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**PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Sheffield City Council supports Universal Basic Income pilot**

Sheffield City Council will pass a motion today giving its support to a pilot of Universal Basic Income (UBI) in the city.

In an amendment to a motion on the local economy, the Council will say that it “believes the Universal Basic Income has the potential to improve wellbeing and provide a boost to our local economy.”

The amendment has been tabled by two Labour councillors, Ben Curran and Dawn Dale. The Labour group holds an absolute majority on Sheffield City Council.

UBI is a radical reform that would see every citizen given a guaranteed income regardless of their employment status.

Proponents of the idea, such as the University of London’s Professor Guy Standing, believe that it would guarantee minimum living standards and eliminate poverty in the UK.

A pilot in the South Yorkshire city has been championed by UBI Lab Sheffield, a grassroots group formed of researchers and activists exploring the potential of a basic income.

The cost of any future Sheffield pilot would be met entirely by an external funder, and not by Sheffield City Council.

The amendment also says that the Council “will work with Sheffield UBI Lab & other parties to ensure Universal Basic Income can be implemented successfully in Sheffield.”

It goes on to welcome the recent announcement by Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell that the next Labour government will pilot UBI in Sheffield.

Sheffield City Council will send a copy of its motion to the Chancellor, the Shadow Chancellor, and to all Sheffield MPs.

**Jason Leman, Chair of UBI Lab Sheffield, said:** "Sheffield has a long history of leading radical change, from the Chartists through to the Socialist Republic of South Yorkshire. We don’t know if a Universal Basic Income is the answer to the problems we face, but a pilot will give us the much-needed evidence about what works.

"Having a real safety net seems to help people’s health and wellbeing. It helps people who are looking after their family and it could also give people the confidence to retrain, volunteer or become entrepreneurs."

**Sam Walby, Director at Opus Independents, one of the founders of the UBI Lab Sheffield group, said:** "Today's announcement is a validation of the tireless campaigning and advocacy that UBI Lab Sheffield has been doing since the group was formed at Festival of Debate 2017.

"No one is saying a UBI would solve all our problems, but with serious challenges like the automation of the workforce on the horizon, as well as blatant injustices and inequalities within the current benefits system, we need to be testing the effects of UBI right now.

"It's an idea whose time has come."

**Notes for Journalists**

In May, Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell announced that the next Labour government would launch UBI trials in Sheffield, Liverpool and the Midlands.

UBI Lab Sheffield has designed three options for a local pilot in its proposal. Each pilot would see around 4,000 people in Sheffield receive a form of UBI for three years.

The first option would remove conditionality from a specific set of employment-related illness and disability benefits. Ill or disabled people would then receive these benefits irrespective of their financial situation or work status.

The second option would see a flat-rate top-up payment made to all citizens. The pilot would include a range of residents, with a flat-rate payment to all participating adults of £130 per month. It would not mean any changes to the current tax or benefit system.

The third option would trial a full replacement of the tax and benefits system. The pilot would see a range of residents receive £6,000 per year, plus additional money for people who are disabled, with children, or over retirement age.

Launched on 9 March at a UK-wide summit for UBI activists in Sheffield, the proposal has been designed by Sheffield-based academics and researchers, informed by several workshops.

UBI Lab Sheffield now aims to build support for a pilot among key stakeholders in the city, including Sheffield’s two universities and its NHS trust.

The full pilot proposal and executive summary is available on our website: <https://www.ubilabsheffield.org/s/SheffUBI-proposal-working-paper-FINAL.pdf>

Press assets and images are available at: <https://www.ubilabsheffield.org/press>

The full text of the Council amendment reads as follows:

Amendment to Item 6. Notice of Motion regarding ‘The local Economy’

Proposed by Cllr Ben Curran

Seconded by Cllr Dawn Dale

Addition of new paragraphs (w) to (aa)

w) Believes the Universal Basic Income has the potential to improve wellbeing and provide a boost to our local economy;

x) Welcomes the work done by Sheffield UBI Lab to create detailed plans on how a universal basic income scheme could work in Sheffield;

y) Will work with Sheffield UBI Lab & other parties to ensure Universal Basic Income can be implemented successfully in Sheffield;

z) Welcomes the comments by the Shadow Chancellor, John McDonnell, supporting Sheffield’s inclusion in a Universal Basic Income pilot under the next Labour government;

aa) Will send a copy of this motion to the Chancellor, Shadow Chancellor and all Sheffield MP’s.