

## Council 23 July 2015

### Notice of motion – Right to Buy for Housing Association Tenants

This Council notes:

- the new Government’s proposal to extend the Right to Buy to Housing Association tenants, to be paid for by selling off the most expensive Council Housing stock;
- with alarm the shortage of affordable rented homes in Torbay, having less than half the national average of Social housing in Torbay with 1921 households on Torbay council’s Housing register and is very concerned that the current government plans risk making matters far worse.
  - the recent LGA “First 100 Days” campaign which highlighted there are 1.7 million households on waiting lists for affordable housing across England and that more than 3.4 million adults between 20 and 34 live with their parents;
  - that a recent opinion poll showed that just 16% of the public believed that extending Right to Buy to housing association tenants would be the most useful way of tackling the affordability crisis; the public’s top choice was to help housing associations or councils to build more affordable homes, selected by 46% of the public;
  - the recent report from June 2015 which shows that there could be a funding gap of over £1 billion to pay for the scheme.

Council opposes the forced sell off of council housing to pay for this plan and is concerned that the Government also:

- Fails to address the situation for many local authorities which no longer have any housing stock to sell as they have transferred theirs to housing associations;
- Fails to address the situation in areas of high housing demand where there are often few suitable sites to build replacement social housing stock;
- Fails to recognise that this means housing associations will simply be trying to catch up with replacing homes rather than building affordable housing to give more people homes they need
- Fails to recognise that this means that housing Associations will have their financial plans under mined.
- Fails to recognise that the charity commission are likely to challenge the disposal of a charities assets at less than the market value.

Council notes that even the Conservative Mayor of London has said he did not want to see councils “deprived at a rapid rate of their housing stock” if more homes were not being built to replace them.

Council recognises the desire by many to own their own homes, and suggests that proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrats over a “Rent to Own” model and Shared Ownership housing would represent a better way of reaching this goal.

Council also notes that there are existing routes for housing association tenants to own their own properties – some Housing Association tenants already have the Right to Acquire.

Council resolves:

- to work with other neighbouring authorities and housing associations to oppose the current government proposals;

- to write to our two MPs for Torbay Unitary Authority asking to support the Council's position; to speak up in parliament for more social housing and not less and to push for a genuine "one for one" replacement but not at the cost of losing more social housing.

Proposed by Councillor Darling (S)

Seconded by Councillor Stocks