

MOTIONS RECEIVED FOR 9 JULY 2024 FULL COUNCIL

GOLDEN MOTION (Green): Ending local government austerity and investing in local public services

This Council notes that:

- Government grants to local authorities were cut by 40% in real terms between 2009/10 and 2019/20, from £46.5bn to £28.0bn.
- As a result, between 2010 and 2019, more than £30 billion in spending reductions (often termed austerity measures) were made to welfare payments, housing subsidies and social services in the UK
- These austerity measures have contributed to 335,000 excess deaths, resulted in a fall in the UK life expectancy, and culminated in UK workers being £11,000 worse off a year after years of wage stagnation.
- At the same time, there has been a huge surge in demand for vital services provided by local authorities, such as adult social care, which takes up about three-quarters of Local Authority budgets.
- Spending on social care grew by an average of 2.6% a year in real terms between 2014/15 and 2021/22.
- This is less than the 3.4% a year increase in spending that the Health Foundation has calculated will be needed between 2024/25 and 2032/33 to meet future demand. This is equal to £8.3 billion overall.
- The National Audit Office has recognised that the pressure on local authority finances “impacts on the funding available for adult social care”.
- Bristol City Council signed up to the Ethical Care Charter in 2021.
- As a result of decreased funding and increased demand for services, since 2021 six local authorities have declared themselves effectively bankrupt, with many councils, including Bristol, warning they may have to do the same.
- Owing to the state that the previous Government has left public finances, The Labour Party has not ~~yet committed~~ been able to commit to a figure to ~~increasing~~ funding for local authorities by.
- The Labour Government has committed to multi-year funding settlements for local authorities, to provide councils with greater stability and the ability to plan strategically.
- The Labour Government has committed to ending competitive bidding, which pits local authorities against each other to compete for small pots of funding.
- That due to budgetary constraints, the Council Tax Reduction Scheme - which gives 34,000 of Bristol’s most vulnerable households a 100% discount on their council tax bills - is under threat.

This Council believes that:

- Cuts to the government grants provided to local authorities must be reversed by the new government in order to sufficiently fund growing demand for key services such as adult social care.
- Without adequate funding, the increased financial pressure from increased demand for these services is likely to have serious negative financial implications for local authorities and Bristol City Council.
- Reaching the UK’s economic growth targets will boost the UK’s tax revenue by tens of billions annually. Fostering growth needs to be a priority for the both the Government and for Bristol City Council.
- Additional revenue raised from sorely-needed economic growth should be spent on our public services, including council-run services, which are crumbling from 14 years of Tory austerity and neglect.

- As well as increased funding, the UK government and local authorities must commit to improving the working conditions of social workers.
- The Ethical Care Charter is essential to ensuring that employment conditions do not routinely short change clients and ensure the recruitment and retention of a more stable workforce through more sustainable pay, conditions and training levels.

This Council resolves to:

- Write to the Newly elected Prime Minister, the [Chancellor](#), and relevant Ministers of State to call for [a determined effort to grow our local and national economy](#), an end to local government austerity, and a significant and substantial investment in local government and public services. This will include a call for a sustained uplift to local authority funding to cover shortfalls in adult social care, education and other key services [and to recognise where local authorities have additional specific challenges](#).- It will also include an ask to provide multi-year funding settlements [- as is Labour Party policy - and express Bristol City Council's desire to see the implementation of a National Care Service, underpinned by national standards, delivering consistency of care across the country-](#)
- Support calls to reform local government taxation to an updated and progressive system that addresses problems inherent in the current system.
- Support the LGA's 'Make It Local' campaign, which outlines how local government is key to delivering solutions to the biggest issues for the public.
- Work with providers to implement the Ethical Care Charter, [as signed up to by the previous administration](#), within the term of current contracts and to fully implement the Foundation Living Wage when central government grants and funding allow.
- Continue with our adult social care transformation project to ensure we are providing the best care and value to all Bristol residents.
- Continue to protect the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in full.

Motion submitted by: Cllr Rob Bryher, Cllr Lisa Stone and Cllr Lorraine Francis

Date of submission: 27th June 2024