



**Service Director – Legal, Governance and  
Commissioning**

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## **Decision Summary**

**Committee:**

**Date:**

**Committee Clerk:**

**TEL:**

**EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL  
WEDNESDAY 17 DECEMBER 2025**

**Andrea Woodside**

**01484 221000**

### **Chair**

Councillor Elizabeth Smaje

### **Councillors Attended**

Councillor Beverley Addy

Councillor Masood Ahmed

Councillor Munir Ahmed

Councillor Karen Allison

Councillor Itrat Ali

Councillor Zarina Amin

Councillor Ammar Anwar

Councillor Bill Armer

Councillor Timothy Bamford

Councillor Donna Bellamy

Councillor Tanisha Bramwell

Councillor Cahal Burke

Councillor Martyn Bolt

Councillor Aafaq Butt

Councillor Andrew Cooper

Councillor Moses Crook

Councillor Aziz Daji

Councillor Hanifa Darwan

Councillor Paola Antonia Davies

Councillor Eric Firth

Councillor Tyler Hawkins

Councillor Caroline Holt

Councillor Yusra Hussain

Councillor Zahid Kahut

Councillor Viv Kendrick

Councillor John Lawson

Councillor Jo Lawson

Councillor Susan Lee-Richards

Councillor Vivien Lees-Hamilton  
Councillor David Longstaff  
Councillor Andrew Marchington  
Councillor Tony McGrath  
Councillor Matthew McLoughlin  
Councillor Alison Munro  
Councillor Darren O'Donovan  
Councillor Amanda Pinnock  
Councillor Andrew Pinnock  
Councillor Ashleigh Robinson  
Councillor Jane Rylah  
Councillor Cathy Scott  
Councillor Imran Safdar  
Councillor Angela Sewell  
Councillor Joshua Sheard  
Councillor Anthony Smith  
Councillor Richard Smith  
Councillor Mohan Sokhal  
Councillor Mark Thompson  
Councillor Graham Turner  
Councillor Alex Vickers  
Councillor Habiban Zaman

#### **Apologies**

Councillor Ali Arshad, Councillor Damian Brook, Councillor Nosheen Dad, Councillor Charles Greaves, Councillor David Hall, Councillor Lisa Holmes, Councillor James Homewood, Councillor Musarrat Khan, Councillor Gwen Lowe, Councillor Harry McCarthy, Councillor Hannah McKerchar, Councillor Carole Pattison, Councillor Kath Pinnock, Councillor Will Simpson, Councillor John Taylor, Councillor Sheikh Ullah and Councillor Adam Zaman

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#### **4 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Ethical Procurement and Investment Policy**

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

“This Council notes:

- 1) That the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee considered updates to the Council’s Procurement Strategy, including elements relating to ethical procurement, on 14 November 2025 (Agenda Item 9), and that these proposals are now scheduled for consideration by Cabinet in December 2025.
- 2) That the UK Government and the United Nations have both recognised that human rights due diligence is a core component of responsible business conduct and public sector accountability.
- 3) That the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights (UNGPs) and the UN Principles for Responsible Investment (UN PRI) provide

internationally recognised frameworks for governments for ethical sourcing, investment, and supply-chain due diligence.

- 4) That Section 26 and 27 of the Procurement Act 2023 sets out discretionary exclusion grounds.
- 5) That several UK local authorities, including Oxford City Council, North Somerset Council and others have strengthened their investment frameworks to ensure that public funds are not used to support companies implicated in serious human rights violations or breaches of international law.

