

Motion from Cllr Susan Taylor

Phrases uttered recently by a Government Minister. “Local Government is the Heart of our Communities” “Local Government Delivers”.

A survey carried out by “Britain Thinks” revealed that Local Government is more trusted to tackle local issues than national government. The survey also showed that there was a significant level of public backing and trust in District Councils. Despite the plaudits, central government of all persuasions have increased local government bureaucracy (the recent form for the Levelling Up Fund alone was over 200 pages including attachments) and have passed legislation, some of which requires administration and /or policing by District Councils e.g. the Energy Performance Certificates for private rented accommodation, often without sufficient financial resources to fully compensate for the work required.

Ever greater demands are made of District Councils despite the pressure on their budgets.

As shown by the response to the Pandemic, District Councils deliver. It is time that this is recognised in more than mere words and District Councils should be given greater empowerment. For example:- Powers to raise fees and charges appropriate to their locality; to increase charges on Second Homes; and to have freedom to charge planning application fees that reflect the work required. Be provided with adequate financial resources to implement new obligations imposed on District Councils; and Reduce bureaucracy. Pages of form filling to apply for grants takes up valuable officer time. Oversight yes, but not bureaucracy for the sake of it.

MOTION

In recognition of the fact that District Councils and Borough Councils are considered best placed to meet the needs of their own residents, this Council resolves to write to its two MPs, to urge the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, that:

- 1. District and Borough Councils should be empowered to :**
 - i) Set fees and charges to meet the needs of their residents , and which cover the actual costs of delivering the services, for example, but not exclusively, planning fees, and**
 - ii) To increase charges on second and holiday homes.**
- 2.The bureaucracy required of local government when applying for government funding should be significantly reduced , to enable officers to concentrate on meeting the needs of their communities.**
- 3.Realistic funding to cover the costs should be provided to local government, when required to enact central government legislation.**