

HOUSING EMERGENCY – COUNCIL STATEMENT

This Council is committed to maintaining mixed and stable communities, and encouraging the development of housing to meet local need.

Replacing secure tenancies with fixed term tenancies will undermine the stability of sustainable communities and discourage tenants' investment of time and energy in our community. Tenants will be fearful that any improvement in their financial circumstances might mean being made to leave their homes.

Excluding people from waiting lists and nominations and putting homeless households into short term private sector lets, would add to pressure on inadequate private rented housing, and will do nothing to provide more homes.

To meet local housing need requires more new and improved council and other secure and genuinely-affordable homes for rent. New RSL fixed-term tenancies with up to 80% market rents, will push up Housing Benefit costs but will not create the homes we need.

The impact of Housing Benefit cuts will fall overwhelmingly on women, people with disabilities, black and minority ethnic families, single parents and the most vulnerable. They will destabilise communities further, disrupting education, health, carer and child protection services to many. Reducing the costs of Housing Benefit requires regulation of high private sector rents, and more council and other genuinely affordable homes for rent.

We therefore agree to:

- Consult widely with existing and would-be tenants and others on proposals for secure tenancies, rents and housing benefit
- Seek to involve private sector tenants, and support them in organising in face of high rents, housing benefit cuts, insecurity and disrepair
- Not replace existing or future secure tenancies with fixed term tenancies
- As a strategic housing authority and planning body, discourage RSL development of fixed term tenancies at up to 80% market rents
- Lobby against proposed cuts in Housing Benefit
- Not evict tenants in rent arrears due to the proposed Housing Benefit cuts
- Support campaigns for more secure and genuinely-affordable council and other housing
- Call on other landlords to support these points