

**Motion to:** Council

14 March 2023

**Subject:** Contacting the council

**Proposer:** Councillor Bogelein

**Seconder:** Councillor Lubbock

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Contact with the council through consultations and everyday communication is vital for the citizens it serves. Councillors have been made aware of many instances where this has been difficult or unsatisfactory. This motion asks for a review and actions to make sure that all citizens are served and inequalities issues are addressed.

Both the council and its citizens benefit from efficient, fair, trusted two-way communication and it is especially important that no one is left out of this process and that issues are dealt with quickly when problems arise.

In December the council took 8096 calls on the telephone alone, the average wait time was over 10 minutes, and over 3488 people were rung back as they were not answered first time. There were just 49 face to face appointments in this time but evidence shows that these are effective and needed especially in complex cases.

Council **RESOLVES** to ask cabinet:

- 1) To improve the mechanism of consultations by:
  - a) Providing a clear statement of intent with each consultation which explains how the results of the consultation and the data collected will be used (e.g. how will a majority of consultees objecting to the consultation change the plans).
  - b) Replying to each consultee with the results of the consultation after it has concluded and outline changes that have been made as a result of consultation returns.
  
- 2) To improve engagement by:
  - a) Having a plan showing how engagement data (such as the Community Connectors' data) is used before it is collected. This should include worked up logic mapping of how the engagement exercise will translate into tangible and measurable outcomes.
  - b) Planning a clear impact evaluation of big engagement pieces before the engagement happens to enable objective evaluation

## Item 13(a)

of the impact achieved. Where possible, a progress evaluation should be included throughout the engagement.

- 3) To improve customer contact by:
  - a) Reviewing the provision of face-to-face appointments and the ease of requesting and being granted these appointments.
  - b) Exploring the use of video appointments to enable the sharing of documents and a better assessment of the overall situation.
  - c) Reviewing and monitoring the equalities impact of the customer contact and advice service.
  - d) Ensuring that if the timing out of websites cannot be removed as a feature that a clear warning is provided before a form times out.
  - e) Assessing the customer journey for a range of customer engagements, and conducting regular spot checks and mystery shopper exercises.
- 4) To improve communications with council housing tenants by:
  - a) Reinstating named housing officers, so tenants can build up a relationship and have a named contact.
  - b) Trialing distinctive uniforms for housing officers, so they can be approached by tenants when in the field.
  - c) Reinstating regular Estate Audits and sharing the dates of these audits in advance.
  - d) Reviewing the tenant involvement panel to ensure it is representative of different kinds of tenancies and diversity of council tenants.
- 5) To improve responses to complaints by:
  - a) Achieving the set targets for responding to complaints in time within the next three months.
  - b) Exploring automated progress updates to residents' enquiries and complaints.
  - c) Exploring ways for residents to escalate reports and complaints that have had no or inadequate responses with the council.

**Item 13(a)**

6) To improve communication via letters by:

- a) Including a name, job title and telephone number of the person sending the letter.
- b) Adhering to readability best practice guidelines, or where that is not possible, including an easy read sheet.

7) To improve contact with contractors by:

- a) Ensuring that the council keeps an overview of work passed on to contractors and trials a system of being able to mark contractor work as completed and follow up work that is not being marked as completed in a set time target.
- b) Ensuring that contractors are part of the 'no wrong door' policy.

**Motion to:** Council

14 March 2023

**Subject:** The Local Electricity Bill

**Proposer:** Councillor Grahame

**Seconder:** Councillor Osborn

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The Local Electricity Bill is a private members' bill with cross-party support that was introduced unopposed in June 2020. If this Bill was passed in Parliament it would give the energy regulator, Ofgem, a duty to create a Right to Local Supply. This would enable local community energy groups to achieve their vision of supplying generated energy back to the local area, help us as a council to meet our carbon reduction aspirations for the city and also bring multiple benefits to the local community. It is supported by many stakeholders, local authorities, and town councils and currently has the backing of 317 MPs.

Council acknowledges the efforts that this council has made to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy;

1) Council notes:

- a) There needs to be a fundamental change in how we generate and consume energy in all aspects of our lives. Both electricity generation and distribution are undergoing rapid evolution, in both shape and scale.
- b) The distribution grid must now cope with power flows in both directions. In scale, electrification of heat and transport will require a quadrupling of electricity capacity. Local, community-based energy schemes can make a significant contribution to addressing both issues and encourage a sense of local empowerment to tackle climate change.
- c) Community schemes encourage local generation and storage to match local demand thus relieving pressure on the grid. Local schemes would be given new impetus and be able to contribute more renewable energy if local people could buy their electricity directly from local suppliers. But the disproportionate cost of meeting regulatory approvals makes it impossible to be a local energy supplier at a local scale and so, under the current system, this local energy gets sold back to the central grid.
- d) In June 2019, council unanimously passed a motion committing to "Ask the cabinet member for sustainable and safe city environment to present a report detailing how Norwich City Council might develop new models of finance to support the local solar industry whilst also helping residents and businesses

**Item 13(b)**

to benefit from renewable energy via the use of power purchase agreements (PPAs) and innovative behind-the-meter services.” The report requested never came to cabinet or to any committees.

