

# Kirklees Council



Council Chamber - Town Hall, Huddersfield

Tuesday 3 December 2024

Dear Member

**The Council will meet on Wednesday 11 December 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.

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**2: Apologies for absence**

Group Business Managers to submit any apologies for absence.

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**3: Minutes of Previous Meeting**

1 - 6

To approve the Minutes of the meeting of the Council Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> November 2024.

**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.

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**5: Petitions (From Members of the Council)**

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

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**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.

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**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.

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## **8: Written Questions to the Leader, Cabinet Members, Chairs and 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 written schedule of written questions will be tabled at the meeting. One supplementary oral question will be permitted.

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## **9: Minutes of Cabinet**

9 - 36

To receive the Minutes of the Meetings of (i) Cabinet held on 10 September, 8 October and 5 November 2024 and (ii) Cabinet Committee Local Issues held on 23 October 2024.

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## **10: Holding Executive to Account**

- (a) To receive a Portfolio Update from the Cabinet Member for Housing and Transport (Councillor Crook).
  - (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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## **11: Minutes of other Committees**

37 - 62

- (a) Corporate Governance and Audit Committee
  - (b) District Wide Planning Committee
  - (c) Health and Wellbeing Board
  - (d) Personnel Committee
  - (e) Strategic Planning Committee
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## **12: 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 (Councillor Firth)
  - Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee (Councillor Burke)
  - Personnel Committee (Councillor Pattison)
  - 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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## **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 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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## **15: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Family Farm Tax**

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

"This Council notes that:

The recent 2024 Autumn Budget change to Inheritance Tax relief announced by the Labour Government will introduce a Family Farm Tax and will have a detrimental impact on Family Farms and farmers' ability to pass on their farms to the next generation of farmers.

This Council believes that:

- The Labour Government have committed a shameful betrayal and let down farmers by breaking their promise to not introduce a Family Farm Tax.
- The Family Farm Tax will damage the ability of farmers to pass on their farms to their children.
- Labour's Family Farm Tax will threaten food security by forcing the sale of family farms.
- The Labour Government's Family Farm Tax will make British food production harder.
- That the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Steve Reed and Keir Starmer promised not to introduce a tax like this.
- Numerous rural and farming organisations such as the National Farmers Union and Country Land and Business Association have warned that countless farms will be harmed, threatening food security and rural areas.
- The comments made by Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Steve Reed that already struggling farmers will have to 'do more with less'.
- At a time when many farmers across Kirklees are struggling with soaring costs and energy prices, this sudden tax rise will damage the future of their farms.

This Council resolves:

- To request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to outline the Council's dismay at this decision and calls on the Government to stop the Family Farm Tax.
- That the Leader of the Council engages with local farmers and community representatives on what the Council can do to support them.
- That the Council seeks to support local farmers by using local produce, produced in Kirklees wherever possible."

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**16: 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.”

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## **17: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Bus Fares**

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors Safdar, Bramwell, Anwar and Daji;

“In the light of the recent budget will increase the current bus fare price cap, this Council notes the Labour Government increased the cap by 50%, from £2 to £3.

In practice current fares will be maintained until 31 March 2025. From 1 April 2025 until 31 December 2025 West Yorkshire fares will be £2.50 single and £6 Day Saver (to be approved at the Combined Authority meeting on 12th December.)

As a result, Kirklees residents will experience a significant increase in travel costs. Although an MCard weekly, monthly or annual ticket may still be cheaper than two single tickets a day for 5 days, not all bus users can afford to pre-purchase Mcards.

This Council believes that:

The increase in the bus fares will hasten the decline in passenger numbers. This could have a damaging impact on the district's bus services. As patronage declines operators will seek to reduce frequency or cut uneconomic routes, which so many residents across the Kirklees area rely on.

Such a move will also have a negative impact on young people travelling to access education, and those reliant on buses to reach their place of employment. It will also have a negative impact on elderly people who do not drive but need to access services, healthcare and visit family.

At a time when many residents across the Kirklees borough are struggling with soaring costs and expenses, an increase in fares will punish some of the most vulnerable in our community.

Increasing fares will discourage sustainable travel and remove an incentive to use public transport to access our town centres, leading to an increase in the number of cars on the road. Buses need to avoid being held up by congestion - created by increased car use. Where bus priority lanes exist, parking is not adequately enforced.

The resulting impact on emissions and clean air will exacerbates health outcomes.

