

Notice of Motion submitted pursuant to Council Procedure Rule No 5.27

To consider the following Notice of Motion submitted by Councillor F Hoskins on behalf of the Liberal Democrats:

No cuts to Universal Credit – let families keep the £20 increase

Aim: To maintain the income of low and middle income families.

This council notes:

Next April the government plans to cut the benefit level for millions of claimants by ending the time limited increase to the basic rate of Universal Credit (and the tax credit equivalent) announced by the Chancellor on 20th March as part of his pandemic response package.

The recent vote in parliament will have no effect as the conservatives were whipped to abstain.

The £20 a week boost reflected the reality that the level of benefits were not adequate to protect the swiftly increasing number of households relying on them as the crisis hit. Exactly because that increase was a very significant and welcome move to bolster low- and middle-income families' living standards, its removal will be a huge loss.

Pressing ahead would see the level of unemployment support fall to its lowest real-terms level since 1990-91, and it's lowest ever relative to average earnings. Indeed, the basic level of out-of-work support prior to the March boost was – at £73 a week (£3,800 a year) – less than half the absolute poverty line.

The increase in benefits has had a positive effect on the lives of thousands of local claimants who are better able to pay for life's essentials such as food, clothing and utilities.

The local economy has also benefited from the increase in benefit levels as claimants spend their money locally thereby supporting local businesses and jobs.

This Council resolves to:

- **Write to the Chancellor, Rishi Sunak and to the Prime Minister, Boris Johnson demanding that the £20 increase to Universal Credit is made permanent and extended to claimants on legacy benefits.**
- **Work with other local government organisations to form a coalition to pressure the government to make the £20 increase to Universal Credit permanent.**