

Bath & North East Somerset Council	
MEETING	Council
MEETING DATE	11th July 2019
TITLE:	Housing Motion Report
WARD:	All
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	
List of attachments to this report: None	

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Labour Group proposed a motion during the full Council meeting of the 14th March based upon the recommendations of the final report of Shelter's commission on the future of social housing. This motion included a range of proposals surrounding the increase in the delivery of social housing, recovery of empty properties and further regulation of the private rented sector. An amended motion was passed which confirmed support for the vision of the report whilst resolving to...

...defer consideration of the motion until full Council in July 2019 and instruct Officers to prepare an information report for that Council on the options and the implications covering policy, budget and Council operations.

2 RECOMMENDATION

Given the importance of the topic the Council is asked to note that Cabinet have requested;

- 2.1 Further investigative work on the options relating to the building of Council housing and with a report being presented to Cabinet later in the year;
- 2.2 Furthermore that this topic is taken forward for discussion and development at the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Panel for cross party discussion before coming back to Council.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Labour Group proposed a motion during the Council meeting on the 14th March based upon the recommendations of the final report of Shelter's commission on the future of social housing¹. The Labour motion proposed the following:

This Council believes that:

7 In line with the vision outlined in the Shelter report, all political parties need to rediscover publicly built housing as a key pillar of our national infrastructure. A home is the foundation of individual success in life and a programme of home building can be the foundation of similar national success.

8 A major increase in the delivery of social housing is required to address the housing crisis in B&NES.

Council resolves therefore:

9 To publicly back the principles and solutions outlined in the Shelter report.

10 To start building Council housing again.

11 To change the priorities of ADL, to ensure that more social rented homes are built and rented out by the Council, not by a housing association.

12 To encourage parish councils to use their powers to purchase land and build council houses for local key workers and provide support for community led and community owned affordable housing.

13 To investigate the provision of more funding to enable the re-possession, refurbishment and sale of derelict properties, to develop homes above shops and garages and to adapt empty commercial and operational properties to provide temporary housing for homeless people.

14 To ensure that all rented property is decent and safe by investigating the extension of the present (self funded) licensing scheme to all rented properties, on a rolling basis, not just HMOs. To require all eligible landlords to apply for a licence but in order to encourage landlords to rent property at or below the Local Housing Allowance Rate, to exempt those doing so from the licensing fee.

15 To propose to Government that Bath, where rents are higher, becomes a separate Broad Rental Market Area to North East Somerset, where rents are lower.

16 To enforce minimum levels of affordable housing in new developments using the Local Housing Allowance as the upper limit, including service charges, to determine whether a housing development is genuinely affordable and to rigorously scrutinise all developers claims that a scheme will not be viable if it is made to conform to B&NES standards of social housing supply.

- 3.2 The motion generated significant debate. An amended motion, proposed by Cllr Tim Warren, was passed 44 in favour and with no objections. The amended resolution stated that...

¹ Shelter (2019). Building our Future: A Vision for Social Housing.
Printed on recycled paper

This Council believes that:

7. In line with the vision outlined in the Shelter report, all political parties need to rediscover publicly built housing as a key pillar of our national infrastructure. A home is the foundation of individual success in life and a programme of home building can be the foundation of similar national success.

8. A major increase in the delivery of social housing is required to address the housing crisis in B&NES.

Council resolves therefore:

9. To defer consideration of the motion until full Council in July 2019 and instruct Officers to prepare an information report for that Council on the options and the implications covering policy, budget and Council operations.

3.3 Discussions between the Cabinet and officers have identified that, whilst the Council has made good progress on the delivery of affordable housing, there is a clear desire to go further. As such, further investigative work on the options relating to the building of Council housing has been requested with a report being presented to Cabinet.

3.4 In addition, Cabinet also want to consider how this important area of work, which affects many local residents and which requires action over the long run, can be debated in a more open and transparent way, including the effective use of the scrutiny panels. As a result, it is proposed that this topic is taken forward for discussion and development at the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Panel for cross party discussion before coming back to Council.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 There are no statutory considerations arising from the recommendation of this report.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

5.1 The main recommendation of this report is that further work is undertaken to consider the options relating to the building of Council in more detail. As such, the direct and immediate resource implications of this report are limited and will be addressed through existing managerial arrangements.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision making risk management guidance.

7 CLIMATE CHANGE

7.1 The report, in itself, does not have any direct implications for climate change.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 None

9 CONSULTATION

9.1 Section 151 Officer and Monitoring Officer have had opportunity to review and input into this report.

Contact person	<i>Graham Sabourn, Head of Housing 01225 477949</i>
Background papers	<i>None</i>
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