

# Local Government Act 1972

## Borough of North Tyneside

Thursday, 19 September 2024

At the meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday, 19 September 2024 at 6.00 pm in Chamber – Quadrant, The Silverlink North, Cobalt Business Park, North Tyneside, NE27 0BY at which a quorum of Members were present, that is to say: -

### Present

Councillor S Cox (Chair)  
N Redfearn (Elected Mayor)

Councillor J Bartoli	Councillor L Bartoli
Councillor L Bones	Councillor Linda Bell
Councillor P Bunyan	Councillor Louise Bell
Councillor B Clark	Councillor B Burdis
Councillor J Cruddas	Councillor S Burtenshaw
Councillor L Darke	Councillor K Clark
Councillor D Drummond	Councillor E Darke
Councillor S Graham	Councillor S Day
Councillor I Grayson	Councillor P Earley
Councillor J Harrison	Councillor C Gray
Councillor J Hunter	Councillor T Hallway
Councillor C Johnson	Councillor A Holdsworth
Councillor J Johnsson	Councillor N Huscroft
Councillor D Lilly	Councillor H Johnson
Councillor W Lott	Councillor J Kirwin
Councillor I McAlpine	Councillor F Lott
Councillor A McMullen	Councillor L Marshall
Councillor J Montague	Councillor C McGinty
Councillor T Mulvenna	Councillor J Walker
Councillor T Neira	Councillor J Mudzingwa
Councillor A Newman	Councillor M Murphy

Councillor P Oliver  
Councillor S Phillips  
Councillor W Samuel  
Councillor J Webster

Councillor T Bailey  
Councillor K Nott  
Councillor R O'Keefe  
Councillor B Pickard  
Councillor O Scargill

**Apologies:** Councillor J Day, Councillor L McMullen, Councillor J O'Shea and Councillor J Sharp

**C32/24      To receive any Declarations of Interest**

Councillor E Darke declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 6 Motion 1 as they would qualify for the proposed exemption of the garden waste charge.

Councillor J Harrison declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 6 Motion 1 as they would qualify for the proposed exemption of the garden waste charge.

Councillor J Hunter declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 6 Motion 1 as they would qualify for the proposed exemption of the garden waste charge.

Councillor N Huscroft declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 6 Motion 1 as they would qualify for the proposed exemption of the garden waste charge.

Councillor D Lilly declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 6 Motion 1 as they would qualify for the proposed exemption of the garden waste charge.

Councillor F Lott declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 6 Motion 1 as they would qualify for the proposed exemption of the garden waste charge.

Councillor W Lott declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 6 Motion 1 as their partner would qualify for the proposed exemption of the garden waste charge.

Councillor T Mulvenna declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 6 Motion 1 as they would qualify for the proposed exemption of the garden waste charge.

Councillor M Thirlaway declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 6 Motion 3 as they have a family member who has Parkinsons.

Councillor J Wallace declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 6 Motion 1 as they would qualify for the proposed exemption of the garden waste charge.

**C33/24 Minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2024**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the Council meeting held on 18 July 2024 be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair.

**C34/24 Proposed Appointments to Audit Committee (Co-opted Chair and Deputy Chair)**

Council received a report that set out the process followed, and proposed appointments, to the positions of Chair and Deputy Chair for the Audit Committee.

It was moved by the Councillor C Johnson and seconded by the Elected Mayor that:

Council agrees to the recommendation that the Authority appoint Dr Stuart Green as co-opted Chair of Audit Committee and Lisa Sproats as co-opted Deputy Chair of Audit Committee for a term of two years.

**Votes for the Motion:**

Councillors T Bailey, J Bartoli, L Bartoli, Linda Bell, Louise Bell, L Bones, P Bunyan, B Burdis, S Burtenshaw, B Clark, K Clark, S Cox, J Cruddas, E Darke, L Darke, S Day, D Drummond, P Earley, S Graham, C Gray, I Grayson, T Hallway, J Harrison, A Holdsworth, J Hunter, N Huscroft, C Johnson, H Johnson, J Johnsson, J Kirwin, D Lilly, F Lott, W Lott, L Marshall, I McAlpine, C McGinty, A McMullen, J Montague, J Mudzingwa, T Mulvenna, M Murphy, T Neira, A Newman, K Nott, P Oliver, R O'Keefe, S

Phillips, B Pickard, N Redfearn, W Samuel, Dr O Scargill, J Shaw, A Spowart, M Thirlaway, J Walker, J Wallace, J Webster.