- 2) Council agrees to ask cabinet to:
  - a) work with partners to encourage investment in the electricity grid to increase capacity and improve capacity for two-way flows
  - b) investigate potential partnership with Community Energy Pathways to support the development of local community-owned renewable energy
  - c) explore ways to increase options for energy efficiency and renewable energy retrofitting measures in conservation areas
  - d) work with partners, as opportunities arise, to develop the skills and infrastructure needed by local providers to rapidly upscale the transition to a zero carbon economy, e.g. by providing training placement programmes, developing a highly skilled retrofit team that could work initially on council homes, then commercially
  - e) publicly announce its support for the Local Electricity Bill (LEB)
  - f) present a report within 6 months outlining potential sites for development of local renewable energy in Norwich and how the council can engage with communities to encourage community ownership of energy; and
  - g) present a report on finance models for local solar, and extend this to other forms of local renewable energy including hydropower, as requested in June 2019.

**Motion to:** Council

14 March 2023

**Subject:** Minimum unit pricing

**Proposer:** Councillor Schmierer

**Seconder:** Councillor Young

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The number of alcohol-related deaths has hit an all-time high, rising by 30.2% in the East of England over the past five years. Experts have blamed the rise on the pandemic, claiming that people who were already drinking at higher levels before the pandemic were the most likely to have increased their alcohol consumption during this period.

In 2020/21 Norwich had the highest proportion of alcohol-related hospital admissions in the region.

Minimum Unit Pricing (MUP) sets a minimum price, per UK unit, below which alcohol cannot be sold.

The Alcohol (Minimum Pricing) Scotland Act 2012 paved the way for the introduction of MUP. A minimum unit price of 50p per unit has been in place since 1 May 2018. Research has showed it has had a lasting impact in both Wales and Scotland, having reduced consumption in some of the heaviest drinking.

Council therefore calls on cabinet to:

- 1) Write to the Secretary of State calling for the introduction of MUP in England in line with the devolved authorities in Scotland and Wales.
- 2) Ask the licensing committee to consider ways in which off premise licensed shops could be discouraged from selling super strength alcohol and other discounted alcohol when the licensing policy is next updated.
- 3) Continue to work with partners to support those who are struggling with alcohol dependency; and
- 4) Include reference to the impact that high levels of alcohol consumption can have on the public health profile of the city in the next corporate plan.

**Motion to:** Council

14 March 2023

**Subject:** Energy For All campaign

**Proposer:** Councillor Hampton

**Seconder:** Councillor Padda

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The failure of Conservative-led governments to invest in renewables, retrofit homes and regulate the energy market has caused the current energy and cost of living crises. At the same time, the climate crisis is the biggest existential threat to our society with urgent action needed. There are numerous synergies between tackling the cost of living, energy, and climate crises; these must be addressed simultaneously to achieve true social, economic, and environmental justice.

1) Council notes that:

- a) Residents in Norwich and across the country are being hit hard by the cost of living crisis, with too many falling into fuel poverty.
- b) The Government's Energy Price Guarantee is socially unjust and fails to lay the path to an energy secure future.
- c) Norwich City Council's Sustainable Warmth Strategy sets out this council's approach to supporting residents who are experiencing fuel poverty, in a just and sustainable manner. It states our aim of ultimately eradicating fuel poverty in Norwich within the timescale of the 2040 City Vision.
- d) But national, systemic change is needed to guarantee energy security and the eradication of fuel poverty in the long term.
- e) The Energy Equity Commission Bill, and Fuel Poverty Action's corresponding Energy For All campaign, calls for the energy price cap system to be replaced with a free universal basic energy allowance, alongside a national retrofitting strategy. Everyone would receive a basic free amount of energy: enough to cover essentials like heating, eating, lighting and connectivity.
- f) If enacted, this policy would largely eradicate fuel poverty in Norwich and the UK.

