

Amendments to Motion B: Council Tax Reduction Scheme

Proposed by Councillor Jo Kuper

Seconded by Councillor Johann Beckford

This council notes:

- The cost-of-living crisis remains acute in Haringey, where communities continue to be impacted by 15 years of government-imposed austerity and its deep cuts to income and basic services. Residents' vulnerability has been further exacerbated by global shocks – from the pandemic, to war, to climate chaos.
- Too many residents in Haringey are unable to absorb rising costs in rents, utilities and food, and are being forced to leave the borough they call home
- Haringey is the third most deprived borough in London, national data shows that healthy life expectancy – the number of years we can expect to live in good health – is now declining in Haringey more than any other part of England.
- Haringey Council has always offered a strong Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) and applied the use of section 13a to assist a range of groups, including care leavers to either exempt or discount low-income households.
- The previous administration introduced the Haringey Support Fund which helps residents in crisis. Since 2022, it has helped 7500 residents.
- The previous administration lifted council tax relief to 100% for hundreds of Haringey families on a low-income as part of the CTRS. It also initiated a review of into the levels of the support provided under the scheme, for 2026/2027, which is underway.

This council believes:

- Council tax is a regressive tax and a deeply flawed way of funding local services, increasing the gap between those who can pay and those who cannot.
- Charging low-income households including disabled people, children in households in poverty, and low-income pensioners is counterproductive and pushes people into debt.
- The costs to the Council associated with seeking to collect council tax from those unable to pay is an ineffective use of Council funding and resources.

- That residents facing financial hardship should be supported, not be burdened by additional costs by their own council.
- That the CTRS has played a vital role in safeguarding thousands of families in Haringey, and that it should be protected as much as possible. -At the national level, the government should instead introduce transformative reforms that tackle both local government underfunding and tackle the root causes of increasingly high-cost statutory services, including a land value tax, rent controls and a national care service.

This council resolves:

- That the Council Tax Reduction Scheme is considered as part of a holistic budget setting process to ensure that people in need of support across Haringey receive appropriate financial and welfare support within a budget which delivers good value for residents across its services. - That the budget-setting process will ensure public consultation on different options and be subject to oversight from the Overview and Scrutiny committee at every step.
- To ask Cabinet to continue to find creative ways to expand the Council Tax Hardship Fund to reach more low-income households who are facing debt.
- To ask Cabinet to ensure the Crisis and Resilience Fund is not used to fund CTRS or any Council Tax Deductions.).
- To commit Cabinet to ensuring the Crisis and Resilience Fund is used to help residents experiencing crisis situations and/or needing to build financial resilience through a robust anti-poverty strategy.
- To ask Cabinet to develop a truly ethical debt collection policy, including a review on how to sustainably end the use of bailiffs to collect council tax.
- To write a cross-party letter to central government outlining the financial situation facing the local government sector, driven by national policy failure, and its disproportionate impact on the borough's poorest residents. The letter would include a request for funding to be able to expand on the current Council Tax Reduction Scheme.