



<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Notice of Motion – Suspension of Government Debt Recovery for those in receipt of benefits and universal credit</b>
<b>Date:</b>	23rd August, 2022
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Nora Largey, Interim City Solicitor
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Jim Hanna, Senior Democratic Services Officer

<b>Restricted Reports</b>	
<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</b>	
<b>After Committee Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>After Council Decision</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sometime in the future</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Never</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>

<b>Call-in</b>	
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues</b>
1.1	To consider the Notice of Motion received for the meeting of the Council on 1st September in relation to Suspension of Government Debt Recovery for those in receipt of benefits and universal credit.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
2.1	The Committee is asked to consider the motion and agree to either adopt the motion, refer it for debate at the Council meeting (with or without restrictions) or reject the motion.

3.0	<b>Main Report</b>
3.1	<p data-bbox="272 253 432 286"><b><u>Key Issues</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="272 320 1453 387">The Committee will be aware Standing Orders 13 (m) to (r) as agreed by the Council at its meeting on 4th October is as follows:</p> <p data-bbox="164 454 1481 1366">3.2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="323 454 1481 622">(m) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will have delegated authority to adopt or reject Notices of Motion. The Lord Mayor will indicate at the Council meeting those Notices of Motion that have been considered by the Standards and Business Committee and whether such Notices of Motion were rejected or adopted. In either case, the proposer only may speak on the issue at Council.</i></li> <li data-bbox="323 656 1481 824">(n) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will refer all Notices of Motion directly to a standing committee when the matter to which the Notice of Motion refers falls within the remit of that committee. At Council, the Lord Mayor will indicate that the Notice of Motion was received and referred. There will be no speakers on such Notices of Motion at Council.</i></li> <li data-bbox="347 857 1481 958">(o) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will refer Notices of Motion for consideration by full Council when the Notice of Motion relates to a strategic or constitutional matter.</i></li> <li data-bbox="347 992 1481 1059">(p) <i>The Standards and Business Committee will not have the power to amend the wording of any Notice of Motion that is being referred to the full Council for debate.</i></li> <li data-bbox="347 1093 1481 1193">(q) <i>Any amendments to Notice of Motions to be proposed at the Council are to be furnished at least one day in advance of going to the full Council and will be circulated to Party Group Leaders in advance of the Council meeting.</i></li> <li data-bbox="347 1227 1481 1366">(r) <i>In referring any matter to the full Council, the Standards and Business Committee may determine to restrict contributions to the debate in relation to any Notice of Motion to one per political party. At the Council meeting, the Lord Mayor will clearly indicate if the restriction applies.</i></li> </ul> <p data-bbox="164 1395 802 1429">3.3 The following motion has been received:</p> <p data-bbox="272 1462 938 1529"><b><u>Suspension of Government Debt Recovery for those in receipt of benefits and universal credit</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="304 1563 1422 1664">"This Council notes new research carried out by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation documenting the alarming cost of living impact due to benefit deductions and debt recovery.</p> <p data-bbox="304 1697 1422 1899">Many in receipt of means tested benefits and on Universal Credit, including many in work, are in bill payment arrears; taking on unaffordable debt; are going without household essentials; and are unable to properly heat their homes or feed their families. With inflation continuing to rise and the hardship emergency predicted to become more extreme as we face into the winter months the situation for many is set to worsen in the absence of immediate intervention.</p> <p data-bbox="304 1933 1422 2065">Benefit reductions to repay government and utility providers at unaffordable rates are compounding the hardship crisis faced by many of those struggling the most. Government departments are in some cases claiming back debts at higher rates than private creditors. Many people are unaware that they can receive debt reduction help.</p>

	<p>This Council will write to the Department of Communities' Minister requesting the immediate suspension of government debt recovery for those in receipt of benefits and universal credit.</p> <p>The Council also requests that the Department of Communities provide information on how many benefit and universal credit claims were subject to deductions in the most recent month for which data is available, broken down by Council area; how much on average was deducted in each Council area; what the total sum was of deductions in each Council area; and what proportion of each of those sums was deducted to repay advance payments."</p> <p>Proposer: Councillor Matt Collins</p> <p>Seconder: Councillor Ferguson</p>
3.4	<p>The motion calls for the Department of Communities to suspend government debt recovery for those in receipt of benefits and universal credit and requests also information from the Department in relation to benefits and universal credit claims – can be adopted, referred to the Council for debate (with or without restrictions) or rejected.</p>
3.5	<p><b><u>Financial and Resource Implications</u></b></p> <p>None associated with this report.</p>
3.6	<p><b><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></b></p> <p>None.</p>
4.0	<p><b>Documents Attached</b></p>
	<p>None.</p>