

Bristol Health & Wellbeing Board

Title of Report	Bristol Living Wage City
Author (including organisation)	Bristol City Council, Mayor's Office
Date of Meeting:	Wednesday 25 th September 2019
For:	Information and views

1. Purpose of this Paper

The One City Plan includes a commitment to Bristol becoming a Living Wage City, in response to a 'Big Offer/Big Ask' at a City Gathering. The City Office is seeking to gain accreditation, from the Living Wage City, as a means of promoting the Living Wage to employers in the city. The primary objective is to increase the number of workers in the city earning at least the Living Wage, an important element in decent jobs that will enhance the health and wellbeing of workers, their families and communities.

The Economy Board will be asked to take a lead on establishing Bristol as a Living Wage City, but is also significant cross-over with the work of the Health & Wellbeing Board. This paper sets out to gain recognition that there are more than economic benefits to be gained from increasing coverage of the Living Wage.

2. Executive Summary

In order for the city to become a Living Wage City, the City Office has

- Established an Action Group of local employers and 'anchor organisations'
- Engaged with the Living Wage Foundation
- Compiled an evidence base of local labour market conditions
- Drafted an application form and Action Plan, with targets
- Recommended a governance scheme

The evidence base indicates that Bristol is relatively well positioned in regard to the proportion of its workforce earning below the Living Wage – at 15.2% this proportion is well below that for the UK (22%) and for other Core Cities. However, this still represents some 37,000 workers and contributes towards significant earnings inequalities.

Concentrations of low earnings exist in neighbourhoods also experiencing other forms of disadvantage, including health, skills and worklessness. Drawing conclusions of causal links is perhaps irresponsible, but there is a clear correlation.

The Action Plan includes several measures to promote the Living Wage locally, together with an aim to establish close working with the Health & Wellbeing Board.

3. Recommendations

That the Health & Wellbeing Board consider the following recommendations

- That the Health & Wellbeing Board members are made aware of the Living Wage Foundation's Living Wage Places initiative and endorse Bristol's intention to become a Living Wage City
- That the Health & Wellbeing Board members are made aware of the benefits of workers earning above the Living Wage, beyond those of the clear economic gains
- That the Health & Wellbeing Board members are also made aware of, promote and disseminate information regarding the benefits to employers of becoming an accredited Living Wage Employer
- For the Health & Wellbeing Board to acknowledge that the commitment to becoming a Living Wage City is part of the One City Plan and that the Board will contribute towards that commitment.

4. Evidence Base

- Population of Bristol – 459,300. Travel to Work Area (TTWA) – 862,000
- Working age population – 314,100. TTWA – 561,000
- Economically Active People In Employment in Bristol – 260,500
- Employees in Bristol (residence-based) – 216,700
- Employees in Bristol (workplace based) – 274,000
- Accredited Living Wage Employers HQ'd in Bristol – 57 (2019); target (2023) 125
- Number of workers employed by accredited employers – 19,031; target 41,250
- All Living Wage Employers in Bristol – 165; target 361
- Gross median earnings in Bristol £544pw; at UK median and above Core Cities
- 2015 Indices of Deprivation show 75,045 Bristol residents income deprived
- Income deprivation concentrated in South, East-Central and North Bristol

5. City Benefits

- Reduced in-work poverty
- Increased proportion of 'decent jobs' (earning above Living Wage, secure contract and suitable hours)

6. Financial and Legal Implications

- Reduced social costs of poverty and low wages
- Accreditation fee – Living Wage City fee of £166 per annum; Living Wage Employer accreditation dependent upon size of employer, starting at £60 per annum for 'micro-employers' (employing less than ten people).