

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## COST OF LIVING Policy & Resources Committee

## Agenda Item 59

Date of meeting 6<sup>th</sup> October 2022

### LABOUR GROUP AMENDMENT

#### Cost of Living and Household Support Fund 3

That the relevant changes are made to the recommendations as shown below in strikethrough and ***bold italics***:

#### Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Policy & Resources Committee notes the updates on the local situation regarding the Cost of Living impact including the ongoing and planned work and actions, with statutory and Community & Voluntary Sector partners, to provide advice and support to households in need.
- 2.2 That the Policy & Resources Committee agrees that the city council should lobby government for urgent and sustained support throughout the Cost of Living crisis including:
  - Fully funding Cost of Living pay increases for schools and local government in the current year and 2023/24;
  - Immediately increasing the minimum wage in line with September 2022 inflation;
  - Reintroducing a top-up to Universal Credit of £20 pw until at least March 2024;
  - Introducing a rent freeze or cap to reduce the incidence of evictions and homelessness, as has been done by the Scottish Government;
  - Providing increases in Local Housing Allowance rates in line with rent increases and welfare benefits in line with RPI to ensure that they keep pace with inflation as a minimum;
  - Reintroducing a temporary ban on evictions during this exceptional inflationary period (until at least March 2024); and
  - Providing Free School Meals for every primary school child in England, and the city council will endorse this lobbying point by signing the [Free School Meals For All Open Letter](#) to the Prime Minister.
- 2.3 That the Policy & Resources Committee agrees that the city council should formally support the #BusinessSOS campaign and further recommend to government the measures and support for small and medium-sized enterprise (SME). The campaign has seen over 150,000 businesses from across the UK lobbying the government to support small and medium sized businesses by taking the following actions;
  - Suspension of Covid loan debt repayments for up to two years (with potential eligibility criteria);

- Reduction of tourism VAT to 5% (i.e. holiday and hospitality services and packages), and;
  - Introduction of dedicated Business Grant support for SMEs and pubs to help with costs over the winter (with potential eligibility criteria).
- 2.4 That the Policy & Resources Committee agrees that the council will work with the city's MPs to lobby for:
- Extension of business rates relief for all SME's and pubs – using usual Treasury relief mechanisms
  - Reduction of VAT on energy for businesses to 5%
  - Energy prices to return to 2021 levels for SME's and pubs
- 2.5 That the Policy & Resources Committee agrees that the council will work with local business representatives to understand their members' concerns and work with them to continue supporting small businesses. These representatives include Brilliant Brighton (the local Business Improvement District - BID), the BH Economic Partnership, BH Chamber of Commerce and BH Federation of Small Business.
- 2.6 That the Policy & Resources Committee instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, advocating for the advantages and business literacy of adopting the Brighton Hove Living Wage.
- 2.7 That the Policy & Resources Committee agrees the council will work with regional public and private sector partners in the Greater Brighton Economic Board to assess the impact of the cost of living to support local SME businesses through sharing intelligence and offering mutual support.
- 2.8 That the Policy & Resources Committee agrees the approach to developing potential warm banks for use over the winter period, including working with the Community & Voluntary Sector regarding their assets, as set out in paragraphs 5.9 to **Error! Reference source not found.**
- 2.9 That the Policy & Resources Committee agrees the proposed communications campaign set out in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** to promote awareness of available advice and support for those in need, and to re-promote charitable giving toward the Cost of Living crisis from those who are able and willing to help.
- 2.10 That the Policy & Resources Committee agrees the council will support the ['Warm This Winter'](#) campaign which calls for government support to provide immediate emergency support, help to upgrade homes and access to cheap energy to lessen reliance on gas and oil.
- 2.11 That the Policy & Resources Committee approves the proposed indicative allocation of HSF tranche 3 as set out at paragraph 10.7, noting the associated Equality Impact Assessment at Appendix 1
- 2.12 That the Policy & Resources Committee agrees that officers may make

adjustments to allocations where there is evidence of changing need throughout the 6 month period of HSF3, to ensure that all of the fund is spent

**2.13 That the Policy & Resources Committee agrees that the Council has a leadership role to play in co-ordinating support for residents across the city through this crisis. We agree to bring key partners together in a urgent 'Cost of Living Crisis Summit' to request commitments from the city's anchor institutions of how they can help to build longer term community resilience. This summit should bring together key stakeholder organisations in Brighton & Hove, including:**

- **Financial advice and support organisations such as Citizens Advice Bureau, Money Advice Plus and the Credit Union**
- **Large private sector anchor institutions such as Legal & General, American Express, Brighton & Hove Football Club, Sussex County Cricket Club and others**
- **Brighton & Hove Economic Partnership**
- **Brighton & Hove Food Partnership**
- **Community Works**
- **Local Trade Unions**
- **The local NHS Integrated Care Board**

Proposed by: **Cllr Allcock**

Seconded by: **Cllr Evans**

**Recommendations to read, if carried:**

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