

# Local Government Act 1972

## Borough of North Tyneside

Thursday, 21 November 2024

At the reconvened meeting of the Council of the Borough of North Tyneside duly convened and held on Thursday, 21 November 2024 at 5.00 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 L Bartoli	Councillor J Bartoli
Councillor Linda Bell	Councillor L Bones
Councillor Louise Bell	Councillor P Bunyan
Councillor B Burdis	Councillor B Clark
Councillor K Clark	Councillor E Darke
Councillor L Darke	Councillor J Day
Councillor S Day	Councillor D Drummond
Councillor P Earley	Councillor S Graham
Councillor C Gray	Councillor T Hallway
Councillor J Harrison	Councillor A Holdsworth
Councillor J Hunter	Councillor N Huscroft
Councillor C Johnson	Councillor J Johnsson
Councillor D Lilly	Councillor F Lott
Councillor W Lott	Councillor L Marshall
Councillor I McAlpine	Councillor C McGinty
Councillor J Walker	Councillor J Montague
Councillor J Mudzingwa	Councillor T Mulvenna
Councillor M Murphy	Councillor T Bailey
Councillor K Nott	Councillor P Oliver
Councillor R O'Keefe	Councillor J O'Shea
Councillor S Phillips	Councillor W Samuel
Councillor J Sharp	Councillor J Shaw

Councillor A Spowart

Councillor J Wallace

**Apologies:** Councillor S Burtenshaw, Councillor J Cruddas, Councillor I Grayson, Councillor H Johnson, Councillor J Kirwin, Councillor A McMullen, Councillor L McMullen, Councillor T Neira, Councillor A Newman, Councillor B Pickard, Councillor O Scargill, Councillor M Thirlaway and Councillor J Webster

**C42/24 To receive any Declarations of Interest**

The Chair stated that members would not need to declare any interests to the reconvened meeting if they previously declared them at the meeting of 19 September 2024.

Councillor A Holdsworth declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 3 Motion 1 as they are employed by a Charity.

Councillor J O'Shea declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 3 Motion 1 as they are of State Pension age.

Members who previously declared on 19 September 2024 were:

Councillor B Burdis declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 3 Motion 1 as they are of State Pension age.

Councillor E Darke declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 3 Motion 1 as they are of State Pension age.

Councillor D Drummond declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 3 Motion 1 as they have a relation employed by the CAB, and is on their Board of Trustees.

Councillor J Harrison declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 3 Motion 1 as they are of State Pension age.

Councillor J Hunter declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 3 Motion 1 as they are of State Pension age.

Councillor N Huscroft declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 3

Motion 1 as they are of State Pension age.

Councillor D Lilly declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 3 Motion 1 as they are of State Pension age.

Councillor F Lott declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 3 Motion 1 as they are of State Pension age.

Councillor W Lott declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 3 Motion 1 as their partner is of State Pension age.

Mayor N Redfearn declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 3 Motion 1 as they are of State Pension age.

Councillor J Wallace declared a personal and non-registerable interest in Item 3 Motion 1 as they are of State Pension age.

#### **C43/24      Motions**

The Chair reminded members present that at the meeting of 19 September 2024, a motion relating to winter fuel payments was moved by Councillor L Bones, who reserved the right to reply, and seconded by Councillor J Johnsson, and was spoken to as mover and seconder.

The motion was that:

North Tyneside Council notes:

- The Labour Government's recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.
- The estimated impact of this decision, which is expected to result in up to 2 million older people who are entitled to them losing their annual winter fuel payments, valued at up to £300 each – including thousands of pensioners across North Tyneside.
- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of North Tyneside and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.

- The criticism from Age UK and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.
- The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.
- The Household Support Fund, established by the Conservative government, has provided millions in additional support to families across North Tyneside, including funding for school holiday food vouchers for children in receipt of free school meals. This has now been extended by the government until April 2025.

