

Labour's spring statement and disability cuts – Motion as adjusted approved, after division.

7 Councillor Bell, seconded by Councillor Doherty, moved that:-

“Council notes the transformative work that Glasgow City Council is undertaking to help tackle poverty in the city. Council welcomes the data and insight-driven ‘Demonstrators of Change’ programme and the workstream of the Child Poverty Programme in ten 'booster wards' across the city which have the highest numbers of children living in relative poverty; and notes that these are piloting and testing different early intervention and prevention approaches, finding out what works for communities, with their input, and scaling up the successes in reducing poverty across the city.

Council agrees with the Resolution Foundation that anti-poverty initiatives like these along with measures like the Scottish Child Payment and universal free school meals are effective ways of lifting people out of poor health and poverty and contribute to the shared aim of the SNP administration in Glasgow and the Scottish Government to work towards eradicating child poverty across the city.

Council is therefore hugely alarmed by the announcements of the UK Chancellor Rachel Reeves and the Work & Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall of cuts to the public sector and the benefits system and believes that these will totally undermine our efforts.

Council believes that the Chancellor's Spring Statement is just the latest example of the Labour Government taking an axe to public services and will mark the beginning of yet another cycle of cuts, harming an increased number of people and leading to higher demand. The announcement of the imposition of further billions of pounds of austerity cuts breaks yet another election promise by both Keir Starmer and Anas Sarwar.

Council notes the UK Government's Spring Statement has done nothing to fix the foundations of the UK economy after the previous Autumn Budget imposed Winter Fuel Payment cuts, increased employers' National Insurance, maintained the cruel Two-Child Benefit Cap, and ignored the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman report which recommended WASPI women should be compensated.

Council further notes that the Spring Statement was preceded by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Liz Kendall's Green Paper on health-related benefit reforms which heralded £6 billion a year cuts, and which the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and New Economics Foundation have exposed as the biggest cut to disability benefits since the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) was created in 2010.

Council also recognises that this is the largest social security cut since the summer of 2015, when a series of cuts and freezes to the system were implemented that have left the UK with one of the weakest social safety nets in the OECD, according to a NIESR report UK Living Standards Review 2025 published early March.

Council agrees with Scope that, “These plans should shame the government to its core”. Council also agrees with the Child Poverty Action Group Scotland “that the Children in a household where someone has a disability already have a higher risk of poverty and further cuts would only make life harder for many of these families. The UK government’s forthcoming child poverty strategy must prioritise investing in the social security system, including by scrapping the two-child limit at source.”

Council further recognises that a number of Trade Unions have urged an immediate re-think of the proposed welfare reforms, warning they would disproportionately harm the most vulnerable in society and deepen existing inequalities. Sharon Graham, general secretary of the Unite, has stated that the government is in danger of making the wrong choices and Council agrees with her statement that “We must be protecting the most vulnerable in society and not pitting the poorest against the poorest.”

Council rejects the callous treatment of disabled and sick people and confirms its belief that there is no moral case for propelling even more people into poverty by cutting benefit levels or denying access to financial support to those who have no alternative, and that people with disabilities should not be a scapegoat for a failing economy and are a community that deserves improved opportunities.

Council believes that the effects of the UK government’s proposals will be to make more people sicker, further undermine everyone’s right to a decent quality of life and further entrench the barriers to access, employment, and social inclusion that many disabled people face.

Council calls again on the Labour UK Government to scrap the cruel two-child limit and notes that this was one of the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR) series of recommendations to tackle poverty in the UK.

Council believes that it is unacceptable that the people of Glasgow continue to pay for their economic incompetence and indifference to poverty of successive UK governments, and instructs the Chief Executive to write to Scottish Labour Leader Anas Sarwar and the UK Labour Prime Minister to highlight the data available in Glasgow that confirms that the choices of the UK government will have the effect of punching down on the poorest and undermining the innovative anti-poverty work of Glasgow City Council.”

Councillor Redmond, seconded by Councillor Turner, moved as an amendment to delete all after the first paragraph and insert the following:

“However, Council recognises the progress made by the Labour Government since taking office in delivering meaningful change for people in Glasgow and across Scotland.

