

Council - 10th March 2022

Notice of Motion

It is time for the Right to Food to become Law

Southend-on-Sea City Council notes that:

We are seeing a crisis of food poverty born out of the political choices and systemic failings created over the past four decades, which have now reached a tipping point for so many in our communities. The figures are devastating for one of the richest nations in the world and highlight the inequality of the UK in 2022.

Need for food banks is already at a record high. Food banks in the Trussell Trust network gave out 2.5 million emergency food parcels between April 2020 and March 2021, a 33% rise on the previous year. This comes on top of year-on-year increases in need.

This council notes the consistent high rates of poverty across our city. We recognise the growing concern amongst our health and care professionals of the current situation and the likely exacerbation of poverty figures through the impact of the COVID pandemic, the cost of living crisis, and economic uncertainty.

Southend Trussell Trust Food Bank provided food for 8512 people, including 3934 children, in 2021. They have seen a 53% rise in food bank use in January 2022 over January 2021, with all evidence suggesting that necessity will continue to increase at an alarming rate.

We also note the Government's forthcoming White Paper in response to the National Food Strategy; which reported in July 2021 and was the first independent review of England's entire food system for 75 years. The 'Right to Food' campaign believes that the 11 million people currently living in food poverty must be central to the response from Government.

Enshrining the 'Right to Food' into law would clarify Government obligations on food poverty and would introduce legal avenues to hold Government bodies accountable for violations.

Southend-on-Sea City Council therefore resolves:

To call on the Government for the Right to Food to be incorporated into the Government's White Paper in response to the National Food Strategy. We ask the Leader of the Council and the relevant Portfolio Holder to write to the Prime Minister and to our City's Members of Parliament, to further this request.

Proposers

Cllr Aston Line

Cllr Daniel Cowan

Seconders

Cllr Martin Berry

Cllr Kay Mitchell