

Kirklees Council



Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield

Tuesday 8 October 2024

Dear Member

The Council will meet on Wednesday 16 October 2024 at 5.30 pm in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield.

This meeting will be webcast live and will be available to view via the Council's website.

The following matters will be debated:

Pages

1: Announcements by the Mayor and Chief Executive

To receive any announcements from the Mayor and Chief Executive.

2: Apologies for absence

Group Business Managers to submit any apologies for absence.

3: Minutes of Previous Meeting

To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Council Meeting held on 18 September 2024.

1 - 8

4: Declaration of Interests

9 - 10

Members will be asked to say if there are any items on the Agenda in which they have any disclosable pecuniary interests or any other interests, which may prevent them from participating in any discussion of the items or participating in any vote upon the items.

5: Petitions (From Members of the Council)

To receive any Petitions from Members of the Council in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9.

6: Deputations & Petitions (From Members of the Public)

The Committee will receive any petitions and/or deputations from members of the public. A deputation is where up to five people can attend the meeting and make a presentation on some particular issue of concern. A member of the public can also submit a petition at the meeting relating to a matter on which the body has powers and responsibilities.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 10, Members of the Public must submit a deputation in writing, at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting and shall subsequently be notified if the deputation shall be heard. A maximum of four deputations shall be heard at any one meeting.

7: Public Question Time

To receive any public questions.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11, the period for the asking and answering of public questions shall not exceed 15 minutes.

Any questions must be submitted in writing at least three clear working days in advance of the meeting.

8: West Yorkshire Combined Authority - Minutes

11 - 28

To receive the Minutes of the Meeting of West Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 25 July 2024.

9: Petition Debate - Cleckheaton Town Hall

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9a, Council will discuss the subject matter of a previously submitted petition regarding the future of Cleckheaton Town Hall.

10: Corporate Governance and Audit Committee - Annual Report 2023/2024 (Reference from Corporate Governance and Audit Committee) 29 - 46

To receive the Annual Report.

Contact: Leigh Webb, Acting Head of Governance

11: Report of the Members Allowances Independent Review Panel (Reference from Corporate Governance and Audit Committee) 47 - 56

To consider the report.

Contact: Leigh Webb, Acting Head of Governance

12: Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report (Reference from Overview and Scrutiny Committee) 57 - 112

To receive the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2023/2024.

Contact: Leigh Webb, Acting Head of Governance

13: Appointment of Chair - Licensing and Safety Committee 113 - 114

To consider the appointment of the Chair of Licensing and Safety Committee for the remainder of the 2024/2025 municipal year.

Contact: Leigh Webb, Acting Head of Governance

- 14: Appointment of Chair - Personnel Committee** 115 -
116
- To consider the appointment of the Chair of Personnel Committee for the remainder of the 2024/2025 municipal year.
- Contact: Leigh Webb, Acting Head of Governance
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- 15: Written Questions to the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees and Nominated Spokespersons**
- To receive written questions to the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chairs of Committees and Nominated Spokespersons in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12.
- A schedule of written questions and responses will be tabled at the meeting. One supplementary question will be permitted.
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- 16: Minutes of Cabinet and Cabinet Committee - Local Issues** 117 -
132
- To receive the Minutes of the Meetings of Cabinet held on 9 July and 13 August 2024.
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- 17: Holding Executive to Account**
- (a) To receive Portfolio Updates from the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member for Finance and Regeneration.
- (b) To receive oral questions/comments to Cabinet Members on their portfolios and relevant Cabinet Minutes;
- The Leader of the Council (Councillor Pattison)
 - The Deputy Leader of the Council / Housing and Transport (Councillor Crook)
 - Children's Services (Councillor Kendrick)
 - Corporate Services (Councillor Hawkins)
 - Education and Communities (Councillor A U Pinnock)
 - Environment and Highways (Councillor Munir Ahmed)
 - Finance and Regeneration (Councillor Turner)
 - Health and Social Care (Councillor Addy)
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18: Minutes of Other Committees

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- (a) Corporate Governance and Audit Committee
 - (b) District Wide Planning Committee
 - (c) Health and Wellbeing Board
 - (d) Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee
 - (e) Personnel Committee
 - (f) Strategic Planning Committee
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19: Oral Questions to Committee/Sub Committee/Panel Chairs and Nominated Spokespersons of Joint Committees/External Bodies

To receive oral questions in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 13(4):

