

Motion on Notice

Submitted by Councillor Ball

This Council recognises the increase in homelessness both in the District and across the country, as well as the acute cost-of-living crisis facing people in Lichfield, Burntwood and surrounding areas. The Council further notes that rapidly increasing rents and mortgage rates since the 2022 autumn statement, coupled with a shortage of genuinely affordable housing at social rents locally, have made the financial pressure facing residents of our District much worse. This Council therefore resolves:

1. To follow up the Leader signing the District Councils' Network letter to the Chancellor, asking him to review the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and the Chancellor's decision to unfreeze this in the Autumn statement, by writing to our local MPs, urging them to press the Chancellor to end the freeze in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) immediately, as he has done with the reduction in National Insurance rates, as Shelter and many other housing bodies have called for, to ensure that the level of LHA allows everyone in Lichfield District depending on this to secure a roof over their heads over the coming winter months.
2. As the current model for assessing financial viability of housing developments and the level of "affordable housing" on sites favours developers by putting a ceiling on house value estimates but not on cost estimates, this Council requires the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Plan, to review this model and look at ways to increase levels of "affordable housing" and ensure that developments meet the needs of local people. This review should be carried out, fully involving a wide range of Councillors in this, and evaluate the evidence bases used within the model, with the aim of delivering much nearer to 40% affordable housing on new housing sites and certainly no less than 20% and a significant part of that at social rents.
3. To require the Cabinet Member for Housing and the Local Plan to work with a cross section of all Councillors and Officers and whatever outside bodies can offer support on this to look at ways of developing a Living Rent model (rents based on a third of local household incomes) for all new rented housing across the District provided by social landlords.