This Council believes:

- 1) That Kirklees Council has a responsibility to ensure that all procurement, commissioning, and investment decisions reflect its stated values on equality, justice and human rights.
- 2) That taxpayers' money must not support organisations or companies that are complicit in, or benefit from, breaches of international humanitarian law or international human rights standards, including (but not limited to) violations occurring in occupied territories, apartheid systems, forced labour contexts, or other internationally recognised abuses.
- 3) 3. That ethical procurement and ethical investment are not only moral imperatives but also form part of robust risk management, reducing exposure to reputational harm, financial instability, and supply-chain vulnerabilities.
- 4) That while Scrutiny has reviewed proposals related to ethical procurement, these do not yet fully align with (i) the UNGPs (ii) the UN PRI (iii) the requirements of the Procurement Act 2023 (iv) modern social value standards (v) net-zero and environmental duties or (vi) contemporary expectations around transparency, due diligence, and supply-chain accountability.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- a. Request that Cabinet review and strengthen the Council's Investment and Procurement Strategies so that they (i) remain fully compliant with the Procurement Act 2023, including the statutory objectives on integrity, transparency, maximising public benefit, and removing barriers for SMEs and VCSEs and (ii) integrate modern requirements on social value, net-zero commitments, climate impact, and supply-chain transparency.
- b. Request that Cabinet bring forward a fully updated and comprehensive Ethical Procurement and Investment Policy for adoption, to include clear governance arrangements for (i) implementation (ii) monitoring (iii) reporting (iv) supplier conduct checks (v) ethical investment screening and (vi) risk management and escalation processes.

- c. Mandate that all Council contracts, commissioned services and financial investments be reviewed against the updated Ethical Procurement and Investment Policy, with a full progress report brought to Cabinet within six months of its adoption.
- d. Reaffirm this Council's commitment to transparency, ethical stewardship and responsible use of public resources, ensuring that public money is managed in a way that strengthens human rights, promotes social and economic justice, and upholds the values of this Council and the communities it serves."

Motion approved.

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## **5 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Firework Use, Enforcement and Community Safety**

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

"Council notes that:

1. Fireworks are an important part of many celebrations and can be enjoyed safely when used responsibly.
2. However, councillors across Kirklees continue to receive reports of fireworks being used irresponsibly — late at night, in residential streets, and outside recognised celebration periods — causing significant distress to residents, pets, wildlife and people with sensory or health conditions.
3. The sale and use of fireworks for private use remains permitted nationally, though many safety and animal-welfare organisations, including the RSPCA, RoSPA and the National Fire Chiefs Council, have called for tighter controls.
4. Kirklees Council already has Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) in place to restrict fireworks in certain public areas, but local powers over retail sales are limited without national legislation.

Council therefore believes that:

- 1) Fireworks should primarily be used at organised, licensed public displays and community events.
- 2) Restricting general retail sales for private use would help reduce nuisance, distress and risk, while allowing communities to continue celebrating safely.
- 3) Stronger local enforcement, clearer public information and national legislative reform are all necessary to improve public safety and wellbeing.

Council resolves to:

- 1) Write to the Secretary of State for Business and Trade and the Secretary of State for the Home Department to request consideration of tighter national controls limiting the retail sale of fireworks to licensed organisers of approved public events.
- 2) Ask the Cabinet Member for Communities and Safety to review local licensing and trading-standards arrangements to ensure all available powers are being used to regulate sales and prevent nuisance.

- 3) Work with West Yorkshire Police, West Yorkshire Fire & Rescue Service, and local animal-welfare organisations to promote a public awareness campaign each autumn on the safe and considerate use of fireworks.
- 4) Encourage town and parish councils and community groups to host and promote organised displays as safer, inclusive alternatives to private use.
- 5) Request that the relevant Scrutiny Panel consider the inclusion of a review on the local impact of fireworks misuse within its workplan, and report back to Council with recommendations within six months.”

Motion approved (unamended).

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## **6 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Raising the Flag of Palestine on Town Halls Across Kirklees**

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

“Council notes that:

- On 29 November 2012, the United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly to grant Palestine non-member observer State status, effectively recognising it as a state within the international community.
- 29 November is also observed annually as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People, established by the UN in 1977.
- The people of Kirklees have a proud record of standing up for peace, justice, and human rights around the world. Our communities are deeply diverse, with many residents who have direct family and cultural ties to Palestine and the wider Middle East.
- Displaying flags in recognition of international days and events has been a longstanding way for Kirklees Council to express solidarity with oppressed peoples and affirm our commitment to universal human rights.

