

Public Document Pack
Crawley Borough Council



Full Council

Supplementary Agenda – Order Paper

Wednesday, 16 October 2024

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. A.', positioned above the title 'Chief Executive'.

Chief Executive

	Pages
2 Disclosures of Interest	5 - 6
Enclosed are the Disclosures of Interests received in advance of this meeting.	
5 Communications	7 - 8
The attached document lists which Cabinet Members will be making an announcement.	
6 Public Question Time	9 - 10
There is one written question submitted in advance for Full Council to consider.	
To answer public questions under Full Council Procedure Rule 1.2-D. The questions must be on matters which are relevant to the functions of the Council, and should not include statements.	
One supplementary question from the questioner will be allowed.	
Up to 30 minutes is allocated to Public Question Time.	
10 Councillors' Question Time	11 - 14
There is one written question submitted in advance for Full Council to consider.	
There are two methods for Councillors asking questions:	

1. Councillors can submit written questions in advance of the meeting and written answers will be provided on the evening of the Full Council.
2. Councillors can also verbally ask questions during the CQT.

Councillors have the opportunity to ask oral supplementary questions in relation to either of the methods above.

11 Receiving the Minutes of the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Other Committees including Items for Debate 15 - 16

There is one item reserved for debate.

NB: In advance of the meeting Political Groups can identify any items they wish to debate as a Reserved Item. These Reserved Items will then be the only matters to be the subject of debate.

13 Amendment 1 to Notice of Motion 1 - Changes To The Winter Fuel Allowance And Protecting Pensioners from Fuel Poverty. 17 - 20

Enclosed is the Amendment 1 to Changes To The Winter Fuel Allowance And Protecting Pensioners from Fuel Poverty, Councillor Crow and Seconder Councillor Burgess.

This amendment will be discussed under item 8 Notice of Motion 1 – Changes To The Winter Fuel Allowance And Protecting Pensioners from Fuel Poverty.

14 Amendment 1 to Notice of Motion 2 - Promotion of Pension Credits 21 - 22

Enclosed is the Amendment 1 to Promotion of Pension Credits, Councillor Ramsay and Seconder Councillor I Khan.

This amendment will be discussed under item 9, Notice of Motion 2 - Promotion of Pension Credits.

NOTE: The Mayor has agreed that, although this report and information was not available for at least five clear days before the meeting, there are special circumstances justifying its urgent consideration.

INFORMATION ON DURATION OF THE MEETING

If the business of the meeting has not been completed within two and a half hours (normally 10.00 p.m.), then the Mayor will require the meeting to consider if it wishes to continue for a period of up to 30 minutes. A vote will be taken and a simple majority in favour will be necessary for the meeting to continue. (Following the meeting's initial extension, consideration will be given to extending the meeting by further periods of up to 30 minutes if required).

Should the vote be in favour of not continuing, there is a process for dealing with motions and recommendations which have not been dealt with within the two and a half hours, or at the expiry of any agreed extension(s). In these circumstances, such motions and recommendations will be deemed as formally moved and seconded (together with any amendments). No speeches will be allowed on these items and the vote will be taken in the usual way. If a recorded vote is called for during this process, it will be taken immediately. This process will also apply in instances where the Council is statutorily required to make a decision about any matter before a particular date.

During the process set out above, the only other motions which may be moved are that a matter be withdrawn or referred to an appropriate body or individual for decision or report. When all motions and recommendations have been dealt with, the Mayor will declare the meeting closed.