- Appeals Panel (Councillor Longstaff)
- Corporate Governance and Audit Committee (Councillor Taylor)
- District Wide Planning Committee (Councillor Ullah)
- Health and Wellbeing Board (Councillor Addy)
- Licensing and Safety Committee - including Licensing and Regulatory Panel (to be appointed at Agenda Item 13)
- Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (Councillor Burke)
- Personnel Committee (to be appointed at Agenda Item 14)
- Scrutiny Panel – Children’s (Councillor Ali)
- Scrutiny Panel – Environment and Climate Change (Councillor Cooper)
- Scrutiny Panel – Growth and Regeneration (Councillor Amin)
- Scrutiny Panel – Health and Adult Social Care (Councillor J D Lawson)
- Standards Committee (Councillor Armer)
- Strategic Planning Committee (Councillor Homewood)
- Kirklees Active Leisure (Councillor Sokhal)
- One Adoption Joint Committee (Councillor Sewell)
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority (Councillor Pattison)

- West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Committee (Councillor McLoughlin)
 - West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Authority (Councillor O'Donovan)
 - West Yorkshire Joint Services Committee (Councillor Munir Ahmed)
 - West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel (Councillor Lowe)
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20: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Gaza - a year on, urgent action is still needed

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors J D Lawson, Arshad, Khan, Safdar, Anwar, Kahut and Bramwell.

“This Council notes that nearly a year on from the start of the latest conflict in Gaza:

- a) 10,000's of innocent men, women and children have been killed or seriously injured. Many more are missing in the debris of Gaza.
- b) Gaza is being raised to the ground. There has been indiscriminate bombing of refugee camps, medical facilities, schools, places of worship of all denominations and the general infra structure.
- c) Aid is still not getting into Gaza in the quantity needed due to interference by the Israeli Govt this has resulted in widespread malnutrition and the remaining medical facilities running without even the basic of medical supplies.
- d) That the Israeli government is guilty of war crimes and breaching International Humanitarian Law. Creating an Apartheid State within the Palestinian Territories of Gaza and the West Bank.
- e) The International Court of Justice has declared the situation in Gaza to be genocide
- f) That many residents of Kirklees remain gravely concerned about the ongoing situation in Gaza and wish to see an end to the genocide in Gaza.

This Council calls on the Leader of the Council to write to Keir Starmer, the Prime Minister to urge him to revoke licenses which allow the selling of arms and military equipment to Israel until a time the Israeli Government stops the on-going genocide in Gaza, ceases to occupy the Palestinian Territories of the West Bank and Gaza, abides by the IJC rulings and the numerous United Nations

resolutions. That the Prime Minister lobbies his Israeli counterpart to immediately allow aid to Gaza unfettered by obstructions, in a bid to halt the humanitarian crisis that is occurring within Gaza. And that the Prime Minister uses all diplomatic channels at his disposal to call for a ceasefire and the return of the Israeli hostages

We ask that the Palestinian Flag be flown at Huddersfield, Batley and Dewsbury Town Halls in an act of remembrance for those who have died. This would be at no expense to local council tax payers as the flags would be purchased by a local group.

We ask that Kirklees Council where at all lawful and practical to avoid purchases of goods from Israeli companies illegally occupying the aforementioned Palestinian Territories.

That the council commits to conducting a thorough review of its procurement practices to ensure that goods and consumables sourced from companies directly or indirectly involved in the conflict are not used.”

21: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance and Protecting Pensioners from Fuel Poverty

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Hall and Taylor;

“This Council notes:

- The Labour Government’s recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.
- The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.
- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of Kirklees Council and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
- The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.
- The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.

This Council believes:

- That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
- While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across Kirklees Council sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
- The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.
- The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

This Council resolves to:

- Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.
- Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging her to reverse the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.
- Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Kirklees Council are supported in claiming their entitlement.”

22: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Providing Similar Support Mechanisms as Ukraine to those impacted by the Genocide in Palestine

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Darwan, Hussain, Moore, H Zaman, Bramwell, Safdar, Scott, Masood Ahmed, A Zaman, Daji, Kahut and Anwar.

