

NOTICE OF MOTION

**MAKING VACANT COUNCIL BUILDINGS AVAILABLE
FOR USE AS HOMELESS SHELTERS**

That the Council requests the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee to commission and give consideration to an urgent report that would enable the city council to:

1. Make policy that allows for all vacant City Council buildings to be made freely available for use as temporary homeless shelters, to be run by community charity and voluntary organisations that are able and willing to do so;
2. Publicises the availability of vacant City Council buildings to the voluntary and community sector, and calls for expressions of interest from the community to operate these spaces;
3. Make preparations for this at the earliest possible time, given the onset of winter, and offers clear guidance frameworks and assistance to all interested groups, particularly with navigating any regulatory requirements; and
4. Sets Terms of Reference for use of the spaces, Conditions of use and clearly details the arrangements for reclaiming possession of the relevant premises when circumstances require it.

Supporting information

1. There is an increased likelihood of premature deaths and exacerbation of health problems that impact upon those sleeping rough in Brighton and Hove, which has been acknowledged in the Rough Sleeping Strategy, which seeks to end rough sleeping by 2020.
2. The recent publication of Brighton and Hove's Homelessness figures estimate that around 144 people are sleeping rough in the city. This is a significant increase on the previous year and reports from local homelessness and housing charities show that this figure is likely to continue to rise, given changes to benefit caps, the rising cost of living and the crisis in affordable housing in Brighton and Hove. Recent media reports outline the need for more homelessness shelters in the city.
3. Similar schemes have been introduced by local authorities in Manchester and Bristol:

[1] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-manchester-34835788>

[2] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-35167430>

and the success of the petition started in Brighton and Hove on this same issue:
<https://you.38degrees.org.uk/petitions/open-up-empty-buildings-in-brighton-and-hove>