Council believes that:

- Raising the flag of Palestine is a peaceful and symbolic gesture of solidarity with those striving for freedom, equality, and self-determination.
- Such an act reflects our borough’s values of inclusivity, justice, and international cooperation, and aligns with the UK’s own stated support for a two-state solution based on international law.
- Public recognition on this day will send a clear message that Kirklees stands for peace and supports a future where Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in safety and dignity.

Council therefore resolves to:

1. That in line with the Council’s Flag Flying Policy, the Leader, Chief Executive and Mayor be requested to support the Raising of the flag of Palestine on all Kirklees Council town halls and civic buildings on 29

November each year, in line with the UN International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

2. Issue a public statement reaffirming Kirklees Council's commitment to peace, justice, and the right of all peoples to self-determination under international law.
3. Encourage community engagement and education around international solidarity and human rights, including opportunities for residents to learn about the significance of this day."

Motion approved as amended.

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## **7 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Opposition to Disability Benefit Reforms**

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

"This Council notes with serious concern:

That the Government has passed the Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill, implementing parts of the earlier Pathways to Work Green Paper published in March 2025.

That the original Green Paper proposed wide-ranging reforms to PIP and long-term sickness benefits, including (i) stricter eligibility thresholds (such as the "4 points in one activity" test) (ii) reductions in support for people with mental health conditions and (iii) a shift toward linking disability benefits more closely with work and health treatment.

That while some of these proposals were dropped following public and parliamentary opposition (notably the new PIP scoring rule), others remain in force or are being implemented in stages, particularly those related to Universal Credit, the Work Capability Assessment, and health-related conditionality.

That the Government has confirmed existing PIP claimants will not be immediately affected, but that new claimants from late 2026 onwards may face stricter rules depending on further guidance and secondary legislation.

That changes to Universal Credit include plans to remove or reduce the "limited capability for work-related activity" element for new claimants, especially under-22s, potentially leaving thousands of vulnerable people with significantly less support.

This Council further notes:

That campaigners and expert organisations including Citizens Advice, Health Equity North, and the Resolution Foundation have warned of substantial financial losses and increased hardship under the reforms.

That research by Health Equity North estimates Huddersfield constituency alone could lose £17 million annually under the original package of proposals, with lasting consequences for residents, the local economy, and essential services.

That many of the worst-affected areas are in the North, with longstanding structural inequalities, poorer health outcomes, and stretched public services, including Kirklees.

That local councils like Kirklees are likely to face additional pressures on: Adult social care, Housing and homelessness services, Welfare support, advice, and crisis payments, Mental health and public health provision, without any clear guarantees of increased funding or capacity.

This Council believes:

That the reforms represent a regressive shift in disability and sickness support, undermining the rights, dignity and independence of people with long-term conditions.

That there is insufficient evidence that the reforms will lead to improved outcomes for disabled people, and growing concern they may increase poverty, reduce access to support, and worsen health inequalities.

That Kirklees has a duty to speak out against national policies that will directly harm its most vulnerable residents and shift costs onto already overstretched local services.

This Council therefore resolves to:

