

North Tyneside Council

Report to Council

24 November 2022

Title: Motions

Notice has been received of the following motions from Members of the Council to be put to the Council meeting.

Motion 1 signed by Councillors Carole Burdis, Carl Johnson and Janet Hunter

North Tyneside Council notes that the Home Office and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) have recognised the magnificent work Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service.

The Fire Authority's budget for 2022/23 was set in February 2022 based on estimates that price inflation and wage growth would both be in the region of 2% to 3% in 2022/23. These were not unrealistic assumptions as they reflected the Government's own forecasts for inflation in 2022 and 2023, the Latest figure is above 10%

The local government and firefighter pay award for 2022/23 have yet to be resolved. This was already going to be difficult when pay was forecast to rise by around 2.5% The Fire Authority had, through careful budget management made provision for a 3% pay rise however this will no longer cover the potential pay demands now faced.

Council recognises that the financial challenge of inflation comes on top of the enormous pressures faced by the Fire Authority after a decade of Government austerity.

Council urges the Government to appreciate that the Fire and Rescue sector cannot resolve the current difficulties without national Government support.

Council calls upon The Elected Mayor in conjunction with all Tyne and Wear Council Leaders to write to the appropriate Government Minister, to seek additional financial support to allow Tyne and Wear Fire and rescue service to continue operating as a high level, give our fire fighters and service staff a decent pay rise and combat skyrocketing inflation, as a matter of urgency.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications for the Authority.

Motion 2 by Councillors Cath Davis, Julie Cruddas and Carole Burdis

Liz Truss, Prime Minister for 45 days, stated she was 'completely committed' to maintaining the triple lock on pensions. Given the rising cost of living crisis, especially gas and electricity and fuel costs, many elderly people are choosing between heating and eating. The state pension is vital to most pensioners, particularly women, who haven't been able to build up a private pension. UK state pensions compare dismally with most of their European counterparts.

Therefore, North Tyneside Council asks the Mayor to write to the New Prime Minister and his Chancellor to ensure that the triple lock is preserved to make sure that some of our most vulnerable residents' pensions are not reduced by the rising cost of living.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications for the Authority.

Motion 3 by Councillors Erin Parker Leonard, Matthew Thirlaway and Debbie Cox

Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) Women

In the 1995 Pensions Act, the Government increased State Pension age for women from 60 to 65, with a further increase to 66 in the 2011 Pensions Act.

The change was not properly communicated to 3.8m women born in the 1950s until 2012, giving some women only one year's notice of a six year increase in their anticipated retirement age.

Council notes that

- The conclusion of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality for Women, states that women born in the 1950s have suffered a gross injustice, affecting their emotional, physical and mental circumstances, in addition to causing financial hardship.
- A swift resolution is needed to address this ongoing injustice as this cohort of woman are dying waiting for compensation.
- This injustice has not only had a profound effect on the individuals involved but on the wider community in North Tyneside and on local government and public sector finances

Council believes WASPI women affected need a one-off compensation payment in align with the recommendations of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on State Pension Inequality for Women

Council calls upon The Elected Mayor, Norma Redfearn to write to the local Members of Parliament and to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to outline the effects of the injustice to 1950s women, their family's and on the communities in North Tyneside and to seek their support for an immediate compensation package.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications for the Authority.

Motion 4 by Councillors Eddie Darke, Carl Johnson and Brian Burdis

The Elections Act 2022 made significant changes to participation in elections in this country which have the potential to disenfranchise voters.

North Tyneside Council calls on the Returning Officer to write to every household to inform them of the significant changes in the Elections Act.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

Financial Implications

The anticipated cost of writing to each household would range between £0.041m to £0.058m depending on the method of delivery. These costs are not within existing budgets, so would need to be found from contingencies.

Motion 5 by Councillors Chris Johnston, Lewis Bartoli and Olly Scargill

At the Council meeting held in November 2021, Councillors were assured that the Borough's war memorials were 'looked after all year round' and the Council's own website proudly claims 'The duty of looking after our war memorials is one that we take extremely seriously. Our staff routinely inspect, repair, and maintain our memorials..., We also conduct full condition surveys at regular intervals. This gives us a condition profile of each memorial so that we can identify where further work and investment might be needed.'

Following this meeting, Councillors and residents from Tynemouth have monitored the condition of the two war memorials on Tynemouth Green. Prior to their annual deep cleaning in the run-up to Remembrance Day 2022, both memorials were covered in algae with moss and weeds growing between the block paving and were still strewn with the decaying poppies of 2021's event. In order to ensure that the Council takes its responsibility to look after our war memorial seriously, we ask the Mayor to commit to:

1. Publish a schedule of cleaning for all of the Borough's war memorials at least four times per year.
2. Maintain a record of work undertaken at each memorial, including cleaning and remedial repairs, that can be accessed by Councillors.
3. Invite Councillors and resident groups to monitor the condition of the memorials before and after cleaning or any repairs.
4. Establish a programme for the respectful removal of poppies at an appropriate time following each Remembrance Day Parade.
5. Affix appropriate signage near each war memorial providing a telephone contact for residents to report damage or disrepair.

