

Council: Tuesday, 21 January 2014

Administration Business Item: Councillor Daniel Thomas

Amendment in the name of Councillor Jack Cohen

Helping residents with the cost of living

Delete third paragraph (starting Council welcomes) and substitute;

Council notes it will decide its 2014-15 Council Tax and Budget at its meeting on March 4th. Council further notes that the policy to cut council tax by 1% saving 21p a week for a Band D Council Tax payer will in total lead to reduced Council services and increased service charges .. This will end up costing individual council tax payers more in the long term. Council welcomes the Coalition decision to raise the personal allowances (the amount you can earn before paying income tax) to £10,000.00 by this spring (and if the Liberal Democrats get their way increasing the personal allowances by a further £250.00). This will reduce the income tax bill for 25 million people across the country. Council also welcomes the Coalition Government's decision to provide free school meals for all pupils in reception, year 1 and year 2, which will benefit 12,000 children in Barnet"

Substantive Business Item to read:

Council notes and welcomes the significant uplift in the economy, with growth of 1.5% achieved between March and September of 2013 and the Treasury forecasting growth in GDP of 2.5% for 2014. Council further notes that business confidence is at a twenty year high according to a recent survey by Lloyds Banking Group. Council believes this is evidence of the success of the government's economic approach, which is delivering a sustainable platform for stability and prosperity.

Council does though realise that many residents of the Borough and beyond may still be concerned about the cost of living. Council therefore welcomes a range of local and national measures which are helping people by allowing them to keep more money in their pockets.

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Council notes the Borough's involvement with the Big London Energy Switch, which is already helping people to reduce their fuel bills by an average of £200. Council welcomes the decision to extend this scheme and calls on the Cabinet to continue to promote ways to help people achieve the best market rates. Council also welcomes the

government's decision to reduce the Green levies which account for a large proportion of residents' fuel bills, helping prices to fall by some £50 a year on average.

The Chancellor's continued fuel duty freeze has also helped hard working people with the price of filling their vehicles and prevented greater food price increases linked to transportation costs.

Council also welcomes the administration's decision to keep rent rises for existing social housing tenants below inflation, delivering a real-terms reduction, when neighbouring Labour councils were increasing them well above this mark. Council notes the building of the Borough's first council houses in twenty years and the fact that there is increasing affordable home provision through the council's many developments and regeneration projects.

Council calls on the Cabinet to continue to support the hard working residents of the Borough with the cost of living by extending these schemes and policies.