**The Motion was approved unanimously by all 57 members present.**

**C35/24 Children and Young People's Plan 2024-2025**

As Cabinet Member responsible for Supporting and Protecting Children, Councillor P Earley proposed to withdraw the refreshed Children and Young People's Plan 2024-2025 report as there were amendments to be made to the plan which would need to go back to Cabinet for approval. The report would be returned to Council as a later date.

This proposal was seconded by Councillor Phillips.

The report was therefore withdrawn from the agenda.

**C36/24 Motion 1: Exempting Pensioners from the new Garden Waste Charge**

**Three valid Motions on Notice, signed by at least three Members of the Council, have been received for consideration at this meeting.**

It was moved by Councillor L Bartoli and seconded by Councillor C McGinty that:

North Tyneside Council notes:

- The recent decision by the Labour cabinet to introduce an annual charge of £30 for garden waste collections, which will apply from March 2025.
- The financial difficulties faced by many pensioners in North Tyneside, particularly in light of the recent changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance, which may significantly reduce their income and increase their financial burdens.
- That pensioners are often on fixed incomes, and any additional charges for essential services, such as garden waste collection, could further strain their ability to meet basic living costs.

North Tyneside Council believes:

- That the introduction of a garden waste charge may disproportionately impact pensioners, who may already be facing difficult choices due to reduced financial support and rising living costs.
- That in recognition of the unique challenges faced by pensioners, particularly those related to changes in the Winter Fuel Allowance, it is appropriate and fair to offer them an exemption from this new charge.
- Gardening contributes significantly to pensioners physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.
- That providing an exemption for pensioners would demonstrate the Authority's commitment to supporting its most vulnerable residents and would help to mitigate the financial pressures they face.

North Tyneside Council asks the Mayor to:

- Request that cabinet explore an exemption from the £30 annual garden waste charge for all pensioners residing in the borough.
- Ensure that any exemption which may be introduced is easily accessible, with a straightforward application process, and is well-publicised to ensure that all eligible pensioners are aware of and can benefit from it.

**Votes against the Motion:**

Councillors T Bailey, Linda Bell, Louise Bell, P Bunyan, B Burdis, S Burtenshaw, B Clark, K Clark, S Cox, J Cruddas, E Darke, L Darke, S Day, D Drummond, P Earley, S Graham, C Gray, I Grayson, T Hallway, J Harrison, A Holdsworth, J Hunter, N Huscroft, C Johnson, H Johnson, J Kirwin, F Lott, W Lott, L Marshall, A McMullen, J Montague, J Mudzingwa, T Mulvenna, M Murphy, T Neira, A Newman, K Nott, P Oliver, R O'Keefe, S Phillips, B Pickard, N Redfearn, W Samuel, J Shaw, A Spowart, M Thirlaway, J Walker, J Webster.

**Votes for the Motion:**

Councillors J Bartoli, L Bartoli, L Bones, J Johnsson, D Lilly, I McAlpine, C McGinty, Dr O Scargill, J Wallace.

**The Motion was rejected by 48 votes to 9.**

It was moved by Councillor L Bones and seconded by Councillor I McAlpine that:

North Tyneside Council notes:

- The unacceptably high levels of fly-tipping across North Tyneside, which continue to be a significant environmental and financial burden on the council and residents.
- The long-running “Clean-up Days” that are currently organised in housing estates funded through the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). While these events have proven effective at reducing fly-tipping in areas where they operate, they are limited in scope and do not extend to all neighbourhoods within the borough, leaving gaps in coverage.
- Newcastle City Council’s “Pop-up Recycling Centres” initiative, which has successfully increased access to recycling facilities across the city, reducing the distance and effort required for residents to properly dispose of their waste and recyclables.

