

## **Statement: PS05.04**

**Cabinet – 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021**

**Re: Agenda item 5 – Housing Revenue Account Budget Proposals**

**Statement submitted by: Sarah**

I was delighted to hear previously that you were going to put my council rent up this year but are now considering a rent freeze. As a survivor of Domestic and Sexual abuse over a significant period of my life I can honestly say that you have let me down massively as a tenant. I have spoken publicly about my trauma and the impact that has had on my council tenancy. For 6 years I was raped and abused daily in our council home by one out of the three perpetrators I have lived with in my life, he abused me in every way thinkable, I have scars all over my body and mind from this abuse and the abuse I imposed on myself because of his constant molestation, rape, coercive control, and oppression of my life, denying me even the right to sleep or wear clothes on many occasions whilst home alone with him. After fleeing over a decade ago and obtaining at the time a none-molestation order (injunction) I was given a lifeline by the council, what should have been a warm, safe home but did not meet the decent home standard. After much complaining I eventually got some of the repairs and maintenance done to my home, I am very articulate and able to confidently write endless amounts of emails to council officers and politicians to get the work done, however, far too many victims and survivors cannot and therefore continue to suffer in silence. So, I write to you for them and myself. After successfully writing and getting repairs done in my previous home, I now live in a relatively nice council home, with little needing doing to it cosmetically, although some safety elements leave a lot to be desired and are need of replacing, for example, my windows are double glazed but are coming to the end of their life cycle, some of the handles and mechanisms are failing and often break unexpectedly whilst out or at home asleep. As well as my windows being unsafe, I also have fire safety concerns in my home, exacerbated my most violent perpetrators history of arson, no door on my kitchen for example, meaning a fire would quickly spread upstairs and engulf my home. Can you imagine coming home or waking up finding your window wide open because the mechanism has failed! Knowing that your most violent perpetrator is no longer in prison, knowing that he is getting closer and closer to finding out where you live, knowing that you see him regularly near your street, knowing he could do what he promised to do a decade ago! Will you raise my rent if he gets into my home? Will you raise the rent if he gets in and smashes up my home like he did for 6 years whilst in a relationship with him? Will you raise the rent if he rapes me again or worse! Strangles me again? Pushes me down the stairs again? Carries out the threat to kill me? Buries me in the local vicinity for no one to find my bludgeoned, burnt, and mutilated body! Will you invest in my home as an afterthought, only when not if he gets in? I and so many other victims and survivors already know the answers to my questions, the answer is NO! you have not and will not invest in the safety of our homes and for many it is already too late, too many victims fall foul to their perpetrators, some of which could and should have been protected by their homes. I have worked hard on my home, I have made long lasting friendships with my neighbours and community so moving yet again to another inadequate council home

is simply not an option for me and many others, we should not have to keep running away or fight or barter for repairs to get done on our homes to be made safe.

RAISE THE RENT!