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Disclosures of Interest Received

Councillor	Item and Minute	Meeting	Type and Nature of Disclosure
Councillor Lanzer	Financial Outturn 2023-2024: Budget Monitoring-Quarter 4 (Minute 5)	Overview and Scrutiny Commission 23 July 2024	Personal interest – a West Sussex County Councillor
Councillor Hellier	Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC) (Minute 7)	Overview and Scrutiny Commission 23 July 2024	Personal interest – NHS Public Governor
Councillor Lanzer	Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC) (Minute 7)	Overview and Scrutiny Commission 23 July 2024	Personal interest – a West Sussex County Councillor & Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing
Councillor Nawaz	Pavement Licence Policy (Minute 6)	Licensing Committee 5 August 2024	Personal Interest – has an interest in a business in Crawley town centre.
Councillor Lanzer	2024-2025 Budget Monitoring – Quarter 1 (Minute 7)	Overview and Scrutiny Commission 2 September 2024	Personal interest – a West Sussex County Councillor
Councillor Pritchard	Cabinet Member Discussion with the Cabinet Member for Planning and Economic Development (Minute 5)	Overview and Scrutiny Commission 30 September 2024	Personal Interest - Chair of Planning Committee
Councillor Hellier	Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC) (Minute 6)	Overview and Scrutiny Commission 30 September 2024	Personal interest – NHS Public Governor
Councillor Lanzer	Health & Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee (HASC) (Minute 6)	Overview and Scrutiny Commission 30 September 2024	Personal interest – a West Sussex County Councillor & Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

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Cabinet Member Announcements

- The Leader of the Council - Outcome of the Council's application to the Brownfield Release Fund from Government

The Leader will brief members on the outcome of the council's application to the Government's Brownfield Land Release Fund (BLRF). This fund is designed to meet the costs of preparing brownfield sites for housing development.

- Cabinet Member for Public Protection – Unity Event

The Cabinet Member will advise Councillors on an upcoming event to celebrate the diversity of Crawley and to thank local people for how they came together during the social disorder and protests seen across the country over summer, to reject racism and discrimination.

- Cabinet Member for Housing – Update on transfer of Crawley Homes residents to secure tenancies

In March 2023, the Cabinet agreed to phase out flexible tenancies over a two-year period starting on 1 April 2023.

The Cabinet Member will provide an update to councillors on the progress made by Crawley Homes officers to transfer all council tenants to secure tenancies.

- Cabinet Member for Housing – The launch of consultation on the Council's Homelessness and rough sleeping strategy.

Working to address our local housing emergency, an important part of this is the council's own work and support for other organisations addressing homelessness and rough sleeping.

The Cabinet Member will outline to members how the public and councillors will be able to participate in the consultation on the four priorities identified by the council for shaping the delivery of homelessness services over the coming five years.

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Public Written Questions and the Responses

Full Council – 16 October 2024

Question to Councillor Jones (Leader of the Council) from Mr Burnham (Bewbush)

Crawley's Labour MP, Peter Lamb has voted to keep the 2 child benefit cap and to scrap the winter Fuel allowance from millions of poor pensioners. Does any Councillor oppose how Peter Lamb has voted on these 2 issues.

Response

Mr Burnham raises the voting record of the local Member of Parliament on areas of policy that the Borough Council is not accountable for. Individual councillors will have their own opinions on a variety of issues, but the purpose of public question time at council meetings is to obtain the policy or operational view of the council as a whole.

Mr Burnham may have seen on the published agenda for this meeting that there are two motions later this evening which may partly or in whole answer his question during the course of the debate that follows, with the webcast broadcast live and then archived on the council's YouTube channel.

Crawley Borough Council will continue to assist residents with money worries as best we can, with the resources that are available, signposting them to local organisations that provide practical support and advice with the cost of living, as well as raising awareness of assistance residents may be entitled to, including eligibility to claim pension credits and use of the Household Support Fund, the latter which has been renewed by the current Government following doubts the previous Government would commit to its continuation.

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Agenda Item 10

Councillors Written Questions and the Responses Full Council – 16 October 2024

Question to Councillor Ian Irvine (Cabinet Member for Housing) from Councillor Duncan Crow

At the Full Council meeting of 27 March 2024, a motion on the supply and affordability of social housing that I had submitted, was debated and then heavily amended by the Leader of the Council, with the following resolutions then agreed by a majority vote:
That the Full Council resolves to:

