

Bath and North East Somerset Council

Full Council Meeting 21st November 2024

Green Motion: Tackling the Housing Crisis in Bath and North East Somerset

To be proposed by Cllr Joanna Wright

Council Notes:

- Bath's status as a UNESCO World Heritage city attracts tourists, generating nearly half a billion pounds annually. However, the rise in short-term rentals, such as over 1,000 Airbnb listings, has reduced housing availability and pushed up rents by 5.2% from February 2023 to 2024.
- House prices in Bath and North East Somerset (B&NES) have surged by over 72% in the last decade, making it increasingly difficult for residents to buy or rent affordable homes.
- The Right to Buy scheme has diminished social housing stock nationally by 165,000 homes over the past decade, further reducing affordable options in B&NES.
- The government has proposed new rules for property owners to register short-term lets and require planning permission for rentals exceeding 90 days per year.

Council Believes:

- Housing costs are forcing residents out of the area.
- Government regulations on short-term lets are essential to freeing up homes for long-term renters.
- Tackling the housing crisis in B&NES requires more social housing investment and rent controls.

Council Resolves to:

1. Request the Cabinet Member for Built Environment and Sustainable Development to write to the government, asking for local authorities to have the power to introduce rent controls in B&NES.
2. Develop local measures to limit the impact of short-term holiday lets, including:
 - Consulting on capping the number of short-term rentals in high-demand areas.
 - Strengthening planning permission requirements for properties rented over 90 days a year, aligning with government proposals.
3. Request the Leader of the Council to write to the government calling to:

Unless where specifically set out in the statute, motions approved at Council do not bind the Executive (Cabinet) but may influence their future decisions.

Councillors are reminded of their public sector equality duty which requires the Council to consider or think about how their policies or decisions may affect people who are protected under the Equality Act.

- End the Right to Buy scheme to protect social housing.
 - Allow councils to borrow and build more social housing.
4. Improve policies on empty homes by:
- Exploring incentives for refurbishing and renting long-term empty properties.
5. Requests Cabinet to
- Monitor and expand the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) pilot scheme to reclaim under-utilised homes in B&NES.

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