

MOTION TO COUNCIL
24 May 2022

Title of Motion	Housing and Homelessness
Proposer	Cllr Kate Ewert
Seconder	Cllr Jayne Kirkham
Supporters (a minimum of three are required)	Cllr Mike Bunney, Cllr Loveday Jenkin, Cllr Dorothy Kirk and Cllr Laurie Magowan.
Recommendation for Council to vote on	<p>This Council resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implement the recommendations of the 2020 Cornwall Council Private Rented Sector Inquiry within 6 months. 2. Set up a dedicated Cornwall Council unit to enforce covenants in ex-council houses sold under Right to Buy legislation. 3. Fund and organise travel to school (if required) for all children who are temporarily more than 2 miles (primary) or 3 miles (secondary) away from their school due to their family becoming homeless and being moved into emergency or temporary accommodation arranged by Cornwall Housing Limited, for as long as they are in that accommodation and remain at that school. 4. Provide an allocated housing officer and an initial care letter or FAQs for Cornish residents facing homelessness, so that they know what action they have to take (apply for benefits, school travel etc) and what action the authority will take on their behalf. This letter should include the service charges and incidental costs that the emergency accommodation provider is likely to charge.
Context for the motion (i.e. why is the motion being submitted – what is the proposer aiming to achieve)	<p>In September 2020 this Council published the completed report of the Economic Growth OSC inquiry into Private rented sector housing. The report's recommendations were agreed and passed by Cabinet and full council to be implemented. Of the 3 recommendations made in that report, only a small number in recommendation 2 are being actioned. The main bulk of the recommendations, including recommendation 1, on consulting for selective and additional licensing, have not. That consultation for</p>

extra licensing was recommended due to evidence of the poor quality of the private rented sector housing and the high number of young children living in the private rented sector in the 3 towns specified in the report.

We are also unable to ascertain that the lobbying of government and local MPs on the items in recommendation 3 was ever carried out. So we ask that the letter that was drafted by our PRS officer could be sent to the Housing Minister and our 6 MPs.

In April 2019 this Council passed the in depth and clear "Post Right to Buy" policy. Part of this document covered the Council's commitment to enforce the covenants that we have on our ex-Council housing stock. Council houses are built from public money for the public good and it is inappropriate for them to be used as profit making enterprises, such as holiday-letting, and student HMOs and we have the powers to challenge this. We believe that we need to better resource the enforcement of the covenants on ex-Council properties, and we need to better advertise where and how breaches are reported for investigation.

In the last two years, as we have been gripped by the escalating housing crisis in Cornwall, we have seen more and more families being moved into emergency accommodation often miles from their home community and from their children's schools. There are larger families across the Duchy that have been in these situations for 5 months or more, as we do not have properties big enough for them to move into. The parents and carers of these children are left with uncertainty and large financial costs to get their children to their schools so they can have continuity, maintain friendships and have some normality as their worlds are turned upside down.

In addition to this, we are now seeing residents of Cornwall evicted from their private rental properties as landlords seek to take advantage of the booming holiday let market or sell. More and more frequently, these are families that have never had need to access benefits or social housing and have never needed the safety net that we provide. They are often overwhelmed, traumatised and scared – never thinking that they would find themselves in this position. The benefits and Homechoice system is overwhelming and confusing, people assume that there will be someone assigned to help them and even apply for their benefits on their behalf. Providing a simple FAQ sheet and

	checklist and person to contact will give clarity on what the council can do and what the resident has to do, and give help when most needed.
Does the motion*:-	
(i) have potential financial implications for the Council – if so advise what these might be	Yes, regarding travel funding and resourcing
(ii) have potential legal/constitutional implications for the Council – if so advise what these might be	Policy changes should not be required. The Council already has a certain amount of discretion and power to act in 'Exceptional Circumstances' in the Home to School Transport policy.
(iii) require further background information to enable the Council to make a decision and/or require detailed consideration – if so advised what might be required	No

*Should any/all of (i)-(iii) apply it is likely that the constitutional provision of referring the motion to the relevant Committee will apply.