1. *Following the declared Housing Emergency declared for Crawley, fully explore all options with renewed vigour, including borrowing and using housing cooperatives, to maximise both the delivery and the speed of delivery, of new social housing for Crawley.*
2. *Notes the plans being brought forward by the Labour administration at Crawley Borough Council for approximately another 500 council and affordable homes anticipated to be delivered over the forthcoming two years of the next council.*
3. *Notes the failure of the national Conservative Government (a) to adequately support social and council housebuilding in the UK, (b) their lack of action and active attempts to suppress the replacement of housing stock lost to councils and (c) their continuing failure to respond to unsustainable levels of expenditure being incurred by councils such as Crawley on temporary accommodation costs by refusing to unfreeze housing benefit subsidy from 2011 levels.*
4. *Increase the rate of lobbying to all those who could potentially positively influence the outcome, to resolve the water neutrality restrictions that is negatively impacting the delivery of new housing in Crawley, and wherever possible, present a united cross-party approach in doing so.*
5. *To assist with affordability for future tenants, continue to share information and best practice with other local authorities, to see how more affordable rents for new properties can be realistically set at the lowest possible amount within the 50-80% range that is national policy.*
6. *Request a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in 2025, to report back on social housing delivery during 2024, including what efforts and progress the council has made with regard to the first five resolutions of this motion.*

With regards to the resolutions of this motion, please state what actions have been undertaken and progress achieved during the last six months, with regard to Resolutions **one, four and five?**

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Response

1. The Council continues to do all that it can to bring forward new social housing for Crawley. There is a significant pipeline in place, which includes pursuing opportunity acquisitions from the market as well as bringing forward Council-owned land. The blockages are water neutrality, funding and capacity.

Consideration of the adoption of the Local Plan at Full Council will be a major milestone, as Crawley is the first ever authority to navigate the planning inspection process under the water neutrality restrictions, demonstrating there is a way for development. This Council is also the only authority to have developed water credits at scale, having retrofitted over 2,400 homes within its Crawley Homes stock, producing capacity to unlock over 700 new homes. This means that the Council is uniquely placed to be able to bring forward housing development. However the process to bring forward development is now slower than previously. Water usage within planning applications are subject to significant scrutiny to ensure that they comply with relevant requirements. These delays should reduce over time as the system adapts but will add to development timeframes until restrictions are lifted.

From a funding perspective, the Council is seeking to maximise its accessing of grant funding. This reflects both the increased costs of development and the need to conserve General Fund Capital Reserves (Council-owned temporary accommodation stock cannot be paid for by the Housing Revenue Account). The Council is having some success on this front. It has recently secured £4.7m of the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund. This will increase the Council's ability to acquire properties for temporary accommodation use, and in so doing reduce the costs of temporary accommodation. Over recent months the Council has extended its own funding for acquisitions both in the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account (Cabinet Reports CH/210 and SHAPS/090). The Council has also applied to the Brownfield Land Release Fund for demolition and site preparation costs in relation to the old Town Hall, Longley House and Deerswood Court. Indications through the process have been very positive and we hope to have positive news to share shortly. Current indications are that Homes England Affordable Homes Programme funding is at capacity. This avenue of funding is unlikely to be available until the next investment period commencing in April 2026. This will impact start on site for schemes that require this funding to be able to proceed. Officers continue to closely monitor the position to ensure the Council is best placed to access any programme underspend or additional funding should this become available.

In terms of capacity, the team responsible for delivery of all of our capital projects is being bolstered, recognising the additional workload the water neutrality processes are creating. The Council has also been exploring 'turn-key' arrangements where others are responsible for developments to the Council's specifications, however they are usually reliant upon the Council in relation to navigating water neutrality processes as the experience and knowledge sits with the Council. The Council remains open to any other arrangements that might come forward.

In terms of maximising delivery, we particularly welcome the positive changes brought in by the new Labour Government which have removed some unnecessary restrictions on funding, including removing the caps on the percentage of replacements delivered as acquisitions and the percentage cost of a replacement home that can be funded using these receipts, and giving councils the ability to combine Right to Buy receipts with section 106 contributions. This can only be welcome.

