

# GreenView

Autumn 2013



Green Party

The green newspaper for Norwich

## Stop a Social Care Crisis

**Planned cuts to services that support vulnerable people in Norfolk could result in a crisis in social care, Green Party Councillors have warned.**

Norfolk County Council is proposing to make further cutbacks to personal care services over the following three years in response to a massive reduction in the government grant.

Green Party Councillors have highlighted that the most crucial services could have been saved if the council had supported their call for a modest 1.95% council tax increase at the last budget round, rather than opting for a council tax freeze, which all other parties supported.

The latest cuts are being put forward by the Labour-led administration, which has published a consultation on proposed reductions in services totalling £140m.

The proposed cuts to social care services include:

- Reducing support for people who have recently left hospital.
- Reducing care funding for people with learning and physical disabilities.
- For the first time the funding for personal budgets and care 'packages' which provide care for vulnerable people is to be reduced and restrictions applied to the kind of care that people can ask for.



**Green Party councillors are campaigning to protect social care services that support vulnerable people**

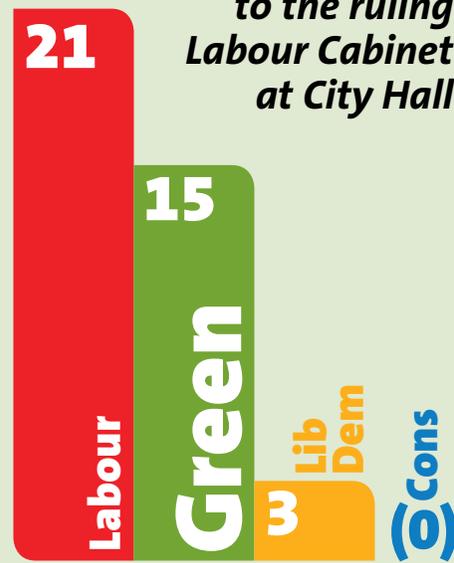
The Green Party has started a petition calling on Norfolk County Council to protect these services and to make social care a top priority.

Richard Bearman, Leader of the Green Party County Councillors, said: "Vulnerable people across Norfolk rely on these services for their basic care and quality of life. Extremely damaging government funding cuts are making it harder and harder for councils to protect services but the County Council does have some choice. Rather than freezing council

tax, our proposal to increase it by 1.95% (which is below the rate of inflation) would add nearly £6m to the council's annual budget. Many vital care services could then be protected. Cancelling road-building plans would also free up much-needed funds.

**"The Green Party has launched a survey asking residents whether they would support a modest council tax increase to protect care services. Do please let us know what you think."**

*The Green Party is the main opposition to the ruling Labour Cabinet at City Hall*



*Number of councillors by party on Norwich City Council*

**GREEN CHRISTMAS FAIR**  
 Saturday 14th December  
 11.30am — 2.30pm  
 St Thomas Church Hall, Earlham Road  
 Gift stalls. Entertainment.  
 Refreshments.  
**FREE ENTRY.**

### Respond to the County Council's Consultation

Norwich Green Party is encouraging residents to respond to the official council consultation, which closes on 12th December.

You can view the consultation document and respond online at:

<http://bit.ly/CouncilConsult>

Alternatively, to request a paper copy of the consultation document please call Norfolk County Council on:

**0344 800 8020**

### Tell US what YOU think



The Green Party is asking for your views on protecting care services. You can sign our petition and fill in the survey online at:

[www.stopacarecrisisnorfolk.co.uk](http://www.stopacarecrisisnorfolk.co.uk)

or post this slip to the address below:

Would you be prepared to see a small rise in Council Tax (of about aprox. 33p a week for a Band B/normal property) to help save social care services for the future? **Yes / No**

Do you think that funding social care is more important than building major new roads? **Yes / No**

Name:

Address:

The Green Party may contact you. To opt out tick

[www.norwichgreenparty.org](http://www.norwichgreenparty.org)

Norwich Green Party: c/o 27 Clarendon Road, Norwich, NR2 2PN

Promoted by Phil Di Palma on behalf of Norwich Green Party (address above).

