



Housing and Growth Committee

27 January 2020

Title	Member's Items Councillor Paul Edwards - Effects of poverty on Barnet Homes tenants Councillor Sara Conway - Resolving the issues affecting residents in Marsh Drive, West Hendon
Report of	Head of Governance
Wards	All Wards
Status	Public
Urgent	No
Key	No
Enclosures	None
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Summary

At its meeting on 26 November 2019, the Housing and Growth Committee agreed to defer the Members Items received from Councillor Paul Edwards and Councillor Sara Conway. The Committee is requested to consider the items and give instructions.

Officers Recommendation

That the Housing and Growth Committee's instructions in relation to these Member's Items are requested.

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 Members of the Committee have requested that the items tabled below are submitted to the Housing and Growth Committee for considering and determination. The Housing and Growth Committee are requested to provide instructions to Officers of the Council as recommended.

Paul Edwards	Effects of poverty on Barnet Homes tenants <p>The Council's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment cites data that the percentage of children in poverty after housing costs in Barnet ranges from 23% in High Barnet to 50% in Colindale.</p> <p>Other data from the Child Poverty Action Group suggests that the number of children in poverty in Barnet after housing costs was 24,308 or 28.99% (2017/2018).</p> <p>Responses to my Council questions recently state that:</p> <p>"The government's fuel poverty statistics, dated 13 June 2019, estimate that 1 in 8 households in Barnet, a total of 17,346 households in the borough, live in fuel poverty."</p> <p>And:</p> <p>"An analysis completed by the GLA found that Londoners most likely to report not being able to keep their home warm in winter include those in the lowest income quintile (31 per cent), single parents (27 per cent), those living in social rented accommodation (27 per cent) and disabled Londoners (25 percent). These are the same population subgroups at risk of food poverty, for which an extensive analysis was completed in Barnet in 2018."</p> <p>Almost 5000 people received 3 day emergency food supplies from three food banks based in Barnet alone.</p> <p>Yet, in 2016 LBB Council Tax service issued County Court Summons against 4386 CTS claimants all of whom were charged court costs.</p> <p>I believe it makes no sense to take those residents on the lowest incomes to the County Court which is only empowered to address whether the person charged does in fact owe a debt to the Council, and if so makes a judgement based on the facts. To add a further burden on tenants who are now required to make a 20% contribution to Council Tax, is simply unfair, unjust and punitive.</p> <p>I would like the Housing & Growth Committee to receive a report about the extent of income, fuel and food poverty amongst our tenants and what steps we are taking as a Committee, alongside the</p>
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	wider council, to ameliorate this situation. The report should also include data on the percentage of these low income tenant households that have at least one adult in paid employment, and have children.
Sara Conway	<p>Resolving the issues affecting residents in Marsh Drive, West Hendon</p> <p>I request that the Housing & Growth Committee receives an urgent update on action to sort out the terrible living conditions for Barnet Homes tenants and residents still living in Marsh Drive, and regular updates as a standing item on the Committee agenda until the issues are resolved.</p> <p>The update should cover action to sort out the various repairs and problems in the block including the broken security system resulting in drug-taking in the hallways and burglary, the persistent problem of flooding, the damp and black mould in people's homes and the pest/vermin infestations.</p> <p>If these problems are not resolvable in the short-term, I would like the Committee to consider moving all the tenants to more suitable accommodation in the Borough, and granting them secure tenancies.</p>

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 No recommendations have been made. The Committee are therefore requested to give consideration and provide instruction.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 N/A

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 Post decision implementation will depend on the decision taken by the Committee.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

- 5.1.1 As and when issues raised through a Member's Item are progressed, they will need to be evaluated against the Corporate Plan and other relevant policies.

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 None in the context of this report.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 A Member (including Members appointed as substitutes by Council) will be permitted to have one matter only (with no sub-items) on the agenda for a meeting of a committee or Sub-Committee on which s/he serves. The matter must be relevant to the terms of reference of the committee.

5.3.2 The referral of a motion from Full Council to a committee will not count as a Member's Item for the purposes of this rule.

5.4 Risk Management

5.4.1 None in the context of this report.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

5.5.1 Members' Items allow Members of a Committee to bring a wide range of issues to the attention of a Committee in accordance with the Council's Constitution. All of these issues must be considered for their equalities and diversity implications.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

5.6.1 None in the context of this report.

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

6.1 Email received on 14 November 2019 and the Committee's decision on 26 November 2019 to refer the two Members' items to its next meeting.