

North Tyneside Council

Report to Council

20 July 2023

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 W Samuel, C Johnson, K Clark

Council notes that the increase in interest rates is causing severe difficulties for many of our residents. With an estimated 6.5 million households across the country to be impacted by the Tory mortgage penalty by 2025. As fixed rate mortgages come to an end, many are having to take out new mortgages with people across North Tyneside facing on average a £2000 increase per year. Those living in the private rented sector are also facing a significant increase with the average rent being 12-15% higher than this time last year and rent has increased on average for 13 consecutive quarters.

It is disappointing that banks and building societies are failing to assist borrowers who are struggling to meet their mortgage costs by offering payment holidays, longer repayment terms and interest only products. At the same time, they are failing to offer savers similar rises in interest rates as those they impose on borrowers.

We note that the Government have sought to agree a voluntary framework to address this, but Council believes this approach falls short of what is required.

Council asks the Elected Mayor to write to the Prime Minister:

- To express the dismay of the residents of North Tyneside at his refusal to legislate to require banks and building societies to assist borrowers and avoid repossession of homes and spiralling increase in costs due to a Conservative made cost of living crisis.

- To call for the Prime Minister to immediately bring forward policy to tackle the tory mortgage penalty and to end the crisis In the private rented sector.

Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications for the Authority arising from this motion.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications for the Authority arising from this motion.

Motion 2 signed by Councillors E Parker-Leonard, M Fox, C Burdis

North Tyneside council is proud to be a safe and welcoming workspace. We always strive to create a workspace where everyone is free to be themselves and continue to try and support the LGBTQ+ community to feel safe at work. We want to continue to transform the workplace culture to make it a more welcoming, diverse, and inclusive space for everyone.

North Tyneside Council's Pride Network have stated that this year pride has been particularly important, given the rise both nationally and internationally in anti-LGBT+ rhetoric and violence.

We call upon the Elected Mayor to:

- Explore the feasibility of taking part in Stonewalls Workplace Equality Index
- Explore the feasibility of NTC becoming a Stonewall Diversity Champion

Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications for the Authority arising from this motion. However, if the motion is agreed, consideration will need to be given to the relevant equalities legislation and the public sector equality duty placed on the Authority during any exploration as envisaged by the motion.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications for the Authority arising from this motion. However, if it is agreed consideration would have to be given to the financial impact of the cost of membership starts from £2,575.

Depending on the timing of this it could be considered as part of the Medium-Term Financial Planning process for 2024-2028.

Motion 3 signed by Councillors I McAlpine, L Bones, L Bartoli

St Mary's Lighthouse

St Mary's lighthouse is one of the Borough's most iconic landmarks, visible along much of the North East coast and from towns across North Tyneside and Northumberland. It brings tourism to the area and forms a hub for vital marine conservation activities.

The lighthouse has been a muse to many an artist and photographer and is so iconic that it adorns much of the council's own publicity.

Sadly, in recent years, the exterior has been deteriorated by the elements, placing a noticeable dark shadow on the north side and a blot on North Tyneside's coastal landscape. Residents and tourists now frequently mention the faded and stained condition of the landmark, disappointed that more is not being actively done to maintain it's beauty.

In 2018 a 2.1 million refurbishment proposal was approved by the planning committee, to be funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund. Sadly the bid for the funds was declined later that year, with the council committing to explore other options to carry out the repairs.

To safeguard the lighthouse's future and to preserve the beauty of our coastal horizon, Council asks the mayor to commit to:

1. Publish options looked at so far to secure alternative funding for the refurbishment proposal.
2. Confirm it is still the Council's intention to perform these (or other) refurbishment works to safeguard the future of the site.
3. In the interim, commit to painting of the Lighthouse to restore it's appearance and that of our coastal horizon.

Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications for the Authority arising from this motion.

Financial Implications

There are direct financial implications should the Authority commit to the painting of the lighthouse. The current estimate is that the cost would be in the region of £0.630m. This is not currently accounted for within the 2023/24 investment plan and no provision has been made for this. If the motion is carried it would be subject to the investment plan governance

arrangements and a submission of a gateway 0 option to the Investment Programme Board. If the Authority, were to borrow an additional £0.630m then it would cost around £100k per annum over 10 years based on current PWLB rates. This would also have to be considered within the Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2024-2028.

Motion 4 signed by Councillors J Johnsson, O Scargill, L Bones

Review and Update of the Tree Management Policy for Improved Balance between Residents' Needs and Tree Maintenance Council recognises the invaluable contribution that trees make to our Borough, including their role in shaping the landscape, providing habitats for wildlife, and playing an essential role in the ecosystem to combat climate change.

However, residents have raised numerous concerns regarding the reactive nature of maintenance of trees by the Council. Many trees within our Borough, particularly in residential areas, exhibit disproportionate size and proximity to residential properties, resulting in significant problems. These issues include the obstruction of light and heat, excessive leaf fall blocking drains and gullies, and property damage caused by falling branches.

The Council's current Tree Management Policy places an imbalanced emphasis on the needs of these problematic trees, with insufficient consideration for the welfare and interests of residents residing in close proximity to them. In order to ensure that residents' concerns are adequately considered in decision-making processes, it is necessary to review the existing policy. This new approach will aim to enhance the aesthetic appeal of our area, minimise property repairs, reduce insurance claims, and significantly improve the quality of life for many residents.

Therefore, the Council asks the Mayor to establish a cross-party working group to review the Tree Management Policy.

The purpose of this review is to strike a better balance between the needs of our residents and the maintenance of trees within our Borough. The group should be asked to propose practical measures, including routine pruning practices, to proactively address tree-related issues before they escalate.

By working with residents, we can develop a policy that better aligns with their needs and expectations, while acknowledging the importance of trees in our Borough.

Legal Implications

There are no direct legal implications for the Authority arising from this motion.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from the establishment of a cross-party working group. However, depending on the outcome and findings from the working group there may be financial implications which would need to be taken into consideration within the current years financial position and factored into the 2024/25 Budget and 2024/2028 Medium-Term Financial Plan.

Motion 5 signed by Councillors O Scargill, L Bones, L Bartoli

Drones to tackle anti-social behaviour

Dangerous motorbike riding is a real issue in many of our estates. Unfortunately, the nature of this means it can be very difficult for Police to catch and identify perpetrators. We need to utilise new technology to help stop this happening.

Council notes that drones have been used by Police forces across the country to help stop dangerous motorbike riding.

Council asks the Mayor to give the community protection team the resources to purchase drones and training for this purpose, helping stop dangerous motorbikes and anti-social behaviour.

Legal Implications

The operation of drones is governed and licenced by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). The Authority would be required to ensure that it met the licensing and operational requirement of the CAA if it wished to undertake the proposed activities. In addition, the Authority would need to:

- ensure that proper consideration of data protection and covert surveillance requirements is given;
- provide adequate training and registration of staff to meet CAA operator requirements; and
- secure adequate insurance to protect third parties in relation to the operation of such drones.

Should any enforcement action result from information secured by the use of a drone, the necessary rules of evidence would need to be complied with to ensure its admissibility.

Financial Implications

There would be direct financial implications associated with this motion, this would include but not limited to the cost of purchasing the drones, licencing, operation staff costs, training and insurance. There is no budget provision for this either revenue or capital within the 2023/24 financial year. If the motion is carried a full business case would need to be produced outlining the total financial implications which would need to be factored into the current years financial position and the 2024/25 Budget and 2024-2028 Medium-Term Financial Plan.