

Conservative amendment to Labour FSM motion

~~This council recognises that during the pandemic~~~~Following the Government's decision not to extend Free School Meals during the recent half term,~~ local authorities, charities and businesses in London and across England ~~have taken important steps to~~ ~~were left to plug the gap in providing~~ ~~provide~~ nutrition for ~~the rising numbers of~~ children in low income households.

Council commends ~~the~~~~the~~ Conservative government's recent announcement of more than £400 million of funding to provide free school meals for children across England until the end of 2021. The £170 million Covid Winter Grants scheme will provide support until the end of March 2021, and the Holidays Activities and Food programme will be expanded across England next year to provide support through Easter, summer and Christmas 2021 and cost up to £220 million. In addition the government has pledged £16 million for food distribution charities. ~~Labour administration in Merton for stepping in to help with additional funding for all families entitled to Free School Meals to cover the half term holiday, despite the increasing financial burden of responding to the Covid 19 crisis. Without sufficient recompense from the government, despite their commitment to do "whatever it takes", this financial strain puts Merton's children at risk of holiday hunger.~~

Council thanks and commends local charities, businesses and individual residents who also joined together to ensure the borough's children don't go hungry.

Council ~~supports the recent announcement and notes that this commitment to the borough's children is in addition to the approximately £100 million of support for Merton Council, local businesses and the self-employed during the Covid19 pandemic. calls on the government to provide funding for families eligible Free School Meals during the upcoming Christmas holidays and other school holidays during the course of the pandemic.~~

Council resolves to ask the Leader to write to the borough's MPs and the Secretary of State to ~~support the Conservative government's action to~~ ~~demand the government~~ safeguard children's health and nutrition by extending Free School Meals provision ~~until the end of 2021. -during the holidays.~~

Motion now to read:

This council recognises that during the pandemic, local authorities, charities and businesses in London and across England have taken important steps to provide nutrition for children in low income households.

Council commends the Conservative government's recent announcement of more than £400 million of funding to provide free school meals for children across England until the end of 2021. The £170 million Covid Winter Grants scheme will provide support until the end of March 2021, and the Holidays Activities and Food programme will be expanded across England next year to provide support through Easter, summer and Christmas 2021 and cost up to £220 million. In addition the government has pledged £16 million for food distribution charities.

Council thanks and commends local charities, businesses and individual residents who also joined together to ensure the borough's children don't go hungry.

Council supports the recent announcement and notes that this commitment to the borough's children is in addition to the approximately £100 million of support for Merton Council, local businesses and the self-employed during the Covid19 pandemic.

Council resolves to ask the Leader to write to the borough's MPs and the Secretary of State to support the Conservative government's action to safeguard children's health and nutrition by extending Free School Meals provision until the end of 2021.