This Council resolves:

- To request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Transport Secretary to outline the Council's dismay at this decision and ask the Government to reconsider this.
- To request that that the Leader of Kirklees Council writes to Mayor Tracy Brabin to highlight the negative impact of this policy and urge the Combined Authority to continue to support subsidised fares in West Yorkshire beyond 31 December 2025.
- That the Cabinet Portfolio Holder engages with local bus companies to consider ways to maintain the essential bus routes that provide a lifeline for many communities.
- That the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Transport and Highways engage with WYCA on planned road reallocation schemes that are pipelined and are taking far too long to be enacted; to prioritise those road schemes that would reallocate road space and enable the introduction of more bus priority; making use of temporary schemes, if necessary. “

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## **18: Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Exempting Social Care from the National Insurance Tax Hike**

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

“This Council notes:

- 1) As part of the Autumn Budget 2024, the Chancellor Rachel Reeves announced a National Insurance increase and reduced the threshold at which employers start paying it. From April 2025, the rate of employers' National Insurance contributions businesses will pay will increase by 1.2 percentage points to 15% and the earnings threshold at which companies pay will be lowered from £9,100 to £5,000. For an employee earning £30,000, the amount a business pays on National Insurance will increase by £865.80 under the new rules, increasing the total cost from £32,884.20 to £33,750. In addition, from April 2025, the National Living Wage (NLW) will increase from £11.44 to £12.21 per hour for all eligible employees;
- 2) The new Labour government has claimed that the change to National Insurance contributions will generate an extra £25

billion in tax revenue, which will aim to make up for the £22 billion 'black hole' left by the previous government;

- 3) Local authorities, including Kirklees Council, are responsible for assessing people's needs and, if individuals are eligible, for funding their care. However, most social care services are delivered by independent sector home care and residential care providers, which are mainly for-profit companies, although also include some voluntary sector organisations.

This Council believes that:

While the Autumn Budget earmarked £680 million of new grant funding to support social care (for both adults and children's services) in 2025/26, the additional pressures on social care providers, including increasing the National Insurance contributions by 1.2%, a reduction in the threshold for employer National Insurance contributions and a 6.7% increase in the

- 1) National Living Wage, will limit the impact of this funding and likely eradicate the extra £680 million allocated. It's subjecting health services to higher taxes and is counterproductive, making it harder to provide care to older, vulnerable and disabled people;
- 2) The Nuffield Trust estimate that the Employer National Insurance Contributions (ENICs) changes will cost independent sector social care employers in the region of an additional £940 million in 2025/26, on top of around £1.85 billion more that will be needed to meet new minimum wage rates. The Nuffield Trust say that the 18,000 independent organisations providing adult social care in England, which constitutes 98% of care providers, will be faced with increased costs of an estimated £2.8 billion in the next financial year. Public sector organisations, including the NHS, will be reimbursed the extra payments, but most care providers are run privately, so will be liable;
- 3) Many social care providers, especially small providers, are now at risk of going bust as a direct result of the National Insurance hike and this could disrupt or end vital care for thousands of older and disabled people across the country, including residents in Kirklees;
- 4) If local authorities, including Kirklees Council, are unable to pay social care providers higher fees, the vast majority of small providers who cannot absorb the extra costs will have to increase prices for people who pay for their own care or may go out of business altogether;
- 5) Hitting small businesses with a tax hike is the wrong political choice, as it will likely result in lower wages and profits for many businesses., It also risks worsening the NHS crisis by

hiking costs for care providers. More widely, the Labour government pledged not to increase the National Insurance paid by 'working people', but when employers' NICs increase, companies' demand for labour decreases, which puts downward pressures on wages. Consequently, it could be argued that employer NIC rises are a tax on working people. Many businesses will be forced to scale back pay increases or hiring plans and the majority of small and medium sized enterprises in the UK will be impacted by the changes;

- 6) Increasing the National Insurance contributions on social care providers will make the crisis in social care worse. The government should exempt care providers from the Employer's National Insurance tax rise. In addition to social care providers, GP surgeries, hospices, NHS dentists, pharmacies and charitable providers of healthcare should all be exempt from the increase. Primary care providers are the backbone of our health services and without them NHS hospitals risk being overwhelmed.

This Council, therefore, resolves to instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to request that social care providers be exempt from the Employer's National Insurance tax rise."

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By Order of the Council



Steve Mawson  
Chief Executive