North Tyneside Council believes:

- While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across North Tyneside sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
- The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.
- The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.
- The North East is one of the coldest regions in the country and, as a coastal area, North Tyneside feels the extremities of that cold. This means pensioners in North Tyneside tend to rely more heavily on their heating during the winter months than in other parts of the country.
- The Household Support Fund has been a much-needed lifeline for families across North Tyneside, offering grants to help with food and energy bills, increased crisis support payments, support for local food banks and community food support groups, vouchers for free school meals in the school holidays, and grants to help parents with the costs of school uniforms.

North Tyneside Council asks the Mayor to:

- Write to the Chancellor asking her to reconsider her decision to limit the Winter Fuel Payment to those in receipt of Pension Credit, and to explore options to broaden the eligibility base within her new means-tested

system. Also note in the letter that North Tyneside Council welcomes the extension of the Household Support Fund but requests a more long-term sustainable funding stream is put in place for activity of this kind.

- Write to the Poverty Intervention Steering Group to request that the steering group explores using the Poverty Intervention Fund to establish a Pensioner Fuel Poverty Scheme to support our most vulnerable pensioners who are no longer in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment. The scheme should provide the full winter fuel payment to our most vulnerable pensioners who are no longer in receipt of the payment from central government, with full details on eligibility and administration to be agreed by the Poverty Intervention Steering group.
- Write back to all members before the end of October, outlining what funding has been secured to establish a Pensioner Fuel Poverty Scheme for those most in need across North Tyneside.
- Expand work with local charities, community groups, and Age UK to support and inform older residents about their entitlements, including how to claim Pension Credit and other available benefits. This should include extending the existing letter writing campaign to all pensioners in North Tyneside, rather than just the 15,000 currently included.
- Commit the Council to signing the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and write to all members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.
- Work with officers to find new funding streams to extend the 'Warm Welcome' scheme, which provides free hot drinks and additional support, social activities, and more to residents who may be unable to heat their own homes. This will be especially important for our most vulnerable pensioners in the coming winter.

The meeting was adjourned by a procedural motion moved by Councillor C Johnson, and seconded by Councillor Matthew Thirlaway, it was considered necessary to adjourn the meeting as relevant financial information would be available in the near future to inform the debate of the motion.

This reconvened extraordinary meeting was the reconvention which would allow the continuation of the debate of this motion with the updated information in relation to the motion following the publication of the government's budget, which had been provided to all members.

**An amendment was moved by Councillor K Clark and seconded by Councillor C**

**Johnson as follows:**

Delete the fourth and fifth bullet points.

To insert the phrase 'which was due to end in March' after the first use of the word government in the sixth bullet point.

To insert 'Council welcomes the decision of the Labour Mayor and Cabinet to introduce a scheme to ensure those most in need of the winter fuel allowance continue to receive funding, with the scheme which also takes a year round approach in trying to address the challenges of poverty. Council welcomes the decision of the Labour Mayor and Cabinet to extend the warm welcome scheme.' after the seventh bullet point.

Delete the eighth, ninth and tenth bullet points.

To insert the words 'decisions on how the' after the first 'The' and 'will be distributed by the Labour Mayor and Cabinet' after the word 'fund' in the eleventh bullet point.

To insert 'Council welcomes the actions the Labour Mayor and Cabinet have taken so far with around 400 residents accessing support and applying for benefits or other support. If all these claims are successful, that could be around £880,000 in the pockets of residents thanks to the campaign.' after the eleventh bullet point.

To delete the words 'reconsider her decision to limit the Winter Fuel Payment to those in receipt of Pension Credit, and to' from the twelfth bullet point.

Insert 'Asks the Poverty intervention group to continue to take a holistic approach on how it allocates its funding and to explore all options.' after the twelfth bullet point.

Delete the thirteenth and fourteenth bullet points.

To delete the words 'expand' and the sentence beginning 'This should include extending' from the fifteenth bullet point.

Delete the sixteenth and seventeenth bullet points.

