

Motion to Council
28 January 2020
Subject Standing up for responsible tax conduct
Proposer Councillor Kendrick
Seconded Councillor Stutely

Item
8(a)

Around 17.5% of public contracts in the UK have been won by companies with links to tax havens. It has been conservatively estimated that losses from multinational profit-shifting (just one form of tax avoidance) could be costing the UK some £7bn per annum in lost corporation tax revenues. Almost two-thirds (63%) of the public agree that the Government and local councils should consider a company's ethics and how they pay their tax as well as value for money and quality of service provided, when undertaking procurement.

Council **RESOLVES:**

- 1) to note that:
 - (a) a Fair Tax Mark offers a means for business to demonstrate good tax conduct, and has been secured by organisations with a combined annual income of £50bn and more than 6,500 outlets and premises, including many social enterprises and co-operatives.
 - (b) paying tax is often presented as a burden, but it should not be as tax enables us to provide services from education, health and social care, to flood defence, roads, policing and defence and also helps to counter financial inequalities and rebalance distorted economies.
- 2) that as recipients of significant public funding, local authorities should take the lead in the promotion of exemplary tax conduct; be that by ensuring, within agreed policies, contractors are paying their proper share of tax, or by refusing to go along with offshore tax dodging when buying land and property.
- 3) that where substantive stakes are held in private enterprises, then influence should be wielded to ensure that such businesses are exemplars of tax transparency and tax avoidance is shunned - e.g., no use of marketed schemes requiring disclosure under DOTAS regulations (Disclosure Of Tax Avoidance Schemes) or arrangements that might fall foul of the General Anti-Abuse Rule.
- 4) that more action is needed, however, current law significantly restricts councils' ability to either penalise poor tax conduct or reward good tax conduct, when buying goods or services.
- 5) that UK cities, counties and towns can and should stand up for responsible tax conduct - doing what they can within existing frameworks and pledging to do more given the opportunity, as active supporters of international tax justice.
- 6) to approve the Councils for Fair Tax Declaration:

- a) lead by example and demonstrate good practice in our tax conduct, right across our activities, including ensuring contractors implement IR35 robustly and pay a fair share of employment taxes
 - b) the council shall not use offshore vehicles for the purchase of land and property, especially where this leads to reduced payments of stamp duty
 - c) the council shall not use not-for-profit structures inappropriately as an artificial device to reduce the payment of tax and business rates.
 - d) demand clarity, when appropriate, on the ultimate beneficial ownership of suppliers and their consolidated profit & loss position.
- 7) to promote Fair Tax Mark certification for any business in which we have a significant stake and where corporation tax is due.
 - 8) to support Fair Tax Week events in the area, and celebrate the tax contribution made by responsible businesses who say what they pay with pride; and
 - 9) to ask the leader of the council to write to Chief Secretary to the Treasury to support calls for urgent reform of EU and UK law to enable local authorities to better penalise poor tax conduct and reward good tax conduct through their procurement policies.

Motion to Council
28 January 2020
Subject Housing standards
Proposer Councillor Neale
Seconded Councillor Osborn

Item
8(b)

The successful completion of the Goldsmith Street development, with houses built to PassivHaus standards, has been recognised to be the way forward for social housing. These construction levels achieve a win for tenants, especially those susceptible to fuel poverty, a win for the council in reducing rent arrears and lowering maintenance and a win for the environment by moving in the right direction to tackle the climate crisis.

Council **RESOLVES** to ask:

- 1) cabinet to commit to building all new housing to the highest possible environmental standards, rather than the minimum set in the current national and local planning frameworks; and
- 2) officers to submit a response to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's The Future Homes Standard Consultation asking for the highest possible levels of energy efficiency to be required as soon as possible.

Motion to Council
28 January 2020
Subject Drug reform
Proposer Councillor Neale
Seconded Councillor Osborn

Item
8(c)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reported that 4,359 deaths from drug poisoning were recorded in England and Wales in 2018, the most since records began in 1993. The UK is clearly facing a drugs crisis and many of our residents suffer under drug-related crime and anti-social behaviour.

