

Full Council – 22 November 2021

1st Labour Group Motion

The Big Issue Campaign – Stop mass homelessness

This Council notes:

That thousands of families are facing evictions and repossessions as measures to protect residents put in place during Covid-19, end; Universal Credit is reduced; the furlough scheme ends; and electricity, gas and the cost of living rises at pace.

This Council believes that:

Now is not the time to unravel the interventions that the government has introduced to protect people during this unprecedented period.

Unless urgent action is taken by this government, the UK will face a homelessness crisis this winter, on a shameful scale.

Over the last year, nearly 6,000 residents approached Brent Council because they feared being made homeless. While our officer's work tirelessly to offer assistance to as many residents as possible, the sheer scale of demand sadly outstrips supply. The pandemic has shown that mass homelessness is a political choice – the government averted it once with the *Everybody In* initiative and they can do so again; simply by making additional funding available to this Council.

This Council resolves to:

1. Support the Big Issue's plan to Stop Mass Homelessness and call on the Lead Member for Housing & Welfare Reform to write to the relevant Secretaries of State asking them to keep people in their homes and in sustainable jobs. They could do this by committing to pay off £360m in rent arrears; suspend no fault evictions until a Renters' Reform Act is passed; make permanent the £20 Universal Credit uplift; improve access to Discretionary Housing Payment; unfreeze Local Housing Allowance; improve support for financial literacy education and invest to create new green jobs.
2. Express its support for a Wellbeing of Future Generations Act requiring public bodies to consider how decisions made now affect future needs, and tackle persistent problems such as poverty, homelessness, health inequalities and climate change.

3. Call on the Lead Member for Housing & Welfare Reform to Commission a report to be heard at the appropriate committee outlining options to amend the decision-making process to ensure that the impact of Council decisions on future generations are properly considered.
4. Tackle the root problem head on, by forging ahead with our ambitious programme to build 1700 council homes by 2028 and to maximise affordable housing options through the council's own company I4B, pan-London Capital Letters scheme and by working with trusted developers across the borough.

Councillor Robert Johnson
Northwick Park Ward