

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 64

Subject: Fraud Error and Debt Bill: Discriminatory impact

Date of meeting: 19 December 2024

Proposer: Councillor Taylor
Seconded: Councillor Miller

Ward(s) affected: All

Notice of Motion

Labour Group Amendment

This council notes:

1) ~~New powers planned under the~~ ***The future publication of a*** Fraud Error and Debt Bill aimed at reducing benefit fraud ~~may result in 'suspicionless' general extraction of data from bank accounts.~~

2) ***The estimated loss of £10 billion a year through fraud and error – money which could go to those who need it most.*** ~~Use of sweeping automated surveillance techniques risks unintended discrimination, as has been admitted by the DWP itself.~~

3) ***Concerns that have been raised about privacy and surveillance and urges the government to ensure the proportionality and safeguards that they have already indicated will be in the Bill.*** ~~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) ***That the*** Council ~~is likely to~~ ***might*** 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 responsibilities;
- b. explores how the Council can push back on the surveillance measures and clarify which ones we would be legally required to use ***the legal duties that would fall on the Council in enforcing any measures in the bill.***

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.

Recommendations to read if carried:

This council notes:

- 1) The future publication of a Fraud Error and Debt Bill aimed at reducing benefit fraud.
- 2) The estimated loss of £10 billion a year through fraud and error – money which could go to those who need it most.
- 3) The concerns that have been raised about privacy and surveillance and urges the government to ensure the proportionality and safeguards that they have already indicated will be in the Bill.
- 4) That the Council may 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 responsibilities;
 - b. *explores the legal duties that would fall on the Council in enforcing any measures in the bill.*