

NOTICE OF MOTION**GREEN GROUP****COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT SUPPORT**

“This Council believes that the Government’s devolution of responsibility for Council Tax Benefit support to local councils in the name of ‘localism’ is a cynical attempt to make councils take the blame for centrally-driven Benefit cuts. By arbitrarily reducing the amount of money transferred to councils to administer the scheme by ten per cent, it ensured that some of the most vulnerable and impoverished people in local communities up and down the country would suffer. The Government further legislated that the new "local" schemes that councils devised had to ensure that pensioners were not adversely affected by the changes, leaving councils no choice but to pass on even bigger cuts in benefits to non-pensioners. This is neither fair nor localist, and taken with the other proposed Government changes to the Benefits System, represents a vicious attack on the less well off in our community. At the same time, Government cuts to local government funding of 25% over 4 years leave this council facing other tough choices on priorities. This council is disappointed that the localised scheme's first year of government funding assumes declining numbers of benefit claims, when all indicators suggest that numbers will be increasing. There will be no additional funding in future years for council tax support, which means that councils will be alone in bearing the costs of more benefits claims as a direct result of the government's economic mismanagement and welfare cuts. This council also deplores the government's reduced support for the administration costs councils bear when delivering the council tax support, further adding to the financial pressures facing local government.

The Council notes that unlike many councils across the country, we have agreed to reduce the cuts to benefits by transferring £1m of general funds and the establishment of a hardship fund.

In its 2013/14 budget provisions, through this and other schemes, the Council will ensure that targeted financial support is available to those households most badly affected by the Government’s council tax benefit cuts.

The Council calls on the Government to restore the 10% cut made to council tax benefit and appeals to all elected representatives (councillors and MPs) in Brighton & Hove to lobby the Government to restore the full amount of council tax funding.”

Proposed by Cllr Phillips

Seconded by Cllr Duncan

