

Senior Officer Decision



Consultative meeting: Council

Consultative meeting date: 8th December 2021

Exempt from publication

No

Title: Motion to Council on poverty

Links to:

(i) **Officer report to consultative meeting**

No report but the motion called for a revision to wording related to Poverty in Council documents

(ii) **Recording of consultative meeting**

[Recording of Council meeting on 8 December](#)

(iii) **Minutes of consultative meeting**

[Minutes of Council meeting on 8 December](#)

Recommendation:

Motion: Revision to wording related to Poverty in Council documents

This council resolves to remove the word “involuntary” from the term “involuntary poverty” from every part of its documentation, at the time each document is scheduled for revision.

Authority

Decision of Council on 26th July 2021 to delegate decision making to officers until 23.59 17th January 2022. [Minutes 26th July 2021 Council Meeting](#). Senior Officer Decision of 10th December 2021 to implement Council’s wish to extend the arrangements until 23.59 on 10th May 2022. [Senior Officer Decision Record 10th December 2021](#)

Officer Decision

Consultations:

I was present at / have watched the recording of the consultative meeting which considered this item

Yes No

Detail any other consultations carried out:

N/A

Other considerations:

Do the legal and finance comments and equalities impact, climate change and risk assessments as detailed in the officer report remain the same.

Yes No

If no, provide the updated assessment below;

Legal Implications

None

Financial Implications

None

Equalities impact

None Choose an impact level

Climate change Choose an impact level

None

Risk: Not applicable; .

Decision:

RECOMMENDATION; that the following recommendation from the motion be approved; This council resolves to remove the word “involuntary” from the term “involuntary poverty” from every part of its documentation, at the time each document is scheduled for revision.

Reasons for decision:

The Chair invited Cllr Rylance as the proposer to speak to the motion.

Cllr Rylance said that she was motivated to propose this motion after seeing the latest available figures which indicated that 13% of children were living in poverty, and in some parts of Devon this increases to 34%. 16 million households do not have one month's worth of savings to rely upon. In the current financial climate, use of the word involuntary harps back to Victorian notions of deserving and non-deserving poor, as if people would choose to be homeless or desperate. Removing the phrase 'involuntary poverty' as Council documents are revised would help to ensure that there is no gate-keeping or impediment to those who request help, or imply any judgement at all.

In the absence of Cllr Bonetta, Cllr Millar acted as seconder to the motion. He considered that phrases such as involuntary poverty are akin to others such as 'intentional homelessness' used legally, but reverts to different times and are very outdated.

Cllr Armstrong reminded Council that a similar debate was held in October 2019, but without setting out realistic or time bound recommendations.

The Chair invited Cllr Rylance to give her right of reply.

Cllr Rylance said that she was pleased to see general support for the motion and made a plea for everyone to be aware of the power of language, particularly when dealing with people on the edge of poverty who are vulnerable.

The Chair invited those present to vote on the motion.

Following a vote the motion proposed by Cllr Rylance was carried unanimously.



Signed

Dated 14th December 2021

Senior Officer job title and name: John Golding Strategic Lead – Housing, Health & Environment

For Democratic Services use.

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