

## **Housing – Motion to Lancaster City Council – 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

**Proposer: Cllr Jack O’Dwyer-Henry. Seconders: Cllrs Oliver Robinson, Colin Hartley, Jason Wood, Katie Whearty**

The Council notes and welcomes the campaigns by ACORN, the Citizens’ Advice Bureau, and Shelter which call upon landlords not to evict tenants for the duration of the pandemic;

This Council Resolves that:

1. Officers will take reasonable steps to contact landlords, letting agencies and housing providers in the district to request that they:
  - a. Do not evict tenants for the duration of the pandemic, (save where exemptions apply for urgent cases such as antisocial behaviour, trespassers, and domestic violence);
  - b. Work with the Council, other agencies, tenants’ unions to find alternative solutions to eviction, and to seek support from council, Citizen’s Advice and other agencies in cases of extended arrears in order to maintain tenants in their tenancies;
  - c. Desist from discriminatory practices that act as barriers to benefit claimants such as “No DSS” policies, requiring six months’ rent in advance, homeowner guarantors and prohibitive terms and conditions.
  
2. The Chief Executive will write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government urging:
  - a. The current ban on evictions be extended for a minimum of six months;
  - b. removal of the exemption to this ban which allows for eviction due to rent debt accrued during the past six months;
  - c. The eviction ban be extended to apply to lodgers;
  - d. The introduction of a grant to help alleviate COVID-related rent debt, as requested by both leading charities, and landlord and property agents’ associations;
  - e. The quick introduction of the promised Renters Reform Bill to scrap Section 21 evictions,
  - f. Introduction of compulsory registration for landlords as requested by many local authorities, in order to better support tenants in their tenancies;
  - g. The introduction of enforcement measures to prevent unlawful discrimination against benefit claimants by landlords and letting agents, following court rulings in 2020 that such practices are illegal;
  - h. That student housing providers, including universities, are asked to waive rent for student tenants for the duration of the time during which they are unable to access their accommodation due to lockdown regulations, and for the government to provide financial support to cover these costs.

### **Officer briefing note:**

The motion is consistent with the Council Priority of ‘Healthy and Happy Communities’. The motion if agreed will require officers to take reasonable steps to contact landlords, etc. Officers can contact the ones for whom we have contact details within existing resources.