
SPECIAL MOTION NO. 3 – CALLS ON THE GOVERNMENT TO HONOUR ITS COMMITMENT AND PAY COUNCILS THE EMERGENCY COVID-19 FUNDING IT PROMISED

Standing in the names of:

- (i) Councillor Max Schmid
- (ii) Councillor Adam Connell

This Council calls on the government to honour its promise and reimburse councils across the country the full financial cost of the COVID-19 crisis.

The Council notes that on 18 March, Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP - the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government - called a meeting at 10 Downing Street attended by leaders and chief executives from 300 councils. During that meeting, Mr Jenrick urged councils to act first and not to worry about the cost, making the specific assurance that “the government will provide whatever funding is needed for councils to get through this and come out the other side”.

The Council notes that the government has now reneged on that promise and is instead asking local authorities, their residents and businesses to pick up much of the increased expenditure and lost income arising from COVID-19 and the national lockdown. The Local Government Association estimates that there will therefore be a £6 billion funding shortfall across the country this year as a result of COVID-19.

The Council notes that Hammersmith & Fulham and other councils are still supporting thousands of people during the COVID-19 crisis across a wide range of areas, while also preparing for the possibility of a second wave of the contagion later this year.

The Council notes the critical role that local authorities play in reducing pressure on the NHS and other public services. The Council further notes the important role local government will play in supporting a post-COVID-19 economic recovery, facilitating the revival of business and helping residents back into work. All of this is put at risk by the financial crisis created by the Government’s broken promise.

The Council agrees that the government should honour the commitment it made to local government. Hammersmith & Fulham Council should take whatever measures necessary to force it to stick to its promise.