

**Council Meeting**  
**Wednesday, 20 July 2022**

**Agenda item 13: Proposed Amendments to Motions received by the Monitoring Officer prior to 12 noon**

Underlined text = proposed additional wording  
~~Strikethrough text~~ = proposed deletions

13a Cost of Living Crisis (Labour Party Amendment)

This Council calls on the Government to introduce an Emergency Budget to take urgent action to protect the people of Hackney from the cost of living crisis.

Council notes that:

- Energy costs have risen by an average of £693 per household – and are set to rise even further, with Ofgem setting the energy price cap at £2800 from October
- Food prices are soaring, some basic staples by as much as 20%
- Inflation has hit 9% – its highest level in 40 years
- Personal Taxation is now at its highest level in 70 years
- 48% of children in Hackney live in poverty and 16.5% of local residents are claiming out-of-work benefits
- Meanwhile £11.8bn of public money has been lost to fraud through the Governments covid support schemes

Council therefore resolves to write to the Prime Minister urging him to:

- Introduce an immediate Emergency Budget to protect children, families, and pensioners from the worst fall in living standards in generations
- Cut business rates for small businesses
- Cut the VAT rate on energy bills
- Increase the support available to all claimants through the welfare and benefits system
- Deliver on the calls made by UNISON, the NEU and other education unions to expand the free school meals programme to all families receiving universal credit or an equivalent benefit
- Fund Hackney Council's Green Homes programme to retrofit homes, helping to reduce home energy consumption and cut energy bills.
- Keep benefit payments in line with inflation, in a system similar to the state pension 'triple lock'

The Council believes that the Emergency Budget must include real help for residents and local businesses in Hackney.

**Amendment proposed by:** Cllr Adejare

**Amendment seconder:** Cllr Samatar

13a. Cost of Living Crisis (Green Party Amendments)

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The Council believes that the Emergency Budget must include real help for residents and local businesses in Hackney.

Council also resolves to:

1. Support the development of a ‘Pledge My Check’ type scheme, where beneficiaries of the £400 relief grant who do not need the additional financial support can donate it to organisations that do, and promote this scheme through the Council’s social media and websites.
2. Build on our work as a Living Wage borough, by encouraging businesses throughout Hackney to end the use of zero-hour contracts and instead give employees secure, fairly paid employment.
3. To agree to undertake a consultation to remove the 15% contribution by residents eligible for full council tax support
4. Continue to protect children’s centres and nurseries as a priority when faced with real-terms Government funding cuts to Local Authorities.

**Amendments proposed by:** Cllr Binnie-Lubbock

**Amendments seconder:** Cllr Garbett

### 13b Long Covid (Green Party Amendments)

Hackney Council notes:

- As of 1 May this year, Figures from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) reveal that two million people living in private households in the UK – or 3.1% of the population – reported they were still experiencing Covid symptoms more than four weeks after their first suspected coronavirus infection.
- About two in five of those with long Covid, or 826,000 people, noted that infection was at least a year ago while one in five, or 376,000 people, said it was at least two years ago. In addition, 71% of those with Long Covid said their symptoms had a negative impact on their day-to-day activities, with 20% saying their ability to undertake such activities had been “limited a lot”. There is also evidence regarding the mental health impacts of long covid.
- As a proportion of the UK population, the prevalence of self-reported long Covid was greatest in people aged 35 to 69 years, females, people living in more deprived areas, those working in social care, teaching and education or health care, and those with another activity-limiting health condition or disability,” the ONS added. The importance of rest and recovery and the inequalities in the availability of this to, for example, people in low paid, insecure and/or labouring jobs.
- At present it is not clear what causes Long Covid, but it can be the result of the initial infection sends some people's immune systems into overdrive, meaning they attack not just the virus but their own organs.

- NICE (National Institute for Health & Care Excellence) describes Long Covid as “signs and symptoms that continue or develop after acute Covid-19”. This definition includes both ongoing symptomatic Covid-19 and post Covid-19 syndrome. Therefore, according to this definition, Long Covid starts from four weeks onwards.
- Long Covid symptoms are plentiful, and more are being seen as related to Covid 19 infection.
- At a local level Hackney Council celebrates the Post Covid Specialist Assessment Clinic and The Covid Rehabilitation (CoRe) service provided by Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, including the work of respiratory consultants Professor Karalasingam Rajakulasingam and Dr Santino Capocci.
- Hackney Council will continue to highlight the needs and support our school children experiencing long Covid symptoms and issue guidance when available from the government to schools and educational settings on the many pupils living with Long Covid, and support for them.

