

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 87

Subject: Support for Political Groups

Date of meeting: 1 February 2024

Proposer: Councillor Alistair McNair
Seconder: Councillor Anne Meadows

Ward(s) affected: All

Notice of Motion

Conservative Group Amendment

That deletions are made as shown with ~~strike through~~ below and additional recommendations are added as shown in ***bold italics*** below:

This Council:

- ~~1. Notes its current financial difficulties and the sacrifices that are having to be made.~~
- ~~2.~~ 1. Notes that the Local Government and Housing Act requires the 3 largest political groups to be offered equal support if the membership of the group consists of at least 10% of the membership of the authority.
- ~~3.~~ 2. Notes that the cost of support for the three largest political groups from April 1st 2024 will be £194,900, spread evenly across the three Groups, **and that this is an essential part of the democratic process all councillors need, particularly new ones, for their voice to be heard.**
- ~~4. Notes that Councillors are able to organise their own meetings, write their own speeches and develop their own opinions on city-wide issues using their manifestos as a base.~~
3. **Notes that Chairs and Deputies Special Responsibility Allowances amount to almost £175k spread among the Administration's politicians.**
4. **Notes that as Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Committees have Officer support in a way which is not available to the opposition, and have their speeches written for them.**
- ~~5. Notes that if the groups wish to maintain the current levels of support then they could directly fund roles to be employed by political parties.~~
- ~~6. Notes that any changes which may have an impact on staffing are required to follow the Council's policies, including the Council's Organisation Change Management Framework.~~

Therefore, Council resolves to:

1. Request officers to **do not** consider including within the budget proposals the £194,900 savings **from staff** ~~that could be achieved through the cessation of BHCC financial support to political groups from April 1 2024, with budget reallocated to frontline services~~
2. **Instead consider including within the budget proposals the almost £175,000 savings that could be achieved through the cessation of Special responsibility allowances to Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Committees from 1 April 2024, with budget allocated to frontline services.**

Recommendations to read if carried:

This Council:

1. Notes that the Local Government and Housing Act requires the 3 largest political groups to be offered equal support if the membership of the group consists of at least 10% of the membership of the authority.
2. Notes that the cost of support for the three largest political groups from April 1st 2024 will be £194,900, spread evenly across the three Groups, and that this is an essential part of the democratic process all councillors need, particularly new ones, for their voice to be heard.
3. Notes that Chairs and Deputies Special Responsibility Allowances amount to almost £175k spread among the Administration's politicians.
4. Notes that as Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Committees have Officer support in a way which is not available to the opposition, and have their speeches written for them.

Therefore, Council resolves to:

1. Request officers do not consider including within the budget proposals the £194,900 savings from staff-
2. Instead consider including within the budget proposals the almost £175,000 savings that could be achieved through the cessation of Special responsibility allowances to Chairs and Deputy Chairs of Committees from 1 April 2024, with budget allocated to frontline services.