North Tyneside Council believes:

- That tackling the issue of fly-tipping requires the adoption of new and innovative approaches, especially in areas where existing waste management strategies don’t seem to work. The current clean-up initiatives, though beneficial, do not serve all areas equally, and new solutions must be explored to ensure borough-wide access to recycling services.
- The introduction of mobile, community-based “Pop-up Recycling Centres” could provide a flexible, convenient option for residents who may otherwise struggle to access static recycling centres. This approach could help reduce fly-tipping by offering regular, well-publicised opportunities for residents to dispose of their waste responsibly, closer to their homes.
- Expanding access to waste disposal facilities through pop-up centres would not only help combat illegal dumping but could also increase recycling rates, contributing to North Tyneside’s sustainability and waste reduction goals.

North Tyneside Council asks the Mayor and Cabinet to:

- Explore how a scheme of “Pop-up Recycling Centres” could be introduced across North Tyneside, including a detailed review of the Newcastle City

Council model. This review should consider the frequency, locations, and types of waste accepted at the pop-up sites.

- Engage in a consultation process with residents, local businesses, and community groups to identify areas of highest need for improved waste disposal services and gauge public interest in the pop-up recycling scheme.
- Investigate potential funding streams to support the year-round operation of a pop-up recycling centres. This should include exploring external funding sources and how existing budgets such as Neet Streets can support this activity. Additionally, an assessment should be made of the potential cost savings from reduced fly-tipping, which could offset the costs of running the scheme.
- Request the Overview and Scrutiny Co-ordination and Finance Committee examine and report on the review and engagement report and outcomes.

**Votes against the Motion:**

Councillors T Bailey, Linda Bell, Louise Bell, P Bunyan, B Burdis, S Burtenshaw, B Clark, K Clark, S Cox, J Cruddas, E Darke, L Darke, S Day, D Drummond, P Earley, S Graham, C Gray, I Grayson, T Hallway, J Harrison, A Holdsworth, J Hunter, N Huscroft, C Johnson, H Johnson, J Kirwin, F Lott, W Lott, L Marshall, A McMullen, J Montague, J Mudzingwa, T Mulvenna, M Murphy, T Neira, A Newman, K Nott, P Oliver, R O'Keefe, S Phillips, B Pickard, N Redfearn, W Samuel, J Shaw, A Spowart, M Thirlaway, J Walker, J Webster.

**Votes for the Motion:**

Councillors J Bartoli, L Bartoli, L Bones, J Johnsson, D Lilly, I McAlpine, C McGinty, Dr O Scargill, J Wallace.

**The Motion was rejected by 48 votes to 9.**

**C38/24      Motion 3: Disabled Parking Badges for Residents with Parkinson's**

(Councillor M Thirlaway left the Chamber)

It was moved by Councillor Dr O Scargill and seconded by Councillor J Johnsson that:

North Tyneside Council notes that:

- Parkinson's Disease is a progressive neurological condition that severely impacts the lives of over 145,000 people in the UK, including residents in North Tyneside. The symptoms of Parkinson's can vary greatly from person to person and fluctuate not only day-to-day but even hour-to-hour, often including mobility issues, tremors, freezing, pain, and extreme fatigue.
- The Equality Act 2010 recognises Parkinson's as a long-term disability from the point it starts to affect daily life, with such effects worsening over time. People with Parkinson's are legally entitled to reasonable adjustments in public life to account for their mobility and safety needs.
- The Blue Badge Scheme provides vital parking concessions for individuals with severe mobility issues, allowing them to access destinations more easily. However, the current eligibility criteria, set by the Department for Transport, does not fully take into account the fluctuating and unpredictable nature of Parkinson's symptoms.
- Concerns raised by Parkinson's UK and members of the North Tyneside Parkinson's community indicate that many individuals with the condition are being denied Blue Badges, despite significant mobility challenges. The current application process does not adequately reflect the needs of those whose ability to walk may vary throughout the day, nor does it take into consideration the necessity for these individuals to be close to their vehicles due to sudden changes in symptoms.
- The Parkinson's UK Campaign highlights that the rigidity of the current Blue Badge criteria is deterring individuals with Parkinson's from applying, exacerbating feelings of isolation and creating unnecessary barriers to independence.

