

Motion to Council – Housing

Cherry Beath on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group

Council:

- Recognises and supports the aspiration of home ownership as a general principle which is the right of hard-working local residents.
- Notes the Government proposal to extend the Right to Buy to Housing Association tenants.
- Notes that 5,918 households are currently listed on the housing waiting register in B&NES – highlighting the need for more social rented homes to be made available not fewer – and notes that this number is likely to increase with the implementation of the proposal.
- Is deeply concerned about the proposed requirement for Council assets to be sold to pay for the proposal and further notes that this plan has a reported funding gap of over £1 billion and fails to address the situation for local authorities, such as B&NES, which no longer have any housing stock to sell due to historic transfers to housing associations.
- Notes that housing associations' capacity to build new housing will also be threatened by the announced rent reduction of 1% per year; this will reduce their rental revenue streams by 12% over the next four years, reducing their borrowing capacity and potentially putting planned development projects at risk.

Council resolves:

- To work with other neighbouring authorities and local registered social landlords to raise these concerns with regard to the Government Right to Buy proposals.
- To write to the MPs for Bath and for North East Somerset to call on them to support the Council's position and raise these concerns in Parliament.
- To further call on our local MPs to work towards ensuring: that the extension of Right to Buy is strictly limited to Housing Association Tenants and does not simply benefit buy-to-let developers; that exemptions are put in place for rural communities and important revenue-generating assets; and that genuine and timely one-for-one replacement of housing units occurs.