Cost of Living Crisis – Motion as adjusted, approved.

15 Councillor Redmond, seconded by Bailie Gallagher, moved that:-

"Council notes the STUC's "Scotland demands a pay rise" rally taking place outside the Scottish Parliament on 8th September 2022; notes the strike action taken by staff of this Local Authority, and others across Scotland, in response to the unsatisfactory pay offer; welcomes the new, much more equitable pay deal offered after extensive negotiations, and hopes that this offer will be accepted; notes that this action takes place in the context of the highest rate of inflation seen for over a generation; and notes, with alarm and concern, that the energy price cap is forecast to at least double by January next year, with some forecasts going considerably higher.

Council recognises that the Cost of Living Crisis is a crisis of poverty borne by those people least able to afford rising fuel and energy tariffs, rents and food prices. Council condemns the UK government's reduction of tariff controls for energy prices, Ofgem's exorbitant increase to the energy price cap, and the opportunism of energy companies in taking advantage to increase charges across the board.

Council recalls its decision of 23rd June 2022 that it is the responsibility of the Council to act, where it can, to support citizens, and considers that the acute pressures this winter requires an emergency response from the Council and all public sector partners. Council notes the reporting in the press regarding Council Officers exploring the concept of 'heat banks'.

Council agrees that the Chief Executive will lead work to establish a Cost-of-Living Community Hubs network across Glasgow as soon as possible, on the understanding that:

- this network will consist of buildings where people can go to keep warm, in anticipation of large numbers of people being unable to pay bills and heat their homes this winter, and it should operate in line with prevailing public health advice;
- this network should be as extensive as possible and therefore officers should consider including as many council buildings as practical while also working with colleagues across the city, including in Glasgow Life, community venues and in the faith community, to identify as many potential sites as possible;
- information about this Cost-of-Living Community Hubs network must be as accessible as possible, with clear communications made across as many channels as possible, including direct engagement with organisations working with the most vulnerable groups in Glasgow; and
- people who access sites within the Cost-of-Living Community Hubs network should be able to access information about other forms of available support, including, where possible, Citizens Advice advisers, income maximisation officers, and officers from the Financial Inclusion team, as well as signposting to other forms of support.

Council instructs Officers to bring forward a paper to the City Administration Committee at the earliest opportunity that outlines the Council's actions taken.

Council acknowledges that wages must rise to meet increasing inflation, supports the growing trade union demands for fair pay negotiations, believes that any pay settlement under the rate of inflation will result in a real terms reduction in spending power and living standards, and agrees that pay settlements which ensure the lowest paid workers receive proportionally higher pay increases is a desirable outcome.

Council believes that the current support package announced by central Government is insufficient to avert widespread suffering; and that both the UK and Scottish Governments should use all resources possible to support individuals and households through the cost-of-living crisis, including supporting pay rises across the public sector.

Council resolves to write to:

(1) the UK Government, demanding immediate actions to address this crisis, including:

- reversal of the energy price cap rises, taking prices back to October 2021 levels;
- bringing back the £20 Universal Credit uplift from the pandemic, and then doubling it, with corresponding increases for legacy benefits;
- nationalisation of the 'big 5' energy firms if they will not commit to ceasing the extraction of unfair profits;
- taxing corporations making unjust profits from this crisis with a real windfall tax that avoids the exemptions and loopholes of Rishi Sunak's energy profits levy; and
- increasing and inflation-proofing Scotland's block grant from Westminster, to allow for fair pay increases for workers; and

(2) the Scottish Government, demanding:

- direct support to Local Authorities to support communities through the current crisis and beyond; and
- increased funding to support the opening of community facilities over the winter months, to match the scale of the crisis that our communities face."

Councillor Aitken, seconded by Councillor Bell, moved as an amendment that:-

(1) at the end of the first paragraph the following be inserted after "accepted":

"Council understands that this offer will result in a minimum payment of £1925 this year and looks forward to this reaching the bank accounts of our staff. Council welcomes the provision by the Scottish Government of additional £140m revenue and £200m capital to local government to enable this offer to be made but understands also that this resource will have to be transferred from other areas of Scottish Government spending.";

(2) "across the board" until "other forms of support" be deleted and the following inserted:

"Council recalls the motion it agreed on 23 June 2022, which mandated the Chief Executive to work with city partners to accelerate interventions to support households and communities through the cost-of-living crisis and agrees to continue to focus efforts on combatting the effects of massive increases in living costs. A paper on our new 'no wrong door approach' to supporting residents - Glasgow Helps will be provided to a relevant committee soon.

Council understands that work has significantly advanced on to open a network of Welcoming Places and that these will be in place in communities from October, providing access not only to warm places but also to a range of other services and supports. Council further notes that Glasgow Life is advancing preparations to reopen community venues impacted by the pandemic and that a communications campaign will be launched to remind Glasgow residents of the wide range of city venues open to them.