Council asks the Mayor to:

- Write to the Secretary of State for Transport, calling on the government to review and amend the Blue Badge eligibility criteria to better account for fluctuating conditions like Parkinson's and other progressive neurological diseases, ensuring that mobility assessments reflect the full impact of such conditions on daily life and also introduce a clear, accessible appeal process for Blue Badge applicants who are denied, ensuring they are given an adequate chance to provide further medical evidence or clarification regarding their condition.



- Request that officers provide additional support and guidance to individuals with Parkinson's or other progressive conditions in navigating the Blue Badge application process.

#### **Votes for the Motion:**

Councillors T Bailey, J Bartoli, L Bartoli, Linda Bell, Louise Bell, L Bones, P Bunyan, B Burdis, S Burtenshaw, B Clark, K Clark, S Cox, J Cruddas, E Darke, L Darke, S Day, D Drummond, P Earley, S Graham, C Gray, I Grayson, T Hallway, J Harrison, A Holdsworth, J Hunter, N Huscroft, C Johnson, H Johnson, J Johnsson, J Kirwin, D Lilly, F Lott, W Lott, L Marshall, I McAlpine, C McGinty, A McMullen, J Montague, J Mudzingwa, T Mulvenna, M Murphy, T Neira, A Newman, K Nott, P Oliver, R O'Keefe, S Phillips, B Pickard, N Redfearn, W Samuel, Dr O Scargill, J Shaw, A Spowart, J Walker, J Wallace, J Webster.

**The Motion was approved unanimously by all 56 members present.**

(Councillor Thirlaway returned to the meeting)

#### **C39/24 Chair's Announcements**

The Chair told the Meeting about some recent events where he represented the Council at the Cenotaph to honour the Veterans and at a Veteran's 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party.

The Chair also attended the 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St Paul's Church in Whitley Bay and International Day to learn about different histories and cultures at home in the North East.

The Chair announced his chosen charity, Acorns, based in North Shields which is a group that supports those directly impacted by abuse but also works to support the children and the young people from those families. This can make a huge difference as children involved with the fallout of an abusive relationship may be impacted for the rest of their lives. The Chair noted he would be contacting all the members soon and asking for their support.

#### **C40/24 Elected Mayor's Announcements**

The Elected Mayor spoke and reminded members that Monkseaton High School

was under consultation and an announcement had not been made that it was due to close. She asked that members remember this in their dealings with the public so as not to cause unnecessary alarm and upset.

The Mayor also reminded members that it had been a previous administration that outsourced Council work to Capita, and that discussions were now underway to bring these teams back into the Council.

## **C41/24      Questions by Members of the Council**

### **1. Question to the elected Mayor from Councillor David Lilly**

Who, decided to alter the configuration of the Farringdon Road, Mast Lane and Broadway roundabout, and for what purpose?

#### **Councillor Hannah Johnson provided the following response:**

The scheme at Broadway, Farringdon Road and Mast Lane roundabout originated following requests from the school crossing patrol and nearby schools for crossing improvements at the junction.

Officers reviewed the area following the request and noted that pedestrians were required to cross three lanes of traffic using narrow traffic islands. The crossing point on the northern side of the roundabout was also subject to drainage issues with standing surface water occurring on the crossing point during wet weather.

The purpose of the scheme was to improve safety for school children and all other users at the junction by improving the crossing facilities on Broadway, reducing the approach lanes to single lane and reduce the size of the junction to encourage slower vehicle movements.

Following completion of the scheme, the Council has received positive feedback from parents and members of the public.

#### **Councillor D Lilly asked the following supplementary question.**

The new roundabout configuration has removed four filter left exits from the roundabout, removed the bus stop from the layby and placed it on the main road about 25 metres from the roundabout and about 15 metres from the Crossing, resulting in regular long tailbacks caused by buses parking on the road over the crossing and over the roundabout onto the other side of the roundabout. So, how can this be an improvement in either traffic flow or pedestrian safety?

