

COUNCIL		
Report Title	Motion 3 in the name of the Mayor to be seconded by Councillor Hall	
Key Decision		Item No.
Ward		
Contributors	Chief Executive (Head of Business & Committee)	
Class	Part 1	Date: February 25 2015

Modern Charter for Local Freedom

“The United Kingdom is one of the most centralised states in the world. Compared to other democracies, local government is relatively weak, lacking the means to raise sufficient income to meet local needs and sufficient and effective powers over services such as health, the police and education.

Instead of being a relationship of equals, local government is the junior partner, reliant on central government for most of its funding, and subject to numerous restrictions and diktats. As the vast majority of council funding comes from central government, local councils often have to make cuts imposed by central government.

Since 2010, local government funding has been allocated more on population and less on need, a cynical move by the Tory-Lib Dem Coalition to shift funding away from areas of greatest need to the wealthier areas. As a result, deeply regressive cuts of 38.2% have since hit the poorest areas hardest, and now Central government cuts will force Lewisham Council into making a further £85m of savings over the next three years.

To address these issues, Lewisham Council affirms its commitment to the overarching principle of achieving a fairer distribution of resources among all regions and localities, with the objective of reducing inequalities. We therefore call for greater freedoms to raise income locally that will better enable us to protect our community from the ravages of austerity enforced by the Coalition while at the same time calling for the retention of some centrally-allocated funding based on the restoration of a needs-based formula to support boroughs such as Lewisham that have the greatest needs.

The Modern Charter for Local Freedom, produced by the Core Cities group, is a bold call for greater devolution and localism. It demands that local areas be given the freedom to decide, the freedom to invest and the freedom to deliver. It demands that local government be given the ability to raise a greater proportion of its income, and to play a greater role in taking decisions and overseeing local services. In return, local areas will commit to creating stronger local economies, investing more in local infrastructure, improving local services, and devolving decision-making further down to local communities, neighbourhoods and individuals.

Lewisham Council therefore resolves to:

- Sign the Core Cities' Modern Charter for Local Freedom
- Campaign for further devolution and greater localism
- Support a fairer distribution of resources based on the restoration of needs-based central funding.”