



NORWICH
City Council

NORWICH CITY COUNCIL

Tuesday, 9 June 2009

7.30 p.m.

AGENDA

- 1. Lord Mayor's Announcements**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Questions from the Public**
- 4. Petitions**
- 5. Minutes**

To agree the accuracy of the minutes of the Council meeting held on 21 April 2009.

- 6. Questions to Executive Members/Committee Chairs**
(A printed copy of the questions and replies will be available at the meeting.)
- 7. Motion – Clarity in Communication**

Councillor Stephenson to move:

“Council notes that

- the Plain English Campaign has awarded its Crystal Mark to over 300 local authorities in the UK to reward clarity in their written communications; Norwich City Council is not one of these authorities;
- most Council communications have a high standard of clear English; However; councillors are often approached by residents to complain about council publications, letters, consultations and other documents. Typical complaints are that these are difficult to read, challenging to understand or that they needlessly use jargon;

- councillors are often asked to approve or note reports and briefings which contain unclear information or jargon.

Council believes

- that all public information and communications should be presented clearly, so that the council's activities can be transparent and easily understood by all residents. Failure to do this can contribute to misunderstandings and increased dissatisfaction with the council, and could be counterproductive to attempts to engage the public in the work of the council. This inevitably means that materials are not accessible to people of all levels of reading ability;
- that while qualification for the Crystal Mark entails a large expenditure that is unlikely to be a priority in the current financial situation, Norwich City Council can still seek to achieve the standard of language and layout that would be required.

Council resolves to ask the Executive to ask the relevant officers to:-

- review the current procedures for checking that each publicly available council document or item of correspondence has very clear language and layout;
- report this review and any suggested actions to the Executive, following consultation with the Plain English Campaign, disability groups and residents' groups."

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