

FC74. NOTICES OF MOTION

Councillor McCabe withdrew from the meeting following consideration of the foregoing item of business.

(g) Welfare Reforms

Councillor Meiklejohn seconded by Councillor Bird moved that:-

Council notes with concern the plans for a further attack on the most vulnerable within society by the UK Government with the announcement in the Autumn Statement on 5 December 2012 that a further c.£4bn is to be cut from the welfare budget at a time when income tax rates for the rich are being reduced.

Council also deplores the changes to the benefits and treatment of disabled people implemented in December 2012 and calls on the UK Government to secure termination of the contract with ATOS, the French company set targets for the removal of benefits to disabled people at present by the Tory/Liberal Coalition Government in London.

Council also calls for information about all benefit changes to be added to the report to be submitted following the 26 September 2012 meeting.

Councillor C Martin, seconded by Councillor Murray, requests that the following wording be included as an addendum to the motion failing which it could be moved as an amendment:-

Council is concerned to note that not enough is being done to address assessments that do not have enough regard to mental health issues. Council is further concerned to note the chaos prevailing with the introduction of changes to child benefit and the obvious unfairness regarding the assessment of household incomes in this connection.

In light of these experiences, Council urges the UK Government to listen to the growing anger and concerns from the various charity organisations and individuals regarding the introduction of further cuts in welfare budget announced in the Autumn Statement 2012.

Following discussion Councillor Meiklejohn, with the consent of the Provost, and Councillor Bird as her seconder, agreed to incorporate the terms of the amendment within her motion.

Councillor Nicol, seconded by Depute Provost Patrick then moved the following amendment against the adjusted motion:-

Council recognises the need for Welfare Reform as:-

- (1) It is unsuitable at a time of global recession for the Benefits System to continue to cost every household in Britain £3000 per year.
- (2) In the last five years, those on benefits have seen their incomes rise almost twice as fast as people in work – at a rate of 20 per cent compared with an increase in average earnings of only 12 per cent.

- (3) Council recognises that work must pay and that the benefits cap of £26000 (£35,000 before tax) is well above the earnings of many of our own staff.
- (4) Council applauds the Government for its determination to deliver stability to the public finances, to cut the deficit and to restore fairness to hard working tax payers.

On a division 2 members voted for the amendment and 29 voted for the adjusted motion.

Accordingly **AGREED** that Council:-

- (1) notes with concern the plans for a further attack on the most vulnerable within society by the UK Government with the announcement in the Autumn Statement on 5 December 2012 that a further c.£4bn is to be cut from the welfare budget at a time when income tax rates for the rich are being reduced;
- (2) deplores the changes to the benefits and treatment of disabled people implemented in December 2012 and calls on the UK Government to secure termination of the contract with ATOS, the French company set targets for the removal of benefits to disabled people at present by the Tory/Liberal Coalition Government in London;
- (3) calls for information about all benefit changes to be added to the report to be submitted following the 26 September 2012 meeting;
- (4) is concerned to note that not enough is being done to address assessments that do not have enough regard to mental health issues and is further concerned to note the chaos prevailing with the introduction of changes to child benefit and the obvious unfairness regarding the assessment of household incomes in this connection, and
- (5) in light of these experiences, urges the UK Government to listen to the growing anger and concerns from the various charity organisations and individuals regarding the introduction of further cuts in welfare budget announced in the Autumn Statement 2012.

Councillor McCabe rejoined the meeting during consideration of the foregoing item of business.