

# Council to say no to 'bedroom tax' evictions in Edinburgh



The Capital Coalition who lead the City of Edinburgh Council have agreed that they will not evict council tenants for arrears caused by changes in the benefits system. They will also campaign to force the UK government to abolish the so-called 'bedroom tax' which has just come into force on Monday. The group have explained that even if they wanted to move tenants there is a problem in doing so due to a lack of one bedroom properties.

It is likely that there will be a majority behind the proposed move when the council debates the matter at the Corporate Policy and Strategy Committee on 16 April 2013, as the Green Group have also confirmed they are against any evictions of tenants who are affected by the changes in benefits.

 Green Housing Spokesperson Councillor Steve Burgess said:-

"I am pleased that that the Capital Coalition have decided to back the proposal I made back in February to commit to a No Eviction policy for council tenants affected by the odious Bedroom Tax. Our tenants can be assured that we are on their side and that we won't make them homeless simply because they have a spare bedroom.

"Of course, I believe that it would be better if tenants didn't have to face this penalty at all, and that is why I submitted a motion calling on the Council to work on ways to reclassify 'spare' bedrooms in other ways."

"Now that the Coalition has submitted its own motion taking a

“no evictions” stance I am sure we now have much more common ground to work on, to ensure that we protect our tenants from arrears and the causes of arrears.”



Convener of  
Health, Social  
Care & Housing –  
Ricky Henderson

This is the motion which Councillor Ricky Henderson will present to the meeting:-

### ***Policy and Strategy Committee 16 April 2013***

#### ***Motion By Councillor Ricky Henderson – Welfare Reform***

- 1) *Committee wishes to express its concern regarding the impact that the range of Welfare Reform measures is having on people in Edinburgh.*
- 2) *Specifically the Committee is concerned that, from April 2013, measures to reduce housing benefit for tenants of local authorities and housing associations (Bedroom Tax) have not taken account of the acute shortage of one bedroom homes. This will lead to significant hardship for the tenants affected and increase the risk of homelessness.*
- 3) *Committee is further concerned that these measures may have an adverse impact on council and housing association landlords' rental income and their ability to invest in improving their own stock and in building new, affordable to heat, homes.*
- 4) *Committee notes that there is a significant risk of a reduction of £45 million in capital investment, funded from the Housing Revenue Account, as a result of this and other measures.*
- 5) *Committee agrees:*
  - (a) *that where the Director of Services for Communities is satisfied that tenants who are subject to the under-occupancy charge have done all they reasonably could to avoid falling*

*in to arrears, then all legitimate means to collect rent arrears should be utilised except eviction*

*(b) to establish a joint working group that will include elected members, officials from Housing and Revenues and Benefits, Registered Social Landlords and tenants representatives. The role of the working group shall be to monitor the implementation and impact of various benefits changes and to contribute to consideration of further measures to support tenants.*

*(c) to support calls by local campaigns to scrap the Bedroom Tax.*