2) Council **RESOLVES** to:

- a) Write to Fuel Poverty Action affirming our support for the Energy Equity Commission Bill and Energy For All campaign.
- b) Ask the Leader to write to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, copying in Norwich's two MPs, to alert them to this motion and request that they lend their support to the Energy Equity Commission Bill.
- c) Continue to support residents experiencing fuel poverty, deliver retrofit measures, promote clean energy and work towards a net zero city by delivery of our Environmental Strategy, Sustainable Warmth Strategy and other related policies.



**Motion to:** Council

14 March 2023

**Subject:** National Housing Crisis

**Proposer:** Councillor Jones

**Seconder:** Councillor Huntley

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The worst cost of living crisis since the 1950s is coinciding with a national housing crisis. The result of this will be an increasing number of our residents deprived of one of the most fundamental pillars to a healthy and happy life – a secure, stable, and affordable home.

Homeownership is in decline following a period of rising house prices that has made buying a home unaffordable for too many. This combined with a drastic depletion in social housing stock has forced an increasing number of Norwich residents into the private rented sector and at the mercy of rising rents and under-regulated tenancies. Worse still, many are left without a permanent residence at all, as levels of homelessness remain high.

Whilst this Council has welcomed the Norwich Council Housing Strategy 2020-26 it is now calling for the acceleration of its delivery to increase the provision of affordable, secure, high-quality, and energy-efficient housing across the city to tackle the root of the housing crisis locally.

However, in the face of a worsening national economic crisis, urgent action is needed to protect our residents, especially those in the most precarious living circumstances, from its severest impacts.

To support residents through the immediate and acute period of the cost-of-living crisis, this Council **RESOLVES** to call upon Government to:

- 1) Increase Local Housing Allowance rates in line with rising private market rents - making these more affordable and reducing the proportion of income spent on rent at a time when household budgets are increasingly squeezed.
- 2) Introduce rent reforms and delegate powers to local authorities to set rent caps to protect private tenants from further rental increases or exploitative charges at a time of crisis.
- 3) Legislate a no winter evictions guarantee to protect private tenants from homelessness through the most challenging period of the cost-of-living crisis.

**Item 13(e)**

- 4) Abolish the Right to Buy in favour of expanding the provision of high-quality, energy-efficient, and environmentally sustainable social housing stock providing homes for residents and their families.
- 5) Expand pathways to homeownership so that owning a home can still be a realistic aspiration for any residents.
- 6) Prioritise the passing of the Renters' Reform Bill that seeks to improve standards and regulations across the private rented sector to better protect tenants.

**Motion to:** Council

14 March 2023

**Subject:** Norwich Bus Fares

**Proposer:** Councillor Stonard

**Seconder:** Councillor Harris

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This council recognises the vital importance of affordable, reliable, and high-quality public transport to the functioning of Norwich. We therefore strongly welcome the recent IPPR research on public transport, published on 6 October 2022 under the title “To support low-income households, it’s time to reduce the cost of daily bus travel”. While the report makes clear that reducing fares is not the only issue needed to increase bus patronage – interventions to improve speed, reliability and the experience of passengers are all required as well - reductions in the costs of public transport for passengers are essential for a fair transport system.

Council **RESOLVES** to

- 1) note that; -
  - a) Low-income households are the most likely to use buses, while research by the RAC Foundation shows that since 2013 the cost of bus travel has risen by a greater extent than all other forms of transport. It is the poorest households, without access to other forms of travel, that have borne the brunt of these increases driven by de-regulation and lack of long-term funding.
  - b) Any reduction in bus fares would therefore be of the greatest benefit to those least well off. Capping bus fares at no more than £1 per day would save the poorest 20% of households in England £0.8bn a year. Making all bus fares in England free would save the poorest 40% of households £1.5bn a year.
  - c) This Council notes that a policy of making bus fares in England entirely free would cost £2.3bn a year, with the greatest benefits going to the least well off. For comparison, the recent ‘fiscal event’ in September 2022 proposed £40bn worth of tax cuts, mostly to the most well off. The current proposed Government funding for new roads is £27bn, for schemes that are likely to increase pollution and make the climate and biodiversity crises worse. For the same money, bus travel could be made free for at least ten years, helping to reduce car journeys, and making progress towards a net zero transport system.

**Item 13(f)**

- 2) ask that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Transport, the Shadow Secretary State for Transport, Norwich's two MPs and to the Leader of the county council expressing this Council's support for making public transport in Norwich free of charge; and
- 3) Use its existing partnerships and relationships with the county council and bus operators, to work to promote this objective.

