

Council: 26 July 2016

Opposition Motion in the name of Cllr Ross Houston

Key worker housing strategy and affordable housing

Council notes the findings of the report "The Business Case for Affordable Housing" published by Peabody on 14 July and produced in partnership with the CBI with the research carried out by the Centre for Economic and Business Research:

- That London's social housing residents make a contribution that is five times greater than the housing benefit bill for social housing tenants in London in the same year.
- That Londoners living in social housing contributed at least £15bn to the capital's economy in 2015 alone.
- That over a third work in the emergency services (ambulance, police, fire service).
- That over 30 per cent work in lower paid jobs which are essential to the effective running of the capital - these include carers, security staff, cleaners, postal workers, kitchen assistants, and bar staff and waiters/waitresses.
- That businesses of all sizes and sectors have made it clear that both housing cost and availability is negatively impacting on their ability to recruit and retain staff.
- That the narrow definition of key workers fails to appreciate the essential role to the economy of many people working on lower incomes.
- That, post-Brexit, ensuring London remains globally competitive is even more important, and that means making sure the people who keep our city running have an affordable home.

Council notes the failure of the Conservative administration in Barnet to deliver enough affordable homes for people who need them, with only 18% affordable housing delivered in 2015/16 against a target of 40%.

Council also notes the removal of at least 800 social homes from Barnet's council estates through 'regeneration' that has resulted in more and more people being forced to move out of the borough. This has been formalised by a recent policy to acquire cheap housing outside the borough to move people to.

Council believes these failures could be damaging Barnet's local economy and businesses, and are making it harder for the Council to recruit and retain quality key workers - like social workers.

Council asks the Housing Committee to look into these issues and consider developing a key worker housing strategy for Barnet as part of a strategy to build more affordable homes in the borough.

Under Full Council Procedure Rule 23.5: if my item is not dealt with by the end I request that it be referred to the appropriate Council Committee for consideration.