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4. The Council never received a response to its Housing Emergency letter from the last Government. A further letter has now been sent, via Peter Lamb MP, which should prompt a response. More widely the Council has been very active in raising the issue directly with both MHCLG and the District Councils Network. In the case of the latter, Crawley Borough Council have been working closely with Eastbourne & Lewes and Hasting Councils to help shape the campaign. Temporary Accommodation has risen up the agenda over the past months, and this Council has played a significant role in this. The Council is also one of the stock holding authority endorsers of the report prepared by Southwalk Council, "Securing the Future of Council Housing" lobbying for changes that will better enable the HRA to deliver Council Housing.

This is not the only related lobbying that has been undertaken. The Leader of the Council, alongside equivalents from Horsham, Chichester and West Sussex, held a positive meeting with a DEFRA minister in May to discuss Water Neutrality. This was the day before the General Election was called, but nonetheless officers reported a shift in approach from Civil Servants. The same local authorities have recently written to the new government requesting a ministerial meeting with a view increasing traction. Further, and with the help of Peter Lamb MP, the Council has also established regular direct meetings with meetings with Southern Water to discuss what support they can provide in helping to navigate water neutrality restrictions. Peter Lamb has likewise secured a meeting with Natural England.

The declaration of a Housing Emergency also made specific reference to the Chagosian citizenship scheme. As the Council warned, this scheme, which sought to address a historic wrong, but was implemented without any impact analysis or planning, has started to have the impacts this Council predicted. The Council has already secured Home Office New Burdens Funding to cover the costs of meeting the Council's statutory housing duties. However, this funding is time-limited and the Council is lobbying for this to be extended beyond the current 2025 end date. Further, the Council is also lobbying for other related costs to be met.

5. The Council's approach continues to be that all new stock will be charged at social rent levels, i.e. 50%. The only stock charged above this level is when dictated by the terms of funding support the development, or when the development would not be viable otherwise. Looking at practice elsewhere, this Council's approach remains best practice but also open to considering financing of development to either reduce costs (and therefore questions of viability) or the need for grant funding requiring higher rent levels. Where Affordable Rent is applied the Council's policy requires rent setting to remain within Local Housing Allowance rent levels. In addition, Crawley Homes build programme seeks to exceed the sustainability standards of Building Regulations, to build more efficient homes to increase affordability for tenants.

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11. Receiving the Minutes of the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Commission and Other Committees including Items for Debate

Items for Debate which are not Full Council Recommendations

Agenda Page no.	Committee/ Minute no.	Item
p.72-3	Cabinet 4 September 2024 (Minute 7) Conservative	2024-2025 Budget Monitoring - Quarter 1

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Agenda Item 13

Full Council

16 OCTOBER 2024

AMENDMENT 1 – NOTICE OF MOTION 1 – CHANGES TO THE WINTER FUEL ALLOWANCE AND PROTECTING PENSIONERS FROM FUEL POVERTY

Mover Councillor Crow and Seconder Councillor Burgess

*(Those words in **Purple** and crossed through to be removed)*

This 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, which impacts up to an estimated 13,000 pensioners in Crawley.
- The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.
- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of Crawley 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, done without an impact assessment.
- 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.
- That on 10 September 2024, Crawley's Labour MP voted against the proposal put forward by the Conservatives in parliament, that sought to stop the Winter Fuel Allowance being scrapped for over ten million pensioners.

This Council believes:

- That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
- While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many pensioners in Crawley sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.

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- The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice, without any impact assessment, 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.
- That the government should take ownership of this decision to remove the Winter Fuel Allowance, and not blame the previous government, given that this decision is a political choice that is not driven by the health of the public finances that the current government inherited, noting that additional funding has been found for some recent public-sector pay awards that are much higher than inflation.

