

**Motion to:** Council

**Item 7(a)**

15 March 2022

**Subject:** 'Robin Hood' tax on oil and gas firms

**Proposer:** Councillor Wright

**Seconded:** Councillor Ackroyd

---

Council **RESOLVES** to

- 1) note the excessive profits being made by oil and gas companies, including the boss of BP describing the company as a “cash machine” after soaring oil and gas prices boosted its profits to £2.4 billion in the third quarter of 2021 alone and that since 2015 the Conservatives have scrapped zero carbon standards for new homes, and failed to insulate the millions of energy efficient homes.
- 2) support calls for a “Robin Hood” tax – a one-off levy on the super-profits of oil and gas firms to raise money to support the thousands of families in Norwich that are facing soaring energy costs which includes:
  - a) A proposed one-off levy to raise an estimated £5 billion from companies that are making record profits from soaring energy prices. This would be used to support vulnerable families facing a 50% increase to their energy bills.
  - b) This “one-off” tax could fund a substantial package of emergency support to help over 17 million people with their heating bills.
  - c) This package of support would include doubling and extending the Warm Home Discount, doubling the Winter Fuel Allowance
  - d) A new ten-year home insulation scheme: This would be spent on reducing people’s energy bills in the long-term through an emergency home insulation programme to upgrade poorly insulated UK homes - including through fully funded grants for those in fuel poverty and on low incomes. This would cost an estimated £500 million in the next year.
- 3) recognises any such one-off tax should be followed by a widespread review to ensure energy companies pay their fair share and ensure that residents of Norwich are not left in fuel poverty as a consequence of excessive profits.
- 4) ask group leaders to write to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, calling for a one-off tax on excessive profits made by oil and gas companies in order to help vulnerable people, especially those in Norwich, with heating bills and upgrade poorly insulated homes.

**Motion to:** Council

15 March 2022

**Subject:** Retrofit taskforce to tackle cost of living crisis

**Proposer:** Councillor Osborn

**Seconded:** Councillor Haynes

---

Energy prices are set to rise by 50% in April 2022, on top of a 12.2% rise in October 2021. This will plunge many people into fuel poverty and exacerbate the cost of living crisis.

The poor energy efficiency of housing is contributing to this crisis. Due to decades of under-funding and lack of coordination for the domestic retrofit sector, the energy efficiency and renewable energy provision in UK housing lags behind much of Europe.

Norwich will be hit hard by the cost of living rises due to high levels of deprivation and significant fuel poverty. Norwich has a strong tradition of working to improve the energy efficiency of homes through the retrofitting of council and social housing and schemes such as Cosy City. However, there is much more work to be done.

The Climate Change Committee recommends that virtually every house will need to be upgraded to meet carbon reduction targets, as well as the need to insulate households against fuel poverty. This equates to upgrading two houses every minute for the next thirty years nationwide, including in Norwich.

Retrofit industry experts have called for local leadership in the retrofit sector. The successive failures of the Government's Green Deal, Green Homes Grant, and Heat and Buildings Strategy have left a vacuum in coordination for the retrofit policy that local authorities must fill.

Despite the scale of the challenge, there has hitherto been no coordinating role between the various agencies that are required to work together to deliver retrofitting. Some local councils such as Lewes District Council are piloting a "Retrofit Taskforce" approach, establishing a local authority-led partnership between the construction and renewable energy industries, further, higher and vocational education institutions, architects, social housing providers, and other stakeholders. Lewes' approach is a three-pronged strategy; a detailed assessment of local housing stock starting with social housing, looking beyond inadequate EPC ratings; a 'community wealth building' approach to developing the local supply chain, and an 'economies of scale' approach by bringing together a partnership of all social housing providers and councils across a wider area. The retrofit taskforce will be dedicated to developing a local supply chain to retrofit 44,000 social homes in the wider Sussex area and boosting the provision of retrofitting for other tenures.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) Work with partners to establish a retrofit taskforce for Norwich, dedicated to developing and promoting a local retrofit supply chain and the targeting of resources to help those in most need of protection from fuel price rises.
- 2) Through the retrofit taskforce, lead the development of a retrofit strategy for Norwich across all tenures, with a paper to be presented to Cabinet within 12 months.
- 3) Through the retrofit taskforce, seek to mobilise alternative sources of finance beyond insufficient and sporadic government grants, including working with the Local Enterprise Partnership and local and international businesses.
- 4) Through the council's membership of UK100, share the aims and expertise of the retrofit taskforce with other local authorities, thereby establishing Norwich as a leading authority.
- 5) Through UK100 and other channels including the LGA, submit to Government a business case for increased funding to scale up local authority-led retrofit taskforces and call for the Net Zero Forum to produce a plan for long term funding for locally led retrofit strategies.

**Motion to:** Council

15 March 2022

**Subject:** The cost-of-living crisis in Norwich

**Proposer:** Councillor Huntley

**Seconded:** Councillor Waters

---

Norwich households are bracing themselves for the biggest drop in living standards in thirty years with a cost-of-living crisis including steep price increases in everyday and essential food items, tax hikes, low growth, falling real wages, and a failure to tackle the energy crisis. Failure of Coalition and Conservative-led governments have left Britain uniquely exposed to a global gas crisis and systemic failure to create an inclusive, sustainable economic model will leave Norwich residents further disadvantaged in the months ahead.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

1) Note that:

- a) The decade of low growth under Conservative-led governments and believes that this is holding back our local and national economy, weakening it and making it unable to deal with shocks.
- b) That the pandemic has further highlighted the significant health, wellbeing, and the economic inequalities in our city and that the increase in the cost of living will impact on most residents in Norwich. Those on the lowest incomes will be hardest hit as incomes are squeezed by inflation, the £1,040 per year reduction to universal credit, the rise in National Insurance contributions for low and middle income workers, increases in council tax, the freezing of the personal income tax allowance from April, the increasing cost of household energy bills, the highest petrol prices since 2013, increased rail fares, the fastest rise in private rental prices since 2008, successive above inflation increases in childcare costs, and rising prices resulting from the supply chain disruption caused by worker and supply shortages.
- c) Eligibility for Free School Meal Vouchers in Norwich is increasing, indicating that poverty in the city is increasing, and council hardship funds are coming under ever increasing pressure. The National Food Strategy was a wasted opportunity to tackle this issue, but the plan lacks a clear vision and strategy on how to improve the crisis and that opportunities to

set out legal ways to enforce the strategy have been missed and need to be enshrined in law.

2) to ask

- a) the Leader to write to the relevant Secretary's of State to request government support measures that would immediately cut VAT on domestic energy bills to ease the burden on households during winter – (giving a potential saving of up to £400 for many Norwich residents) – which would be paid for by a one-off windfall tax on booming oil and gas profits; believes that we need long-term change to keep energy bills low in the future and that a radical Green New Deal to insulate homes, improve energy efficiency and develop a long-term energy strategy to secure network resilience is vital. This must be combined with an immediate uplift in Universal Credit and its future replacement with a new compassionate social security system that is designed to support everyone when they need it, together with a Real Living Wage for all regardless of age. In particular, government should immediately increase the local housing allowance, cap rents in the private rented sector, abolish the Bedroom Tax, increase Working Tax Credits, remove differential pay rates for young people on the Government's National Minimum Wage and improve employment rights for those on zero hour contracts to better tackle the assault on living standards.
- b) Cabinet to ensure the City Council social inclusion agenda continues to respond most effectively to rising living costs, the corporate plan helps to deliver an inclusive economy to better protect Norwich's health and well-being, while making the strongest case for government to provide the additional resource so urgently required.