Hackney Council therefore resolves to:

- Work with our health partner organisations to ensure that support for those experiencing Long Covid is a central part of the next City and Hackney Long Term Conditions Strategy.
- Recommend to the Head of the Paid Service that the Council's employment policies and procedures be reviewed to ensure that those with Long Covid symptoms, and their carers, are supported.
- Work with and encourage our supply chain and borough partners to also review their employment policies (if they have not done so already).
- Dedicate a Health in Hackney Scrutiny Commission meeting to hear from resident and staff experiencing long covid to further inform policy.
- Stay up-to-date on research of the impact of long covid including on children and young people and incorporate findings into future policy development and service provision.
- Consider the key recommendations of the Long Covid publication by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Coronavirus.

**Amendments proposed by:** Cllr Garbett

**Amendments seconder:** Cllr Binnie-Lubbock

13c Fair Votes (Labour Party Amendments)

Hackney Council notes:

- ~~The UK's First Past the Post voting system curtails voter choice and leaves millions feeling unrepresented by their elected representatives.~~

- Research has found that electoral systems impact participation in politics for example there is a positive correlation between proportional representation (PR) and women elected to legislatures.
- The introduction of PR for local elections in Scotland has led to an increase in turnout, which was 44.8% at the last elections, held in 2022. In contrast turnout in Hackney in 2022 was 34.29% (this varies by ward with the lowest turnout in Hoxton at 24%).
- The Labour Party in government successfully implemented Proportional Representation to a number of elections, introducing PR into the London Assembly, in devolved government for Scotland and Wales and the Supplementary vote for the Mayoral elections.
- With the Welsh Senedd reviewing legislation on Single Transferable Vote for local councils, England looks likely to be the only part of the UK without any form of PR at the local level.
- According to polling, the majority of voters in the United Kingdom support the use of PR for elections in the United Kingdom.
- The last Labour Government put together the Jenkins Commission, which recommended the adoption of the AV+ voting system. This system is similar to how we vote for the London Assembly, giving voters local representatives and regional list members.
- The Green Party of England and Wales has a ~~long-standing~~ long-standing policy of supporting proportional representation and electoral reform.
- In June, Prospect and the University and College Union (UCU) voted to embrace more proportional general elections. The list of trade unions ~~that~~ who back electoral reform is long and growing, it currently includes Unison, Unite the Union, Fire Brigades Union and Musicians' Union.

Hackney Council recognises:

- That these factors could have contributed to dangerous levels of distrust and disillusionment with our democratic process.
- That it is essential that faith is restored in our democratic system and that the public see Parliament as fairly reflecting their views.
- That there are many reasons people are disillusioned with politics, including politicians and institutions looking inwards, rather than focusing on issues that matter most to people's daily lives.
- That our First Past the Post voting system could be ~~is~~ a significant barrier to restoring this faith ~~and all but guarantees that the balance of opinion among the electorate is not reflected in Parliament and at local councils.~~
- That the current Conservative Government introduced the biggest barrier to Hackney's communities engaging in democracy by introducing voter ID requirements and removing the limited use of the supplementary vote in England and Wales in the Elections Act 2022.

- That this Council lobbied against the Elections Act, its introduction of voter ID and the removal of the supplementary vote for directly elected Mayors.
- Voter ID is also a significant barrier to Hackney residents engaging in democracy, particularly among poorer and more diverse communities that may not have valid ID such as a passport and drivers licence. 24% of the electorate hold neither a passport or photographic driving licence<sup>1</sup> and Hackney Council estimates that 47% of households in Hackney have no driving licence holder Democracy must be inclusive and accessible to work.
- That a system of Proportional Representation in which seats match votes and all votes count equally ~~could would~~ help to rebuild public trust by ensuring that all political views are represented in Parliament and at local councils in proportion to their level of public support.
- ~~That systems of Proportional Representation that maintain a constituency link are best, since they mean voters will still have local representatives. Single Transferable Vote and AV+ both fulfil this criteria.~~
- That no voting system is perfect and many forms of Proportional Representation lack the vital local link between elected representatives and their constituents, risk creating fragile coalitions, and risks creating opportunities for extremist views in our democratic institutions. Under PR, the British National Party gained a seat on the London Assembly in 2008.

#### **Hackney Council therefore resolves to:**

- ~~To make representations to Hackney's MPs asking them to lobby for change to our outdated electoral systems and support Single Transferable Vote for electing local councils, AV for Westminster elections and the return of Supplementary Vote for Mayoral elections.~~
- ~~To oppose this Conservative Government's efforts to remove existing PR systems, and write a letter to the Home Secretary condemning the removal of the supplementary vote for Mayoral elections.~~
- To write to the Secretary of State for Levelling-Up, Housing and Communities and the Home Secretary, to call for a national review of voting systems in England and condemning the introduction of voter ID and removal of the supplementary vote for Mayoral elections.
- ~~To use proportional systems in non-statutory elections managed by Hackney Council, for example Hackney Youth Parliament, where this is supported by the relevant body.~~
- To consult the Hackney Youth Parliament on their choice of voting systems for Youth Council elections

**Amendments proposed by:** Deputy Mayor Bramble

**Amendments seconder** Cllr Joseph Ogundemuren