

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Council

## Agenda Item 64

**Subject:** Fraud Error and Debt Bill: Discriminatory impact

**Date of meeting:** 19 December 2024

**Proposer:** Councillor Sykes

**Seconder:** Councillor Goldsmith

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### Notice of Motion

#### Green Group

#### This council notes:

- 1) New powers planned under the Fraud Error and Debt Bill aimed at reducing benefit fraud may result in 'suspicionless' general extraction of data from bank accounts.
- 2) Use of sweeping automated surveillance techniques risks unintended discrimination, as has been admitted by the DWP itself.
- 3) That the measures introduced in this bill represent an unprecedented invasion of privacy and assumption of guilt on those claiming benefits, unfairly targeting them, creating unnecessary additional stress, and eroding trust in government.
- 4) Council is likely to have a role both in enforcing and implementing new powers and in ensuring the right support continues to be provided to those in need.

#### Therefore, resolves to:

- 1) Request that a report is brought to a future Cabinet meeting once the bill is published which:
  - a. sets out the potential impact of these new powers on B&HCC, including the impact on benefit claimants and of new administrative burdens;
  - b. explores how the Council can push back on the surveillance measures and clarify which ones we would be legally required to use.
- 2) Request that the CEO of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, expressing Council's concerns about this Bill and requesting the proposals are significantly rolled back to respect the privacy and dignity of those on benefits.