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# News in Brief

If you live in social housing, or are elderly, you may be able claim a grant towards replacement of your boiler or other house maintenance.

It is very important that residents contact the council as soon as they can to make a grant application – before allowing work to begin or making any payment. Recently Green councillors have asked the council to be more responsive in dealing with grant applications following a case where an elderly person had to pay for a boiler themselves as the council didn't respond quickly enough. A Green councillor has successfully persuaded the council to pay a part grant retrospectively in this case.

**Green Party Councillors are calling on the City Council to reinstate the budget for tree planting.**

Currently, trees outside of conservation areas are not being replaced when they die or are cut down.

Green Councillor Ben Price said: "Although we understand that budgets are very tight, we feel that this will have unacceptable impacts on the city's ecology. Trees enhance the value of the city, create a cleaner environment and encourage wildlife. We have a responsibility to safeguard our environment for future generations and to maintain a healthy diversity in our wildlife."



**Green Party Leader Natalie Bennett has called for an immediate end to licensed badger culls in England.**

She described the culls as unscientific, inhumane and also shambolic, highlighting that a six-week trial in Somerset had failed even in its own terms, with the number of badgers culled around 40% of its target of 2,081.

Natalie Bennett said: "This slaughter of our indigenous wildlife, which is also causing substantial disruption to rural communities, has to end. We must take effective action to deal with the problem of bovine TB, but this clearly isn't it.

"We need to develop a co-ordinated approach of badger vaccination, improved biosecurity and hasten efforts towards the final clear answer to this problem – a cattle vaccine."

# Europe is Good for the Environment



**Keith Taylor and other Green MEPs say that the EU has a leading role in creating a clean and healthy environment**

**Leaving the European Union would put at risk years of work to protect our environment, say campaigners.**

Friends of the Earth, responding to David Cameron's announcement that he would hold an in/out referendum in 2017, called it "a poorly thought-through policy designed to see off his political opponents from the right,

with too little thought given to the consequences for our environment."

A recent Friends of the Earth report reminded us that Britain used to be called "the dirty man of Europe" with some of the worst emissions and filthiest seas. EU membership brought a shift to strict, legally binding targets.

The report also highlights that:

- EU bathing water directives clamped down on the discharge of effluent at the coast.
- EU air quality directives saw emissions of sulphur dioxide and nitrous oxide cut.
- EU habitats directives obliged the government to take care of wildlife in special protected zones.
- The EU is calling now for binding targets for renewable energy by 2030.

Keith Taylor, Green Party MEP for the south east of England, said: "The EU offers the best opportunity for concerted action to succeed, for responsibilities to be shared, for expertise to be pooled... and for the UK to play a leading role in setting the international agenda."

The Green Party wants the EU's role in environmental protection to be strengthened, not jeopardised.

But the Greens are realistic about the EU's shortcomings. The Green Party wants to cut through the distant bureaucracy, giving more power to elected MEPs not unelected Commissioners and putting a curb on corporate lobbying.

## Where Greens Lead, Others Follow...

**The Green Party is influential far beyond its size. Many of its ideas are taken up by others. For example:**

The Greens have long argued for a **Living Wage**. Green Party members of the London Assembly successfully proposed a Living Wage Unit for London in 2004. This has led to many public and private sector bodies paying the London Living Wage – and paved the way for other areas of the country to follow. In Norwich, Green Councillors proposed a Living Wage in 2008. It was recently introduced by Norwich City Council for all its staff.

In Parliament, Green MP Caroline Lucas vigorously opposed the callous **bedroom tax**. Now, many MPs who could have voted it down but didn't are voicing fears as the tax wreaks havoc. Ruling Labour councillors on Norwich City Council opposed a Green councillors' motion calling on the council not to evict tenants if they can't afford the bedroom tax.

In the European Parliament, many proposals which have long been championed by Green MEPs have now come into force, including the promotion of **renewable energy** and **energy efficiency schemes**, **banning animal testing for cosmetics** and **new regulation of the financial sector** including a limit on bankers' bonuses.

