

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING
21st NOVEMBER 2012
MOTIONS TO COUNCIL

1. Motion from the Labour Group

Council notes that

- The Chancellor of the Exchequer announced in the 2012 budget the Government's desire to introduce "more market-facing" public sector pay. This could mean regional or local public sector pay.
- Public sector employers already have some flexibility to adjust pay in response to local conditions, and higher rates are paid in London and the South East.
- The New Economics Foundation believes that regional and local pay could cost the West Midlands economy up to £1.2 billion per year and 3,710 jobs.
- 65% of public sector workers are female and, despite Equal Pay legislation, women in many sectors of the national economy still earn less than males in comparable roles.
- Workers in Wyre Forest are paid £133 less per week than the national average.

Council believes that

- The Government's case is based on the claim that public sector pay is "crowding out" the private sector. This is not supported by evidence, particularly at a time of high unemployment. In Wyre Forest, where there are four Job Seekers Allowance claimants for every job vacancy, there are simply not enough full-time jobs of any kind on offer.
- The Government misinterprets the real reasons for the differences between public and private sector pay. For instance, it does not appear to realise that a higher proportion of public sector work is highly-skilled, such as teaching and nursing, that, in the public sector there is a smaller pay gap between top and bottom earners, and that there is a smaller gender pay gap.

Council further believes that

- Regional or local public sector pay would make it harder for the public sector in Wyre Forest to recruit and retain good quality professionals, because they would be able to earn more elsewhere.
- Reducing the pay of the 7,800 public sector workers in Wyre Forest would have significantly harmful effect on spending power locally.
- Driving down public sector wages would not improve the wages of people working in the private sector, but could encourage further depression of wages in all sectors.

- Our vision of the economic future for Wyre Forest is greater actual and relative prosperity, not for our district forever to be saddled with a “low pay” status

Therefore, Council resolves

- To write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Chief Secretary to the Treasury stating this Council’s opposition to plans for regional or localised public sector pay.
- To write to Mark Garnier, MP, outlining our concerns about the impact that this policy would have on the local community.
- To sign up to the Fair Pay campaign.

2 Motion from the Labour Group

The Living Wage

Council understands the principle of the Living Wage to be remuneration for employment at a level above the Minimum Wage, such that living standards can be higher than the basic affordability of life’s necessities.

Council supports the principle of the Living Wage, currently set at £7.45 per hour outside London.

Council accepts the impracticality of the immediate implementation of remuneration at Living Wage levels, especially for small businesses, but believes that it should be a longer-term goal for all paid employment.

Council notes that forty-three of its own employees, nearly 11% of the workforce, are not paid a Living Wage.

Council resolves to ask Scrutiny to consider the implications of the living wage for the organisation and to make recommendations into the budget decision-making process for 2013-14 to identify resources which will enable it to pay all employees at least a Living Wage.

3. Motion from the Labour Group

Charter for a Future that Works

Wyre Forest District Council formally endorses the following principles:

- **A Job or Training Guarantee:** The Government should guarantee paid work or training to every young person who has been out of work for six months or more.
- **Action on Apprenticeships:** All public bodies should commit to recruiting a set number of apprentices each year and public sector contracts should encourage private contractors to have a quality apprenticeship scheme.

- **Quality Work Experience:** Young people should have access to good quality, work experience that should lead to a job interview at the end of every placement.
- **Welfare Reform:** In the short-term, the Government should reform the rules on Job Seekers Allowance, to allow young people to return to full-time education without any effect on their benefits. In the longer term, a Youth Credit, or other financial support, should be introduced to help all young people boost both their learning and employment prospects.
- **Practical Support:** Also, there need to be extra measures to help young people stay in education and assist with transport costs.

It is vital that urgent action is taken by all public bodies and employers to address the unemployment crisis facing young people today. At a local level, Wyre Forest District Council will write to Mark Garnier MP and business trade bodies requesting that they agree with these principles and take practical steps to support its aims.

Wyre Forest District Council will support local young people by

- Offering apprenticeships
- Offering quality work experience programmes
- As part of the tendering process, urge all private contractors to have a quality apprenticeship scheme.

Cllr Jamie Shaw
Leader of the Labour Group
8th November 2012