

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the committee for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes.

Notification of 1 Deputation has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

**(a) Deputation Lynchet Close Rent Levels
Spokesperson Sheila Rimmer**

Supported by: Nichole Brennan, Carrie Hynds, John Hadman, Zoe Polydorou

Deputation to Housing and New Homes from the Living Rent Campaign

We are here to urge the housing committee to agree to more affordable new council housing. Rents are too high for ordinary people to afford and live on in the city and we argue that public providers of housing (such as the council) should not be setting rents in relation to the market, but rents should be based on what people can afford.

We understand that each year on average 80 social rented homes are lost to the city through the right to buy. These homes are being replaced by so called “affordable rents” which are twice as much. But the council could replace some of these homes with rents much closer to ordinary council “social rents”.

We therefore ask the committee to consider building new homes at less than so called “affordable”, private sector or LHA rates (all these rates are linked to the private rental market rather than incomes. In contrast a living rent is linked to household incomes. Social rents are also set mostly in relation to incomes as are the council’s welcome concept of a “living wage rent”

If we take the middle income of households in the city and assume they should not have to spend more than a third on rent, then rents need to be less than £9,000 a year for middle earners and even less than £9,000 for half of households whose incomes are less than this. 10,000 households can only afford to pay social rents and many others not much more.

One option (option 5 in previous committee papers) would involve the council making no surplus from the new council houses over the first 40 years. Under this option two of the rents are around 60% more than council rents which is the level calculated by the Living Rent campaign as a “living rent” for Brighton and Hove. We urge you to support this option. This would be a historic step forward and the council would be setting an important example to others.

We also understand that there is an option to charge the same level of rents as the Joint Venture with Hyde “Living wage rents” and that charging these rents still generates a surplus for the council. This option enshrines the principle of linking rents to income and though the rents are a bit higher than our campaign calculates they should be, we support also this option. Partly as we accept that the higher rents are partly mitigated by the lower energy bills expected

In general we ask that in providing new council homes that the committee as a matter of policy always consider providing rents at Living rents and Living wage rent levels. As a not for profit landlord, the council is one of the few bodies able to provide more genuinely affordable rents needed by the lowest 50% of households in the city. It is vital you do this.