This includes the introduction of the New Deal for Working People—a UK-wide programme of employment law reform that will apply in Scotland—strengthening workers’ rights by combating exploitative zero-hour contracts, tackling fire and rehire practices, enhancing trade union protections, and introducing day-one rights to sick pay, parental leave, and protection from unfair dismissal.

Council also notes the record £5.5 billion devolution settlement—the largest since the establishment of the Scottish Parliament—which provides substantial resources for Scotland to invest in local priorities, including health, education, housing, and transport.

Additionally, Council welcomes the UK Labour Government's commitment to addressing the housing crisis through substantial investment and reform, including:

- A £5bn housing investment package for 2025/26, including an immediate £500m top-up to the Affordable Homes Programme – expected to deliver 5,000 new affordable homes.
- A pledge to build 1.5m new homes over the lifetime of this Parliament, the most ambitious national housebuilding drive since the 1960s.

Council further welcomes the UK Labour Government's long-term investment commitments, such as the Green Prosperity Plan, which will support the transition to a low-carbon economy, create skilled jobs in green industries, and fund large-scale retrofit programmes to tackle fuel poverty and reduce household energy bills.

Nonetheless, Council recognises the recent public disquiet over proposals for reforms to the disability and health-related benefits system and acknowledges the serious concerns raised by campaigners, trade unions, and communities across Glasgow.

Council therefore affirms that any reform to the social security system must be underpinned by the principles of dignity, fairness, and compassion.

Council therefore calls on the Chancellor to reconsider the potential impact of any proposed changes and urges the UK Government to explore fair and progressive alternatives to welfare cuts.

Council recognises the importance of exploring fair and progressive alternatives to welfare cuts, and believes that alternative proposals should be considered, including:

- Equalising Capital Gains Tax rates with Income Tax to ensure that income from wealth is taxed fairly.
- Reforming Corporation Tax to ensure that profitable companies contribute appropriately to the public purse.
- Introducing a Financial Transaction Tax to raise revenue from high-frequency trading and speculative financial activity.
- Implementing a modest Wealth Tax on multimillionaire households.

Council believes these options must be seriously considered if the UK Government is to maintain a fair and sustainable welfare state.

Council further believes that decisions taken at UK level must empower, not hinder, Glasgow's efforts to improve outcomes in areas such as child poverty, employability, and inclusive growth. Council notes that the Labour Government's

commitment to strengthening devolution and enabling place-based investment provides Glasgow with the tools to lead local change. However, this must be matched by a policy environment that safeguards the most vulnerable and supports those who need help the most.

Finally, Council reaffirms that poverty is not inevitable. Through investment, partnership, and fairness, we can build a future where every citizen in Glasgow has the opportunity to thrive.”

Bailie Hoy, seconded by Councillor Bruce, moved as an amendment that:-

- (1) after the second paragraph “child poverty across the city.”, insert the following 2 new paragraphs:

“Council agrees that poverty and Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) are deeply intertwined creating a vicious cycle where poverty makes women more vulnerable to violence, and violence further entrenches them into poverty, limiting their access to education, housing and the labour market. Council also notes that women are around seven times more likely than men to be out of the labour market due to caring commitments.

Council regrets that the Scottish Government has failed to meet its child poverty reduction targets, however we recognise the barriers that have been put in place to prevent achieving these targets. Council notes that 64% of children in Glasgow in absolute or relative poverty have a lone woman parent and agrees that child poverty should be looked at with a gendered lens.”;

- (2) at the fifth paragraph beginning “Council notes the UK Government’s”, between “Two-Child Benefit Cap,” and “and ignored”, add “cutting the budget for aid and international development”;
- (3) after the sixth paragraph ending “was created in 2010.”, insert the following 2 new paragraphs:

“Council notes that the OBR estimates that the welfare cuts package announced in the Spring Statement will save £4.8bn by 2029-30. Council notes that Oxfam is calling for a two per cent wealth tax on those with net assets of over £10 million, which could raise an estimated £24 billion tax revenue each year - £460 million every week - and would only apply to 0.04 per cent of the population - around 20,000 people. Office for National Statistics (ONS) data shows that in the April 2020 to March 2022 period, the wealthiest 1% of households held 10% of all household wealth in Great Britain, which was the same as the proportion held by the least wealthy 50% of households combined. Wealth inequality is widely recognised to be detrimental to the functioning of a society.