“This Council notes that almost a year ago from the start of the recent conflict in Gaza:

- a) Israel's ground and air campaign in Gaza has killed more than 39,324 people and continuing, mostly civilians, and driven most of the enclave's 2.3 million people from their homes Plus 90,830 Palestinian people injured and approximately 1,478 Israelis have been reported as killed.
- b) The Israeli crimes violate international criminal laws, including war crimes, crimes against humanity and the crime of genocide, which the Israel Defense Forces, the military branch of the state of Israel, has been accused of committing since the founding of Israel in 1948. These have included murder, intentional targeting of civilians, killing prisoners of war and surrendered combatants, indiscriminate attacks, collective punishment, starvation, the use of human shields, sexual violence and rape, torture, pillage, forced transfer, breach of medical neutrality, targeting journalists, attacking civilian and protected objects, wanton destruction, incitement to genocide, and genocide.
- c) Many residents in Kirkcaldy remain gravely concerned about the continued horrifying situation in Gaza. Most societies consider murder to be an extremely serious crime, and thus believe that a person convicted of murder should receive harsh punishments for the purposes of retribution, deterrence, rehabilitation, or incapacitation. In most countries, a person convicted of murder generally receives a long-term prison sentence, a life sentence, or capital punishment.

This Council calls on the Leader of the Council to write to the UK Prime Minister Kier Starmer and to the Foreign Secretary David Lammy to immediately request the following:

1. Suspend both extant licenses for military equipment and technology and the issuing of new licenses while Israel continues to carry out widespread serious violations with impunity.
2. Adhere to its obligations under international law, respect the International Court of Justice ruling, and advocate for adherence to international law and accountability for all parties.
3. Use every diplomatic and economic lever at its disposal to help secure an immediate and permanent ceasefire, to stop the death and destruction, and to secure the safe release of hostages on both sides.
4. Significant and immediate aid and protection for Palestinians in Gaza who face imminent danger from hunger, disease, and military bombardment.
5. To look at a leadership change in Israel. It appears increasingly clear that a ceasefire will not happen with Netanyahu and his supporters in control of Israel's policy and military.
6. Control of Gaza to be given to the Palestinian Authority.

In addition to the above we ask that the Council Leader that the Palestinian Flag be flown at Huddersfield, Batley and Dewsbury Town Halls in an act of remembrance for those who have died. In the past Huddersfield Town Hall have flown the Irish flag. The flags will be donated by a local Kirklees group and at no cost to the Kirklees Council or to the Local Council Taxpayers. Furthermore, we request the Council to stop buying products from Israeli companies, who have illegally occupied Palestinian territories, and to ensure that goods and consumables sourced from companies directly or indirectly involved in the conflict are not used.”

23: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Opposing Racist and Islamophobic Violence

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Cooper, Vickers, Allison and Lee-Richards;

This Council:

- condemns the organised racist and Islamophobic violence by far right rioters in many towns and cities in England;
- notes the failed Huddersfield riot called for Monday 5th August which drew little support and thanks the police for their robust response;
- believes the divisive rhetoric of some mainstream politicians and media has fuelled the recent violence and the ‘Stop the Boats’ narrative has contributed to division and has helped further stigmatise migrants and asylum seekers;
- is concerned that even an advisor, appointed by the previous Government, identified that successive governments have failed the British people and left local authorities struggling to deal with extremist challenges;
- recognises the fear of violence and intimidation terrified many people of colour, especially women, and made people feel unsafe in their hometowns;
- acknowledges that the threat of serious violence impacted negatively on businesses in the local economy;
- recognises that migrants have always contributed to our society as workers, taxpayers and citizens and that segregation of asylum

seekers into different systems for homelessness, destitution and work creates further division and lack of cohesion in

society;

- condemns the policy of austerity, which causes hardship and resentment amongst the communities most left behind;
 - welcomes the scrapping of the Rwanda deportation scheme and Bibby Stockholm barge;
 - thanks the Police and Crown Prosecution Service for pursuing rightful convictions and for the local press for reporting on the sentences;
 - calls on the government to abandon any proposals to place asylum seekers in overcrowded unsuitable accommodation, in large numbers, that may make them a target for racist and far right violence;
 - thanks the people of Kirklees who have spoken out against violence intimidation and racism;
 - believes that the majority of people in Kirklees want an asylum system that is fair, well managed and humane;
 - resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to the Prime Minister with a copy of this motion and to ask him to consider implementing a Social Cohesion Strategy for the UK.”
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24: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Opposing Cuts to the Winter Fuel Allowance and Protecting Vulnerable Pensioners

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Hussain, Scott, H Zaman, Moore, A Zaman, Masood Ahmed, Bramwell, Anwar, Safdar, Darwan and Daji;

“This Council notes with deep concern the Labour Government’s decision to cut the Winter Fuel Allowance, resulting in over 10 million pensioners losing up to £300 a year. This loss is equivalent to more than a week’s pension income, and the cuts come just as Ofgem has announced an energy price cap increase of £149 this winter. This represents a devastating double blow for millions of vulnerable pensioners.

