

# Council – 7 October 2024

## Amendments to Motions on Notice as Amended

The Council is requested to consider the following amendments submitted in accordance with Standing Order 13.3.

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

#### **Green Group Amendment**

**Proposed by Councillor Gail Jenkinson  
Seconded by Councillor Naomi Graham**

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.
- ***Minimising energy use is a highly effective way to tackle fuel poverty. Improved insulation is essential to create more warm, healthy homes.***

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.
- ***As part of the above letter, urge the Chancellor to make funds available for an accelerated roll out of home insulation prioritising those residents currently experiencing high levels of 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.

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### **MOTION 3. ETHICAL ADVERTISING**

#### **Joint Amendment - Labour Group and Liberal Democrat Group**

**Proposed by Councillor Liz Grey**

**Seconded by Councillor Chris Carubia**

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. <sup>1</sup>

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. <sup>2</sup>

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

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 therefore welcomes the Labour Government's promises to ban advertising of junk food to children online and on TV and seeks to align with this ambition to improve public health through greater restriction of advertising.***<sup>5</sup>

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.<sup>6</sup>

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

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

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.badverts.org/s/Advertising-and-demand-for-SUVs\\_Kasser-et-alBadvertising-2021.pdf](http://www.badverts.org/s/Advertising-and-demand-for-SUVs_Kasser-et-alBadvertising-2021.pdf)

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

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp3d33153r9o>

<sup>6</sup> [High Carbon Advertising - Opinion.docx \(newweather.org\)](#)

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;  
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.