

## **Appendix B – Summary of the Principal Petitioner’s Speech**

Most councillors will have children, grandchildren so this petition is your family’s problem and a concern for all families in Crawley. We do have a housing crisis. You have tonight a unique chance to positively affect the following: the fact we have increasing numbers of homelessness in the town centre, the fact that there’s 3000 people on the housing list, the fact that there’s people particularly in my area of Bewbush charged £1500 a month to private landlords. Not only are people being superexploited but there no secure tenancies – 21 days and you could be out as the private landlord wants to charge you more rent. One Councillor has already told me that they are already very concerned about the situation.

The petition is in 3 parts;

Part One – end the so-called affordable housing. So-called affordable housing means the government allows councils to charge new builds or new tenants (if you’re going from one old property to another old property or a new tenant then that is still affordable housing as well as new builds being affordable housing) it allows councils to charge new builds or tenants rents between 50-80% of the market value. I’m an old billed tenant and I get charged 50% of the market value. Since 2012 the year affordable housing started the council has only built Forge Wood at council rents (see question put to Councillor Irvine at the March Council meeting). In 10 years 324 affordable housing have been built (see Crawley Observer article Karen Dunn). So in 10 years apart from Forge Wood only 32 homes have been built in Crawley each year and every one of these is at the 80% or market value which is not affordable. The council built flats by the college which is £170 a week I don’t call that affordable.

Not only is it unacceptable to be charged 30% more than me at a time when we have the greatest cost of living crisis in our lifetimes ie you eat or you heat your home but we have the scandal of this council charging dearer affordable rents than any other council in the country, please see the information left directly to government website

You don’t have to exploit our people, as the government allows you to charge 50% as I am charged. End so-called affordable housing and introduce council rents that are 50% of market value for all. Camden, Greenwich, Hackney, Haringey, Waltham Forest, Suffolk and Kensington are all charging 50% and so can you.

Part Two – borrow to built council houses with rents that are comparable to existing stock. You can now borrow to built council houses at council rents. In 2018 the housing revenue budget cap was lifted. Interest rates while they have gone up are still very low and this is the time to borrow but before you borrow you can use the £40m surplus in the housing revenue account and you can return the £300,000 year which has come from garages that was taken out of the housing revenue account and put into the general fund. And this was done in secret and tenants didn’t know about it and I suppose most councillors didn’t know about it. Building more council houses to clear the 3000 on the waiting list must be sustainable so we don’t just build anywhere and no one would agree with the 10,000 on the West of Ifield site. We appreciate that land is getting scarce but we’d argue that council homes at council rents should be built on land that is available.

Part Three – using housing qualities to achieve the cost. Housing craftsmen are always cheaper than always using big multinational building firms. Collection of workmen are not out to get super rich or rip people off so why not use them and stretch our money and obtain value for money.

Finally, there are two outcomes on the vote. The pessimist will say you won’t back the petition, you won’t do anything to cut homelessness, you won’t cut the waiting list, you won’t cut the private rents by offering an affordable alternative. But can I say that if you did this

there would be a consequence that people won't vote for you. Today trust and respect for politicians is at the lowest level in my lifetime and I'm a pensioner. If I was a Councillor I would want to do everything I could to protect the citizens of Crawley otherwise what's the point of having councillors. I am optimistic you will back this petition. I will say to you go home tonight to your families and say I did something fantastic tonight I voted to change lives for the better and put money in people's pockets. Make your families proud of you and make your community proud of you.