

Council

Thursday 3 December 2015

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PROCEDURAL MOTIONS

MOTION 13 (1) – Harrow united in the face of Terrorist Atrocities

We propose that Council Procedure Rule 14.3.2 be suspended to enable the Motion to be moved and seconded by two Councillors. As result both proposers of the Motion will be able to speak for five minutes.

We further propose that this Motion be considered immediately following item 3, Procedural Motions.

Proposer: Councillor David Perry

Secunder: Councillor Susan Hall

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LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING

-

3 DECEMBER 2015

QUESTION WITH NOTICE

A period of up to 15 minutes is allowed for the asking of written questions by members of the public or a Member of the Executive or the Chairman of any Committee.

Questioner: Sandip Ruparelia

Asked of: Councillor Keith Ferry (Portfolio Holder for Business, Planning and Regeneration)

Question 1:

“We are the owners of premier banqueting 1 Canning Road, Wealdstone.

Our entire business survives on the use of PEEL ROAD CAR PARK which the council wants to demolish and will cause a loss of employment. We currently serve the entire community for Harrow for Asian weddings, reception, civil weddings and also we do extra services for ACCA exams and Gathering for AGE concern and more.

We purchased premier banqueting two years ago and have invested millions of pounds to update the facility in to five star banqueting for our community use and also part of planning process Harrow policy was to have parking large parking facility. If this goes we have to close our business and face bankruptcy and I'm sure the council are here to help businesses and not to close businesses. We have also generated almost 250k for council per annum since we have started.

Please council officers and cabinet members advise where will be provision for this car park facility in the future if gets demolished with similar size to serve Wealdstone with new extra houses flats and schools. “

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LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING

-

3 DECEMBER 2015

QUESTION WITH NOTICE

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Questioner: Councillor James Bond

Asked of: Councillor David Perry (Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Strategy, Partnerships and Corporate Leadership)

Question 1:

“The government has set up a review into the Freedom of Information Act. What is the council’s view on this matter, and will you publish their submission in response to the consultation that closed in November?”

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING -

3 DECEMBER 2015

QUESTION WITH NOTICE

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Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Glen Hearnden (Portfolio Holder for Housing)

Question 2:

“Do you think that the HRA business plan has the appropriate time horizon?”

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING -

3 DECEMBER 2015

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Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Graham Henson (Portfolio Holder for Environment, Crime and Community Safety)

Question 3:

“Can you confirm what impact the new option of a ‘seasonal’ charged-for garden waste collection will have on relevant staffing levels and workloads?”

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COUNCIL MEETING -

3 DECEMBER 2015

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Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Graham Henson (Portfolio Holder for Environment, Crime and Community Safety)

Question 4:

“In light of the well-publicised concerns from community organisations, do you have any plans to amend or alter the consultation on the proposed Events Policy?”

LONDON BOROUGH OF HARROW

COUNCIL MEETING -

3 DECEMBER 2015

QUESTION WITH NOTICE

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Questioner: Councillor Barry Macleod-Cullinane

Asked of: Councillor Kiran Ramchandani (Portfolio Holder for Performance, Corporate Resources and Policy Development)

Question 5:

“What sort of ‘outcome focused actions’ would you like to see put in place to address the issues in the Equality in Employment Action Plan – specifically in relation to improving the recruitment of women and BAME candidates into senior positions?”

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Questioner: Councillor Susan Hall

Asked of: Councillor Keith Ferry (Portfolio Holder for Business, Planning and Regeneration)

Question 6:

“What discussions is the Council having with the companies and organisations which could face closure or relocation as a result of the planned Civic Centre move and Wealdstone regeneration?”

