

## REQUEST TO IMPLEMENT THE LIVING WAGE AT BANES COUNCIL

On behalf of the Labour Group I wish to urge Cabinet and council to adopt the Living Wage as a minimum salary for Council employees as part of the Budget settlement for 2014/15.

Up to the 2013/14 budget cycle 25 local authorities had implemented the Living Wage for their workers. This number has now risen to 50, since they set this year's budget, including our neighbours in South Gloucestershire..

The Living Wage is intended to be the minimum wage which will cover the basic essentials in life and is calculated at £8.55 for London and £7.45 for other parts of the UK. The calculation is updated by the Centre for Social Policy at Loughborough University. The principle as support from Ed Miliband and more surprisingly from the prime Minister and Boris Johnson.

The Living Wage has been found to be good for **business**. 80% of employers implementing it found the quality of their employees' work improved, absenteeism fell by 25%, and two thirds found recruitment and retention improved.

It is good for **individuals and families** there is less need to work very long hours or hold more than one job. Those on the Living Wage were also found to be more flexible with regard to working practices.

It is good for **society**. It is estimated that it has lifted 45,000 families out of poverty and their take-up of benefits has decreased, saving money for the whole country.

We have investigated the cost of implementing the Living Wage in BANES Council and are told it would be about £160,000 – less than the cost of the salaries of two of our strategic directors. However it is not simply about behaving responsibly to BANES employees. If the Wage is implemented by the Council this will act as a model for other local employees, encouraging them to adopt it as well. It will be remembered that when the Labour Government proposed a Minimum Wage in 1997 businesses protested strongly that it was unaffordable. However it is now an accepted part of our social structure and we in the Labour Group believe the Living Wage will achieve the same status.

I would like to end with a brief quotation from a recipient of the Living Wage, a cleaner and youth worker;

Before, I had to work two jobs to put food on the table and pay the rent. I had no time for my family or my community. When the Living Wage was introduced I was able to prioritise the one job and that means I've been able to be there for my family and set up a youth group in my community.

John Bull.