

Motion relating to the provision of genuinely affordable housing

In the names of Councillors Carol Birchmore, Cllr Donald Berry, Cllr Andrea Booth, Cllr Des Duncalfe, Cllr Glyn Marsden, Cllr Ken Simpson, Cllr Mike Smith and Cllr Mary Walsh

Andy Burnham has recently admitted that setting targets for private developers to build or pay for affordable housing does not work. The number of council homes is falling in 8/10 boroughs in Greater Manchester. Only Salford and Trafford built more than they lost in the last year.

Manchester City Council are collaborating with Manchester Housing Providers Partnership (MHPP) to provide much needed affordable housing – more than 700 - on surplus council land, (i.e. in their land disposals programme). They are expecting revenue savings in maintenance and insurance in addition to some proposed developments creating savings (or cost avoidance relating to temporary accommodation provision).

Bury's Housing Needs and Demand Assessment identifies an “affordable imbalance” in areas such as Ramsbottom and Prestwich when compared to parts of Bury and Radcliffe. Some, especially younger people are having to move out of these areas to find more affordable housing.

This Council needs to follow Manchester's lead and either build their own housing or work with social housing providers to offer genuinely affordable housing ie 50-60% of market rent, rather than the 80% market rents currently talked about as “affordable”.

Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that a council cannot sell land for less than the best price reasonably obtainable, unless it has the consent of the Secretary of State. However, The Secretary of State has issued general consents that allow councils to dispose of land for less than its market value if the purpose is to promote or improve the economic, social, or environmental well-being of the local area.

It is recognised that where sites are disposed of for less than best consideration, the Council may receive reduced capital receipts. However, this would facilitate the provision of genuinely affordable housing and reduced expenditure in temporary housing and associated costs.

This proposal requires complex discussion and analysis. This motion proposes the Council undertakes a thorough costed analysis in terms of both monetary costs and socio-economic advantage to determine the viability of building its own or collaborating with social housing providers using council owned land to provide genuinely affordable housing to address the current dependence on developers to provide so called “affordable” housing.

The Council resolves to:

- Include a required consideration of land being used for the provision of genuinely affordable housing before making a decision on whether Council owned land can be sold on the open market
- Evaluate all sites on the accelerated land and property disposals register to determine its suitability for provision of genuinely affordable housing
- Look at the possibility of using Council owned land to address “affordable imbalance” in relation to some areas of Bury MBC

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