

## **Agenda item 8 – Support for a Universal Basic Income pilot in Lewes District**

***Submitted to the Leader of the Council, Councillor James MacCleary by Councillor Imogen Makepeace, in accordance with the Council's Cabinet Procedure Rules***

### **Background**

A Universal Basic Income (UBI) is a non-means-tested sum paid by the state to cover the basic cost of living, which is paid to all citizens individually, regardless of employment status, wealth, or marital status, and which has been more widely debated in recent months than ever before. It replaces a complex panoply of means-tested benefits of which £10B remains unclaimed each year.

Advocates argue it is the fairest, most effective way to mitigate the effects of coronavirus on people's incomes. A network of Universal Basic Income Labs has been set up and works with local authorities across the UK developing UBI proposals to address problems such as poverty, inequality, discrimination and environmental damage, long-term and immediately, in relation to coronavirus.

### **Proposal:**

This Cabinet resolves,

(1) To establish a forum for councillors and local partners and stakeholder groups, and with local partners to raise awareness and understanding of UBI.

(2) On behalf of the Council and our residents, to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the leader of the party in Government, their counterparts in all opposition political parties in parliament to articulate the following:

- The current benefit system is failing citizens, with Universal Credit causing hardship to many in Lewes District
- There is a danger of increasing numbers of people facing poverty as a result of the coronavirus crisis;
- Trialling a UBI is needed, as a UBI has the potential to help address key challenges such as inequality, poverty, precarious employment, loss of community, and breach of planetary boundaries through:
  - i) Giving employers a more flexible workforce whilst giving employees greater freedom to change their jobs;
  - ii) Valuing unpaid work, such as caring for family members and voluntary work;
  - iii) Removing the negative impacts of benefit sanctions and conditionality; and

- iv) Giving people more equal resources within the family, workplace and society;
  - v) Breaking the link between work and consumption, thus helping reduce strain on the environment;
  - vi) Enabling greater opportunities for people to work in community and cultural activities or to train or re-skill in areas that will be needed to transition to a lower-carbon economy.
- The success of a UBI pilot should be measured by health and well-being and community benefit alongside economic and employment impacts;
  - Lewes District is ideally placed to pilot a UBI, given its economic and geographic diversity.