**Motion to:** Council

14 March 2023

**Subject:** Plant-based food

**Proposer:** Councillor Catt

**Seconded:** Councillor Osborn

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It is increasingly recognised that meat and dairy production is a significant contributor to climate breakdown, with the livestock sector accounting for at least 14% of global greenhouse gas emissions, as well as being a major contributor to global deforestation. The catastrophic effects of climate breakdown mean climate and risk experts predict a world with systemic cascading risks related to food insecurity including food shortages, societal tensions, hunger and malnutrition, unrest and conflict (according to a Chatham house report from 2021), which furthermore predicts a 50% chance of synchronous crop failure in the decade of the 2040s. Producing a kilo of beef creates, on average, 12 times more CO<sub>2</sub> than a kilo of tofu or other soya based proteins. Meanwhile, producing a litre of dairy milk uses, on average, at least four times as much land as producing a litre of plant milk. Growing numbers of people are adopting plant-based diets, which do not include meat or dairy.

As well as a smaller carbon footprint, eating more plant-based foods also reduces the land footprint of our diets and would improve UK food security and self-sufficiency, thereby making our diets more local. As a country, we currently import much more food than we export. In 2021 we had a trade deficit for all dairy products of £1.04 billion and a trade deficit for just beef, pork and lamb of £1.7 billion. Only 55% of the world's crop calories feed people directly with 36% going to feed livestock; only a fraction of the calories in feed given to livestock make their way into the meat and milk that we consume which is a huge food waste issue on top of making our food production much more carbon intensive. While some people criticise people who follow a plant-based diet for eating imported soy, the vast majority of soy - 77% - goes to feeding livestock, which research has shown is an inefficient use of resources. East Anglia has predominantly arable farming and there are many local predominantly plant-based food businesses we could support.

Henry Dimbleby, in the Government-commissioned National Food Strategy concluded that a 30% reduction in meat consumption is necessary for future food security. The National Food Strategy also states that obesity alone accounts for 8% of annual health spend in the UK, or £18bn. Savings to the NHS will come from healthier, plant-based diets. Sustain estimates that meat over-consumption costs the NHS directly £1.2 billion, and is responsible for 45,000 deaths annually. Over 40% of

## Item 13(g)

Britons are trying to reduce their meat consumption and 14% already follow a flexitarian diet, but plant-based food options are not consistently available at all events or food venues. Other countries have taken a stance; for example, in Portugal it is a legal requirement for all public catering – including local authority facilities – to provide plant-based food options, and other local authorities such as Oxfordshire County Council and Cambridge City Council have decided to promote plant-based food via serving a fully plant-based menu at Council meetings and events, where cost-effective. Locally, the University of Cambridge Catering Service reduced food-related greenhouse gas emissions by a third via replacing beef and lamb with plant-based products.

In September 2021, Norwich City Council formally adopted the Glasgow Declaration on Food and Climate which committed the council to try to reduce greenhouse gas emissions associated with food. Norwich City Council can build on its achievements to date and lead by example to promote and normalise consumption of plant-based food, recognising that plant-based meals are frequently nutritious and low-cost food options. This is in line with its vision for Norwich City to be net-zero carbon by 2045.

Council therefore **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) Follow the lead of other councils around the country in ensuring that food and drink provided at all meetings and events hosted by the city council, including those hosted by the Mayoralty, is plant-based, and where possible, is provided by a local caterer paying the Real Living Wage and sourcing sustainable local ingredients.
- 2) After exploring a wide variety of catering options (including consideration of social enterprises), use Norwich City Council civic events to promote and showcase environmentally friendly plant-based food and drink options, alongside displayed information about the climate and health benefits and relative cost of different protein/food sources and informing people about how to achieve a balanced plant-based diet.
- 3) When events occur on City Council open spaces, and where catering is provided, ensure that environmentally friendly plant-based options are available (i.e., minimum from at least one caterer), secured through the use of terms and conditions of hire (where reasonably possible).
- 4) Secure through a contract specification when re-tendering for suppliers that environmentally friendly, locally sourced plant-based food and drink options are to be available at providers on City Council open spaces (where reasonably possible). Similarly, when possible, via future contract specification when re-tendering for suppliers for council-run cafes, kiosks or leisure centres, specify that vegetable/legume rich plant-based options are listed prominently on menus, above non-plant-based options.
- 5) Continue to use council communications channels to promote sustainable (and affordable) food and drink practices throughout the city, including details of the climate and health benefits of plant-based food and drinks and educating people on the best ways to achieve a balanced plant-based diet, while also appropriately highlighting the

**Item 13(g)**

crisis of ever-increasing food poverty in this city and the support available to respond to it.

6) Write to Norfolk County Council requesting that they assess the carbon impact of meat and dairy industries on the county and ask what steps are being taken to reduce this in line with the target to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2030.

