

NOTICE OF MOTION**GREEN GROUP****REJECT THE BENEFIT CAP**

"This council notes that the Government plans this year to implement an annual cap on the total benefits a household can receive. This cap will be £26,000 a year for a household with children living in it, and £18,200 for those without [1].

This council believes the cap is a punitive and unnecessary measure which penalises the poor whilst the government has failed to make the wealthy and major companies as Amazon and Starbucks pay their fair share for supporting the costs of running a fair and decent welfare system. It is estimated that 60% of those in receipt of benefits and tax credits are in some form of work. Rather than seeking to reduce the welfare bill by cutting benefits, the government should seek to increase wages taking people out of the need to make ends meet through benefits.

This council also notes the logistical difficulties the government is experiencing in delivering this ill-considered policy, including the recently delayed implementation date for the cap from April 2013 to as late as September 2013.

It is estimated that when it is implemented the cap will force around 300 of Brighton and Hove's poorest families out of their homes. The government has confirmed that they cannot be considered 'intentionally homeless' and so the council will have a duty of care to them. The council estimates the cost of housing these families will be approximately £1.1m in the first year alone.

This council also notes the Department for Communities and Local Government's 2011 New Burdens Doctrine, which states that:

"the Cabinet has agreed that all new burdens on local authorities must be properly assessed and fully funded by the relevant department... [this is] to ensure that the pressure on council tax is kept down"[2]

The Council therefore resolves:

- (1) To note that the benefit cap will unfairly penalise and dispossess the poorest families in our city and result in perverse additional costs to the public purse; and

- (2) Requests the Chief Executive to write to the senior ministers responsible in both the Department for Work and Pensions and the Department for Communities and Local Government seeking;
- (i) the abolition of the benefits cap,
 - (ii) to acknowledge that should it not be cancelled, the results of the benefit cap impose a new burden on local government; and
 - (iii) As such, this new burden should be funded by central government so that the council can support those affected by its introduction.”

Proposed by: Cllr J. Kitcat

Seconded by: Cllr Wakefield

Supported by: Cllrs Bowden, Buckley, Davey, Deane, Duncan, Follett, Hawtree, Jarrett, Jones, Kennedy, A Kitcat, Littman, Mac Cafferty, Phillips, Powell, Rufus, Shanks, Sykes and West.

[1]:<https://www.gov.uk/benefit-cap>

[2]:https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/5960/1926282.pdf