Brent

Item 9.2(c)

Full Council – 16 November 2026

Amendment submitted by the Conservative 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. Brent's housing delivery and management arrangements include council-owned housing assets held through i4B and First Wave Housing. Effective oversight of vacant properties across these portfolios is necessary to ensure that public assets are managed efficiently, financial performance is protected and homes are made available to residents in housing need wherever appropriate.

- ~~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.~~

- 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 Council has recently announced a task force to tackle its backlog of empty council homes, focusing on identifying delays and getting properties back into use more quickly. Brent should examine this approach 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. 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 details of all void council-owned housing stock – including current void time, property size, and repair work required and to include separate figures for Brent Council, i4B and First Wave Housing, identifying any differences in void management performance and the reasons for those difference

~~(2) Consider establishing an empty homes task force to tackle the backlog, coordinate services and speed up the return of vacant homes.~~

(~~3~~ 2) Set clear targets for reducing the time council homes remain empty between tenancies, with attention to prolonged vacancies.

(4 3) 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, consistent with allocations policies and property suitability.~~

(~~6~~ 4) Examine the approach taken by Southwark and other London boroughs and adopt good practice that can help Brent get homes back into use faster.

(~~7~~ 5) Report regularly to Cabinet and Full Council on the number of empty council homes, average void periods, prolonged vacancies and progress in reducing unnecessary delays~~.~~ with separate reporting on the performance of i4B and First Wave Housing, including the number of vacant properties, average void periods, prolonged vacancies, expenditure incurred and action taken to address identified delays.

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

Councillor Jayanti Patel
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