



Full Council – 8 July 2024

Motion for Non-Cabinet Member debate

Declaration of a Housing Emergency

This Council notes:

- London is the epicentre of the country's housing crisis, with a quarter of Londoners living in poverty after paying for their homes.
- In one of the wealthiest cities in the world, more than one child in every classroom is homeless and living in temporary accommodation, while rough sleeping is up 50% over this decade.
- Councils in London are spending £90m per month on temporary accommodation for homeless people - up almost 40% on last year.
- The dream of homeownership is out of reach for young people. The government have failed to act despite the housing crisis acting as one of the country's biggest barriers to growth.
- The government has spent billions of pounds on housing benefit every year, which goes into the pockets of private landlords without creating any new assets.
- Without intervention, the number of new affordable homes built will fall sharply in coming years thanks to high interest rates and runaway construction cost inflation.

This Council further notes:

- The Housing Needs Service in Brent has seen a 12% increase in homelessness approaches in 2023/-24 (7,300) compared to 2022/-23 (6,529). The total number of homeless families living in B&B and Annexe accommodation has risen to 485.
- Many Councils are being forced to book rooms in commercial hotels to meet statutory duties. In Brent this has driven a £13.4m overspend. These issues are not unique to Brent and have impacted the whole of the country – but especially London.

- There are 5,688 households in A-C banding on the waiting list. At Band C, the average waiting time for a 2-bed home is 8 years, with a 4-bed home rising to 24 years.
- GLA grant funding per unit of affordable housing is approx. £195k, with typical build costs per average unit in the region of £450k. Brent Council has planning permission ready or has submitted applications for 423 more affordable units, but many face a significant funding gap, and will not be viable without an increase in available subsidy.

This Council welcomes:

Pledges made during the current election campaign:

- To update the National Policy Planning Framework, including restoring mandatory housing targets.
- To get Britain building again, creating jobs across England with 1.5 million new homes over the next parliament.
- To work with local authorities to reform Local Plans and strengthen the planning presumption in favour of sustainable development, supported by additional planning officers.

This Council resolves to:

- (1) Work with other local authorities in London that have declared a housing emergency to calling on the incoming government to unlock the funding needed to deliver the affordable homes Brent desperately needs.
- (2) Write to the Secretary of State to recommend the following steps:
 - The suspension of the right-to-buy discount.
 - A new Housing Revenue Account funding settlement to increase the supply of housing, improve standards and support retrofitting.
 - Financial support to immediately purchase more homes from private landlords.
 - To review the Local Housing Allowance available for Temporary Accommodation.

Cllr Liz Dixon
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