

Jan McLachlan to ask the cabinet member for resources:

“Given increasing public concern regarding Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), could you please explain what has been resolved by cabinet with regards to the motion (below) recently submitted to Council by the Green Party to urge rejection of TTIP’.

Original motion: If the planned transatlantic trade and investment partnership (TTIP) goes ahead, there are concerns that it could reduce the council’s options for providing public services in the interests of Norwich residents

Council **RESOLVES** to call upon the leader of the council to write to all Norwich MPs and MEPs and to the government, asking them to reject the transatlantic trade and investment partnership (TTIP)”

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources’ response:

Thank you very much for your question.

The short answer is that the cabinet will be considering this matter on 10 December 2014 and the TTIP report will be available on the council website as part of the cabinet papers, from the middle of next week. The cabinet meeting takes place at 17.30 on Wednesday 10 December and is open to the public.

While I cannot at this stage give you a precise response to your question, since I would be pre-empting the discussion and recommendations that will be considered by cabinet, what I can say is that we have spent a considerable amount of time reviewing the issues around TTIP from an ever growing body of literature – both general and highly technical.

Major areas of concern.

As you will know the TTIP negotiations were launched at the G8 summit in June 2013 and the 7th round of negotiations started on 29 September. Like previous bilateral and multinational trade agreements TTIP is highly contentious and for good reason. In our consideration of our public position and the representations we wish to make, we share views outlined in a House of Commons library research note on TTIP – I quote:

‘ There are concerns that liberalising public procurement markets, combined with measures to protect foreign investors from government action, could constrain the power of national governments to decide how public services are provided’.

Naturally, (though not exclusively) our particular worry is the **NHS** and the risk that TTIP will threaten universal access to health care. The possible exclusion of public services like the NHS from the TTIP agreement looks very shaky as a result of the passage of the Health and Social Care Act (2012) and the explicit creation of a health care market in competition with other providers.

This is also true of a wide range of other public services that now operate within a commercial framework.

The '**investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS)**', as currently framed, allows trans-national corporations under TTIP to sue individual countries directly, for loss of profits suffered as a result of public policy decisions, including predicted reductions of profits in the future.

The possible threat to **key environmental regulations** within the EU, which are known to guarantee higher safety levels than in the US.

Shortcomings in **transparency and consultation**: for example, of the 560 meetings that the EU Commission's Directorate-General for Trade held in preparation for negotiations, 520 were with business lobbyists and only 26 were with public interest groups.

And of course not forgetting the potential impact of TTIP on **local government**, particularly in relation to food safety, environmental standards, public procurement and public services.

We are also looking very closely at the **economic modelling** around the perceived benefits of TTIP in terms of increased trade, investment and jobs.

The report to cabinet and the recommendations that will flow from it, will seek to influence the current round of negotiations in the areas I have touched upon in my response to your question. We will also be pressing the Government, local MPs and MEPs on specific issues – e.g. taking the NHS out of TTIP through 'negative listing'.

In a wider context we will continue to play our part in bringing these very important issues to the attention of residents in the city.