

COUNCIL		
Report Title	Motions	
Key Decision		Item No.
Ward		
Contributors	Chief Executive (Head of Business & Committee)	
Class	Part 1	Date: January 21 2021

1 Making the Universal Credit Increase Permanent

This council notes:

- In 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.

This council resolves to:

- Write to the Chancellor, Rushi 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.

Proposer: Cllr Stephen Penfold

Seconder: Cllr Silvana Kelleher

The Perilous State of Women's Human Rights in Poland

This Council condemns the current assault on women's human rights in Poland, including the total ban on abortion and the move towards the restriction of women's rights in other countries around the world.

We support the women and men putting themselves at risk by protesting on the streets in Poland to try to protect basic human rights in their country. If successful, these reforms could have far-reaching consequences with the adoption of extreme and discriminatory practices in countries around the globe as noted by Irene Donadio of the International Planned Parenthood Federation European Network, a global NGO, "This is a problem for all of us. If we let this happen in Poland, it could be just the start."

The true danger is recognised by Amnesty International. "Behind these latest moves, lies a profound contempt for the rights of women... that is not limited to Poland. Other countries, including neighbouring countries, follow a similar agenda" (Monica Costa, Senior Campaigner, Amnesty International). Poland has been steadily rolling back women's rights and has pulled out of the Istanbul Convention, a European treaty aimed at preventing violence against women.

The Geneva Consensus Declaration illustrates the possible wider consequences. It has been signed by 33 countries and was co-sponsored by the United States, Brazil, Uganda, Egypt, Hungary and Indonesia. In Europe, the other two signatories were Poland and Belarus. Signatories say that there is no right to abortion and that there is no international obligation for states to organise or pay for it. Activists fear that a steady elimination of women's rights could also develop into the oppression of groups in society.

Proposer: Cllr Suzannah Clarke

Secunder: Cllr Joan Millbank