**Councillor Hannah Johnson provided the following response:**

I regularly use that road, given I live in the area, and I don't think I've once been caught up on the Broadway since it's been done. Obviously whenever we do schemes like this we keep an eye on what happens, and I can assure you that we will continue to keep an eye on the traffic loads around that area.

**2. Question to the elected Mayor from Councillor Liam Bones**

Does the Mayor agree with Councillor Kirwin that Councillors currently have to 'jump through endless hoops to get jobs done' and what discussions has she had regarding setting up new committees to allow Councillors to better oversee the running of local services?

**Mayor Redfearn provided the following response:**

I do not agree with that statement. In this borough we have a system in place which allows Councillors to be effective representatives of the people they serve. We have a group of council officers committed to ensuring the organization is effective and they do consider the politicians opinions. We have invested significantly in technology to ensure Councillors and members of the public are able to see results themselves and get things changed via the Customer First Team. We have systems in place which allow all our residents and members to be significantly better informed and get things done. I also want to say again that I have an open door policy, as has the Chief Executive, if people come to an impasse and have issues.

**Councillor L Bones Lilly asked the following supplementary question:**

Councillor Kirwin also said this week that we cannot continue with business as usual referring to the tenure of this Mayor, so it's no wonder that the Mayor's chosen candidate is Councillor Clark. My question to the mayor is how will she heal the civil war within the opposite group when Councillor Kirwin and his supporters find out what the rest of us already know.

**Mayor Redfearn provided the following response:**

I was asked my opinion, and I have shared it. At the end of the day, we in our group are not dictators and people have their own personal opinions. I don't tell my Councillors what to think and what they can say.

**3. Question to the elected Mayor from Councillor John Johnsson:**

The single person council tax discount provides vital financial relief to individuals living alone by reducing their council tax by 25%. This helps ensure fairness, as council tax is usually based on the assumption of multiple contributors in a household. The discount is especially beneficial for those on low or fixed incomes, such as pensioners or single parents. Can the Mayor please reassure residents across North Tyneside that they will continue to receive their single person Council Tax discount in the next financial year?

**Mayor Redfearn provided the following response:**

As the Councillor knows, this money comes from government and at the minute we don't know what the situation is and as such we haven't started to prepare our budget. We have a number of priorities and we have to make some decisions. If the government decides not to do that, this will be one of our priorities and when we come to what pressures we've have, we will consider that. At this present moment I don't know what position we'll be in, but I would never say that I would want that to happen, but I have to be sensible and deal with whatever's in our area when it comes to finance and we will deal with it accordingly when we're doing the Budget.

**Councillor J Johnsson asked the following supplementary question:**

Would you be in willing to look at a local support scheme if the chancellor does go ahead and make that decision?

**Mayor Redfearn provided the following response:**

I'm prepared to write to anybody to support the people here in North Tyneside.

**4. Question to the elected Mayor from Councillor Liam Bones**

What impact will new housing targets have on North Tyneside's existing local plan and how many additional houses will need to be built over the next ten years to meet the government's new targets?

**Councillor C Johnson provided the following response:**

As I'm sure Councillor Bones knows, local plans can't be amended once they have been agreed and they can only be replaced by a new local plan. The current new figure is 1,075 dwellings per annum, and that's just an interim figure until the final figures have been published.

**Councillor L Bones asked the following supplementary question:**

Labour's New National planning policy framework consultation does have an

uplift for North Tyneside over the coming years. I just wondered how confident the Cabinet member is that our current local plan will stand up within that and we won't have houses forced us from government?

**Councillor C Johnson provided the following response:**

You'll remember the last conservative government told our local authorities they would have to come with a new local plan anyway. This Council will have to come up with a new local plan in the next couple of years and it will be on this new number of units. So, if people want to live in this borough and our people need houses, we will ensure there are sufficient houses for those people to live here.