Eighty people have died from drug misuse in Norwich in the past three years - more than in any single London borough, statistics have revealed.

Norfolk Police have made 350 drug-related arrests in the past year alone, but have told residents that they cannot arrest their way out of the problem.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) ask all group leaders to write to the Home Secretary to endorse the recommendations made by the Health and Social Care Committee. In particular the need to:
 - a) implement a radical change in UK drugs policy from a criminal justice to a health based approach
 - b) examine the Portuguese system, where decriminalisation was implemented as one part of a comprehensive approach to drugs and has seen the number of drug related deaths as well as HIV rates decline rapidly
 - c) reverse the cuts to drug treatment services which have been cut by 27% over the past three years
- 2) ask the scrutiny committee to consider examining the implications of Norwich becoming a pilot city for safe drug consumption rooms, which have been shown to save lives; and
- 3) ask the leader of the council to write to the Department of Education, urging them to provide evidence-based drugs education as a mandatory, key component of their curriculum.

Motion to Council
28 January 2020
Subject Moving to four yearly elections
Proposer Councillor Schmierer
Seconded Councillor Bogelein

Item
8(d)

Over the last five years, voters in Norwich have gone to the polls for three general elections, one referendum, one European Parliamentary election, four city council elections, one Police and Crime Commissioner election and one county council election.

Currently, Norwich City Council elects its councillors by thirds. The cost to the council of holding a stand-alone local election is approximately £170,000. Only approximately a third of eligible voters participated at the last set of local elections in Norwich.

Several other local authorities, such as Great Yarmouth have switched to all-out elections in the last few years.

Council **RESOLVES** to ask cabinet to consider the process for moving to four yearly elections.

Motion to Council
28 January 2020
Subject Promoting pollinators in the city
Proposer Councillor Packer
Seconded Councillor Maguire

Item
8(e)

Norwich City Council is committed to helping to conserve the UK's pollinators by ensuring the council will consider the needs of pollinators in the delivery of its duties and work. The council will seek to protect and increase the amount and quality of pollinator habitat and manage its green space to provide greater benefits for pollinators. We will ensure local people are provided with opportunities to make Norwich more pollinator friendly. The council already undertakes important actions to help pollinators however, we should always aspire to do more. In addition to the actions within the biodiversity motion passed by Norwich City Council in September 2019,

Council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) note, that it is well documented that bees and other pollinators have been in serious decline for many years. This is a loud and clear message that they need help and quickly otherwise all of us, plants, pollinators and people, face serious problems. Pollinators are central to Norfolk's fruit farms, they serve crops including oilseed rape, clovers and other nitrogen fixing plants. They are important for livestock grazing and wild flowers. Pollinators add to the diversity of plant species, habitats and wildlife in Norwich as well as its natural beauty. This makes Norwich a better place to live, to enjoy and to visit. Losing our pollinators would be a major ecological and economic disaster.
- 2) continue to raise the awareness of pollinators' needs in local communities by:
 - a) continuing to promote what action can be undertaken both on an individual basis and by community groups to help pollinators;
 - b) continuing to ensure the wellbeing of pollinators is a principal consideration in land management e.g. through grass-cutting and pollinator-friendly planting regimes;
 - c) using planning powers to protect pollinator habitats where possible;
 - d) reviewing and seeking to end the use of pesticides in its estate;

- e) planting pollinator-friendly plants and trees, such as those identified in the Royal Horticultural Society's Perfect for Pollinators scheme;
- 3) ask cabinet, through its advisory climate and environment emergency executive panel, to develop a pollinator action plan;
- 4) continue to plant pollinator-friendly plants as part of amenity planting in parks, gardens and green spaces;
- 5) ask the county council to encourage schools to help children engage with this agenda;
- 6) seek to influence other partners, including social housing, public health bodies, district and county councils to support our efforts; and
- 7) ask the leader of the council to write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs calling on the Government to maintain the current ban following 31 January on the use of neonicotinoids – with a widening of the ban to include other neonics and systemic pesticides based on results from the funding of proper research into the hazards of neonicotinoids and glyphosate on human health and the environment.