We believe that austerity policies such as this are not the answer, and pensioners should not be made to bear the burden of government mismanagement. The wealth exists in our society to provide support where it is most needed. For example, energy companies more than trebled their profits during the pandemic, and the 50 richest families in Britain own a combined £500 billion in wealth – equivalent to half of the UK population’s combined wealth.

A wealth tax on the richest 1% would raise billions, yet the government has chosen to target pensioners instead of seeking fairer solutions.

Some argue that wealthy pensioners receive the Winter Fuel Payment unnecessarily, but we strongly support the universal nature of this payment. Like the state pension itself, a universal payment ensures that nobody falls through the cracks. Linking the Winter Fuel Payment to pension credit will leave millions of vulnerable pensioners without the extra support they need. Currently, over 850,000 pensioners who qualify for pension credit do not receive it, missing out on an average of £2,677 a year. These same pensioners will now face losing up to £300 more with these cuts. Additionally, Age UK estimates that a further one million pensioners who live just £50 above the poverty line will also lose out on the Winter Fuel Payment, pushing them closer to financial hardship.

It is important to stress that the proposed cuts to the Winter Fuel Payment are expected to save only £1.4 billion a year. However, if all pensioners entitled to pension credit were encouraged to apply as a result of these changes, the cost of paying this unclaimed credit would rise to £2.2 billion annually – meaning the government might save nothing at all from these cuts.

The Chancellor's announcement of an extension to the Household Support Fund is a temporary and inadequate measure. It places an additional burden on pensioners, forcing them to rely on charitable grants from their local councils instead of receiving their automatic Winter Fuel Payment. Pensioners, who have worked hard all their lives, should not be forced to go cap-in-hand for basic support.

This Council calls on the Leader of the Council to write to the government and demand that they reverse the proposed cuts to the Winter Fuel Allowance. Our vulnerable pensioners deserve better, and they should not be made to suffer as a result of government decisions that fail to tax the wealthiest individuals and corporations adequately.

We urge the government to reconsider its approach, seek fairer alternatives, and protect the wellbeing of those who rely on this essential support to stay warm this winter.”

25: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Reforming the Right to Buy Scheme

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors J Lawson and Marchington;

“This Council notes:

- 1) The Conservative Government, under Margaret Thatcher, introduced the Right to Buy scheme in the United Kingdom. The Right to Buy scheme allows eligible council tenants and tenants in housing associations to purchase their council property, often at a discounted rate;
- 2) When the Right to Buy scheme was introduced in England and Wales in 1980, it was designed to help ‘generation rent’ to get on the property ladder and was seen by some as a means to encourage homeownership and social mobility. Since 1980, more than two million homes have been sold under the scheme;
- 3) Government figures released in February 2024, which show that 22,023 social homes were either sold or demolished in England in 2023, while 9,561 social homes were built, a net loss of 12,462 homes. In the past 10 years, there has been a total loss of 177,487 social homes, while over 1.28 million households in England are currently on council waiting lists for social housing. This is at a time when local authorities in England spent a record £2.29 billion a year in providing emergency temporary accommodation for homeless households between April 2023 and March 2024, a 29% increase from the previous year. In any one year in Kirklees, there are between 19,000 and 20,000 people waiting for a council property, but only around 1,700 to 1,800 homes become available in any given year;
- 4) According to the think-tank, the New Economics Foundation (NEF), over 40% of council houses and flats sold under the Right to Buy scheme across the country are now owned by private landlords. In the last 10 years alone, over 109,000 former council homes have started being let privately.

