



NORWICH
City Council

NORWICH CITY COUNCIL

Tuesday, 31 March 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 meetings held on 24 February 2009 and 3 March 2009.

- 6. Questions to Executive Members/Committee Chairs**
(A printed copy of the questions and replies will be available at the meeting)
- 7. Treasury Management Strategy**
(Report of the Head of Finance)

Purpose – This report outlines the Council's prudential indicators for 2009/10 – 2011/12 and sets out the expected treasury operations for this period. It fulfils three key reports required by the Local Government Act 2003:

- the reporting of the prudential indicators as required by the CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (Appendix A);
- the treasury strategy in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management (Appendix B);
- the investment strategy (in accordance with the DCLG investment guidance) (Appendix B).

8. Council Rents and Other Housing Charges for 2009/10 - Revised
(Report of the Executive)

Purpose – To approve a revision to the Housing Rent Increases for 2009/10 as previously recommended by Executive to the Council, following the announcement by the government of support for reduced increases.

9. Members' Allowances Scheme 2009/10
(Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services)

Purpose - To consider the recommendations of the Independent Panel set up to make recommendations on the members' allowances scheme as required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations, 2003.

10. Motion – Low Carbon Buildings Programme (LCMP)

Councillor Fisher to move:

'This Council notes:

- That last month the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) announced it was closing the £50m second phase of the Low Carbon Buildings Programme (LCBP) to new applicants from June 2009.
- That the second phase of the LCBP was aimed at public sector buildings.
- That there remains (at time of writing) more than £23m in the LCBP account
- The account of Ray Noble, the former UK manager at BP Solar who now heads up the Renewable Energy Association's (REA) solar division, who said the LCBP was the industry's most important funding stream.

This Council believes that:-

- under these plans, introduction of feed-in tariffs, an alternative incentive for micro-renewables that involves paying above market price to those who generate renewable energy, may not be introduced until April 2010;
- the LCBP should continue until the feed-in tariff is launched
- makers of micro-generation technology have become reliant on the LCBP, which pays up to 50% of product and installation costs for micro-renewables.

This Council resolves:

- (1) in view of the serious consequences that this could have on public bodies and Housing associations in Norwich and the City Council;
- (2) to ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change to urge him to reconsider and reverse this decision;

- (3) to write to the Norwich MPs Charles Clarke and Ian Gibson to urge them to support our campaign against this decision.'

11. Motion – Protecting Norfolk's Fire Control Service

Councillor Holmes to move:

'This Council notes:

- that the Government has acknowledged the excellent work of Norfolk's Fire Control Service by placing it in the top rank of services throughout the country;
- that the Government is planning to amalgamate county fire services into regional centres.;
- the stated reason for the Government embarking on this reorganisation is to bring other fire services, ranked at a lower level, up to the standard of Norfolk.

This Council believes that:

- the proposed amalgamation would reduce the effectiveness of Norfolk's Fire Control Service by taking away local knowledge and introducing inferior equipment;
- the Government is misguided in trying to raise the standards of other fire services by reducing the effectiveness of Norfolk's fire service.

This Council resolves to write:

- (1) to the Government and ask that the reorganisation be suspended pending further investigation into the costs of the reorganisation and the likely deterioration in service;
- (2) to Norfolk County Council and asking it to make similar representations to the Government;
- (3) to the trade unions of Norfolk's firefighters to express support for their stand against the proposed amalgamation.'

12. Motion – Supporting the Matrix Project

Councillor Dylan to move:

'This Council notes that:-

- The Matrix Project has led the way in helping those working in the sex industry in Norwich. For example, 12 women who have been helped by the project have left prostitution in the last 6 months. 3 have gone into employment and 2 are about to start college. There has also been a reduction in anti-social behaviour and crime associated with street based sex work in Norwich since the inception of the project.
- The scheme, which is often raised as an exemplar of national best practice, has been under threat since the publication of the Norfolk Drug

and Alcohol Partnership (N-DAP) draft Adult Joint Commissioning Strategy 2008 – 2012, which proposed completely cutting the funding for the Matrix Project. Since then, the Matrix Project organisers have been successful in securing part funding from N-DAP/DAAT (Drug and Alcohol Action Team), Norfolk Constabulary, Norfolk Primary Care Trust, Norfolk County Council.

- Despite the funding that has been secured, there is still a £16,000/year funding gap over the next 3 years, which will necessitate a cut in the services being offered unless other funding streams can be identified.

Council resolves:

- (1) to thank Norwich City Council officers for the work they have already done in liaising with the Matrix Project manager, and in trying to find a way forward;
- (2) to write a letter thanking N-DAP for its continued support of the Matrix project, and to ask that N-DAP continues to assist the Matrix Project in every way it can, including in continuing the search for new funding streams;
- (3) To ask the Executive to ensure:-
 - (a) the Council helps the project organisers explore all possible options for plugging the funding gap;
 - (b) that the Council uses all appropriate channels to promote the work of the project and to help ensure that those working in the sex industry in Norwich know about the support that is available.'

13. Motion – Post Bank

Councillor Watkins to move:

'This Council notes that:

- The credit crunch has caused a loss of public confidence in both banks and bankers;
- Even before the credit crunch, about three million people nationally and many locally did not have basic bank accounts, with pensioners and those on low incomes most marginalised.
- The need to safeguard the future of the Norwich Post Office network by keeping it in the public sector, increasing investment, and diversifying its business model.
- The Post Bank Coalition (made up of the Communication Workers Union, Federation of Small Businesses, New Economics Foundation, Public Interest Research Centre, and Unite the Union) has been established to advocate the setting up of a Post Bank based on the Post Office network;

- A Norwich Post Bank could offer a safe, reliable banking service for local businesses and individual customers alike through the existing Post Office network;
- A Norwich Post Bank could help those struggling to access the normal banking system through a "universal banking obligation" - to ensure all people have access to accounts;
- The coalition's calls for links with local credit unions, such as the four credit unions in Norwich, to ensure post offices have closer ties to the local economy;
- Business groups say Post Bank could create jobs in Norwich and across the country.

Council resolves:

To help the Norwich Post Office network and local residents by writing to:

- (1) the Minister for Employment Relations and Postal Affairs Pat McFadden MP asking him to further explore the idea of a creating a Post Bank;
- (2) Charles Clarke MP and Ian Gibson MP asking them to support the creation of a Post Bank in Norwich.'

14. Motion – Promoting Local Businesses

Councillor Stephenson to move:

This Council notes:

- local businesses consistently keep between 60% to 80% of their turnover in the local economy, where chain stores can keep as little as 14%.
- larger companies often pay a retainer to developers to reserve prime retail locations.

This Council resolves:

This Council resolves to ask the Local Development Framework Working Party to explore ways that the local development framework could be used to create a more level playing field between large chain stores and local independent businesses.'

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23 March 2009



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