Legal Implications

Under the War Memorials (Local Authorities' Powers) Act 1923 the Authority has the power, though not a duty, to maintain, repair and protect war memorials in the Borough. The Authority has understandably chosen to exercise that power by cleaning, maintaining, and restoring public war memorials across the Borough.

If there are any war memorials in the Borough that are not in a public place then it would not be possible for the Authority, without permission from the landowner, to publish a schedule of cleaning or undertake work/repairs etc.

Financial Implications

Any increase in cleaning and/or repair over and above current levels would incur an additional cost. It is not possible to quantify this at present without a more detailed specification of works, however it is likely that the costs could not be accommodated in existing service budgets unless service levels were reduced in other areas.

Motion 6 by Councillors Liam Bones, Lewis Bartoli and Olly Scargill

Restaurant Week

North Tyneside has some of the best restaurants in the North East, with many award winning eateries being joined by new start ups in recent years. Neighbouring authorities like Newcastle and South Tyneside organise annual or bi-annual restaurant weeks as a way to boost the local tourism economy and show off local businesses in the area. Newcastle Restaurant Week is one of the North East's most popular leading food events, which celebrates some of the very best restaurants in the city.

North Tyneside has so far had sporadic success with the same concept, with the last restaurant week being held before the Covid-19 pandemic. Since then many new eateries have opened their doors and with the cost of living on the rise our local businesses could really do with a boost. North Tyneside Council is uniquely placed to bring together leading groups such as the Business Forum and the LEP to create an event similar in scale and success to that of Newcastle Restaurant Week.

North Tyneside Council therefore asks the Mayor and Cabinet to:

- begin work to introduce a Council-organised restaurant week in North Tyneside next spring as part of the wider culture and leisure offer
- offer free parking in council run car parks during restaurant week to encourage visitors to our borough
- Work with Nexus to reduce ticket prices for those travelling on the metro to visit our local restaurants in that week
- Use Council social media to advertise the event across the borough

Legal Implications

The Traffic Regulation Orders made by the Authority enable it to suspend parking charges in Authority operated car parks.

Insofar as the Authority working with Nexus to reduce ticket prices during any North Tyneside 'Restaurant Week' is concerned, the North East Joint Transport Committee (JTC) of the North East Combined Authority and the North of Tyne Combined Authority is responsible for setting and monitoring a budget for Nexus. Nexus is of course funded through fares from customers using the metro and its other services (plus a grant from the Department of Transport and a levy on the five Tyne and Wear local authorities). Any suggestion that there be a reduction in metro fares during 'Restaurant Week', is likely to be a matter for the JTC (through the Tyne and Wear Sub-Committee) to determine rather than Nexus.

Independent bus operators may be able to offer discounted fares during the restaurant week.

Financial Implications

A decision to introduce free car parking for 7 days would result in a reduced level of income. Unless a system of reimbursement could be established, to target this reduction on people eating in restaurants, this would require all parking charges to be suspended. The actual cost such a scheme would be dependent on which week of the year this took place, but the average weekly income for car parks is in the region of £0.024m.

For the proposed metro reduction, it is not considered possible to develop a scheme whereby Nexus could offer a reduced ticket at the point of sale, as this would have to apply to all metro journeys, not just those travelling to a restaurant. On that basis, some form of reimbursement scheme would be required, whereby the customer provides evidence of their travel cost to the restaurant and are given a discount against their bill.

In order for the Authority to bear this cost, the restaurant would need to take a copy of the metro ticket and then seek reimbursement from the Authority. The same could be applied to a targeted reimbursement for car parking tickets. In both cases it is not possible to quantify the cost of such a scheme as the terms/value of the discount are not known, nor are the volumes involved. It should be noted that there would be an administrative burden for the Authority to assess and process this scheme. Finally, the VAT implications of such a scheme would need to be considered.

Motion 7 - by Councillors Olly Scargill, Liam Bones and Lewis Bartoli

IVF - INVITRO FERTILISATION

Access to NHS IVF funding in England varies according to your postcode, with the number of cycles and access criteria traditionally being determined by local Clinical Commissioning Groups, now Integrated Care Systems.

In accordance with the NICE (National Institute for Health and Care Excellence) guidelines, in North Tyneside women under 40 years old who have been trying to conceive for 2 years are offered 3 rounds of IVF. However, they face the added barrier of not being offered any rounds if one person in the relationship has a child from a previous relationship.

This is despite NICE guidance stating that IVF treatment is more effective in women who have previously been pregnant and/or had a live birth.

Council notes residents in North Tyneside are not able to access IVF treatment if one partner in the relationship has a child from a previous relationship.

Council believes this policy is dated and the criteria for IVF should match the reasonable standards set out by NICE and established by other ICSs.

Council asks the Mayor to write to the North East and North Cumbria ICS, asking to review this policy and remove this section from their IVF access criteria.

Legal Implications

There are no legal implications.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications for the Authority.