**5. Question to the elected Mayor from Councillor Ian McAlpine**

In light of the new NPPF consultation can the Mayor assure my residents that green belt land to the North of St Mary's Ward will continue to be protected from development?

**Councillor C Johnson responded with the following response:**

We will not play any area off against another. It's consultation from the government and the consultation hasn't finished yet, so we don't know what the policy is going to be. Once we know what the policy is going to be, we'll look at all areas.

**Councillor I McAlpine asked the following supplementary question:**

Can you give an indication of when residents will receive clarity on the future of the St Mary's green belt and a commitment to transparency over all options being considered to satisfy any new housing Target?

**Councillor C Johnson responded with the following response:**

You'll have to write to the Secretary of State to find out the time scales because I have no control over what they do on National Plan and Policy Framework. As soon as any information is available we'll ensure it's shared with all ward councillors, and be completely open and transparent in this process all the way through.

**6. Question to the elected Mayor from Councillor Liam Bones**

The new Mayor of the North East has committed to "think differently, work differently, and to start to build new ways of funding things" following the government's failure to commit to funding the Leamside line. What discussions

have been had at a combined authority level with regards to a new way of funding the proposed cobalt link to the Metro System?

**Councillor C Johnson provided the following response:**

Following the establishment of North of Tyne combined Authority, new government Arrangements have replaced Regional the previous Regional transport governance structures of the joint transport committee. As part of the arrangements, measures are being put in place to develop a new transport plan for the region. Engagement on the new Transport Plan is likely to commence before the end of 2024, and the Cobalt Corridor extension is identified with delivery as part of the pipeline schemes in the existing North East Transport Plan, alongside a number of other regional rail and Metro projects, and is cited in the North East Metro and Rail strategy. The major scheme is also referred to in our own strategic documents, notably in the Local Plan and the North Tyneside Transport Strategy.

As part of the proposed work to update the Transport and Delivery Plan, there have been a series of regional meetings to review the existing pipeline schemes including the Cobalt extension. This dialogue will help them form the agreed pipeline schemes which forms part of the North East Transport Plan which will approved by

North East Mayor and Cabinet which the Cobalt will very much be part of. New ways of funding projects will be explored in due course as the Transport Plan and associated pipeline schemes are developed through to March 2025.

**Councillor L Bones asked the following supplementary question:**

Does the cabinet member agree with me that what our residents want to see isn't a fairy tale wish list, but is actually real delivery on transport projects and will the Mayor write to the new North East Mayor to again make the case for the Cobalt link?

**Councillor C Johnson responded with the following response:**

A fairy tale wish list is what your government came out with at the end of its conference last year which fell apart quicker than any plan in local history - the Leamside line we were getting one day and the next day we weren't getting. We will always stand up for this borough, and that's why the Cobalt line extension is going to be in the Transport Plan and that's why we will seek to have East Coast mainline station in North Tyneside in the Transport Plan and that's why the Ferry Landing funding will come in the Transport Plan. We will always up this borough.

We've got successful results in the past and we'll continue to do so.

**7. Question to the elected Mayor from Councillor Jay Bartoli**

Please can the cabinet member provide an update on works on the coast road, updated timescales and when it is now envisaged the road will return to national speed limit?

**Councillor H Johnson responded with the following response:**

The work to replace the crash barriers on the A1058, the Coast Road, commenced earlier this year and is progressing program the work is approaching completion and is expected to be finished in May / October subject to favourable weather on completion of the works the temporary speed limit from the Newcastle City Council boundary to Silverlink will be returned to the National Speed Limit.

**Councillor J Bartoli responded with the following response:**

Can I just get the reassurance that the plans for Bus Lane have been scratched?

**Councillor C Johnson responded with the following response:**

Just to be clear, we never had any plans – it was Newcastle City Council, and we presume they have shelved that. We would never allow a bus lane in North Tyneside.