- (1) Formally oppose the changes to Universal Credit and disability benefits as enacted under the Universal Credit and PIP Bill, and any future secondary legislation that restricts access to PIP, particularly for people with mental health conditions or fluctuating needs.
- (2) Write to the Prime Minister, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, and Chancellor of the Exchequer to (i) express the Council's objection to the enacted reforms (ii) call for a halt to any further erosion of disability-related entitlements and (iii) request a cross-party review of the long-term adequacy of disability and sickness benefits.
- (3) Write to all Kirklees MPs urging them to (i) oppose any additional regressive measures in forthcoming legislation (ii) speak up for disabled and chronically ill constituents and (iii) support amendments or repeal of the most damaging elements of the reforms.
- (4) Publish a public statement outlining the Council's position, and commit to working with local charities, advocacy groups, carers, and disabled residents to monitor and raise awareness of the changes.
- (5) Request that the Overview and Scrutiny function undertakes a full impact review of the reforms on (i) local service demand (ii) financial risk to the Council and (iii) lived experience of Kirklees residents, particularly in relation to care, health, and income security.
- (6) Request that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions seeking formal assurances that (i) existing PIP claimants will not be reassessed under any new rules without full consultation and safeguarding (ii) all further benefit changes will be subject to published Equality Impact Assessments and (iii) that local authorities will receive sufficient funding to manage additional demand and hardship resulting from national reforms."

Motion not approved.

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## **8 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Abolition of the Council Committee System**

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors J C Lawson, Davies, J D Lawson, Cooper, Scott and H Zaman;

“This Council notes:

- 1) The statement by the former Minister of State for Local Government and English Devolution, Jim McMahon MP, on the 24<sup>th</sup> June 2025 which outlined the Government’s plan to introduce legislation which will ‘simplify governance arrangements’ for local authorities in England and abolish the committee system, requiring all councils to adopt the leader and cabinet system;
- 2) Councils in the UK typically operate under one of three governance structures: leader and cabinet, committee or mayoral systems;
- 3) Most councils currently operate under a leader and cabinet model. The committee system was the way that councils were governed up until 2000. The Local Government Act 2000 changed the models of governance, introducing the leader and executive (cabinet) and elected mayor and executive models. The Local Government Act 2000 also resulted in the abolition of the committee system in England everywhere (except shire authorities with a population under 85,000). However, as part of the Localism Act 2011, the committee system was re-introduced as an option for all local authorities to adopt;
- 4) Typically, under the leader and cabinet model, the full council elects a leader, who then appoints a cabinet (executive), with cabinet members responsible for specific areas of service and the cabinet being the primary decision-making body. Under the committee system model, power is exercised, alongside full council, by a number of politically balanced committees, each with a specific area of responsibility. Under the executive mayor and cabinet model, a directly-elected mayor leads the executive and is accountable to the electorate;
- 5) Currently, councils in England can change their governance arrangements and local residents can have a say on the governance model adopted by their local authority via a referendum;
- 6) As part of the Government’s plans, councils currently using the committee model, including councils which have recently transitioned to the committee model following a referendum, will be required to transition to the leader and cabinet model;
- 7) The Government has argued that the changes are needed in order to improve clarity and accountability in decision-making, enhance efficiency

by streamlining governance structures and preventing unnecessary expenditure on governance transitions.

This Council believes that:

- 1) Councils across the country use various governance systems, with some favouring the committee system and others preferring executive systems. Councils should have the choice to choose which model of governance best suits the needs of its residents. The details of councils' internal arrangement should be a matter for local discretion. Although Kirklees Council currently operates a leader and cabinet model, it should be given the opportunity to transition to the committee system if Kirklees residents support this. Local people should be given the power to make the best choice for themselves;
- 2) The Government's plans are at odds with the devolved powers that the Labour party advocates. It should not be a one-size fits all approach. Fundamentally, the Government's plans to change the way that councils operate is top-down and heavy handed, ignores local choice and undermines local democracy. It is centralisation by stealth;
- 3) The committee system offers a number of benefits and abolishing it is a huge opportunity lost. As part of a committee system, councils are not run by a small group of councillors; instead, the committee system supports cross-party collaboration, and councils are often run in a more inclusive manner. Council committee systems can also increase accountability, reduce top-down decision making, provide a platform for diverse perspectives and provide greater opportunities for participation;

This Council, therefore, resolves to:

Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Minister of State for Local Government and Homelessness, Alison McGovern MP, to express concern about the Government's plans to standardise local government structures and express concern that local authorities have not been consulted. The Government should abandon its plans for reform, since the measures will undermine local empowerment and local decision-making."