7) Work with community groups across the city to promote the establishment of new community gardens, especially on sites that have been previously derelict or contaminated, so that these sites can be quickly brought back into beneficial use to meet the wider demands posed by the social, economic, and environmental crisis, including that of supporting the growth of cheap and accessible plant-based food and drinks for all our communities.

8) Continue to recognise Norwich as a city with businesses leading the way in the provision of plant-based foods and drinks. Continue to engage with Norwich BID and the Norwich Market Traders' Association to investigate the opportunities to promote the benefits of plant-based foods, give people information about the best ways to achieve a balanced plant-based diet, and improve the availability of plant-based options at Norwich businesses; and

9) Write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs supporting UK endorsement of the Plant Based Treaty and invite all Party Group Leaders to sign the letter.

**Motion to:** Council

14 March 2023

**Subject:** Walk-in Centre

**Proposer:** Councillor Jones

**Seconder:** Councillor Giles

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1) This Council Notes:

- a) That the Norfolk and Waveney Integrated Care Board has begun a consultation on proposals for general medical services provision in Norwich when the current contract for the Walk-in Centre, the GP practice on Rouen Road and the Vulnerable Adults Service expires on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024
- b) That this consultation proposes three options for the provision of these three services after 31 March 2024:
  - i. No change – reprocure (buy again) all three services, meaning the current location and services provided would not change
  - ii. Reprocure (buy again) the Vulnerable Adults Service and GP practice at Rouen Road (and allow the Walk-in Centre service to expire)
  - iii. Reprocure (buy again) the GP practice and the Vulnerable Adults Service under one contract and commission (buy) the health service capacity that is provided at the Walk-in Centre in a different way to improve health outcomes in underserved communities across the Norwich area
- c) That the consultation, in Option ii, explicitly proposes the closure of the Walk-in centre
- d) That the Walk-in centre treated 7632 patients in December 2022 and 6,836 in January 2023 and that this equates to a total of 78,255 patients treated in a twelve month period



**Item 13(h)**

- e) That the Walk-in Centre offers face-to-face appointments outside normal GP surgery hours, from 7 am to 9 pm seven days a week, which is more accessible and convenient for working people than their GP surgery
  - f) That GP practices in Norwich, faced with recruitment and retention problems, on the back of twelve years of Tory austerity, are struggling to respond to patient demand. Patients may be expected to wait many weeks for a face-to-face GP appointment and, according to local press reports, some GP practices are only able to offer a face-to-face encounter for 40% of their appointments.
  - g) That a proportion of patients who use the Walk-in Centre would otherwise have attended the Accident and Emergency department at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital and that the Walk-in Centre therefore helps reduce pressure on the A&E department as well as saving the NHS money by offering a more cost-efficient service. The consultation does not include an economic analysis of the cost and service implications, of closing the Walk-in Centre, for the rest of the local NHS
  - h) That Norfolk Healthwatch has stated that if the Walk-in Centre was to close: "Even with an enhanced service provision, neither the primary nor secondary care system would be able to cope with this demand."
  - i) That the walk-in centre is available to those without a registered practice, some of which are particularly vulnerable.
- 2) This Council Believes:
- a) That the Norwich Walk-in Centre is a valuable, vital, and accessible health service for the people of Norwich, which treats many tens of thousands of people every year
  - b) That its closure would be disastrous for both local people and the local NHS. Other local health services would not be able to provide for the patients that currently are treated by the Walk-in Centre, meaning many would be forced to go to A&E, which would cost the NHS much more and would add to the pressure on that service, or would be forced to wait many weeks to see a GP, during which time their health condition could deteriorate significantly
  - c) The Walk-in Centre is a more efficient and cost-effective way of supplementing local GP services than the alternative of providing additional funds to individual GP practices, because, as a single point of access, it benefits from economies of scale. Norfolk Healthwatch has noted: "Spreading equivalent funding across Norwich GP practices can never be able to provide same level/quantity of service provision to so many people."

**Item 13(h)**

- d) That the Walk-in Centre is a vital resource for many vulnerable people who may not be registered with a local GP
  - e) That Option iii. in the consultation document is vague and does not describe in any way the replacement service which would be provided and that the public is being asked to support an alternative option while not knowing what it is
  - f) That the threat of closure of the Walk-in Centre must be removed
- 3) This Council **RESOLVES** to:
- a) clearly state its support for the continuation of the existing Walk-in Centre service
  - b) write to the Integrated Care Board stating this support
  - c) write to the two MP's for Norwich asking them to step up their support and make every effort to ensure the Walk-in Centre's continuation
  - d) encourage people to participate in the consultation to make sure the commissioners hear their voice