

MOTION - REQUESTING THE PRIME MINISTER AND CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER TO APOLOGISE FOR DELIVERING POOR VALUE FOR MONEY FOR HARROW TAXPAYERS

25 November 2021

Following this government's ~~poor~~ handling of the Covid-19 pandemic and ~~mismanagement of~~ the ~~strains this has placed on the~~ economy, Harrow households face an increasing tax burden of £3,000 per household, per year, according to the Resolution Foundation. The think tank also found policies announced by Chancellor Rishi Sunak had boosted incomes by 2.8% for the poorest fifth of households.-

The government, through its recent Comprehensive Spending Review and anticipated Local Government Finance Settlement, has placed a starting assumption that all councils have the option to ~~will be required to~~ raise Council Tax, ~~in order to cover the costs of more than a decade of cuts to local authority budgets.~~

~~Harrow is regarded by peers as a high quality, low cost authority, with an extremely low level of financial reserves.~~

Harrow has been a historically underfunded borough compared with peers ~~throughout various governments since 2000. It is widely regarded that Harrow Council provides good value for money for Harrow residents and businesses.~~

Harrow remains one of the lowest funded Councils both within London and nationally and Council notes:-

- According to the Director of Finance, Harrow Council has received £1,331,014,416 in non-Covid grants since 2018 from the Conservative government, this is an average of £332,753,604 per year.
- The Director of Finance also states that Harrow Council has received £143,105,841 in Covid grants from the Conservative government since the start of the pandemic.
- Combined, Harrow Council has received £1,474,120,257 in grants from the Conservative government since 2018.
- Harrow Council spent £342,639 on LTNs and Ghost cycle lanes. This includes installation, upkeep and removal of these ill-conceived schemes. These unpopular schemes were a waste of time and money which could have been better spent delivering on the real priorities of Harrow residents.
- In the 2020 budget, the Labour administration spent £300,000 on the Council's communications/PR department. The Labour Group chose to vote against the Conservative amendment which would have committed this £300,000 to frontline services.
- In the 2020 budget, the Labour administration spent £140,000 on inflating the back-office HR. The Labour Group chose to vote against the Conservative amendment which would have committed this £140,000 to frontline services.

- Over the past eight years the Council has wasted £46,415,000 on failed regeneration projects.
- In recent years, the Council has spent £3,700,000 on aborted IT projects.
- The Council has also wasted £32,912,000 on other projects.
- The Council's Revenue Support Grant (RSG), its main source of funding from central government, has reduced by 97% to just £1.6m, a reduction of £50.5m since 2015.
- The Council receives no additional funding to meet demographic and inflationary pressures. Therefore, growth of £77.4m has had to be provided to fund the continued pressures on front line services
- The total budget shortfall to find over the nine years of £147.3m to achieve a balanced budget.
- The Council has chosen to increase the Council Tax has been increased largely in line with up to the referendum limits and full use has been made of the Adults Social Care precept, but this has still been below the amount Labour believe they needed to properly fund services.
- ~~The reduced funding grants have meant a transfer of responsibility onto the council taxpayer to 78% – from 51% in 2014.~~

By contrast, this Conservative government has ~~been found to have egregiously wasted taxpayers' money on a~~ invested £20bn in the Test & Trace system ~~of limited efficacy which has allowed the UK to unlock faster (and stay unlocked) compared to any other developed nation,~~ due to the unprecedented pandemic it has also commissioned handed out contracts without bureaucratic due procurement processes in order to meet the urgent need for PPE and other necessary equipment, ~~to friends of Ministers, and supported and backed Conservative MPs who have run inappropriate second jobs, on occasions, not even from this country, let alone their constituency.~~

~~This government is failing to provide value for money to Harrow residents.~~

THIS COUNCIL RESOLVES:

- For the Leader of the Council ~~and Leader of the Opposition~~ to write to the Prime Minister requesting an apology for this government's wasteful use of Harrow taxpayer's money
- For the Leader of the Council, ~~the Leader of the Opposition~~, and the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister and Chancellor of the Exchequer, requesting that Harrow is properly funded for the national services provided
- That once proper funding is reinstated or a Conservative administration is elected in Harrow, the ~~Leader of the~~ Council commits to implementing a freeze in Council Tax, in order to protect Harrow residents from the £3,000 per annum tax increases imposed by this Council Conservative government

Proposed by Cllr Antonio Weiss

Seconded by Cllr Graham Henson

[Amendment:](#)

[Proposed by Cllr Paul Osborn](#)

[Seconded by Cllr Marilyn Ashton](#)