NOTICE OF MOTION

LABOUR GROUP AMENDMENT

PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR RENTS

To add a final paragraph at the end of the motion as shown in bold italics:

"This council notes many employees in the public and private sectors in Brighton and Hove are facing very low wage increases, pay freezes or, in some cases, wage cuts as an alternative to unemployment.

It also notes that, according to the council's latest *Housing Costs Update (November 2011*), private sector rents in the city for homes in the greatest demand – two-bedroom flats and houses – have risen by 22 per cent and 10.9 per cent between September 2009 and June 2010; the rents of studio flats rose by 12.4 per cent during the same period.

It also notes that, with the exception of rooms and studio flats, the local housing allowance is now less than lower quartile rents which could reduce the chances of those on benefits finding an affordable home (*Housing Costs Update, November 2011).*

It also notes that these rent rises have a widespread impact in Brighton and Hove where 22 per cent of all households live in the private rented sector (twice the national average) and where home ownership is beyond the pocket of many of those renting in the city where the average 1 bedroom flat costs more than 5½ times the median household annual income, 3-bedroom houses cost more than 10 times median annual income and deposits of 25 per cent are required (*Housing Costs Update, November 2011).*

Therefore, in circumstances where the combination of Housing Benefit cuts and rent increases will lead to increased hardship and homelessness in the city, this council:

Calls on the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Minister for Housing, urging them to set up a commission to examine private rented sector rent capping, regulation, and other measures to reduce the cost of rented homes and to reconsider their Housing Benefit proposals; ***and***

As a matter of urgency requests that officers report back to the Cabinet on:

(i) ways that relevant council departments can work together with other partners, including private sector landlords, to develop plans to

understand who will be most affected by the LHA changes and to mitigate the impact of those changes on claimants; and

(ii) possible protocols to prioritise the use of Discretionary Housing Payments to prevent homelessness.

Proposed by: Cllr Christine Simpson Seconded by: Cllr Anne Meadows