

**COUNCILLOR QUESTION NO. 1**

Councillor McElroy to ask the Lead Councillor for Corporate and Consumer Services:

**Living Hours employer**

A decade ago Green Councillors proposed that this Council pay its staff a Living Wage, and in 2013 we urged the Council to become an accredited Living Wage employer. As we hopefully emerge from covid lockdowns and restrictions, we call on the Council to also provide security of hours alongside security of wages. Everyone should have the right to know how many hours they will work next week, to be paid if their shifts are cancelled, and a basic minimum of hours if they want them.

Does the Lead Councillor agree that all Reading Borough Council Staff and all staff employed by companies with RBC contracts should have those rights? Will she ask the Chief Executive to make RBC an accredited Living Hours\* employer, and make sure the same can be said of all companies that hold contracts with RBC going forward?

*\*Living Hours as defined by the Living Wage Foundation*  
(<https://www.livingwage.org.uk/living-hours>)

**REPLY** by Councillor McEwan (Lead Councillor for Corporate and Consumer Services):

The Council is already a real Living Wage accredited employer. The Living Hours programme is a new initiative from the Living Wage Foundation aimed at providing a practical solution that employers can adopt to help provide security and stability to low paid workers, to help them make ends meet. The key commitments are:

- Decent notice periods for shifts - At least 4 weeks' notice, with guaranteed payment if shifts are cancelled within this notice period.
- A contract with living hours - The right to a contract that reflects actual hours worked, and a guaranteed minimum of 16 hours a week (unless the worker requests otherwise).

This will be underpinned by a new Living Hours accreditation programme run by the Living Wage Foundation.

Officers have asked to meet with the Living Wage Foundation to understand fully the implications if we were to become an accredited Living Hours employer, both for the Council and for companies that hold contracts with the Council. The Living Wage Foundation are unable to meet with officers until the end of November. I will therefore provide an update to Policy Committee on this issue at a future meeting.