Bracknell Executive Statement.

To: Cllr. Paul Bettison, Executive Member for Council Strategy & Community Cohesion (Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Executive)

Re: Bracknell Forest, Budget Consultation 2016/17 - Further Savings.

In his resignation letter and following interview, Iain Duncan-Smith, the architect of welfare austerity, disowned his actions and admitted that austerity is a self-imposed political choice and not an economic necessity. He feels that, perhaps for a long time, welfare cuts have been applied without due thought or consultation, and he has realised that welfare austerity has unfairly hurt people, and that it has gone too far. He now requests that we stop to rethink. We welcome his new-found honesty.

The Chancellor has agreed with this assessment, and demonstrated that funds are quickly available, by reversing £4.4bn of proposed cuts to Personal Independence Payments (PIPs), for which we applaud him.

This radical and sudden rethink of policy at the most senior level of the Conservative Party calls in to question policy as enacted by Conservatives at a local level. Respecting the changed opinion of their leadership, local Conservatives must also stop to rethink their proposed cuts to vulnerable people.

We urge Bracknell Forest Council's leading Conservative group to:

1. Request a renegotiation of Bracknell Forest's Local Government settlement. This would be of undoubted benefit to residents and, given the clear opportunity to do so, a proposal we trust they will embrace.

Failing this, to:

2. Divert cuts away from vulnerable people. This would be in line with The Chancellor's new thinking, The Council's published plan for 2015-2019 and the Council Leader's wishes. We request that they exempt from cuts the following, currently under proposal -
• Early intervention support and care for children.
• Youth services and universal provision.
• Adult social care commissioning.

Failing this, to:

3. 'Back-load' or 'Even-load' the cuts over several years, thereby allowing vulnerable people and their supporters time to adjust. If the Council believes that the 'Front-loading' of their settlement is difficult then this would be the more compassionate thing to do for others.

We trust that our proposals can be enacted.

**Signatories (Councillors, Executive Officers and Branch Delegates to the Executive Committee):**

Cllr. Mary Temperton, Borough Councillor for Great Hollands North, Vice-Chair (Campaigns) & Election Agent.

Cllr. Paul Bidwell, Town Councillor for Priestwood.

Cllr. Chris Green, Binfield Parish Councillor.

Roy Bailey, Chair.

Kathleen Nugent, Vice-Chair (Membership).

John Wright, Secretary.

Graham Firth, Assistant Secretary.

Diane Wilson, Treasurer.

Diane Thomas, Womens' Officer.

Thomas Hemmings, Youth and Trade Union Liaison.

Wilf Holness, Ethnic Minorities Officer.

Guy Gillbe, Political Education Officer.

Tom Neill, IT Officer.

Tricia Brown.

Ian Newman.

Clive Temperton.

Dick Turpin.

**ENDS**
FOOTNOTES

[1] "I am unable to watch passively whilst certain policies are enacted in order to meet the fiscal self-imposed restraints that I believe are more and more perceived as distinctly political rather than in the national economic interest."
Iain Duncan Smith resignation letter

[2] "My problem throughout this last period didn't start last week or the week before. Through the debates and the disputes that I've had on tax credits, on the cutting away and eroding of universal credits allowances, and then the big assault on the taper."
Iain Duncan Smith, Marr Show

[3] "the institution of a welfare cap which was lowered directly after the last election pretty arbitrarily."
Iain Duncan Smith, Marr Show

[4] "I mean, we just come back to what we were talking about with this benefit changing literally by hour. You know, I wasn't consulted on the Friday about those changes. I didn't know anything about them until media started ringing me up and telling me. This is not the way to do government."
Iain Duncan Smith, Marr Show

[5] "I sat silently at eight o'clock in the morning of the budget presentation because I then realised the full state of what was actually happening with regards to both the tax cuts and this juxtaposed budget."
Iain Duncan Smith, Marr Show

[6] "AM: Now, in very, very clear, sort of simple terms, that's why I asked you at the beginning, do you think this is an unfair or immoral situation? Because you're cutting taxes for the better off at the same time as you're cutting benefits for disabled people. Do you think that's unfair? IDS: Juxtaposed as it is – as it came through in the budget, that is deeply unfair and was perceived to be unfair. And that unfairness is damaging to the government, it's damaging to the party, and it's actually damaging to the public."
Iain Duncan Smith, Marr Show

[7] "AM: It's too far now, it's gone too far? IDS: I think it's going too far."
Iain Duncan Smith, Marr Show

[8] "what I'd hoped for was I'd be able to stop this process and get this wide debate"
Iain Duncan Smith, Marr Show

[9] "In targeting our services, we will prioritise people and areas with the greatest need, early help and prevention so struggling or vulnerable people can maximise their opportunities to become independent."
Bracknell Forest Council Plan 2015-19


[10] "It's very sad because none of us wants to have to cut things"
Council Leader, Cllr. Paul Bettison speaking to the Bracknell News

http://www.bracknellnews.co.uk/news/14423974.Children_s_services_across_Bracknell_threatened_by_dramatic_cuts/

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