



COUNCIL MEETING

25 January 2024

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

AMENDMENT TO NOTICE OF MOTION

ITEM 11a – TWO CHILD BENEFIT CAP

Councillor J Adams will move the following amendment:

Insert two new paragraphs at the beginning:

“This Council notes the achievements of the Labour Government of 1997-2010 in reducing child poverty. When Labour entered power in 1997, one in three children were living in families that were officially living in poverty. By 2010 research by the Resolution Foundation showed that the number of children living in poverty in the UK had reduced from 3 million in 1998 to 1.6 million in 2010.

“This council also recognises the significant harm caused since 2010 by both the Liberal Democrat-Tory Coalition and the Conservative governments since 2015 as a direct result of welfare reform, a benefits freeze, the closure of Sure Starts and austerity, all of which have increased poverty and damaged the economy of the North East and the well-being of its residents.”

Replace “The Child Poverty Action Group calculates that 1380 Gateshead families including 5330 children are affected by the cap.” with:

“Gateshead Council notes that child poverty has increased in Gateshead since 2010, with over a third of our children living in poverty (39% in the latest figures). An estimated 14.5 million people are now living in poverty, 22 per cent of the population, including 4.3 million children. The Child Poverty Action Group calculates that 1380 Gateshead families, including 5330 children, are affected by the two-child limit.

“This Council recognises the ongoing work being done across Gateshead to deal with the consequences of these policy decisions. We have invested in making sure our residents have better information, advice and guidance, which according to Citizens Advice Gateshead has resulted in an additional income of £12 million for our residents

in 2022/23. Council staff should be congratulated on the excellent work they have done delivering the Household Support Fund, free school meal vouchers during school holidays, funding older person households in need, creating Warm Spaces and funding voluntary and community organisations.”

Delete final paragraph and replace with:

“We ask the Chief Executive to write to our MPs expressing the Council’s support for the removal of the two child cap among other anti-poverty measures, including an extension of the Household Support Fund, an increase in the threshold for access to free school meals, a fundamental reform to universal credit, an end to zero-hour contracts and fire and rehire, a bold cross government child poverty strategy, free breakfast clubs in every primary school and an end to the bedroom tax. The public finances are in a woeful state after 14 years of mismanagement, but welfare must be reformed as soon as practical and must be a priority for public spending.”

Proposed by: Councillor J Adams

Seconded by: Councillor S Potts