**8. Question to the elected Mayor from Councillor Claire McGinty**

Nicole Jacobs, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, has raised serious concerns following the release of hundreds of domestic abuse perpetrators from prison before the end of their sentence. She said domestic abuse victims and survivors were particularly vulnerable because their perpetrators were more likely to have contact with them, know where they lived and work or know their family, compared with other criminals being freed. What additional work is being done by the North Tyneside Domestic Abuse Partnership following the early release of hundreds of prisoners to ensure survivors of domestic abuse receive additional support and protection.

**Councillor K Clark responded with the following response:**

I fully appreciate this issue is a real concern for victims of domestic abuse, which is a horrific and very complex crime. I welcome the opportunity to reassure victims of domestic abuse and the wider public that appropriate actions have been undertaken and necessary measures have been put in place to support

and protect victims of domestic abuse in North Tyneside.

Firstly, I've just got a couple of issues with the way the question is presented. I think it is a little bit misleading and there may be some confusion over the terminology used. I think the Commissioner did voice her concern about the potential of prisoners with a history of domestic abuse being released early from their sentence, however to be clear – no prisoner currently serving a sentence for domestic abuse crime is eligible for early release under this scheme.

You stated that she expressed concerns following the release of hundreds of domestic abuse perpetrators from prison before the end of their sentence. I'm not aware that we know how many perpetrators of domestic abuse have actually been released before the end of the sentence given, in that anyone serving a domestic abuse crime is not eligible for release under this scheme. As we know the early release scheme was introduced by the new government as an urgent and temporary response to the prison overcrowding crisis, an issue that the previous Conservative government has failed to address during the 14 years that were in power.

Again to be clear, it reduces the standard time served in prison to 40% of a sentence rather than 50%, so we're talking about prisoners who are due to be released soon anyway so that's just putting it into the context.

The UK government have confirmed exemptions under the scheme and has stated there will not be early release for offenders serving a sentence for a domestic abuse crime and that sentences for serious violent offenses of four years or more as well as sex offenses will be automatically excluded. Anyone released will be strictly monitored on license by the probation service through measures which can include electronic tagging and curfews; they face being recalled to prison if they breach their license conditions.

In North Tyneside members of the Domestic Abuse Partnership have considered the implications of the early release scheme and any impact it may have on victims of domestic abuse in the borough. In relation to the number of prisoners released in North Tyneside, again to be clear we've certainly not had high numbers and certainly not had hundreds. The numbers released are very minimal and all the measures have been reviewed and put in place to protect potential victims. The Local Resilience Forum nationally stood up its command structure in July to manage the pressures on prison capacity and to coordinate



the response to the early release scheme. In addition, North Tyneside Council stood up our internal Local Response Group, attended by all key service leads and partners.

This coordination provides a level of reassurance with partners and communities across the borough and region as all local risks and impacts have been identified and monitored throughout this process. I can confirm that reporting and escalation mechanisms continue to be in place.

The probation service is also playing a critical role in mitigating and managing risk connected to the release of offenders. Safeguarding and domestic checks are undertaken on all released offenders and protection plans will be put in place. All victims have been contacted and risk assessments undertaken, I emphasize anyone who breaches the license conditions will be immediately recalled to

Custody. Ensuring that all victims of domestic abuse know where to access support remains a key priority nationally but also for our local domestic abuse partnership. Importantly the partnership will continue to promote the range of local advice and support services available for those at risk or who have suffered domestic abuse. Probation have confirmed that if any victim is worried they should come forward and they will be offered the appropriate support. I hope these facts and updates provide reassurance to any victims of domestic abuse in North Tyneside and indeed to the wider North Tyneside residents.

**Councillor C McGinty responded with the following response:**

The early release scheme is putting victims in danger as the victims are not being given enough notice. Could the Cabinet member please provide a briefing paper to the Councillors outlining the work that has been done on this matter.

**Councillor K Clark responded with the following response:**

I think I've just provided that briefing verbally on the work that's been done in relation to all the risks that are being looked at and being reviewed, that Safeguarding procedures are being put in place and all victims are being informed if there's any danger. If any victims have wider concerns, haven't been contacted or are worried that a perpetrator may be released from prison, they're being encouraged to come forward. I will circulate a briefing paper reflecting the update I've just given.