Motion withdrawn from business (heard at the meeting of Ordinary Council on 10 December 2025).

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## **9 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to the Growing Epidemic of Violence towards Women and Girls**

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

"This Council notes:

- 1) Violence against women and girls (VAWG) includes female homicide,

rape, sexual assault, domestic abuse, stalking, harassment and controlling and coercive behaviour. Some of these are complex crimes which have a devastating and often life-changing impact on victims, their families and friends;

- 2) Between 2018/19 to 2022/23, police records of VAWG in England and Wales rose by 37%. In West Yorkshire, domestic abuse related crimes make up 21% of all recorded crimes in region. However, this is the tip of the iceberg, as often abuse is never reported;
- 3) It has been reported recently that approximately 2 million women a year in England and Wales are victims of male violence. It's also estimated that at least 1 in 12 women are victims of violence perpetrated by men, which includes harassment, sexual assault and domestic violence;
- 4) According to the Home Office, the national average cost to the UK of violence against women and girls is estimated to be in the region of £37 billion annually (including cost of health, legal and social services). In Kirklees, the Kirklees Joint Strategic Assessment (KJSA) has indicated that the estimated cost of domestic violence/abuse to agencies locally is in the region of £43 million each year;
- 5) While victims of domestic abuse are not confined to a particular gender, the evidence shows that the majority of victims are women. Between November 2022 and November 2023, there were 59,681 total reported cases of domestic abuse across West Yorkshire, with 43,691 (73%) of the victims being female.

This Council believes that:

- 1) Violence against women and girls is a significant issue on a local, regional and national level. It is a national emergency, and the scale of violence is akin to a public health crisis;
- 2) There is a lot of good work being done at a local and regional level to tackle the issue of violence against women and girls and this Council commends the work already being done. For instance, Kirklees Council is a supporter of the White Ribbon campaign, which encourages men to challenge misogynistic behaviour. The Council also has a strategic focus on tackling VAWG through its *Kirklees Communities Partnership Plan* and focus on multi-agency collaboration and public safety initiatives. At a regional level, the West Yorkshire Combined Authority is also taking a strategic approach through its *Safety of Women and Girls Strategy*, which includes a commitment to embed healthy relationships education in schools and communities, behavioural change through intervention programmes, improving safety in public spaces and strengthening services for victims and survivors;
- 3) While Kirklees Council is actively working to tackle VAWG, there is room to do more, especially in terms of leadership, visibility and long-term investment. The Council should publicly appoint an elected member VAWG Champion – to provide visible leadership, ensure accountability and champion the voices of survivors in policy-making. The Council should also improve public engagement, as there is limited public-facing communication about VAWG initiatives. Furthermore, public reporting on

outcomes and progress is limited, while the Council should also take a whole council approach, embedding VAWG awareness and prevention across all council services (including housing, education and licensing).

This Council, therefore, resolves:

- 1) To conduct a review into Kirklees Council's procurement practices for commissioning VAWG services to ensure they align with statutory guidance and meet the needs of all survivors, including the most marginalised survivors;
- 2) To appoint a Kirklees councillor as a VAWG Champion, to hold the council to account on these pledges and amplify the voice of survivors. The VAWG Champion will be a designated individual within the council who will be responsible for leading efforts to address and reduce violence against women and girls, including advocating for survivors, implementing strategies to prevent VAWG and ensuring that appropriate support services are available;
- 3) To improve public engagement and transparency by publishing regular updates on VAWG-related initiatives, outcomes and community impact;
- 4) For the Leader of the Council to write to the Home Secretary demanding an urgent Royal Commission into male violence against women. A Royal Commission is the highest form of public inquiry in the UK, and it would be set up to gather evidence and make binding recommendations. The Royal Commission could examine the root causes of male violence, investigate the failures of the criminal justice system, recommend long-term cross-government reforms (e.g. to education, health, policing and social care) and help to drive systemic change by focusing on the voices of survivors and marginalised communities.”

