditure to administer and enforce the Government's pay to stay proposals.
- result in 'starter homes' being built in place of social housing which will be unaffordable to Haringey families and young people on ordinary incomes.
- further reduce the supply of affordable housing by undermining section 106 requirements on private developers to provide affordable homes.
- undermine and put at risk the Councils housing regeneration programme.
- provide no guarantee that the truly affordable social rented, homes the Council is forced to sell will be replaced like-for-like in Haringey.
- undermine local democracy and decision making by taking 32 new wide and open-ended powers for the Secretary of State over councils,
 - including the power to override locally agreed plans,
 - to mandate rent levels for social tenants,
 - to impose a housing levy on stock-holding councils, violating the terms of the housing revenue account self-financing deal Councils agreed with the government.

Whilst the Bill takes forward some positive measures in relation to the private rented sector, it does not address the affordability, poor conditions and insecurity issues in this sector – and as such will do nothing to help arrest the recent rise in homelessness.

This Council resolves:

- To make clear its opposition to the Housing and Planning Bill and continue to warn the Government and others of the impact of the Housing & Planning Bill on Haringey

- To ask the Cabinet Member for Housing to write to the Secretary of State with the Council's concerns about the Bill.