

Council – 7 October 2024

Motions

The following motions have been submitted in accordance with the notice required by Standing Order 13.1 and are listed in accordance with Standing Order 13.2.

1. CHANGES TO THE WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE AND PROTECTING PENSIONERS FROM FUEL POVERTY

Proposed by Councillor Jeff Green

Seconded by Councillor Lesley Rennie

Council notes:

- That, in Opposition, Sir Keir Starmer and Labour pledged to maintain Winter Fuel Payments and to freeze energy bills.
- That, in Opposition, the Labour Party commissioned the Joseph Rowntree Foundation to report on the likely effects of means-testing Winter Fuel Payments. It found that some 4,000 pensioners across the country could die if the Winter Fuel Payments are effectively scrapped.
- Labour's decision, after the election, to scrap Winter Fuel Payments for 10 million pensioners, includes 1.6 million pensioners with a disability and 1.2 million pensioners in absolute poverty.
- Data from the Department for Work and Pensions showing 58,800 pensioners in Wirral who received Winter Fuel Payments in 2023 (including 18,620 pensioners aged 80 or above), and who do not receive Pension Credit, are expected to lose the payment.
- The remarks by Caroline Abrahams CBE, Charity Director at Age UK: *'There are also about a million pensioners whose weekly incomes are less than £50 per week above the poverty line, who will also be hit hard by the loss of the Payment. Older people in this group often tell us they really struggle financially; the proposed change will make it even harder for them to afford to stay warm when it gets chilly.'*

Council believes:

- That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across Wirral and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship, including those with disabilities and long-term ill health.
- The impact of removing Winter Fuel Payments and the 10% increase in the Energy Price Cap will have a devastating impact on many pensioners in the

Borough, particularly those who have incomes just above the threshold for Pension Credit.

- The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, at such short notice, 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.

Council resolves to:

- Request that all four Group Leaders write a joint letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and copied to Wirral's four Labour MPs, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.
- Request the Mayor, on behalf of the Council, to sign the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and circulate to all Members offering them the opportunity to sign the petition themselves.
- Instruct the Chief Executive to write to all voluntary, community and faith organisations supporting pensioners and those in fuel poverty inviting them to meet with the Council's Senior Leadership Team.

2. WIRRAL STATEMENT OF UNITY

Proposed by Councillor Liz Grey
Seconded by Councillor Angie Davies

Along with our fellow residents, the Council were appalled to hear about the terrible attack that targeted the children at the Southport dance studio on 29th July this year. The Council expresses its heartfelt sympathy to the families & friends of Bebe King, Elsie Dot Stancombe and Alice Dasilva Aguiar, who were murdered that day, and all those others who were injured in this attack. Our thoughts remain with everyone affected and their families.

The Council were no less appalled at the hijacking of this tragedy and the violent disorder that spread across various places in the country. The attacks on police and emergency workers, the malicious vandalism, the arson and the looting were horrifying, and harmed and frightened so many people. They were scenes that no-one should ever witness or have to endure.

The Council pays tribute to everyone involved in dealing with these events and expresses its gratitude to the emergency service workers, local community leaders,

residents, local council workers, businesses and other organisations. True community spirit always shines through.

As councillors and residents in Wirral, Council denounces all forms of prejudice, hatred and violent disorder.

Council resolves to stand in unity with people across the country, against those who seek to divide us, and within our wards and across the borough, and will continue to work to promote unity, tolerance and respect for all.

3. ETHICAL ADVERTISING

**Proposed by Councillor Judith Grier
Seconded by Councillor Pat Cleary**

Council acknowledges the policy on prohibited advertisements on the council's website alongside the entitlement of the council to remove the whole, or any part or parts of an advert as set out in the policy. Prohibited adverts currently include tobacco or smoking related devices, alcohol where it encourages excessive or underage use and high interest or payday loans. ¹

Furthermore, Council is aware that the Local Planning Authority is responsible for regulating advertisements outside the urban area as set out in the Unitary Development Plan.

