

Council: Tuesday, 16 April 2013

Opposition Business Item: Councillor Richard Cornelius

Amendment in the name of Councillor Richard Cornelius

Welfare Reform

Under Standing Order Part 4, Section 1, 17B.1, Councillor Richard Cornelius moved the following amendment;

At the end add:

Council therefore asks Cabinet to provide its support to the local implementation of these reforms – including through considered use of the Crisis Fund - and, further, to actively recognise and incorporate their principles when developing wider policy.

Substantive Administration Item to read:

Council welcomes the introduction of vitally important reforms to the welfare system by the Coalition government. With the welfare bill reaching a staggering £208 billion in the last financial year, Council recognises the urgent need to get this figure under control. However, Council similarly recognises the need for the system to become fairer in the process. Recent and high-profile cases have clearly demonstrated the pitfalls of a welfare system which entrenches families in a culture of dependency, with claimant's becoming unable or unwilling to move into employment for fear of losing money. Council condemns this situation, greatly extended under the last Labour government, as chronically unfair to both claimants and taxpayers.

Therefore, Council welcomes measures which serve to incentivise and support employment by ensuring that work always pays. Council also understands that at a time when there are, nationally, thousands of people living in overcrowded accommodation, or awaiting social housing altogether, it is right that the taxpayer should no longer have to subsidise claimants in over-sized homes.

Council recognises that these – and those beyond - are significant changes and will therefore remain alert to mitigate any unintended consequences on the most vulnerable members of our community.

Council must though give its support to a welfare system which is becoming easier to understand, easier to administer and harder to abuse; a system which provides help for the most needy, support for those in work and an opportunity for people to escape the welfare trap.

Council therefore asks Cabinet to provide its support to the local implementation of these reforms – including through considered use of the Crisis Fund - and, further, to actively recognise and incorporate their principles when developing wider policy.