Motion approved.

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## **10 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to the Need for SEND Profit Caps on Private Providers**

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

“This Council notes:

- 1) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) refers to young people who require extra help and support with their learning difficulty and/or a disability that means they need special health and education support;
- 2) Private providers play a key role in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities sector, including early years, alternative provision and specialised independent schools and are often commissioned by councils to provide support and education for children with SEND. In Kirklees, there are 10,098 pupils aged 4 to 16 years with SEND. Of

these 9,407 pupils are educated in mainstream schools and settings and 691 in special schools (2022). SEND provision is a key issue for many parents in Kirklees.

Across England, approximately 1.7 million pupils have been identified as having special educational needs, representing around 19.6% of pupils;

- 3) There has been a huge surge in the need for SEND provision and, as a result, demand for school places supporting SEND students across the UK. Many state schools are not adequately equipped to meet the increased demand or to support pupils with more complex and challenging needs. This has led to expert providers across the private and charitable school sectors stepping in;
- 4) According to House of Commons Library research, commissioned by the Liberal Democrat national party, the top private equity companies providing SEND schooling have seen their annual profits increase as the SEND crisis has worsened, with some making margins of over 20%. Some of the private providers of special needs education are backed by private equity companies based in tax havens or foreign sovereign wealth funds;
- 5) The SEND crisis has led to many councils facing exorbitant costs for private provision. This is at a time when local authority budgets are being pushed to the brink, with many facing effective bankruptcy or end service provision for vulnerable groups;
- 6) The Liberal Democrat national party has demanded that private providers of special education are subject to an operating profit cap of 8% in order to curb exorbitant profits. The party has called for the Government to cap the profits of these companies to ensure that money is channelled back into the SEND system and not into the pockets of shareholders.

This Council, therefore, resolves to:

Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Education Secretary, Bridget Phillipson MP, to express concern that the profiteering from private equity firms is a major driver of the crisis in our SEND system and to cap the profits of these firms at 8%, ensuring that the priority is provision and not profits and helping to cut the excessive profiteering off the backs of disabled children. While the Government's commitment to reform the SEND system is welcome, profit-limiting controls are needed as a matter of urgency."

Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).

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## **11 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Labour's Welfare Cuts**

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

"This Council notes:

- 1) The Government has published a Green Paper, which includes proposals to change disability and long-term sickness benefits. This includes Personal Independence Payment (PIP);
- 2) PIP is claimed by nearly 3.7 million people in England and Wales, which includes residents in Kirklees. PIP is a benefit not linked to being in work or out of work but instead designed to help people with the additional unavoidable costs of having a disability. It is used by people who need daily help because of a long-term illness or disability or mental health condition. Many disabled people rely on PIP to cover the cost of getting to and from work, paying for essential equipment and for meeting their social care charges;
- 3) PIP is a non-means tested benefit, meaning that claims are not affected by an individual's income, capital or savings. It consists of 2 parts: a daily living component and a mobility component. Depending on their assessment, individuals may receive one or both components;
- 4) The Government's Green Paper proposes that PIP will be focused more on those with higher needs and reports suggest that eligibility criteria will be tightened. This may mean that individuals judged to have lower needs will no longer be eligible for the daily living component of PIP. In effect, it may mean that some individuals could lose entitlement to the daily living element of PIP and potentially other entitlements linked to this award. If an individual loses the daily living component, it will directly affect their caregiver, as the carer may become ineligible for Carer's Allowance or the carer element within Universal Credit. Furthermore, the Government's Spring Statement indicated that they wish to freeze the health element of Universal Credit for existing claimants until 2030 – meaning it will no longer increase with inflation, resulting in a real terms loss of income for over two million households;
- 5) Responding to the Chancellor's Spring Statement and the publication of the Government's impact assessment for their planned cuts to disability benefits, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation state that the cuts to health-related benefits risk pushing 250,000 people into poverty, including 50,000 children;
- 6) People who struggle to even wash their hair may have their payments reduced by an average of £1,720 per year. It is estimated that 370,000 people with disabilities will no longer qualify for PIP under the Government's new assessment rules.