Harrow £159 Campaign – Council Motion (December 2015)

Council notes:

- That previous administrations, both Labour and Conservative, have both campaigned to get Harrow a fairer grant deal from Central Government.
- The report by LG Futures (Analysis of Funding Drivers, October 2014) was commissioned to understand Harrow’s funding context in comparison with other London boroughs, and the rest of the UK. The report made a number of findings that have raised concerns about Harrow’s spending power and how our Government grants are calculated.
- In respect of spending power, the analysis found that in Harrow our residents have £39.8m less spent on them than the London average – that is £159 less per person than the average Londoner.
- The formulas used by Government date back to 1978 and do not reflect Harrow’s current needs, particularly given the pressures from homelessness and welfare changes.
- Harrow receives less funding than the London average on account of a range of factors including its lower population density, having less residents on welfare, amongst other technical points.
- Harrow also receives less funding than the national average on account of it being in London and “Damping”, a process by which boroughs take additional reductions to buffer other boroughs, reallocates a lot of Harrow’s funding elsewhere.
- ~~Harrow is also short-changed by the “freezing” of funding formulas (which may not be “unfrozen” until 2020/21) – which means Outer London’s unprecedented demographic changes and population growth goes unacknowledged.~~
- This unfair funding from Central Government is [a double blow](#) on top of the £83m of cuts imposed on Harrow Council and our residents by central Government.
- [The Chancellor’s announcement at the Comprehensive Spending Review on Wednesday 25th November that over the course of this Parliament all Local Authorities Revenue Support Grant will be phased out, and instead Local Authorities will have full retention of their local business rates.](#)
- The Council’s commitment to being an efficient and well run organisation, including it’s ambitious commercialisation programme that will create £5m of income by 2018/19, to help make up the shortfall caused by central Government cuts.

Council believes:

- [The funding formulas need to be updated so that Harrow gets the money necessary to continue Building a Better Harrow, protecting frontline services and ‘Making a Difference’ to our community.](#)
- [We have not been given sufficient detail by Government about how they will administer and implement the change in Local Government finances to a new system](#)

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whereby Council's will have the full retention of local business rates, whilst the Revenue Support Grant will be phased out entirely.

- In Harrow our falling business rates, in part due to the government's disastrous 'Office to Residential' scheme, means that this will amount to a further cut to local services.
- ~~An adjustment to the Settlement Funding Assessment so that the growing populations of Harrow is reflected now would be a fairer way to allocate funding out to local Council's, rather than waiting until when it is next up for assessment in 2020/21.~~
- Greater fairness in the funding system, so that:
 - "Damping" is reduced, and Harrow's resources are not pulled into an endless cycle of re-allocation to other boroughs.
- The weighting of resources and government grants is changed to reflect the changing nature of London. The future settlement needs to acknowledge the role of outer London authorities in maintaining the progress and status of the capital.
- A request that the Government provide an advantage to Harrow when making funding decisions for other grants in light of our shortfall.

Council resolves:

- To Support the Harrow '£159' campaign to get Harrow its missing millions.
- For the Chief Executive to write to local MPs and Assembly Members to ask them to support the Harrow '£159' campaign and lobby central government for a fairer grant to ensure that Harrow does not lose out when the Revenue Support Grant is phased out and replaced by full retention of local business rates.
- For the Leader of the Council to write to the Prime Minister explaining the Council's funding shortfall.

Proposer: Cllr David Perry

Seconder: Cllr Sachin Shah

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Government cuts making Harrow's residents poorer – December 2015 Full Council

This Council Notes:

