



## ORDINARY COUNCIL

13<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2024

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| <b>REPORT TITLE:</b> | Notices of Motion  |
| <b>REPORT OF:</b>    | Claire Mayhew – Joint Acting Up Director of People & Governance & Monitoring Officer |

### REPORT SUMMARY

Any one or more Members of the Council may, by notice received by the Monitoring Officer no later than 10.00 am eleven working days before the day of the Council meeting, require the Council to consider a motion about a matter relating to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Council's area. A notice of motion may be accompanied by a statement of not more than 200 words setting out the reason for the proposed motion.

The Monitoring Officer shall include all notices of motion and accompanying statements in the agenda for the next relevant meeting of Council in the order received.

Four Notices of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Rule 3 in Part 4.1 of the Constitution - Council Procedure Rules and are listed in order of the date received.

#### **Motion 1 – Received 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 @ 10:52**

**Mover: Cllr Dr Barrett**

**Secunder: Cllr Davies**

#### ***The council notes***

- The obligations it owes to the Armed Forces community within the Borough of Brentwood as enshrined in the Armed Forces Covenant; that the Armed Forces community should not face disadvantage in the provision of services and that special consideration is appropriate in some cases, especially for those who have given the most.
- Brentwood Borough Council, along with all other local authorities in Great Britain, has proudly signed the Armed Forces Covenant.
- That in the course of their service in His Majesty's Armed Forces, some members of the Armed Forces Community, by virtue of the often dangerous and risky nature of their work, or environments in which they are required to

operate, become wounded, injured or sick in such a way that affects their life in a permanent or significant way.

- That a number of military compensation schemes exist to recognise and compensate Service Personnel and sometimes their families, for the hardship, inconvenience or ongoing impact conditions such as PTSD, limb loss, hearing loss etc.
- Military compensation can be awarded through the War Pension Scheme (WPS), Armed Forces Compensation Scheme (AFCS) or through a veteran's occupational Armed Forces Pension Scheme (AFPS), known as Service Invaliding Pensions (SIPs) or Service Attributable Pensions (SAPs). Compensation awards under these schemes may also include supplementary payments. This compensation often interacts with benefits issued through Local Authorities and may impact a veteran's entitlement to such benefits.
- That whilst some benefits such as Universal Credit rightly disregard military compensation as income, others administered by or subject to the discretion of Local Authorities, do not always do so, meaning that some veterans must give up their compensation in order to access essential financial support.
- A 2022 Freedom of Information request by the Royal British Legion showed that only one in five (20%) of Local Authorities in Great Britain rightly disregarded all military compensation when assessing local benefits claims for Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support, Discretionary Housing Payments and Disabled Facilities Grants.

### ***The council resolves***

- That no member of the Armed Forces Community should be forced to give up their military compensation to access the same welfare support as their civilian counterparts.
- That all compensation paid under any of the relevant military compensation schemes should be treated as such and not regarded as income when the Local Authority assesses applications for benefits over which they exercise discretion: Council Tax Support scheme, Housing Benefit, Discretionary Housing Payments and Disabled Facilities Grants. Rather it should be treated as intended, as a compensatory payment made in recognition of the often significant and life changing service or sacrifice an individual has made in the course of their service in our nation's Armed Forces.
- To support the Royal British Legion's call for all forms of military compensation to be disregarded as income in the assessment and administration of locally administered benefits over which this council exercises discretion.

## **Motion 2 – Received 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024 @ 17:22**

**Mover: Cllr Davies**

**Seconder: Cllr Aspinell**

Potholes have become a National Epidemic and there has been a 70 % increase in claims for damage to cars in Essex.

Whilst welcoming the increase in Essex County Council Highway funding for the coming year, assurance is required about standard and scrutiny of work being undertaken.

This Council calls upon Essex County Council Highways Department to ensure major improvements in the standard of pothole repairs are carried out, ensuring that once a pothole has been identified by County Highways, it is repaired to a standard that is permanent, not one lasting a few short weeks. Also, this Council requires Essex County Council to undertake their responsibilities in assuring that ditch clearance / gully maintenance is of a standard to protect our road surfaces from flooding.

Climate change is challenging but good quality road repairs and maintenance will ensure safer highways for everyone.

## **Motion 3 – Received 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2024 @ 17:31**

**Mover: Cllr Gorton**

**Seconder: Cllr Munden**

### **Statement**

In Essex, Local Highway Panels are made up of a representative number of Members from the County and the individual Borough, City or District. They also have Parish representatives where appropriate. The Membership criteria are set out in the Terms of Reference. While incorrectly stated on the Essex Highways website, a decision was made in May 2023 that for Brentwood, the LHP would only have representatives from the County Council.

The LHP Members meet on a quarterly basis to discuss and consider Highways concerns within their local Borough, City or District boundaries. The Panels are designed to prioritise local concerns and make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for the implementation of highway schemes that meet the concerns of local people. The meetings are not open to the public except by invitation.

### **Motion**

The Council notes:

1. The Brentwood Local Highway Panel is currently made up of the four County Councillors who represent Brentwood's County Divisions.
2. That the make-up of the Panel is at the discretion of the Chair, in consultation with the Essex Cabinet Member for Highways.

This Council believes:

1. A collaborative relationship with the County Council on opportunities for Highways improvements is beneficial.
2. That individual Borough Councillors will be made aware of opportunities for Highways enhancement, which could be submitted directly to the Panel without an increased workload for the County Councillors.
3. Openness on what schemes are being considered and decisions made helps better inform democracy, increases trust in politics and helps make better decisions.

This Council resolves:

1. To request a mechanism for Borough Councillors and Parish Councils to submit schemes, in an appropriate format, to Highways Officers so that they may be raised at the Local Highway Panel.
2. To request the opportunity to observe, either live or recorded, the decision-making process and debate over new schemes at Local Highway Panels.
3. To request that we receive prompt minutes, actions and updates on Local Highway Panel meetings and decisions.

#### **Motion 4 – Received 26<sup>th</sup> February 2024 @ 08:08**

**Mover: Cllr Kendall**

**Seconder: Cllr Naylor**

In Europe, only the UK and authoritarian Belarus still use archaic single-round First Past the Post for general elections. Internationally, Proportional Representation (PR) is used to elect the parliaments of more than 80 countries. These countries tend to be more equal, freer and greener.

PR ensures all votes count, have equal value, and that seats won match votes cast. Under PR, MP's and Parliaments better reflect the age, gender and characteristics of both local communities and of the nation.

MP's better reflecting the communities they represent in turn leads to improved decision-making, wider participation and increased levels of ownership for decisions taken.

PR is already used to elect the parliaments and assemblies of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. It's use should now be extended to include Westminster and local government in England.

In Scotland a proportional voting system was introduced for local elections in 2007. We believe a similar system should be introduced for local elections in England. Town Halls would benefit from increased political diversity and a clearer link between votes and seat share could be a major boost to people's political engagement and sense of place.

Brentwood Borough Council therefore resolves to write to H.M. Government calling for a change in our outdated electoral laws to enable Proportional Representation to be used for UK General and English Local elections.