This Council believes that:

- 1) Although the Right to Buy scheme has increased home ownership and has made home ownership more accessible to some, the failure to replace homes sold through the scheme has hindered its success. There was a commitment to the building of replacement social homes for each one sold when the scheme was set up, but less than 5% of homes sold off through the Right to Buy scheme have been replaced since the policy was introduced;
- 2) Increasingly, it is evident that the Right to Buy scheme has failed. It has largely exacerbated rather than alleviated the housing crisis in the UK. While thousands of homes are sold through Right to Buy each year, the number of replacement

homes falls drastically short, resulting in a net loss of social homes. This is at a time when the private sector isn't building enough affordable homes and local authorities are unable to do so. While local authorities, including Kirklees Council, endeavour to respond to escalating demand for housing, vulnerable households find themselves locked out of safe and secure social housing;

- 3) The Right to Buy scheme effectively forces many households into private renting, when the properties were built originally with the intention to reduce pressure on social housing waiting lists;
- 4) Allowing tenants to buy their council home has depleted the stock of affordable housing for those in need, resulting in demand far exceeding supply and resulting in rents going up and homelessness increasing;
- 5) Tackling the housing crisis should be one of the biggest priorities in the UK and for the new Labour Government. This Council believes that the loss of our country's social housing stock can, in part, be addressed by reforming the Right to Buy scheme;
- 6) This Council support proposals outlined by the Local Government Association (LGA) to reform the Right to Buy scheme. Measures to reform the scheme, including some proposed by the LGA, include:

Giving local authorities, including Kirklees Council, the flexibility to shape the Right to Buy scheme locally, so it works best for their local area, people and housing market. This includes giving the right for councils to discontinue the Right to Buy scheme in their area. Councils should also be able to set the discount levels on which homes can be purchased, and in some areas, this could be at 0%. This localised approach ensures that housing solutions reflect the needs and aspirations of local communities.

Protecting a council's investment in social housing to prevent loss-making transactions. This could be achieved by increasing the tenancy requirements for the Right to Buy scheme from 3 to 15 years, for example, exempting newly built and retrofitted homes from Right to Buy, and introducing an indefinite cost-floor protection so the purchase price of the property does not fall below what councils have invested to build and maintain homes.

Giving local authorities control over the use of funds raised through the Right to Buy, enabling them to invest in the development, delivery or acquisition of new council homes as per local needs. Local authorities, such as Kirklees Council, understand their local housing needs and the solutions required for their communities best.

- 7) If the Government adopts the reforms set out by the LGA, it could allow local authorities to regain their position as major builders of affordable housing. We must safeguard the future of social housing and uphold the fundamental right for everyone to have safe and secure housing. In essence, the current form of the Right to Buy scheme does not work for local authorities and it is vital that the Government overhauls the existing scheme, which has resulted in our social housing stock significantly diminishing. This would benefit our residents and communities in Kirklees and across the UK;

This Council, therefore, resolves to:

Instruct the Leader of the Council to write a letter to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities & Local Government, Angela Rayner MP, to ask the Government to consider the LGA's proposals for reform to the Right to Buy scheme as a matter of urgency, grant local authorities the power to set the Right to Buy discount locally, including discontinuing the scheme, and to make permanent the 100% retention of Right to Buy receipts. The scheme, as it exists, must be significantly reformed to help serve the needs of our diverse communities."

26: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Winter Fuel Payment Cuts

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Munro and Marchington;

"This Council notes:

- 1) The recent announcement by the Labour Government to end universal Winter Fuel Payments and restrict eligibility to only those in receipt of Pension Credits and other benefits;
- 2) The Government won a vote in Parliament on the 10th September on the plan to restrict the payments for most pensioners by 348 votes to 228. Liberal Democrat MPs backed a motion in Parliament to block the Government's cut to Winter Fuel Payments;
- 3) Though many argue that universal Winter Fuel Payments are not necessary, Council is deeply concerned that many

pensioners on lower and middle incomes will not now receive the payments. Across England and Wales, the number of people eligible for Winter Fuel Payments will fall by 10 million (from 11.4 million to only 1.5 million);

- 4) In Kirklees the number of pensioners affected by the change in eligibility criteria is 63,108. That means that just under 88% of pensioners in Kirklees currently eligible for Winter Fuel Payments will no longer be able to claim the payment from this winter onwards;
- 5) That the Government did not carry out an impact assessment as part of their decision to cut winter fuel support;
- 6) By making the Winter Fuel Payment a means-tested benefit tied to claims for Pension Credit, the Government projected savings of £1.4 billion per year. The Government's savings calculation were based on an assumption of a rise in Pension Credit applications by 95,000, resulting in additional Pension Credit expenditure of £370 million a year. However, new analysis by Policy in Practice, a consultancy who work with local authorities, has thrown the Government's projected £1.4 billion savings in doubt, as there has been a surge in claims for Pension Credit since the Government's announcement. This means that any savings could be significantly lower than the Treasury expected, as many of those affected will need to seek other benefits to help them stay warm;
- 7) From the 1st October this year, the energy price cap for a typical household that uses gas and electricity and pays by Direct Debit will go up from £1,568 to £1,717 per year, an increase of around 10%. The new energy price cap, which combined by the removal of Winter Fuel Payments, will likely push thousands of local pensioners into fuel poverty.

