

Subject:	Items referred from the Council meeting held on the 24 October 2019		
	Notice of Motion – Housing Benefit		
Date of Meeting:	23 January 2020		
Report of:	Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Mark Wall	Tel: 01273 291006
	E-mail:	mark.wall@brighton-hove.gov.uk	
Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:

- 1.1 To receive the following Notice of Motion which was debated at and referred from the full Council meeting held on the 24 October 2019 and held back for the January Committee meeting due to the General Election on the 12 December 2019.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Committee responds to the motion either by noting it or where it is considered more appropriate, calls for an officer report on the matter as requested, which may give consideration to a range of options.

3. CONTEXT / BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 To receive the following extract from the minutes of the full council meeting held on the 24 October 2019 setting out the motion and recommendation for the committee to consider as detailed below:

- 3.2 The extract from the full Council meeting is detailed below:

This council resolves to:

- (1) Request the Policy & Resources Committee to take into account the need to reduce the burden on the poorest households in the city by making the council tax reduction scheme more generous and/or increasing funds available for discretionary support as part of this year's budget process, thereby easing pressure on low-income households facing high housing costs; and
- (2) Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Communities;
 - Expressing the council's concern about local people being priced out of private sector housing at a time where there is insufficient social housing available; and
 - Demanding that Housing Benefit levels are increased to an appropriate level.

COUNCIL

4.30pm 24 OCTOBER 2019

HOVE TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBER

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Phillips (Chair), Robins (Deputy Chair), Simson, Allcock, Bagaeen, Barnett, Bell, Brennan, Brown, Childs, Clare, Davis, Deane, Druitt, Ebel, Evans, Fishleigh, Fowler, Gibson, Grimshaw, Hamilton, Heley, Hill, Hills, Hugh-Jones, Janio, Knight, Lewry, Lloyd, Mac Cafferty, Mears, McNair, Miller, Moonan, Nemeth, Nield, O'Quinn, Osborne, Peltzer Dunn, Pissaridou, Platts, Powell, Rainey, Shanks, C Theobald, West, Wilkinson and Williams.

PART ONE

45. NOTICES OF MOTION

(2) HOUSING BENEFIT

- 45.10 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Williams on behalf of the Labour Group. She stated that housing benefit failed to keep in touch with the increases in private rents which meant that people either had to cut back on other essentials or get into debt. She hoped that the motion would be supported.
- 45.11 Councillor Evans formally seconded the motion and stated that the situation was only the top of the ice-berg. People were faced with living in sub-standard accommodation with increasing rent levels and other factors such as the gig-economy and zero-hour contracts having an impact on their ability to afford the rents. There was a need to find ways to support people and she hoped that the motion would be supported.
- 45.12 Councillor Gibson moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group and stated that it sought to strengthen the motion and to look at what could be done locally to assist people by finding the means to provide housing for them and to support low income households.
- 45.13 Councillor Hugh-Jones formally seconded the amendment and noted that there was a reliance on the Government to make changes but felt that things could be done locally to improve the situation.
- 45.14 Councillor Platts stated that the Administration intended to have a report on how to support low income households and those facing increasing pressures of debt and hoped that this could be built into the budget process and supported by all Members.
- 45.15 Councillor Grimshaw stated that she fully supported the motion and the amendment and noted that she had experienced the situation and was faced with decisions about

how to meet her living costs. Thankfully, she had been able to access her pension recently which meant she was able to meet her rent bills for another year.

- 45.16 Councillor Mears stated that the Conservative Group would not support the motion but were happy to support the amendment. She also noted that where there was an increase in housing benefit, private landlords tended to then increase the rent levels. There was also a lack of affordable council housing which needed to be addressed so that those on housing benefit could afford the rent.
- 45.17 Councillor Williams noted the comments and confirmed she was happy to accept the amendment.
- 45.18 The Mayor noted that the amendment had been accepted and put the following motion as amended to the vote:

This council resolves to:

- (1) Request the Policy & Resources Committee to take into account the need to reduce the burden on the poorest households in the city by making the council tax reduction scheme more generous and/or increasing funds available for discretionary support as part of this year's budget process, thereby easing pressure on low-income households facing high housing costs; and
- (2) Ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Communities;
 - Expressing the council's concern about local people being priced out of private sector housing at a time where there is insufficient social housing available; and
 - Demanding that Housing Benefit levels are increased to an appropriate level.

- 45.19 The Mayor confirmed that the motion had been carried unanimously.

