



Subject:	Notice of Motion – Increase in Average Rent Costs
Date:	21st February, 2023
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor/Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Restricted Reports	
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?	
After Committee Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
After Council Decision	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sometime in the future	<input type="checkbox"/>
Never	<input type="checkbox"/>

Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To consider the Notice of Motion received for the meeting of the Council on 1st February in relation to an Increase in Average Rent Costs
2.0	Recommendation
2.1	The Committee is asked to consider the motion and agree to either adopt the motion, refer it for debate at the Council meeting (with or without restrictions) or reject the motion.

3.0	Main Report
3.1	<p data-bbox="316 304 472 331"><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p data-bbox="316 365 1514 432">The Committee will be aware that Standing Orders 13 (m) to (r), as agreed by the Council at its meeting on 4th October, are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="363 465 1514 633">(m) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will have delegated authority to adopt or reject Notices of Motion. The Lord Mayor will indicate at the Council meeting those Notices of Motion that have been considered by the Standards and Business Committee and whether such Notices of Motion were rejected or adopted. In either case, the proposer only may speak on the issue at Council.</i> <li data-bbox="363 656 1514 824">(n) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will refer all Notices of Motion directly to a standing committee when the matter to which the Notice of Motion refers falls within the remit of that committee. At Council, the Lord Mayor will indicate that the Notice of Motion was received and referred. There will be no speakers on such Notices of Motion at Council.</i> <li data-bbox="387 846 1514 947">(o) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will refer Notices of Motion for consideration by full Council when the Notice of Motion relates to a strategic or constitutional matter.</i> <li data-bbox="387 969 1514 1037">(p) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will not have the power to amend the wording of any Notice of Motion that is being referred to the full Council for debate.</i> <li data-bbox="387 1059 1514 1160">(q) <i>Any amendments to Notice of Motions to be proposed at the Council are to be furnished at least one day in advance of going to the full Council and will be circulated to Party Group Leaders in advance of the Council meeting.</i> <li data-bbox="387 1182 1514 1328">(r) <i>In referring any matter to the full Council, the Standards and Business Committee may determine to restrict contributions to the debate in relation to any Notice of Motion to one per political party. At the Council meeting, the Lord Mayor will clearly indicate if the restriction applies.</i> <p data-bbox="204 1361 844 1395">3.2 The following motion has been received:</p> <p data-bbox="316 1429 759 1462"><u>Increase in Average Rent Costs</u></p> <p data-bbox="347 1496 1474 1597">“This Council recognises the increase in average rent costs in the North by roughly 10% over the past 12-month period. The Council further recognises the impact these increases have on those dealing with higher cost of living prices.</p> <p data-bbox="347 1630 1474 1697">With warnings of higher mortgage prices being pushed onto tenants by landlords, this Council accepts that people in Belfast will struggle further to pay increased rental bills.</p> <p data-bbox="347 1731 1474 1832">Indeed, rising rentals and rising house prices mean that more people may be forced to rent for longer before they can afford to buy, adding to increased demand for rental properties which can lead to even further rental price increases.</p> <p data-bbox="347 1865 1474 2000">This Council rejects the idea that renters should be left unprotected against rising prices in the rental sector or risk facing eviction for failure to keep up with prices. Further, the Council accepts that the political failure to build enough public housing has led to the crisis facing renters and those on the housing waiting list.</p>

	<p>In the absence of a Stormont Communities Minister and, given the failure of the previous Minister to implement adequate rent controls to protect tenants, the Council is committed to doing what it can to protect renters in the City.</p> <p>Accordingly, Belfast City Council will follow the lead of Bristol City Council in writing to the Secretary of State, in the absence of a Minister locally, to request the powers to control rents locally be vested to the Council. The Council also commits to writing to any incoming Stormont Executive to request such powers.</p> <p>Finally, Council agrees to write to Bristol City Council to make express interest in their Living Rent Commission, requesting access to its findings, and develop a working relationship, where possible, relating to this issue.”</p> <p>Proposer - Councillor Fiona Ferguson</p> <p>Seconder – Councillor Michael Collins</p>
3.3	<p>The motion calls upon the Council to write to the Secretary of State in relation to powers to control rents and to Bristol City Council regarding its Living Rent Commission – the Committee can either adopt the motion, refer it for debate at the Council meeting (with or without restrictions) or reject the motion.</p>
3.4	<p><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.5	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p> <p>None.</p>
4.0	Documents Attached
	None.