

Rother District Council

Report to - Council
Date - 21 September 2022
Subject - Motion – Council Motion – Cost of Living Emergency

Motion submitted by Councillor S. Coleman

Rother District Council notes;

- In 2019, an estimated 10,530 people in Rother were affected by income deprivation (MHCLG, 2019).
- With inflation rising higher than wages, the cost of living post-pandemic is affecting many Rother residents and without action from government and local authorities, the scale of hardship in Rother could be vast and increasing.
- The Council's work developing an Anti-Poverty Strategy has highlighted the challenges already faced by those in hardship or with limited resources. Whilst it has addressed key improvements that can be made in terms of co-ordination, access and communication, its full effectiveness will not be realised until the medium to long term.
- Further work is needed to address more immediate problems that have developed in part because of the financial fall out of the Covid-19 pandemic and the current cost of living crisis, both of which have occurred since the initial remit of the Anti-Poverty Strategy was developed.
- Socio-economic inequalities and disadvantages persist in the UK, but successive governments have chosen not to enact the socio-economic duty contained in Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010. If enacted, the duty would legally require public authorities to consider the way their decisions increase or decrease inequalities that result from socio-economic disadvantage. Both Wales and Scotland have adopted this duty at a national level and one in seven councils in England have voluntarily adopted the socio-economic duty (Greater Manchester Poverty Action).

It is moved therefore that Council;

- Formally recognises the extreme financial hardship residents face by declaring a Cost of Living Emergency; and
- Request that the former Anti-Poverty Task and Finish Group be reconstituted to examine ways that the Council can work with partners to ensure that those in need are better protected from the current crisis and also to make recommendations to Cabinet and Council about voluntarily adopting the socio-economic duty to affirm the Council's commitment to preventing and combatting hardship, with particular considerations to any impact on those with protected characteristics as outlined in the Equality Act 2010.