

A BETTER WAY

LABOUR'S RESPONSE TO CANTERBURY FOODBANK'S LETTER ON THE LIVING WAGE

Thanks for your email to our candidates regarding use of the Food Bank, poverty in the District, and in particular the role of the Council in ensuring that its contractors pay the Real Living Wage.

Labour's policy, since the Council first proposed to establish Canenco as an "arms length" business, has been that this should not be used as a mechanism to avoid the established core policy of paying the Real Living Wage, nor of avoiding public sector pension entitlement for the staff. Our councillors opposed the "arms length" nature of the business, and when that was pushed through by the Conservative administration we specifically proposed that Canenco should pay the Real Living Wage. That too was turned down by the Conservatives.

More recently, earlier this year our Councillors made a motion to Council that the City Council should become an accredited Living Wage employer, which would require all its suppliers and contractors (thus including Canenco) to work towards paying the Real Living Wage. Again, the Conservatives voted that idea down.

It remains Labour policy that the Council should take a lead in the District by becoming a fully accredited Living Wage employer. If Labour forms the ruling administration after the May 4th elections that will be one of our priorities. We also have plans to try to tackle poverty across the District, although that is a larger problem than the Council can solve alone. We also intend to introduce a 'buy local first' policy to stimulate the District economy, and to bring in a "best practice" accreditation scheme for businesses in the District which includes paying the Real Living Wage.

I hope that combination of policies is something that will have an impact and begin to address the problems of poverty in our District.