

**Statement: PS11.01**

**Cabinet – 18 January 2022**

**Re: Agenda item 11 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget and Business Plan 2022-2023**

**Statement submitted by: Clive Stevens**

Dear Tom, Mayor and Cabinet – Happy New Year, if it's not too late to wish you that.

This is a great start, getting a long term HRA plan to build 300 Council houses per year. And I'm looking forward to the detail of Project 1000 coming to Cabinet in February which, if I understand it correctly, is about bringing Bristol's affordable housing provision up to a 1,000 a year by 2024/25. We might need even more than 1,000 per year, but going from where we've been to a plan for 1,000 is pretty good. If achieved it should be a "textbook" example of the State needing to intervene in a broken market.

The Guardian published an article on Saturday where the author, Sam Bowman, suggested that fixing the housing crisis might go towards fixing many other things too. Examples he gave were congestion, public transport, CO2 and pollution, services and sustainability of the high street. I would add mental health to that list.

For example; regarding the local economy, it's not difficult to work out that if rents double and wages don't, then people have less money to spend in the shops and food sector because more of it goes to the landlord who, as often as not, is not local.

One of my big concerns is whether our neighbouring Councils are going to support this. Project 1000 means perhaps 40% even 50% of homes built are affordable. The WECA Strategic Development Plan is being completed and then Bristol's Local Plan starts up (again). These require a consensus normally to give them authority.

- but the high affordable housing requirement won't be popular with some private developers and landowners.
- it might not be popular with some local residents too.
- I think it is really important that the other Local Authorities involved are really supportive which could mean Bristol itself offering to build higher percentages.
- it might have an impact on other uses of land like: new office developments, student accommodation and more. For example, an office block opposite where I currently live could be developed but for more offices, not homes and for what I think is a ridiculous reason too.

You have my best wishes for this project but it requires some very tough work and especially in Planning.