Council believes however that Welcoming Places are only one necessary response to the cost-of-living crisis and understands that investment in measures to support residents to remain comfortable in their own homes are also essential. Council notes that work is therefore also underway with city partners such as the Glasgow Council for Voluntary Service to map demand and provision for services such as hot meal delivery, assistance with fuel costs, and maximising access to social security benefits."; and

(3) after "supporting pay rises across the public sector." the following be inserted:

"Council welcomes the interventions to assist households and businesses announced by the First Minister in her Programme for Government, including increasing the Scottish Child Payment to £25, putting in place a rent freeze and a ban on evictions and freezing ScotRail fares. These will be of significant benefit to Glasgow."

Councillor Redmond, with the approval of his seconder, accepted part of the amendment by Councillor Aitken, resulting in the following adjusted motion:-

"Council notes the STUC's 'Scotland demands a pay rise' rally taking place outside the Scottish Parliament on 8th September 2022; notes the strike action taken by staff of this Local Authority, and others across Scotland, in response to the unsatisfactory pay offer; welcomes the new, much more equitable pay deal offered after extensive negotiations, and hopes that this offer will be accepted; notes that this action takes place in the context of the highest rate of inflation seen for over a generation; and notes, with alarm and concern, that the energy price cap is forecast to at least double by January next year, with some forecasts going considerably higher.

Council recognises that the Cost of Living Crisis is a crisis of poverty borne by those people least able to afford rising fuel and energy tariffs, rents and food prices.

Council condemns the UK government's reduction of tariff controls for energy prices, Ofgem's exorbitant increase to the energy price cap, and the opportunism of energy companies in taking advantage to increase charges across the board.

Council recalls the motion it agreed on 23 June 2022, which mandated the Chief Executive to work with city partners to accelerate interventions to support households and communities through the cost-of-living crisis and agrees to continue to focus efforts on combatting the effects of massive increases in living costs. A paper on our new 'no wrong door approach' to supporting residents - Glasgow Helps will be provided to a relevant committee soon.

Council understands that work has significantly advanced on to open a network of Welcoming Places and that these will be in place in communities from October, providing access not only to warm places but also to a range of other services and supports. Council instructs that an update on this work should be submitted to the City Administration Committee on 29th September, detailing that:

- this network will consist of buildings where people can go to keep warm, in anticipation of large numbers of people being unable to pay bills and heat their homes this winter, and it should operate in line with prevailing public health advice;
- this network should be as extensive as possible and therefore officers should consider including as many council buildings as practical while also working with colleagues across the city, including in Glasgow Life, community venues and in the faith community, to identify as many potential sites as possible;
- information about this Cost-of-Living Community Hubs network must be as accessible as possible, with clear communications made across as many channels as possible, including direct engagement with organisations working with the most vulnerable groups in Glasgow; and
- people who access sites within the Cost-of-Living Community Hubs network should be able to access information about other forms of available support, including, where possible, Citizens Advice advisers, income maximisation officers, and officers from the Financial Inclusion team, as well as signposting to other forms of support.

Council believes however that Welcoming Places are only one necessary response to the cost-of-living crisis and understands that investment in measures to support residents to remain comfortable in their own homes are also essential. Council notes that work is therefore also underway with city partners such as the Glasgow Council for Voluntary Service to map demand and provision for services such as hot meal delivery, assistance with fuel costs, and maximising access to social security benefits.

Council acknowledges that wages must rise to meet increasing inflation, supports the growing trade union demands for fair pay negotiations, believes that any pay settlement under the rate of inflation will result in a real terms reduction in spending power and living standards, and agrees that pay settlements which ensure the lowest paid workers receive proportionally higher pay increases is a desirable outcome.

Council welcomes the interventions to assist households and businesses announced by the First Minister in her Programme for Government, including increasing the Scottish Child Payment to £25, putting in place a rent freeze and a ban on evictions and freezing ScotRail fares. These will be of significant benefit to Glasgow.

Council believes that the current support package announced by central Government is insufficient to avert widespread suffering; and that both the UK and Scottish Governments should use all resources possible to support individuals and households through the cost-of-living crisis, including supporting pay rises across the public sector.

Council resolves to write to:

(1) The UK Government, demanding immediate actions to address this crisis, including:

- Reversal of the energy price cap rises, taking prices back to October 2021 levels.
- Bringing back the £20 Universal Credit uplift from the pandemic, and then doubling it, with corresponding increases for legacy benefits.
- Nationalisation of the 'big 5' energy firms if they will not commit to ceasing the extraction of unfair profits.
- Taxing corporations making unjust profits from this crisis with a real windfall tax that avoids the exemptions and loopholes of Rishi Sunak's energy profits levy.
- Increasing and inflation-proofing Scotland's block grant from Westminster, to allow for fair pay increases for workers.

(2) The Scottish Government, demanding:

- Direct support to Local Authorities to support communities through the current crisis and beyond.
- Increased funding to support the opening of community facilities over the winter months, to match the scale of the crisis that our communities face.

Councillor Aitken, with the approval of her seconder, withdrew her amendment in favour of the adjusted motion.

The motion, as adjusted, was thereafter unanimously approved.