

Kirklees Council



Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield

Tuesday 5 November 2024

Dear Member

The Council will meet on Wednesday 13 November 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 16 October 2024.

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4: Declaration of Interests

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

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To receive the Minutes of the Meeting of West Yorkshire Combined Authority held on 19 September 2024.

9: Petition Debate - Dewsbury Sports Centre

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9a, Council will discuss the subject matter of a previously submitted petition regarding the future of Dewsbury Sports Centre.

10: 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 12.

A schedule of written questions and responses will be tabled at the meeting. One supplementary question will be permitted.

11: Key Discussion - Elected Mayor (West Yorkshire Combined Authority)

The Elected Mayor (West Yorkshire Combined Authority) will be present for the Council's Key Discussion Debate, which will include an update on the Elected Mayor's current priorities.

12: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Gaza - a year on, urgent action is 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 allowed in aid to Gaza unfettered by obstructions, in a bid to holt 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 afore mentioned 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.”

13: 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.”
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14: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Providing Similar Support Mechanisms as Ukraine to those impacted by 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 Kirklees 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.”

15: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to the Situation in the Middle East

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Pattison, Crook and McLoughlin;

“This Council notes that here in Kirklees our heart goes out to all those who have been killed, suffered injury or have lost someone in the ever-escalating conflict in the Middle East.

The Kirklees Labour Group has brought to this Council two motions on standing up for Gaza and Palestinians since the conflict began. We asked that the Council call for an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Gaza and that there should be an end to all violence in the Middle East making way for a lasting peace across the area.

These motions were explicit from the beginning in their demands for:

- An immediate and permanent ceasefire
- The immediate, safe and unconditional release of all hostages
- Immediate, urgent, humanitarian aid to the Palestinians and funding to help them restore water, food, electricity, medicines and homes
- Ending the civilian bloodshed
- UK arms sales not to be used in acts that may amount to war crimes under international law

As soon as the Labour Party came to power at the General Election, and they were in a position to have some influence on this situation, there was a huge government policy shift compared to the previous Government on this issue. Right from the start the new Government, having listened to our lobbying over the past 12 months, has:

- Called for an immediate and lasting ceasefire in Palestine and Lebanon
- Restored funding to UNWRA, the UN’s aid agency for Gaza
- Completed a review of UK arms exports licensing to Israel and has suspended 30 export licenses where there was a clear risk that exports, where used for military operations in Gaza, might be used in serious violations of International Humanitarian Law.
- Dropped the challenge of the previous Government to contest the right of the International Criminal Court to seek an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant.
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The conflict in the Middle East has now escalated to involve far more countries and residents in this warfare and continues to cause much grief and anguish to all those directly involved and to our communities here in Kirklees. The Government continues to call for an immediate ceasefire, increased humanitarian aid and for negotiations to continue to find a lasting peace in the region.

Therefore, this Council resolves to:

- 1) Repeat our calls for an immediate, permanent and lasting ceasefire in the Middle East, the release of all hostages and reiterates the UK's clear obligations under international law to support international institutions, including the International Court of Justice (ICJ) and the International Criminal Court (ICC).
 - 2) Encourage all Kirklees residents and businesses to continue their support for all those affected by this conflict.”
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16: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Two Child Limit to Benefit 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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Mawson', written in a cursive style.

Steve Mawson
Chief Executive