**In so many areas, a strong Green Party is needed to show the way**

# Incinerator Funding Withdrawn

**The Green Party has welcomed the news that the Government has withdrawn its financial support for a waste incinerator to be built near King's Lynn.**

The Government had previously awarded £169m of 'waste credits' for the scheme to burn Norfolk's waste at the west Norfolk site. But in mid-October the environment minister wrote to Norfolk County Council saying that the incinerator was no longer needed to meet EU landfill targets.

Green Councillors have called on the County Council to abandon any plans for an incinerator in Norfolk and to support clean alternatives. Commenting on the 18th October announcement, Green Councillor Andrew Boswell said: "For over

ten years, a small group of ruling councillors and officers at Norfolk County Council have pursued incineration without consideration of other solutions or listening to the public. The new Labour/LibDem administration should now recognise that it would be bad for democracy and bad for the environment to build an expensive and unpopular incinerator in Norfolk.

"The Green Party has consistently

argued against burning Norfolk's refuse and supported clean and modern methods for treating waste. These would include improved recycling and composting initiatives at local level and several small mechanical biological treatment centres around the county to treat residual waste in a clean way. We also call on the coalition Government to help meet the costs of cancelling this unwanted plant in King's Lynn."



**An incinerator**

# Save Our Post Office



Local residents and Green councillors are campaigning to keep a Post Office on Vauxhall Street

**Green Party Councillors have been campaigning alongside residents to keep a Post Office branch at Suffolk Square, in the Vauxhall Street area of Norwich.**

The current franchise on the Suffolk Square Post Office will soon end and Post Office Limited has already approved a new franchisee to run a replacement Post Office at the Unthank Road shops, by Dover Street.

But Green Party Councillors criticised Post Office Limited for not consulting local residents before making a decision. They also highlighted that there is a large proportion of older and disabled people in the Vauxhall Street area who need a Post Office within walking distance.

Following a strong local campaign, Post Office Limited agreed to extend the consultation period before making a final decision on the location of the replacement Post Office later, probably in November.

With the help of Green Party activists from across Norwich, over 1000 signatures were collected on a petition calling for a Post Office to be kept in the Vauxhall Street area. Green councillors also organised a public meeting inviting guest speakers from the Post Office, a local MP and councillors from other parties. The hall was packed and Post Office Limited reassured the public that their views would be taken into account.

Paul Neale, Green Party councillor for Town Close ward, said: "We have been continually speaking to residents and encouraging them to respond to the consultation. The overwhelming opinion we've had from local residents was to keep a Post Office in the Vauxhall Street area."

Residents in the Larkman Lane area are also suffering from a decision of Post Office Limited, which has meant that the local Post Office which closed last year has not been replaced. The

new shopkeeper in the building that previously housed the Post Office wanted to open a new branch but was asked to contribute a £45,000 start-up cost.



The Green Party organised a public meeting for residents to question Post Office Limited on plans to move the Post Office branch from Vauxhall Street. Green Party MEP candidate Rupert Read addressed the meeting on the importance of protecting local services

# Advice Axed

**Funding for free, impartial, general advice for the people of Norwich has been cut off by the City Council.**

Green councillors called on the Labour-led authority to reconsider after it suddenly halved the grant it gives to Norwich Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB). The money it does give now has to be spent on debt advice only.

Last year the City Council granted a total of £99,872 to Norwich CAB for general and debt advice. It replaced this with £54,000 from the council for a debt service only, as part of its new 'commissioning framework'.

Green City Councillor Lucy Galvin said: "This is a short sighted cut at the wrong time. People need general advice, and it's more important than ever when many people are struggling with the effects of the recession. I could not find any other councils taking this approach to general advice."

"Some people could end up in debt if they don't get general advice early on, for example victims of scams, people who have lost their jobs or are threatened with eviction. It is in the council's long-term interests to make sure its residents get this kind of advice."

# Happy 65th Birthday NHS

**Green Party MP Caroline Lucas recently helped celebrate the 65th birthday of the National Health Service.**

She met with campaigners and residents at a birthday party, and paid tribute to "the greatest health service in the world".

