

Motion to Council

Proposer: Cllr David Baines

Seconder: Cllr Martin Bond

St Helens Borough Council has suffered huge cuts in central government funding since 2010. Twelve months ago, Council agreed a motion supporting a collective demand for urgent fair funding, and Council notes that one year later the financial challenge continues and is worsening.

Thirteen years ago, the Council received £127m in general funding from government, but for the current year 2023/24 it was just £11m.

Council notes the hard work of officers and members since 2010 in managing the impact of these cuts as best as possible, but further notes the inevitable harm such cuts have done to our ability to support residents and provide the services people expect and deserve.

Council notes that ours is not the only authority to face these challenges. The cross-party Local Government Association estimates that the sector faces a funding gap of around £4 billion over the next two years.

It also continues to be a difficult time for many residents. St Helens Borough Council continues to work with our local public, faith and voluntary sectors to provide as much practical support and advice as possible, but those sectors – like ours, and as well as schools, health services, emergency services and more – are also facing huge difficulties.

Essential services cannot be run on thin air – we need fair funding urgently.

Ahead of the Chancellor's Autumn Statement on 22 November, Council therefore resolves:

To support another letter to the Chancellor to be co-signed by representatives of local public, private, faith and voluntary sector organisations to ask for fair funding for essential services;

To ask the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor and the Prime Minister again to set out the challenges faced by the Council in particular and to ask for urgent support.