



NORWICH CITY COUNCIL

Tuesday, 3 March 2009

7.30 p.m.

AGENDA

- 1. Lord Mayor's Announcements**
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
- 3. Questions from the Public**
- 4. Petitions**
- 5. Questions to Executive Members/Committee Chairs**
(A printed copy of the questions and replies will be available at the meeting)
- 6. Nominations for Lord Mayor and Sheriff**

To receive nominations for Lord Mayor and Sheriff for the next Civic Year.
- 7. Motion – National Express: Job Losses and Service Cuts**

Councillor Jeraj to move:

'This Council notes:

- that National Express announced in November 2008 that it would cut its staff in Norwich by 314;
- that National Express recently announced a 9% rise in profits with pre-tax profits of £90 million;
- the work being done by Norfolk MPs and the RMT Union in opposing these cuts.

This Council believes:

- that a high quality rail service in Norfolk is vital to the County and cutting jobs will reduce this quality;
- the loss of local jobs in the railways will add to the level of financial hardship locally, at a time of an economic downturn;
- that the best long-term future for railways in Norfolk, and the country as a whole, is for them to be brought into public ownership.

The Council resolves to write to:

- (1) National Express to state its opposition to the local job cuts because of the affect it will have on the level of service to Norwich;
- (2) the Transport Salaried Staff's Association (TSSA) in support of its campaign to bring the railways back into public ownership because it is the best option for the long term future for Norwich.

8. Motion – Royal Mail Privatisation

Councillor Read to move:

'This Council notes:

- the announced intention by the Business Secretary, Peter Mandelson, to part-privatise Royal Mail;
- that this proposal has attracted strong opposition;
- that a group of non-government organisations, trade unions and MPs is proposing that the Royal Mail be kept in public ownership.

This Council believes that:

- part-privatisation of Royal Mail risks tens of thousands of jobs, including some in Norwich;
- an added risk to local jobs in Norwich is especially worrying in the current economic downturn;
- the Royal Mail is best kept in public ownership to ensure the best possible service in Norwich.

This Council resolves:-

- (1) to write to the MPs for Norwich to ask them to support their fellow MPs in keeping the Royal Mail in public ownership and sign Early Day Motion 364 because this is the best way to ensure that Norwich receives the postal service it needs and deserves;
- (2) for the same reason to write to the:-

- (a) Business Secretary, Peter Mandelson, to express opposition to the plans to part-privatise Royal Mail;
- (b) Communications Workers Union (CWU), Compass and John Grogan, MP, to express the support of Norwich City Council for a publicly-owned postal service.'

9. Motion – Fuel Poverty

Councillor Lubbock to move:

'This Council notes:

- The Government estimates that fuel poverty currently affects 2.5 million households in the UK.
- The Warm Front Energy Initiative, a key component of this government's fuel poverty strategy, is failing as according to a February 2009 National Audit Office report:
 - 57% of vulnerable households in fuel poverty do not claim the relevant benefits to qualify for the scheme;
 - 75% of households, who qualified under the scheme, were not necessarily in fuel poverty;
 - £34 million in grants was awarded to comparatively energy efficient households;
 - 11,020 qualified householders, who applied to the scheme in 2008-09, pulled out because they were unable to afford the top-up fees to the grant to cover the cost of upgrades.
- Many older people in Norwich, most vulnerable to fuel poverty, are unable to access information about which benefits they are entitled to, according to the Council's Independent Commission for Older People.
- David Heath MP introduced a Fuel Poverty Bill to Parliament on January 21, with a second reading scheduled for March 20. This bill includes two measures:
 - A major energy efficiency programme to bring existing homes up to the current energy efficiency levels enjoyed by modern homes;
 - Social tariffs to limit vulnerable households' exposure to high energy bills.
- This Fuel Poverty Bill is backed by a wide range of organisations including Age Concern, the Centre for Sustainable Energy, and the Child Poverty Action Group.

This Council resolves, in view of the impact of fuel poverty on the people of Norwich, to ask the:

- (1) Leader of the Council to write to David Heath MP in support of the proposed fuel poverty bill and to Dr. Ian Gibson MP and Charles Clarke MP to ask them to support the bill;
- (2) Leader of the Council to write to Energy Secretary Ed Miliband and Environment Secretary Hilary Benn asking them to re-evaluate the Warm Front Scheme in the light of the National Audit criticisms, particularly the eligibility requirements and funding arrangements;
- (3) Executive to consider, in relation to fuel poverty, how to implement the recommendation set out in the Independent Commission for Older People report to use its financial inclusion initiative as a means to improve access to information for older people.

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