This Council believes that:

- Some of these changes will have a negative impact on the lives of Kirklees residents;
- These changes amount to nothing less than an attack on those living with disabilities and health conditions – who need PIP payments and health-related Universal Credit, to live independent, dignified lives;
- Freezing, reducing and removing these payments will have a catastrophic impact on million of households who, due to disability and ill-health, face some of the highest rates of material deprivation in the UK.

This Council, therefore, resolves to:

- 1) Instruct the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, expressing the Council's grave concerns about the impact of these changes and urging them to reverse their decision to target those with disabilities and health conditions with cuts to their support payments;
- 2) Follow the example set by Stockport Council in developing a strategy to maximise the number of people claiming benefits they are entitled to in Kirklees, by using existing resources, including the Council website, the Council's newsletters, notices in local newspapers and council social media feeds;
- 3) Ask the Council's scrutiny function to convene a Task & Finish Group, to identify likely impacts on the local population and to assess the likely demand for support from the Council and its local partners."

Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).

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## **12 Motion submitted in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14 as to Disabled Bus Access**

To consider the following Motion in the names of Councillors J C Lawson and A C Pinnock;

"This Council notes:

- 1) The English National Concessionary Travel Scheme (ENCTS) is a government-backed initiative that offers free local bus travel in England for people over the State Pension age and people with eligible disabilities. However, the scheme is typically only available to individuals with disabilities outside of peak hours, from 9.30am to 11pm on weekdays, and all day on weekends and bank holidays;
- 2) Local areas can offer discretionary concessions beyond the rules set by the ENCTS, including extending free bus travel on weekdays before 9.30am. Locally, the ENCTS scheme is administered by the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, but Kirklees and West Yorkshire currently does not offer free travel before 9.30am for most disabled bus pass holders;
- 3) The Kirklees Transport Strategy (2025) commits to improving accessibility and promoting inclusive, sustainable transport options for all residents;
- 4) Disabled bus pass holders make up about 10% of all concessionary users in England;
- 5) The Bus Services (No. 2) Bill is a major piece of legislation which is

currently progressing through Parliament, aiming to improve the performance, accessibility and quality of bus services across England. Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament for Harrogate and Knaresborough, Tom Gordon, submitted an amendment to the Bill and called on the Government to give disabled people the freedom to travel at any time. The amendment received support from over 75 MPs, disability charities and campaign groups. However, the proposal to remove the 11pm – 09.30am exception to free travel for Disabled people was voted down.

This Council believes that:

- 1) These restrictions disproportionately affect disabled people who need to travel early for work, education, healthcare or caring responsibilities. Disabled people should have the freedom to travel at any time of day, just as non-disabled people do;
- 2) Time restrictions on concessionary travel create a postcode lottery and undermine efforts to promote equality, independence, and inclusion;
- 3) Removing these restrictions would support disabled residents in accessing employment, education, healthcare, and social opportunities.

This Council, therefore, resolves:

- 1) Request that the Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State for Transport to express disappointment at the Government's decision to turn their backs on disabled people as part of the Commons vote in September this year. This undermines their commitment to accessibility and equality. The Government needs to rethink their decision and remove the discriminatory restrictions to help create a system that allows everyone to make the journeys they want to. Removing the time restrictions could also open up work and training opportunities for disabled people, allowing them to travel with freedom, ease and confidence.
- 2) Ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Elected Mayor of West Yorkshire, to ask the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to extend the local ENCTS scheme to allow 24/7 free bus travel for all eligible disabled passholders across the region."

Item not considered (Meeting terminated in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16:2).

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