**The amended Motion therefore read:**

North Tyneside Council notes:

- The Labour Government's recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.
- The estimated impact of this decision, which is expected to result in up to 2 million older people who are entitled to them losing their annual winter fuel payments, valued at up to £300 each – including thousands of pensioners across North Tyneside.
- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of North Tyneside and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
- The Household Support Fund, established by the Conservative government which was due to end in March, has provided millions in additional support to families across North Tyneside, including funding for school holiday food vouchers for children in receipt of free school meals. This has now been extended by the government until April 2025.

North Tyneside Council believes:

- While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many thousands across North Tyneside sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
  - Council welcomes the decision of the Labour Mayor and Cabinet to introduce a scheme to ensure those most in need of the winter fuel allowance continue to receive funding, with the scheme which also takes a year round approach in trying to address the challenges of poverty.
  - Council welcomes the decision of the Labour Mayor and Cabinet too extend the warm welcome scheme.
- The decisions on how the Household Support Fund will be distributed by the Labour Mayor and Cabinet has been a much-needed lifeline for families across North Tyneside, offering grants to help with food and energy bills, increased crisis support payments, support for local food banks and community food support groups, vouchers for free school meals in the school holidays, and grants to help parents with the costs of school uniforms.
  - Council welcomes the actions the Labour Mayor and Cabinet have taken so far with around 400 residents accessing support and applying for benefits

or other support. If all these claims are successful, that could be around £880,000 in the pockets of residents thanks to the campaign.

North Tyneside Council asks the Mayor to:

- Write to the Chancellor asking her to explore options to broaden the eligibility base within her new means-tested system. Also note in the letter that North Tyneside Council welcomes the extension of the Household Support Fund but requests a more long-term sustainable funding stream is put in place for activity of this kind.
- Asks the Poverty intervention group to continue to take a holistic approach on how it allocates its funding and to explore all options.
- Continue to work with local charities, community groups, and Age UK to support and inform older residents about their entitlements, including how to claim Pension Credit and other available benefits.

#### **Votes against the Amendment:**

Councillors T Bailey, Linda Bell, Louise Bell, P Bunyan, B Burdis, B Clark, S Cox, E Darke, L Darke, J Day, S Day, D Drummond, P Earley, S Graham, C Gray, T Hallway, J Harrison, A Holdsworth, J Hunter, N Huscroft, C Johnson, F Lott, W Lott, J Montague, J Mudzingwa, T Mulvenna, M Murphy, K Nott, P Oliver, R O'Keefe, J O'Shea, S Phillips, N Redfearn, W Samuel, J Sharp, J Shaw, A Spowart, J Walker.

#### **Votes for the Amendment:**

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

**The amendment was rejected 38 votes to 8 votes.**

**This vote was retaken due to a vote not being recorded.**

#### **Votes for the Amendment:**

Councillors T Bailey, Linda Bell, Louise Bell, P Bunyan, B Burdis, B Clark, K Clark, S Cox, E Darke, L Darke, J Day, S Day, D Drummond, P Earley, S Graham, C Gray, T Hallway, J Harrison, A Holdsworth, J Hunter, N Huscroft, C Johnson, F Lott, W Lott, J Montague, J Mudzingwa, T Mulvenna, M Murphy, K Nott, P Oliver, R O'Keefe, J



O'Shea, S Phillips, N Redfearn, W Samuel, J Sharp, J Shaw, A Spowart, J Walker.

**Votes against the Amendment:**

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

**The amendment was approved 39 votes to 8 votes.**

**An amendment to the substantive motion was moved by Councillor L Bones and seconded by Councillor J Johnsson as follows:**

To delete the eleventh bullet point and replace with the following two points:

- Write to the Poverty Intervention Steering Group to request that the group uses the PIF to expand the scheme announced this week following the renewal of the Household Support Fund. This would triple the funding available to help our most vulnerable pensioners this winter.
- Commit to providing a similar scheme in future years to ensure this problem does not reoccur next winter.

**(Councillor Grayson entered the meeting at 17:40)**

**Votes for the Amendment:**

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

**Votes against the Amendment:**

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

**The amendment was rejected 40 votes to 8 votes.**

**A vote was taken on the substantive motion as amended.**

**Votes for the Motion**

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

**The Motion as amended was approved unanimously.**