This Council believes:

- 1) That the Labour Government has set the threshold at which pensioners do not qualify for Winter Fuel Payments far too low. Only those receiving a pension of less than £218.15 a week (or £332.95 a week for couples) are eligible for Pension Credits. This is significantly lower than the living wage rate;
- 2) While claims for Pension Credit has increased in recent months, the take-up is still too low, with only 63% of those eligible nationwide receiving them – and over 880,000 pensioners not doing so. Council recognises the role we have to play to increase awareness of benefits, such as Pension Credit, to ensure people are aware of the support they are entitled to;

- 3) Balancing the nation's books on the backs of low-income pensioners is the wrong political choice and will likely increase pressure on health and care services and on an already stretched NHS.

This Council, therefore, resolves to:

- 1) Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the policy on linking Winter Fuel Payments to Pension Credit receipt to be immediately paused and introduce a new threshold to determine eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments. Council further requests the Chief Executive write to all MPs covering Kirklees, asking them to give their formal support to halting the changes to the Winter Fuel Payment eligibility;
- 2) Request all group leaders at Kirklees Council sign a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer calling for the new Winter Fuel Payment policy to be suspended and reviewed and for a new threshold determining eligibility for Winter Fuel Payments to be adopted;
- 3) Urgently commence a significant awareness campaign to maximise uptake of Pension Credits. This will include use of council noticeboards, social media, promotion in local press and targeted letters to those who may be eligible.”

27: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Two Child Limit to Benefits Payments

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Marchington and Munro;

“This Council notes:

- 1) The two-child limit to benefit payments was introduced by the Conservative Government in 2017 and is currently supported by the new Labour Government. The cap restricts Child Tax Credit and Universal Credit to the first two children in most households;
- 2) The recent research conducted by the End Child Poverty Coalition, which has found that:
 - 1.5 million children in the UK live in households subject to the two-child limit on benefit payments. This is

- roughly one-in-ten children in the UK.
 - In 2023/24 the two-child limit cost families up to £3,235 per child each year.
 - There is a strong correlation between families affected by the two-child limit and those who are living in poverty.
 - Scrapping the two-child limit would lift 250,000 children out of poverty overnight, and significantly reduce the level of poverty that a further 850,000 children live in.
 - Scrapping the two-child limit would cost £1.3 billion. However, it is estimated that child poverty costs the economy over £39 billion a year. This includes increased public service expenditures and lost economic output, due to lower earnings potential among adults who grow up in impoverished conditions.
- 3) New data which reveals that the Yorkshire and Humber region, which includes Kirklees, is a hotspot for children hit by the two-child limit on benefits, with 13% of children in Yorkshire and Humber impacted. As a comparison, across the nations, the figure is 11% for both England and Wales. At the same time, the number of children living in poverty in Kirklees in 2021/22 was 34,969. That is 33.7% of all children living in the district;
- 4) The Liberal Democrat national party has consistently opposed the two-child limit to benefit payments since it was introduced – calling for it to be axed in their 2017, 2019 and 2024 manifestos. Council notes with concern the stance of the Labour Government, who are committed to keeping the cap – going as far as suspending the whip from MPs who rebel against this position.

This Council believes that:

The two-child limit to benefit payments is a cruel and harmful policy that should be scrapped. Research from the University of York has shown that its introduction has had no positive impacts on employment and earnings. Instead, it has dragged thousands of local families into poverty and has been a key driver of child poverty in recent years. Furthermore, the policy has had a negative impact on many people's mental health, increasing stress and anxiety and harming their wellbeing, with knock-on effects on children's opportunities and wellbeing.

This Council, therefore, resolves to:

- 1) Instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Prime Minister indicating Kirklees Council's strong belief that the two-child limit to benefit

payments should be scrapped – which would help many children and households in Kirklees

- 2) Further, instruct the Chief Executive to write to all MPs covering Kirklees Council's area, asking them to commit their public support to the campaign to end the cruel two child limit to benefit payments;
 - 3) Ensure the number of children a family has is considered when a hardship grant is given out by the Council."
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By Order of the Council



Steve Mawson
Chief Executive