Council agrees that the policy should go further to ensure that any advertising in Wirral aims to reduce emissions, meet public health goals and support the kind of healthy and sustainable choices that are increasingly recognised as vital to achieving climate change goals.

Council believes that the very purpose of advertising is to stimulate demand for goods and services. This can normalise unsustainable and unhealthy choices.

Council notes that only a third (106) of local authorities in England had a relevant ethical advertising policy by the end of the 2024 municipal year. ²

Council understands that statistical evidence shows how exposure to advertising increases consumption of advertised goods and services. As examples, a 2021 study found that demand for Sports Utility Vehicles (SUV) among UK residents is positively related to their exposure to SUV adverts. A ban on advertising for unhealthy food across the Transport for London network resulted in a drop in

¹ <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/business/advertising-your-business/advertising-council-website>

² [Upward trend in councils introducing 'ethical' ad policies - Adfree Cities](#)

household purchases of unhealthy food and drink, preventing 100,000 obesity cases with an expected saving to the NHS of £200 million.³⁴

Council considers that the advertising of high carbon products conflicts with the aims and policies of the council in relation to its carbon reduction and net zero commitments.

Council further considers that the advertising of food with a high fat and high sugar content conflicts with the aims and policies of the council in relation to promoting healthy lives.

Council notes the legal advice stating that it is within councils' power to restrict advertising for high carbon goods and services according to their discretion, and that this step is lawful, proportionate and necessary.⁵

Council notes the progress other councils, such as Edinburgh and Sheffield, have made in restricting the advertisement of high carbon products. Council further notes the progress other councils, such as Sefton and Liverpool, have made in restricting the advertisement of food products high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS).

Council therefore resolves to:

- 1) commit to introducing an Ethical Advertising Policy to support the Council's objectives regarding climate change, air pollution and public health issues to include at the very least, prohibition of advertisements and sponsorships for: vehicles powered by fossil fuels, including hybrids and all SUVs given the additional risks that these pose to public safety; Airlines, airports, or any content that can reasonably be seen to promote flying; Fossil fuel companies and their financiers; High Fat Salt Sugar products; and
- 2) Request that the Director of Regeneration and Place, in consultation with The Director of Public Health and Director of Law and Corporate Services bring a draft ethical advertising policy to Policy and Resources Committee for consideration within the next six months.

³ http://www.badverts.org/s/Advertising-and-demand-for-SUVs_Kasser-et-alBadvertising-2021.pdf

⁴ [Junk food advertising restrictions prevent almost 100,000 obesity cases and is expected to save the NHS £200m | LSHTM](#)

⁵ [High Carbon Advertising - Opinion.docx \(newweather.org\)](#)

4. PROTECTING WIRRAL'S SERVICES WITH THE FUTURE FUNDING REQUIRED

**Proposed by Councillor Phil Gilchrist
Seconded by Councillor Stuart Kelly**

Council supports the submission made by the Local Government Association to the Government on 13th September 2024. and in particular highlights:

- the benefits of investing in preventative services rather than a reactive, demand-led model to service spending
- ending the reliance on council tax and the social care precept as a key means for funding adult social care
- and providing long-term financial certainty through multi-year funding settlements linked to outcomes agreements, which includes an appropriate level of revenue funding.¹

Council believes that, should the Government take full account of the hopes expressed in that document, there would be a positive impact on the lives of Wirral's residents.

Currently residents are struggling to come to terms with services that are under financial stress, the prospect of further decline in services and the state of the borough, and the prospect of higher council taxes and new and increased charges for services.

In addition, residents do not understand the Government's determination to make damaging changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance which will leave many vulnerable people in fuel poverty this winter; along with rumours of changes to the single person discount; these key issues have been causing distress and uncertainty which could have been avoided.

In the light of these concerns, Council requests the Director of Law and Corporate Services to forward a copy of this motion to Wirral's MPs with a request that such damaging changes flowing from Government policies, as currently understood, should not be proceeded with and that the Budget on 30th October 2024 should recognise the needs of Wirral residents.

¹ [Further funding cuts for councils would be disastrous; urgent funding and reform is needed | Local Government Association](#)