
SPECIAL MOTION NO. 4 – SUPPORTING RESIDENTS IN THE COST-OF-LIVING CRISIS

Standing in the names of:

- (i) Councillor Rowan Ree
- (ii) Councillor Rebecca Harvey

This Council recognises that Britain is in the middle of a cost-of-living crisis.

- Inflation is currently above 9%, its highest level since 1982.
- Household bills are rising, with energy bills likely to rise significantly higher in October when the energy price cap is increased.
- Interest rates have increased from 0.1% to 1.25% since December, with further increases likely, putting pressure on borrowers, including mortgage payers.

The Council recognises that people across our borough are struggling to make ends meet and are in need of support.

- One in five adults in the UK has less than £100 in savings.
- Nearly four million children in Britain live in poverty.
- Areas of Hammersmith & Fulham are among the most deprived in the country.
- Hammersmith & Fulham Foodbank is distributing record numbers of meals to residents who cannot afford to feed themselves and their families.

The Council thanks the many organisations across our borough who are providing much-needed financial support or advice to those who need it. We are blessed to have such caring, compassionate and dedicated residents who are prepared to go out of their way to help their neighbours and communities, and we praise this vital work.

This Council also recognises the need for government at all levels to step in and provide support for those who cannot bear the increasing costs that rising bills and prices bring.

H&F Council is playing its part by taking action to support residents through the cost-of-living-crisis. Although the Conservative government has cut 54% of the Council's general grant funding in real terms since 2010, action by the Labour administration since 2014 has so far included:

- A real terms council tax cut of 9%;
- A generous and comprehensive council tax support scheme;

- Free breakfasts for primary school children, and free food for children who need it through school holidays;
- Abolition of home care charges for elderly and disabled residents;
- A freeze in other charges in children's and adults' services;
- Significant funding for local charities and the Hammersmith & Fulham Foodbank; and
- Expanded advice services for residents in need of support.

The Council is now working with its partners to develop a wide range of further support, including an extensive Financial Inclusion Strategy to improve access to financial information, advice and services for residents.

By contrast, we regret that where Boris Johnson's government has acted, support has been poorly targeted and insufficient for those struggling the most.

- Measures such as the regressive increase in National Insurance will push local residents deeper into financial difficulty.
- The £20 per week cut to Universal Credit was a disastrous step just as the country became gripped by the-cost-of-living crisis.

This Council urges central government to take as proactive an approach to the cost-of-living crisis as Hammersmith & Fulham Council has done.

This Council calls on the government to reverse the £20 a week cut to Universal credit.

It also calls on the government to fund local authorities adequately as these are often best placed to understand the direct needs of their residents through their work in the community. As a first step, this should mean increasing the general grant to councils and funding for payments such as Discretionary Housing Payments that allow councils to support those in the greatest need.