

Council: Tuesday, 8 December 2015 – Agenda item 15.3

Administration Motion in the name of Cllr Richard Cornelius - Autumn Statement

Amendment in the name of Cllr Barry Rawlings

Delete all and replace with:

Council notes the content of the Chancellor's recent Autumn Statement and Spending Review.

Council notes that growth forecasts have once again been revised up, as a result of Office for Budget Responsibility re-modelling as opposed to genuine economic optimism.

Council further notes that in Barnet unemployment has fallen another 8% in the last year and that average incomes in the borough are up over 17% on 2012 although 22,000 jobs in Barnet - nearly a quarter - still pay less than London's Living Wage - the minimum needed to cover basic costs, and when housing costs are taken into consideration just over 20,000 children in Barnet are living in poverty. With higher growth and tax receipt forecasts and reduced interest rates on debt, the Chancellor hopes he will be able to deliver a budget surplus by 2019/20 - although previous such hopes have been dashed in the past.

But Council notes that there are still £12bn of welfare cuts programmed in, which will mean 2.6 million families will lose an average £1,600 according to the Institute of Fiscal Studies. Council also notes that there is still £400 million scheduled to be cut from police budgets.

Council welcomes the government's reaffirmation of £97m in funding for the new Thameslink Station at Brent Cross and notes their support for our plans to deliver 7,500 new homes as part of the redevelopment but believes that more than 15% affordable housing should be secured.

Council believes that measures on housing outlined in the Autumn Statement, such as funding for new starter homes for first time buyers and a special Help to Buy for London, will not boost efforts to deliver the new homes people desire considering that the average house price in Barnet is now £460,000, and the 20% Starter Homes discount will still not bring homeownership into the reach of households on the median income of £38,147 when a home costing £368,000 is 9.65 times that income.

Council recognises that the Spending Review reinforces the requirement to make savings to our budget. Whilst we await all the final details in the Local Government Settlement, the likely 25% further cut will mean further attacks on frontline services, and increased inequality and poverty in the Borough.

Council calls on the Leader of the Council to stand up to the government and make the case for adequate funding of local council services.