

Motion to: Council

30 January 2024

Subject: Cost of living crisis

Proposer: Councillor Giles

Seconder: Councillor Carrington

This Council notes:

News before Christmas that children in Norwich have “bowed legs: hunger worse than ever” rightly shocked any decent resident and highlights the continuing growing extreme poverty within our city. The UK has a failing economy and a failing Government in which real household disposable incomes in the UK were 1.2 percent lower in the second quarter of 2023 than at the end of 2019, with a long-term crisis in the real value of wages and household income. The Office for Budget Responsibility now says real wages will not return to 2008 levels until 2028. The current pay squeeze will have lasted 20 years, a generation, with the consequent combined impact in driving poverty within Norwich.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) note that austerity economics has patently failed in delivering growth or reducing debt. It has eviscerated public services, harming millions who did not get the support they needed, and life expectancy has fallen. It pushed millions towards and into poverty.
- 2) continue to prioritise and build on the social inclusion agenda within the City Council as previously agreed in prior motions on this subject. Examples of actions taken can be found in the Annual Equality Information Report.
- 3) call on the Government to declare a Cost-of-Living Emergency and provide Covid-level support to residents, businesses, and local government to tackle this issue urgently.
- 4) thank our third sector advice agency partners in the Financial Inclusion Consortium for all their hard work supporting residents.
- 5) continue grant funding the Financial Inclusion Consortium.
- 6) thank our Community Partnerships Team for their hard work distributing Household Support Fund grants to those in need of support with utility bills, food, and other essential items.

- 7) call on the Government to extend the Household Support Fund beyond its current end date of March 2024.
- 8) thank our Benefits team for their hard work administering Housing Benefit, our 100% Council Tax Reduction Scheme, and Discretionary Housing Payments.
- 9) call on the Government to provide an adequate level of Discretionary Housing Payments funding to enable local authorities across the entire financial year to support all Housing Benefit and Universal Credit recipients struggling to pay their rent.
- 10) call on the Government to introduce permanent provision of free school meals for children in school holidays.
- 11) continuing progress working with partners implementing the actions as set out in the Norwich Real Living Wage Place Action Plan; and
- 12) call on the Government to increase the National Minimum Wage to match the Real Living Wage.