

NOTICE OF MOTION**CONSERVATIVE GROUP AMENDMENT****HOUSING BENEFIT**

Insert new paragraph 3 and text as shown in bold italics and delete wording as struck through and shown in bold italics:

“This council recalls the period in the 1990s when Housing Benefit changes led to a crisis in rough sleeping and homelessness.

It acknowledges the excellent work of the city housing team, Brighton Housing Trust, the Sussex Central YMCA, CRI and others who have dramatically reduced the problems.

Furthermore, this Council recognises that significant cuts in public expenditure are required over the coming years in order to address the huge deficit bequeathed by the previous Labour Government which has left every man, woman and child in the country owing £22,400.

However, it fears the Coalition Government’s recent proposals to cut Housing Benefit from October 2011 and the Job Seeker’s Allowance could result in a return to the homelessness and rough sleeping levels of the 1990s, with younger single people and families with children particularly affected. The changes could have a profound effect on Brighton and Hove, a city with double (24 per cent) the national average of private rented housing and a critical shortage of social housing. However, until further details of the proposals emerge, it is difficult to predict the impact with any certainty. This will also depend to a large extent upon other unpredictable variables such as landlord behaviour, tenant behaviour, the wider housing market and unemployment levels.

This council therefore ~~requests the Chief Executive to write resolves~~ to:

- 1. the Coalition Government asking the government to withdraw the proposals affecting Housing Benefit and Job Seeker’s Allowance and to consult with the Local Government Association, the National Housing Federation, private landlords’ organisations, the CAB and other advice agencies to find a way forward; continue to work with the City’s MP’s and the new Coalition Government to minimise any potential negative impacts of the proposed changes to Housing Benefit; and***
- 2. the city’s three MPs asking them to support the council’s request by making a direct approach to Ministers Continue the good work in housing strategy where our excellent relationship with private sector landlords and other partners will minimise the impact of any changes.***

Proposed by: Cllr Maria Caulfield Seconded by: Cllr Trevor Alford

Supported by: Cllrs Mary Mears, Dee Simson, Ayas Fallon-Khan, Ken Norman, Ann Norman, Garry Peltzer Dunn, Jan Young, Vanessa Brown, Brian Oxley, Tony Janio, Dawn Barnett, Steve Harmer-Strange, Averil Older, Ted Kemble, Geoffrey Theobald, Carol Theobald, Brian Pidgeon, Denise Cobb, Lynda Hyde, David Smith, Pat Drake and David Smart.