

## Amendment for Motion (1) – Budget Cuts to Welfare

Council notes that:

- In George Osborne's emergency Budget, £12bn of cuts to the UK's vital safety net for people who have hit on hard times were laid out, with a further £19bn to be cut from non-protected government departments, including the Department for Communities & Local Government, which- was necessary to deal with the economic mess left by the last Labour Government.

- In the budget, many of the welfare cuts will-may detrimentally affect Harrow's residents, including:

- 18 – 21 year olds in Harrow will no longer be automatically eligible for housing benefit.

- Employment & Support Allowance, which helps people with severe medical conditions will be cut (i.e. Working age benefits will be cut in real terms each and every year for four years).

- Cutting the benefit cap to below the level needed by a family with two children living in the private rented sector. Tax credit, housing benefit and universal credit will be limited to two children from April 2017.

- A new national 'living wage' to be introduced for over 25s, which is set almost £2 an hour lower than the London living wage set by Boris Johnson.

- In Harrow, -the number of residents claiming Job Seekers' Allowance has more than halved between July 2012 and July 2015; from 4,080 to 2,030, and that our unemployment rate has fallen by a third since 2010.

Council believes that:

- Making 18 – 21 year olds exempt from housing benefit will be a further hit to a generation of young people both in Harrow and across the UK who are struggling to get on the housing ladder but will encourage employers to give jobs to 18-21 year olds.

- The cut to Employment & Support Allowance is unjustified and will penalise people with disabilities through no fault of their own; people with severe medical conditions may no longer be able to afford to eat or heat their homes, leading to their condition deteriorating.

- The effects of these cuts will push more and more people in to severe poverty, rent arrears and homelessness-work

- Setting the benefit cap at £23,000 will force families out of Harrow and London, forcing children to move schools and putting more pressure on families help ensure that work pays.

- Limiting certain benefits to families with a maximum of two children has put families in a terrible place by making no allowance for women who have become pregnant with a third child after being a victim of a traumatic sexual crime.

- The new national 'living wage' is solely a massive increase to the minimum wage, significantly above anything Labour pledged in their recent Election Manifesto, and-but does falls below the actual living wage, which in London is-was set Boris Johnson at £9.15.

Council resolves that:

- The Council will monitor the impacts of these welfare cuts on our residents.

• The Council is committed to supporting the most vulnerable, and ~~is prohibited in doing this within the financial constraints placed on it by the Conservative Government~~ therefore pledges to scrap Sachin Shah's Council Tax Support scheme, which has been heavily criticised in two independent reports from the Child Poverty Action Group and Zacchaeus 2K, and adopt all the recommendations of the cross-party Scrutiny review into the CTS scheme. Harrow's scheme has been described as 'the harshest in the country' and forces Harrow residents in receipt of council tax benefit to pay, on average, £300 more than if they lived elsewhere in London. Harrow's scheme also has the most severe taper rate – making it a disincentive to work, with those who attempt to work (often in low-paid jobs) effectively taxed at 97p in the pound.

• The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive jointly writes to Harrow's three MPs and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to express our concern about these changes on Harrow's residents.

• The Council, having set an example by modifying its own Council Tax Support Scheme, will lobby national government to reverse some cuts if they are found to impoverish or have a significant and damaging impact on the lives of our residents.

**Proposed by Cllr. Paul Osborn**  
**Seconded by Cllr. Barry Macleod-Cullinane**

## Amendment for Motion (2) – National City Park

Council notes that:

- There is a campaign by the Greater London National Park City to make London the world's first National Park City.
- The proposed organisation would bring together public, private and third sector organisations to enhance our natural and cultural heritage, encourage a better understanding and enjoyment of the city, foster wellbeing and inspire others to share these purposes.
- Air pollution in London is a real problem and is linked to 1 in 12 deaths in London; taking measures to improve London's green spaces and parks will help reduce levels of air pollution, and be of benefit to all our residents health & well-being.
- Living in a green city with easy access to local parks, nature and wildlife improves the well-being of local residents.
- The London Assembly have passed a motion approving the plans to turn London into a National Park City.
- ~~That under the guidance of the Labour administration,~~ the Council has set a target to be the best Borough in London for recycling, as a part of its campaign to make the Borough cleaner and more green.
- The Borough of Harrow has over 100,000 trees, with a third of the Borough categorised as green space – including five parks that have been awarded green flag status.
- Good quality green spaces are an essential component of the urban fabric of Harrow and, with over 1,300 hectares of open space within the borough, this make a profound contribution to the quality of life of local communities.
- The Council has set up Park User Group Forums to allow local people to have a greater say in how their parks are maintained, and to encourage community use of our parks.
- The Council has a fully developed open spaces strategy to preserve our parks and green spaces.

Council believes that:

- ~~That the £83m of cuts imposed by the Conservative Government on Harrow Council and our residents, has put severe pressure on our ability to maintain our parks and open spaces to the highest possible standard.~~
- As a Council we should work with all organisations to improve our parks and green spaces, as well as reduce air pollution and help support our residents to access and enjoy our many parks.
- We should welcome and fully support the excellent campaign to make London the world's first National Park City.
- The Greater London National Park City initiative would bring together public, private and third sector organisations to enhance our natural and cultural heritage, encourage a better understanding and enjoyment of the city, foster wellbeing and inspire others to share these purposes.

Council resolves that:

- The Portfolio Holder for Business, Planning & Regeneration should meet with Greater London National Park City to explore how the plans to make a London a National Park City can fit in with the ~~Labour~~ administration's ~~ambitious~~ regeneration plans for the Borough.

- All Harrow Councillors should sign to declare their Wards support on the [http://www.nationalparkcity.london/ward\\_support](http://www.nationalparkcity.london/ward_support) website.

- The Council should support the organisation in developing its vision, in particular by setting out how Harrow Council and its local partners could contribute towards its aims.

**Proposed by Cllr. Susan Hall**

**Seconded by Cllr. Barry Macleod-Cullinane**