

Birmingham City Council

City Council

10 January 2023



Subject: Motions for Debate from Individual Members
Report of: Janie Berry, City Solicitor (Monitoring Officer)
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Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? ☐ Yes ☒ No

If relevant, state which appendix is exempt, and provide exempt information paragraph number or reason if confidential :

1 Recommendation(s)

- 1.1 To consider the following Motions of which notice has been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules (section B4.4 G of the Constitution).

2 Notices of Motion

A. Councillors Ken Wood and Adrian Delaney have given notice of the following Notice of Motion:-

“This Council notes that between 2004 and 2012:

- The Birmingham Municipal Housing Trust was created and began building the first new social housing in the city for 30 years
- The Council’s housing department became rated as one of the best three in the country by the audit commission
- The stock condition of council housing in Birmingham increased from just 30% meeting the decent homes standard to 99%
- During these years, under New Labour’s system of national pooling, £77m of rent raised in Birmingham was being handed over to the treasury each year. The self-financing model introduced by the Coalition Government in 2011

meant a £37.9m additional resources annually (£49.8m after also taking into account rent increases) to reinvest in the housing stock.

This Council notes that between 2012 – 2022:

- There has been a decline in performance against the decent homes standard from 99% in 2011 to just 61%
- the Housing Ombudsman has been forced to launch an investigation into potential systemic failings at the council due to the high number of similar concerns and repeated failings as a landlord.
- 2 findings of severe maladministration by the Ombudsman against the council within the last 6 months.
- There have been an increasingly number of high profile media stories about tenants living in squalid or unsafe conditions, including people being hospitalised due to damp
- That 68% of Birmingham Council Homes have an energy efficiency rating of D or below, compared to 44% of social housing stock nationally.
- There have been 15,000 complaints of damp or mould in the last 5 years
- There are now 9000 properties in Birmingham that have one or more key components (such as doors, windows or central heating systems) that are old and, because of their condition need replacing or major repair

This Council believes that everyone has a right to live in a decent home and that where we live has a significant impact on wider outcomes, including physical and mental health, prosperity, educational achievement and the ability to reach individual potential.

This Council has no confidence in the Executive's management of the repair and maintenance of the Council's housing stock and believes that the current Administration have let tenants in this city down and failed in their legal and moral duties as landlord.

Council therefore calls on the Executive to

- Refocus the Council's Housing Department on its core purpose, which should be to provide decent, safe homes for those who can't afford the market, and to deliver against this purpose
- Carry out an in-depth condition survey to establish the true condition of all council housing stock
- Work with tenants, partners and scrutiny to develop and apply a clear standard of what an excellent repairs and maintenance service looks like

- Review contract management arrangements for repairs and maintenance, to include physical inspection and audit of repairs carried out
- Review the effectiveness of Housing Liaison Boards to ensure that tenants have a genuine and effective voice at all levels of decision making, including reviewing performance against standards and monitoring complaints to ensure lessons are being picked up and acted on
- Commit to re-establishing Birmingham's position as a national exemplar of the decent homes standard, with a target of 99% compliance by 2026
- Commit to implementing all recommendations from the Housing Ombudsman and to report back to Council within 6 months on progress against this."

B. Councillors Morriam Jan and Deborah Harries have given notice of the following Notice of Motion:-

"This Council recognises the difficult situations faced by Care Leavers in the City who can face significant barriers after they leave Local Authority care such as struggling to cope with independent living and placing them at heightened risk of social isolation, homelessness, unemployment and involvement in crime. Although care leavers have access to benefits, as the cost of living has increased, so have their struggles to travel and access basic needs. In order to make life easier and to help aid further integration, this Council proposes:

Lobbying the Combined Authority and National Government to ensure:

All care leavers have access to free public transport, for travel to work, apprenticeships or interviews until they are 25, so there are no barriers to attendance at their chosen workplace.

All care leavers, who are part of the National Apprentice Scheme or are in employment, have access to free medication up to the age of 25.

All care leavers are able to access a full package of Mental Health Support with specific focus on trauma and past harm."