

Council 1 February 2018 – Public Question

End Conscious Cruelty in Torbay Charter

Tories pursuing policies of conscious cruelty have lost the trust of Torbay people. We will no longer tolerate homelessness, extortionate rents, insecure tenancies, the bedroom tax, benefit sanctions, insecure, low-paid work, privatisation or cuts to services.

We, the people of Torbay, affirm our solidarity with the victims of the Grenfell Tower atrocity along with every other community in Great Britain suffering under Tory rule. We affirm our solidarity with communities all over the world who suffer from war, famine, destruction of communities and environmental destruction caused by rapacious capitalist interests. We look forward to a political, social and economic revolution which will end poverty and wars waged in the interests of the rich.

We demand from our elected local representatives:

- 1) An emergency budget, to be published by February 20th 2018, which will make funds available to end homelessness in Torbay;
- 2) By February 20th 2018 Torbay Council must pronounce policies designed to meet the above demand. A starting point, a litmus test for the sincerity of Torbay councillors, will be scrapping the consciously-cruel notion of "intentionally homeless." Only a born bureaucrat who has never experienced the terror of having no shelter for the night could believe anybody intentionally makes themselves homeless;
- 3) Torbay Council must enact a "fair rents" policy by February 20th 2018, which enshrines that rent "top-ups" are abolished from that date. This means that either rents are brought down to the amount covered by housing benefit or that Torbay Council increases housing benefit payments to cover the rents demanded by landlords;
- 4) By February 20th 2018 Torbay Council must declare its intention to begin building high-quality, council-owned housing for rent. This to be done in full consultation with those on the housing waiting list so that different needs are adequately catered for.
- 5) By February 20th 2018 Torbay Council must declare war on rogue landlords who unfairly evict tenants and keep properties empty. A policy of requisitioning and/or compulsorily purchasing such properties must be announced by the same date;
- 6) By February 20th 2018 Torbay Council must end the enforcement of the Bedroom Tax. Furthermore, it must scrap rent debts accumulated under this consciously-cruel measure;
- 7) People in need as a result of benefit sanctions must be provided for by Torbay Council. Victims of benefit sanctions must be given food, rent and utilities money. This will be an incentive for Torbay Council to pressurise the consciously cruel national government to end the practice of benefit sanctions.
- 8) By February 20th 2018, Torbay Council must have taken immediate steps to replace the inhumane use of Bailiffs to recover Council Tax

arrears. Most people cannot pay because they do not have it after rent and very high costs of basic amenities. A more humane approach is urgently needed as trialled by other Councils across the country.

Unless action is taken on these above points, we the people of Torbay will keep protesting and then seek to replace you with all Anti Cuts and Austerity Councillors who have a working moral compass towards an area as tragically deprived in such a consciously cruel way as Torbay has been in recent years; Cuts and austerity have been implemented by a heartless Conservative government, now being daily exposed for the sham that they are and executed by a Conservative council who clearly appear to not care for the people who need them the most.

The well off of Torbay does not even need a council but for the poor, it keeps them alive. Torbay and its residents are in the state it is in because of you and now you must put it right or leave.

Nick Slater