Brent

Item 9.2(a)

Full Council – 16 November 2026

Amendment submitted by the Labour Group to the Liberal Democrats Group Motion

Proposed amendment – To delete the wording indicated add the wording underlined in red:

Making Better Use of Empty Homes in Brent

This Council notes:

- Brent is facing a housing crisis. Thousands of residents are waiting for a council or social home, meanwhile many families live in overcrowded accommodation, temporary accommodation or homes that do not meet their needs.

- At the same time, council homes can sit empty for months waiting for repairs, inspections or other processes. There are currently at least 150 vacant council-owned properties - including 8 that have remained empty for a year or more – ~~and it is unclear whether this number includes properties within the portfolios of i4B and First Wave Housing~~. Since a peak 12 months ago, the number has now reduced by 26.5%.

- Homes must be safe and brought up to the right standard before new tenants move in. But leaving homes empty for longer than necessary is unacceptable.

- Every council home sitting empty represents a missed opportunity to provide a secure and affordable home to Brent residents. It places pressure on the Council's housing waiting list and can increase reliance on expensive temporary accommodation.

- ~~Southwark~~ Brent Council has ~~recently~~ already ~~announced~~ appointed a ~~task~~ Voids Manager supported by new contractors force to tackle its backlog of empty council homes, focusing on identifying delays and getting properties back into use more quickly. Brent ~~should~~ will examine ~~this~~ the approach of other London Councils to ~~and~~ identify what can be applied locally.

- Brent cannot solve the housing crisis overnight. New homes take time to plan and build, but ~~bringing empty homes back into use is something the Council can act on now~~. M making better use of the homes we already own must be a priority.

This Council therefore believes that:

- Empty council homes should be brought back into use as quickly as possible, without compromising safety, compliance or quality standards.

- Unnecessarily long void periods represent a missed opportunity to provide a home to Brent residents in housing need.

- Delays caused by repairs, procurement, inspections, administration or other Council processes should be identified and reduced wherever possible.

- Bringing larger family homes and properties suitable for households with the greatest housing need back into use should be prioritised where appropriate.

This Council therefore calls on Cabinet to:

(1) Publish a summary ~~details~~ of all void council-owned housing stock – including current void time, property size, and repair work required.

(2) Support the work of the Voids Team ~~Consider establishing an empty homes task force to~~ in tackling~~e~~ the backlog, by coordinating~~e~~ services and speeding up the return of vacant homes.

(3) Set clear targets for reducing the time council homes remain empty between tenancies, with attention to prolonged vacancies.

(4) Review repairs, procurement, inspections and other processes to identify unnecessary delays and address recurring causes.

(5) Prioritise larger family homes and properties suitable for households with the greatest housing need, where consistent with allocations policies and property suitability.

(6) Examine the approach taken by ~~Southwark and other~~ all London boroughs and adopt good practice that can help Brent get homes back into use faster.

(7) Continue to ~~R~~ report regularly to Cabinet and ~~Full Council~~ Housing Scrutiny on the number of empty council homes, average void periods, prolonged vacancies and progress in reducing unnecessary delays.

(8) Make reducing the number and length of unnecessary council home voids a priority within Brent's response to the housing crisis.

Councillor Robert Johnson
Barnhill Ward