Council agrees that a wealth tax, and invest-to-save proposals like creating good green jobs, increasing childcare provision, and improving maternity and paternity conditions, would be a far more effective way of addressing fiscal

and labour market concerns, without causing permanent harm to families throughout the country.”;

- (4) at the tenth paragraph beginning “Council rejects”, between “should not” and “a scapegoat”, add “be”; and
- (5) at the final paragraph, remove “punching down on” and replace with “disproportionately penalising”.

During the debate Councillor Bell and Bailie Hoy, with the agreement of their seconders, agreed to combine their motion and amendment resulting in the following adjusted motion:-

“Council notes the transformative work that Glasgow City Council is undertaking to help tackle poverty in the city. Council welcomes the data and insight-driven ‘Demonstrators of Change’ programme and the workstream of the Child Poverty Programme in ten ‘booster wards’ across the city which have the highest numbers of children living in relative poverty; and notes that these are piloting and testing different early intervention and prevention approaches, finding out what works for communities, with their input, and scaling up the successes in reducing poverty across the city.

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pounds of austerity cuts breaks yet another election promise by both Keir Starmer and Anas Sarwar.

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On a vote being taken electronically and by roll call, 29 members voted for the amendment by Councillor Redmond and 47 for the motion as adjusted with 2 abstentions.

The motion as adjusted was accordingly declared to be carried.

Adjournment.

8 In terms of Standing Order No 17, the Council agreed to adjourn the meeting at 1255 hours until 1400 hours.

Resumption of meeting.

9 The meeting resumed at 1400 hours and the sederunt was taken as follows:-

Present: Chair, Lord Provost Jacqueline McLaren

JAMES ADAMS
SAQIB AHMED
SUSAN AITKEN
IMRAN ALAM

STEPHEN DORNAN
STEPHEN DOCHERTY
LAURA DOHERTY
SEAN FERGUSON

NORMAN MacLEOD
ELAINE McSPORRAN
ANNE McTAGGART
LEÒDHAS MASSIE

BLAIR ANDERSON
KEN ANDREW
ALEXANDER BELIC
RICHARD BELL
DECLAN BLENCH
EVA BOLANDER
ABDUL BOSTANI
PHILIP BRAAT
JILL BROWN
HOLLY BRUCE
BILL BUTLER
GRAHAM CAMPBELL
CHRISTINA CANNON
PAUL CAREY
ANTHONY CARROLL
JOHN CARSON
ALLAN CASEY
ANNETTE CHRISTIE
CHRIS CUNNINGHAM
STEPHEN CURRAN
JOHN DALY
AUDREY DEMPSEY

ELAINE GALLAGHER
ZEN GHANI
ALLAN GOW
WILLIAM GRAHAM
SHARON GREER
GREG HEPBURN
FIONA HIGGINS
SEONAD HOY
MHAIRI HUNTER
RASHID HUSSAIN
DAN HUTCHISON
FYEZA IKHLAQ
EUNIS JASSEMI
ANN JENKINS
LILITH JOHNSTONE
RUAIRI KELLY
ALEX KERR
MATT KERR
KEVIN LALLEY
PAUL LEINSTER
PAUL MCCABE
DONNA MCGILL

CHRISTY MEARNES
ANGUS MILLAR
MALCOLM MITCHELL
JON MOLYNEUX
ROBERT MOONEY
MARGARET MORGAN
EVA MURRAY
CECILIA O'LONE
JILL PIDGEON
LINDA PIKE
HANIF RAJA
DAVENA RANKIN
THOMAS RANNACHAN
GEORGE REDMOND
LANA REID-MCCONNELL
ROZA SALIH
FRANNY SCALLY
SORYIA SIDDIQUE
KIERAN TURNER
CATHERINE VALLIS
MARTHA WARDROP
ALEX WILSON

DEACON CONVENER

LORD DEAN OF GUILD

Apologies: Marie Garrity, Thomas Kerr, Frank McAveety and Elaine McDougall.

Attending: M Millar, Director of Legal and Democratic Services; S Millar, Chief Executive; D Hutchison, Executive Director of Education Services; R Emmott, Executive Director of Financial Services; G Gillespie, Executive Director of Neighbourhoods, Regeneration and Sustainability; P Togher, Chief Officer, Glasgow City Health and Social Care Partnership; and K Rush, Director of Regional Economic Growth.