

Subject:	A Basic Income Trial for Brighton and Hove - Petition for Debate		
Date of Meeting:	22 October 2020		
Report of:	Executive Lead Officer for Strategy, Governance & Law		
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Wards Affected:	All		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 Under the Council's Petition Scheme if a petition contains more than 1,250 signatures and is not petition requesting officer evidence, it will be debated by the Full Council.
- 1.2 The e-petition has resulted in triggering a debate at the council meeting, having exceeded the threshold with a total of 1,898 signatures confirmed at the time of printing the report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the petition is noted and referred to the Policy & Resources Committee for consideration.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION / CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:**3.1 The Petition:
A Basic Income Trial for Brighton and Hove**

We the undersigned petition Brighton & Hove Council to support a basic income trial in the city and to write to the government to request that they look into the feasibility of a pilot in Brighton. We understand that not all councillors may have looked into this subject and so in this petition we are asking that:

- The petition is presented at full council and that councillors have time to debate the issue
- The council considers joining the councils in Sheffield, Liverpool and Hull in backing the idea of a basic income trial in the city and votes whether to support the proposal
- The council writes to the government in support of a basic income trial in Brighton and Hove.

Lead Petitioner – Maggie Gordon-Walker

Additional Information:

There have been a number of local groups in the UK that have formed over the past few years all with the aim of promoting the idea of basic income such as the UBI Labs in the North of England (Sheffield, Leeds, Liverpool, Kirklees etc.). We, Basic Income South East, have recently formed to continue the movement but with a focus on the South East of England, starting with Brighton and Hove.

Proponents of Basic Income argue it is the fairest way of sharing wealth and could guarantee minimum standards of living. They also argue it would dramatically reduce, if not eliminate poverty in the UK, improve the wellbeing of everyone and help the local economy. Every individual would receive regular payments from the government with no strings attached, taking away the conditionality that the current welfare system has. By covering everyone's basic needs, a basic income would enable them to have more stability and security in their lives and thrive rather than just survive. Recently we have seen evidence of the lack of security that many have through the coronavirus outbreak and with an increasingly unstable economic future, we feel it is better to support people with an upfront payment rather than dealing with any problems after they occur.

There have been several trials of basic income that have occurred including recently in Finland but also in Canada during the 1970s and other countries across the world such as Kenya and India. The UK government, however, has yet to support such a scheme in the UK, although the Scottish government have taken it upon themselves to investigate the practicalities of a pilot scheme and have been working on a feasibility study over the last few years. They will publish their results later this year, with the potential of a pilot happening north of the border. In last year's general election, the Green Party included basic income as a core part of their manifesto and were joined by the Labour Party who supported the idea of several trials across the UK. In addition, several local authorities have backed the idea of trials in their area including Sheffield (June 2019), Liverpool (2018) and Hull (Jan 2020).

4. PROCEDURE:

4.1 The petition will be debated at the Council meeting in accordance with the agreed protocol:

- (i) The Lead petitioner will be invited by the Mayor to present the petition and will have up to 3 minutes in which to outline the prayer of the petition and confirm the number of signatures;
- (ii) The Mayor will then open the matter up for debate by councillors for period of 15 minutes and will first call on the relevant Committee Chair to respond to the petition and move a proposed response. The Mayor will then call on those councillors who have indicated a desire to speak in the matter, before calling on the relevant Committee Chair to respond to the debate;
- (iii) An amendment to the recommendation in paragraph 2.1 of the report or to add additional recommendations should be submitted by 10.00am on the day of the meeting; otherwise it will be subject to the Mayor's discretion as

to being appropriate. Any such amendment will need to be formally moved and seconded at the meeting;

- (iv) After the 15 minutes set aside for the debate, the Mayor will then formally put:
 - (a) Any amendments in the order in which they are moved, and
 - (b) The substantive recommendation(s) as amended (if amended).