This Council resolves to:

- Instruct the Leader of the Council, on behalf on the Council, to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to:
 - i. seek an urgent review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment.
 - ii. ask the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.
 - iii. request that she accepts full responsibility for her decision and stops publicly blaming the previous government and the inherited public finances for her decision, when she is making other political decisions that put pressure on the public finances.
- ~~Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible for Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.~~
- 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.
- ~~Encourage local efforts to promote Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations, to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Crawley are supported in claiming their entitlement.~~

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Proposed Amended Notice Of Motion 1 – Changes to the Winter Fuel Allowance and Protecting Pensioners from Fuel Poverty, If approved, now reads:

This 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, which impacts up to an estimated 13,000 pensioners in Crawley.
- The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.
- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of Crawley 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, done without an impact assessment.
- 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.
- That on 10 September 2024, Crawley's Labour MP voted against the proposal put forward by the Conservatives in parliament, that sought to stop the Winter Fuel Allowance being scrapped for over ten million pensioners.

This Council believes:

- That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
- While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many pensioners in Crawley 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, without any impact assessment, 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.
- That the government should take ownership of this decision to remove the Winter Fuel Allowance, and not blame the previous government, given that this decision is a political

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choice that is not driven by the health of the public finances that the current government inherited, noting that additional funding has been found for some recent public-sector pay awards that are much higher than inflation.

This Council resolves to:

- Instruct the Leader of the Council, on behalf on the Council, to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer to:
 - i. seek an urgent review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment.
 - ii. ask the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, particularly those who do not claim Pension Credit, are protected from fuel poverty.
 - iii. request that she accepts full responsibility for her decision and stops publicly blaming the previous government and the inherited public finances for her decision, when she is making other political decisions that put pressure on the public finances.
- 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.

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Full Council

16 OCTOBER 2024

AMENDMENT 1 – NOTICE OF MOTION 2 – PROMOTION OF PENSION CREDITS

Mover Councillor Ramsay and

Seconder Councillor I Khan

*(Those words in **Purple** and crossed through to be removed)*

~~This Council notes the pressures on the nation's finances caused by the £22 billion black hole created by the previous Conservative Government and the difficult choices this has created, including restricting those pensioners eligible for the Winter Fuel Allowance to those in receipt of pension credits.~~

This Council ~~further~~ notes that official figures from the ONS estimate that there are approximately 1,500 eligible households who are not currently claiming the pension credit in Crawley Borough.

The Council recognises the efforts already being undertaken by Crawley Borough Council officers to spread awareness, including the successful 'Money Worries' page on the council's website containing a 'Help for Pensioners' section specifically addressing Pension Credit take up, the Winter Warmer Event at K2 on Thursday 17 October between 11am and 3.30pm where staff will be on hand to help submit an application, and regular drop ins at the Town Hall doing likewise.

Whilst much is being done, we are keen to go even further.

Therefore, this Council calls on our officers to use any other effective measures, including:

- a) working with other partners such as Citizens Advice, and voluntary and community groups within the Borough, to assist with applications and to maximise the number of eligible pensioners in Crawley taking up their entitlement to Pension credits,
- b) increase publicity on this issue including through the winter edition of Crawley Live,
- c) investigating if a targeted campaign would be feasible based on previous successful take up efforts for other methods of assistance, and
- d) helping signpost any pensioners on low incomes to other sources of help that may be available, such as the Household Support Fund, to mitigate any shortfall.

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Proposed Amended Notice of Motion 2 – Promotion of Pension Credits, If approved, now reads:

This Council notes that official figures from the ONS estimate that there are approximately 1,500 eligible households who are not currently claiming the pension credit in Crawley Borough.

The Council recognises the efforts already being undertaken by Crawley Borough Council officers to spread awareness, including the successful 'Money Worries' page on the council's website containing a 'Help for Pensioners' section specifically addressing Pension Credit take up, the Winter Warmer Event at K2 on Thursday 17 October between 11am and 3.30pm where staff will be on hand to help submit an application, and regular drop ins at the Town Hall doing likewise.

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- a) working with other partners such as Citizens Advice, and voluntary and community groups within the Borough, to assist with applications and to maximise the number of eligible pensioners in Crawley taking up their entitlement to Pension credits,
- b) increase publicity on this issue including through the winter edition of Crawley Live,
- c) investigating if a targeted campaign would be feasible based on previous successful take up efforts for other methods of assistance, and
- d) helping signpost any pensioners on low incomes to other sources of help that may be available, such as the Household Support Fund, to mitigate any shortfall.