

NOTICE OF MOTION REGARDING UNIVERSAL CREDIT UPLIFT PAYMENTS

Council	25 February 2021
Report Author	Nick Hughes, Committee Services Manager
Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Member for Housing and Community Services
Status	For Decision
Classification:	<i>Unrestricted</i>
Key Decision	No
Ward:	All Wards

Executive Summary:

This Council will consider a notice of motion requiring the Leader to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, to express its deep concern about the consequences of removing or reducing the £20 per week uplift to universal credit and working tax credit.

Recommendation(s):

Council is invited to consider whether to debate the motion.

Corporate Implications

Financial and Value for Money

None arising directly from this report.

Legal

Council Procedure Rule 3.7 states that: "the Member whose name appears first on the notice will move the motion during his or her speech and call for a seconder. If seconded, a Member from the controlling political group will be entitled to a reply, after which the motion shall stand referred without further discussion to the Cabinet or appropriate committee for determination or report unless the Council decides to debate the motion in accordance with Rule 16" (*rules of debate*)

However, as only Council can adopt the motion on notice, the motion will fall if the Council does not agree to debate it.

Corporate

Council Procedure Rule 3 provides the opportunity for Councillors to give advance notice of motions to be put to Council.

Any motion on notice that proposes the adoption of a policy or the taking of a decision where Council has not received a report from the officers setting out the technical, legal and financial implications of adopting the policy or taking the decision in question shall only be debated.

Equality Act 2010 & Public Sector Equality Duty

Members are reminded of the requirement, under the Public Sector Equality Duty (section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) to have due regard to the aims of the Duty at the time the decision is taken. The aims of the Duty are: (i) eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment, victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act, (ii) advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it, and (iii) foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

Protected characteristics: age, sex, disability, race, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, religion or belief and pregnancy & maternity. Only aim (i) of the Duty applies to Marriage & civil partnership.

There are no specific equalities issues arising from this report.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

This report relates to the following corporate priorities: -

- *Communities*

1.0 Introduction and Background

1.1 The following motion has been received from the Leader in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 3:

“Thanet has the highest number of universal credit claimants in Kent - more than 18,000, nearly a quarter of the eligible population and an increase of almost two-thirds over the last year due to the impacts of COVID-19 on our local economy. A third of these residents are in work, but recorded unemployment is up 80% since March 2020 and now afflicts one in ten of the working age population. One in eight Thanet households is in fuel poverty.

Last March, the chancellor announced a £20 per week uplift to universal credit and working tax credit for 2020/21. This has been a vital lifeline to thousands of families in Thanet and provided an eight-figure cash injection to their collective spending power, helping them feed their children, heat their homes and support local business. It has helped contain the severe pressure on the voluntary sector, including local food banks.

The estimated cost of the uplift is around 2% of the extra government spending nationally triggered by COVID-19, and even after it is taken into account UK benefit payments are among the lowest in Europe.

No part of Kent will suffer more detriment than Thanet if this uplift is taken away. Nowhere in Kent will more children suffer, more families go cold and hungry, and more local businesses lose out. The lives of residents already struggling to manage will be made harder.

This council will speak up for those in urgent need. It calls on both Thanet's MPs to do the same.

Council urges the chancellor to retain the £20 uplift in his budget next week and not turn his back on the poorest members of our community. It instructs the leader to write to him tomorrow to express its deep concern about the consequences of removing or reducing this essential support."

2.0 Options

- 2.1 To debate the motion
- 2.2 Not to debate the motion, in which case the motion will fall.

3.0 Decision Making Process

- 3.1 It is for Council to decide whether or not to debate the motion.

Contact Officer: Nick Hughes, Committee Services Manager
Reporting to: Tim Howes, Director of Corporate Governance and Monitoring Officer

Annex List

There are no Annexes with this report.

Background Papers

There are no Background Papers with this report.

Corporate Consultation

Finance: Chris Blundell, Director of Financial Services

Legal: Estelle Culligan, Director of Law and Democracy