But Dr Lucas warned that the NHS as we know it is under threat from cuts and privatisation of health services and praised the work of campaigners fighting to protect it: "The huge campaign against privatisation has shown that there are plenty of people who still have that faith – and who will fight to protect it from being sold off to the highest bidder."



Green MP Caroline Lucas is fighting to protect NHS services from privatisation

Steve Cheshire, chief executive of Norfolk CAB, said: "When people come to us they normally have a series of problems requiring our holistic approach to help them deal with a range of pressure points and concerns in their lives. This financial year we have already seen nearly 5000 city families with multiple problems, including employment, disability, pension, welfare benefits and relationship breakdown."

Green Party councillors suggested savings elsewhere and to amend the City Council budget to allocate an additional £25,000 for general advice, but Labour voted against the change.



# End Zero Hours Contracts

## Claire Stephenson Writes...

Green Party councillors have been shocked to discover that Norwich City Council employs people on zero-hours contracts.

The City Council recently confirmed that approximately ten employees worked for the council with no guarantee of regular hours. These contracts are similar to those controversially used by Amazon and other large companies. Workers on zero-hours contracts have to be on call but may not get any paid work.

The Green Party is opposed to such contracts and we've challenged the Labour-run council to stop using them. The certainty of a guaranteed number of hours should be part of a basic set of decent conditions for workers, which should also include a living wage and secure pension.

Green Party Leader Natalie Bennett



recently said that "Zero-hours contracts put workers in an invidious position, uncertain if they're going to have enough money to pay their rent, the food bills and other essentials." Her campaign was continued by Norfolk Green Councillor Elizabeth Morgan who formally asked for confirmation that no County Council employees will be hired on zero- hours contracts .

We need to create an economy where there are enough secure and

fulfilling jobs to go round.

The Green Party is campaigning for more apprenticeships and sustainable jobs in local manufacturing, farming and green industries. This will provide lasting work while helping to address climate change and create a secure, local food supply. Norfolk is ideally located to make the most of local farming and sustainable food production as well as renewable energy.

In Norwich, the gaps created by the closure of traditional industries, such as chocolate and shoe making, are still evident. While the Labour Party focuses on creating top-end jobs for scientists and hopes that endless house-building will provide employment for some, it hasn't got to grips with the need to provide ordinary jobs for Norwich's residents.

**Claire Stephenson is the Leader of the Green Party City Councillors.**

## CONTACT Norwich Green Party

For more information or to offer help please get in touch –

**PHONE:** (01603) 611909 **EMAIL:** enquiries@norwichgreenparty.org

**POST:** 27 Clarendon Road, Norwich, NR2 2PN.

**SURGERIES:** Green Party Councillors hold the following surgeries. Come along to raise a local issue or problem. No appointment needed.

**First Tuesday of each month, 5–6pm at Inner Space**  
(Maude Gray Court, St Benedicts Street).

**First Wednesday of each month, 6–7pm at Belvedere Community Centre**  
(Belvoir Street, off Dereham Road).

## Advertising in GreenView

Reasonable rates for Norwich or regional (6 counties) editions.  
Affinity scheme discounts and bonuses.  
Advertise over multiple platforms: print, e-bulletins and online.  
Reach over 200,000 homes in targeted areas of eastern region.

**CONTACT:** Alaine.Mukene@greenparty.org.uk

## Can YOU help Norwich Green Party?

**Yes, I will help by:**

- Voting Green at local elections
- Voting Green at the next General Election
- Displaying a window poster at election time
- Displaying a garden poster board at election time
- Putting up poster boards at election time
- Delivering some leaflets in my area
- Coming to a Green social event (please tick to request details)
- Helping to develop policy ideas
- Making a donation (cheques payable to 'Norwich Green Party')
- Joining the Green Party (please tick for details)

**Name:** .....

**Address:** .....

**Telephone:** ..... **Email:** .....

**Please return to: Norwich Green Party, 27 Clarendon Rd, Norwich, NR2 2PN.**

**The Green Party will contact you using the details you have supplied. If you do not wish to receive information from the Green Party please tick here:**

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