A Universal Basic Income Trial in Mendip

This council notes:

1. The drastic impacts of the Covid pandemic on employment and household incomes in Mendip, in particular the self employed, those on zero hours contracts and people working in the arts, festival and cultural industries.

2. The threat to income and employment from Brexit, climate breakdown, automation and artificial intelligence, which could affect a great many more jobs in future;

3. The development of universal basic income (UBI) trials in other countries, which offer 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, which has been widely debated in recent months;

4. The resolutions of other local authorities including Sheffield, Bristol, Oxford, Birmingham, Lewes, and Brighton and Hove [with cross party support] calling for trials of UBI;

5. 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.

6. UBI has been Green Party Policy since the ‘70’s and now taken up by the Liberal Democrats and more recently the Labour manifesto calling for a UBI trial.

7. The time has come for Universal Basic Income.

This council believes:

1. That the current benefit system is failing citizens, with Universal Credit causing hardship to many communities;

2. A UBI is the fairest, most effective way to mitigate the effects of coronavirus on people’s incomes as it does not discriminate between employment status, caring responsibilities, age, or disability when providing basic support;

3. There is a danger of increasing numbers of people facing poverty as a result of the coronavirus crisis;

4. Testing 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 reskill in areas that will be needed to transition to a lower-carbon economy.

5. The success of a UBI pilot should not be measured only by impact upon take-up of paid work, but also the impact upon communities and what the people within them do, how they feel, and how they relate to others and the environment around them; and

6. Given its history of social innovation, wealth of expertise, and active networks across community, business and public services, Mendip is ideally placed to pilot a UBI.

**Full Council calls on the Cheif Executive / leader to:**

1. Send a joint letter with the other party leaders 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, and all local MPs, and media asking for a trial of Universal Basic Income in Mendip citing the above reasons.

Motion to be moved by: Shane Collins, Keyford Ward Green Party Councillor, seconded by Cllr Ros Wyke, Leader of MDC.

Date submitted: 9th February 2021