- ~~On 7 July in the summer budget the Chancellor announced £12 billion of cuts to the welfare budget by 2019/20. This package included a proposal to freeze all working-age benefits for the duration of the current parliament, cuts to Tax Credits and a freeze to Local Housing Allowance rates, at a time when rents are rapidly increasing.~~
- ~~This would include a freeze to Local Housing Allowance rates, at a time when rents are rapidly increasing.~~
- There is a full blown Housing crisis in London; currently in Harrow 600 families are in temporary accommodation, including B & B's, many of which are out of the Borough.
- Due to a mixture of low wages and unsustainable increases to House prices and rents there have been exponential increases of residents being forced to use the Private Rental Sector for Housing. These costs are often met by Housing Benefit, but through the Local Housing Allowance scheme limits the amount of housing benefit a person can claim well below the level of rents in Harrow. ~~through the Local Housing Allowance scheme.~~ Even families in work have to rely on housing benefits to pay the rent, mainly due to the Government's repeated inability to tackle low-pay and the housing crisis – something the Chancellor's Comprehensive Spending review failed to meaningfully deal with. ~~Local Housing Allowance rates;~~ In all, 57.6 per cent of London's households in receipt of LHA have a member who is in employment
- ~~These cuts to welfare also include plans to cut the Tax credit budget by £4.4bn. The proposed changes reduce the incentives to work, by reducing the income thresholds or work allowance for working tax credit, child tax credit and universal credit while increasing the taper rate.~~
- The Chancellor has delayed plans to cut the tax credits threshold and taper from April 2016, until Universal Credit is rolled out nationally in four years time. In the Comprehensive Spending Review, it was announced that these plans will be delayed, following public outcry, lobbying by the Labour Party and backbench Tories, rejection by the House of Lords and detailed analysis showing that millions of families across the country would lose out on thousands of pounds. This u-turn is welcome and means:
 - Working tax credit threshold will remain at £6,420 (this is the income level at which tax credits start to be reduced).
 - Child tax credit threshold will remain at £16,105.
 - The taper (rate at which tax credits are reduced) will remain at 41%
- However some changes to Tax Credits will still be implemented in April 2016, which will hit larger families or those without a steady income, such as residents on zero-hour contracts.
- There are over 15000 families in Harrow receiving Tax Credits, which help the lowest paid families in Harrow with the cost of essential items such as food, child care and heating.
- ~~It is estimated that the marginal reductions rate could be as high as 93%, meaning~~

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~~that as families on tax credits earn more money, the increased taper rate mean that they will only keep 7p of every extra pound they earn.~~

- Analysis by the Institute of Fiscal Studies have shown that even after taking into account the new minimum wage and increase to tax free personal allowance these cuts to Tax Credits, including those that have been delayed will leave millions of families across the Country and in Harrow worse off by thousands of pounds.

- ~~A Government report into the changes reported,~~

- ~~These changes from April 2016 will affect almost all in-work recipients of tax credits. At April 2015, 3.3 million in-work families received tax credits, of whom 2.7 million had children. The average impact across all affected families can be roughly estimated as a reduction in the tax credit award of around £1,300 in 2016-17. The actual impact will vary from family to family however; some will lose more than this amount, others less. Some families will lose entitlement to tax credits completely.~~

- ~~On Monday 26th October the House of Lords voted to delay the introduction of the proposed cuts to Tax credits by three years.~~

This Council Believes:

- ~~In a Borough where 40% of residents earn below the London Living Wage, these cuts will have a disproportionate affect in Harrow, where thousands of families rely on Tax Credits to top up their wages and housing benefit to pay their rent. A situation which will only be made worse when Universal Credit is rolled out, which will include the delayed cuts to Tax Credits, the Local Housing Allowance so they can afford to live.~~

- A four year freeze to Local Housing Allowance rates will make a dire situation even worse for many of our residents who are unable to find affordable homes.
- This freeze will make it increasingly difficult for key workers such as nurses and shop assistants to live in London - all our residents will suffer if these workers are forced to move away from London.
- This Government's housing and welfare policies are hitting in work families, and are making the housing crisis even worse in Harrow.

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The Council resolves:

- That the Chief Executive writes to the three local MPs in Harrow to raise our concerns directly with Government about the potential impact of the cuts to Tax Credits and freezing Local Housing Allowances to families in our Borough.
- The Council monitors the impact of cuts to Tax Credits and freezes to Local Housing Allowances and the roll-out of Universal Credit in Harrow via the welfare reform board.

- Formally state our objection to cuts to the future Tax Credits and freezing Local Housing Allowances that will leave our residents poorer by thousands of pounds.

Proposer: Cllr Pamela Fitzpatrick

Secunder: Cllr Adam Swersky

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Amendment for Motion (3) – Government cuts making Harrow residents poorer

To insert at:

Council notes that:

Harrow's Council Tax Support scheme has been heavily criticised in two independent reports from the Child Poverty Action Group and Zacchaeus 2K.

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.

This Council believes:

In actions rather than words.

The Council resolves:

To scrap Harrow's Council Tax Support scheme, and adopt all the recommendations of the cross-party Scrutiny review into the CTS scheme.

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

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