

NOTICE OF MOTION**INDEPENDENT MEMBERS****NO CUTS TO UNIVERSAL CREDIT – LET FAMILIES KEEP THE £20 INCREASE**

This Council resolves to:

- Request the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor and the Prime Minister, imploring the Government to take necessary steps to ensure that the £20 increase to Universal Credit is made permanent and extended to claimants on legacy benefits; and
- To request that the Chief Executive and officers work with other local government organisations, such as the LGA to form a coalition to pressure the government to make the £20 increase to Universal Credit permanent.

Proposed by: Cllr Brennan

Seconded by: Cllr Knight

Supporting Information:

- Next April the Government plan to cut the benefit level for millions of claimants by ending of 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 £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 have 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.

