



## COUNCIL MEETING – 21 SEPTEMBER 2017

### PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO MOTION 1

#### **Motion 1: Protecting Private Renters**

#### **Proposed amendment to be moved by Councillor Russell**

This Council notes that -

- The housing crisis means that more young people and families are moving into the private rented sector. According to the latest census, the proportion of rented households was 36 per cent in 2011, up from 31 per cent in 2001.
- Soaring rents and certain unscrupulous landlords and letting agencies are making it increasingly difficult for private renters to continue living in Islington.
- The recent Queen's Speech in June announced a Tenants' Fees Bill that would ban letting agent fees for renters, although there is no timetable for it to be debated in Parliament.

This Council further notes that -

- Islington Council is working hard to support and protect private renters in Islington by:
  - Launching Islington Lettings in 2014, London's first not-for-profit lettings agency where tenants do not have to pay tenancy fees.
  - Introducing an additional HMO licensing scheme for Caledonian Road and Holloway Road, two areas known to have a large number of poorly managed HMOs, to protect renters from poorly managed accommodation that could potentially endanger their health and safety.
  - Fining and ensuring the prosecutions of a number of landlords and letting agencies for failing tenants and breaking the law, for offences ranging from giving tenants sham licenses to renting out substandard properties.
  - Providing a dedicated telephone number (020 7527 3001) for its Private Sector Housing team, who can resolve issues between landlords or letting agencies if the tenants are unable to themselves.
  - Ensuring private accommodation is safe and healthy to live in by enforcing standards and providing advice to both tenants and landlords through its Residential Environmental Health service.
  - Promoting good standards in and providing advice about the private rented sector through its Trading Standards department.
  - Providing free, independent, confidential and impartial advice to private renters on their rights and responsibilities through the Islington Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB).
  - Doing everything it can to prevent private renters from becoming homeless by resolving issues with landlords through its Housing Advice Team.

- Islington Council was responsible for two thirds of total fines issued by London councils to rogue landlords since new enforcement measures, on displaying letting fees and membership of deposit and redress schemes, were introduced in May 2015.
- The 2017 Labour manifesto proposed a number of positive measures to protect private renters, including: an inflation cap on rent rises, granting the Mayor of London the power to give renters in London additional security, legislating to ban letting agency fees for tenants and giving renters new consumer rights.

This Council resolves to -

- Back the ~~Labour Party's~~ grassroots campaigners such as Generation Rent and Acorn who have done so much to campaign for stronger regulation of the private rental sector in order to protect renters.
- Make representations to Government to urge them to introduce further regulations to ensure proper protection of renters' rights, including preventing letting agencies imposing rip-off fees by introducing a Tenants' Fees Bill that is properly enforced.
- Continue to use all powers available to it to identify and fine bad landlords and letting agencies who are breaking the law and endangering tenants, and ensure they are prosecuted where possible.
- Encourage private renters to report unscrupulous landlords and letting agencies to the Council so their concerns can be followed up where appropriate.