

Full Council

27 MARCH 2024

NOTICE OF MOTION – SUPPLY AND AFFORDABILITY OF SOCIAL HOUSING

Mover Councillor Crow and Seconder Councillor Millar-Smith

This Council notes:

At the meeting of the Full Council in July 2022, the following petition was submitted under the Petition Scheme, signed by over 1,000 Crawley residents.

“We need truly affordable, publicly owned homes for Crawley people. We, the undersigned, are appalled at Crawley Borough Council’s decision to charge council tenants so-called affordable rents at the maximum 80% of the market rate. This policy is causing unnecessary hardship and must be scrapped. Instead, we call upon the Council to borrow the money to build council houses at rents comparable to existing stock and use housing cooperatives to reduce the cost.”

It was presented and after discussion, it was agreed to note the petition and for councillors to be provided with information relating to the charging levels for affordable rents, which was subsequently done.

This Council further notes:

Since July 2022, we have seen increased housing costs for all tenures, including for council tenancies charged at social and affordable rent levels.

At the February 2023 meeting of the Full Council, the following items occurred:

- The annual budget was passed, with it being highlighted how exceptionally high temporary housing accommodation costs would become financially unsustainable for the council.
- A motion declaring a Housing Emergency for Crawley was passed with unanimous support.
- A written question was submitted and answered, which showed that in 2023, only 37 new Council homes were delivered, which was lower than in previous years.

This Council resolves to:

1. Following the declared Housing Emergency declared for Crawley, fully explore all options with renewed vigour, including borrowing and using housing co-operatives, to maximise both the delivery and the speed of delivery, of new social housing for Crawley.

2. Increase the rate of lobbying to all those who could potentially positively influence the outcome, to resolve the water neutrality restrictions that is negatively impacting the delivery of new housing in Crawley, and wherever possible, present a united cross-party approach in doing so.
3. To assist with affordability for future tenants, seek learning from other local authorities, including London boroughs such as Kensington and Chelsea, to see how more affordable rents for new properties can be realistically set at the lowest possible amount within the 50-80% range that is national policy.
4. Bring back a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in 2025, to report back on social housing delivery during 2024, including what efforts and progress the council has made with regard to the first three resolutions of this motion.