

Council: Monday, 4 April 2016

Opposition Motion in the name of Cllr Reema Patel

Supporting the Disabled to Live Independently

Council notes that the Chancellor has delivered a Budget which is the least fair and least popular of all Budgets he has delivered according to a recent YouGov poll; prompting public backlash that has forced a U-turn on the issue of cuts to Personal Independence Payments (PIP), in a humiliating personal defeat for both himself and for the Conservative party.

Council notes that the Budget has reconfirmed the Conservatives as the 'nasty party', and has revealed so-called 'compassionate Conservatism' to be nothing more than 'smoke and mirrors'. The Chancellor's recent budget struck entirely the wrong balance – prioritising the interests of the wealthy and of corporations above the needs of some of the most vulnerable and disabled residents within our communities.

Council notes the comments of the recently resigned Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Iain Duncan Smith, that:

- the Chancellor's proposed cuts to disability personal independence payments (PIPs) are unfair
- the poorest and most vulnerable in our communities are bearing the brunt of the government's cuts to balance the budget
- the cap on welfare spending is "arbitrary"
- the government doesn't care about the impact of the cuts in welfare because it affects people who don't vote Conservative
- the cuts are falling disproportionately on working age benefits
- the Chancellor is obsessed with short term savings and isn't getting the balance right in the interests of social justice
- the presentation of the cuts to disability PIPs alongside tax cuts for companies and the rich was the last straw
- the government is undermining its 'one nation' credentials with the approach to welfare reform.

Council notes that Iain Duncan Smith has also presided over six years of cuts to the poorest and most vulnerable in Barnet; and has been the chief architect of policies including the phasing out of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), successive cuts to Personal Independence Payment, cuts to ESA, the introduction of the Bedroom Tax and cuts to Working Tax Credits.

Council notes that cuts to disability support will have contributed to unmet need within the Borough as well as across the UK, adding pressure to an already strained social care budget.

Council notes that the Chancellor of the Exchequer has provided insufficient resource to local authorities to assist them to meet both the needs and pressures

faced by social care budgets and that further marginalising the most disabled and most vulnerable in our communities is a false economy which fails to support the disabled to live independently in Barnet.

Council notes that to meet the government's deficit reduction targets they will need to find just under £8bn of savings by the end of the parliament, and we fear this will inevitably result in further cuts to local authorities and other public services.

Council therefore asks the Leader of the Council to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to call on him to review the budget to ensure fairness and that the burden of reducing the deficit falls on those who can afford it.