

Greens Party motion to demand basic income pilot in Norwich is passed unanimously



21 July 2020

Norwich City Council has tonight unanimously passed a Green Party motion calling on the government to trial a fully evaluated basic income in the city in response to the economic shock of the coronavirus crisis.[1]

Leaders of all political parties on Norwich City Council will now write to the Good Economy Commission for Norwich, the secretary of state for Work and Pensions, the Chancellor, the Prime Minister, and all opposition party leaders to ask for a UBI trial in the city of Norwich after passing the motion this evening.

It would mean each citizen in Norwich would receive a monthly income to cover the basic costs of living, regardless of employment status, wealth, or marital status.

This is the first such council motion calling for a trial specifically as response to coronavirus, citing the threat of many Norwich citizens being plunged into poverty, and the shortcomings of Universal Credit.

The last year has seen the number of people claiming the Universal Credit benefit in Norwich more than double, from just over 3,000 in March 2019 to more than 7,200 in March 2020. [2]

Responding to the news the motion had passed, Green Party peer Natalie Bennett said:

“The economic crisis is only just getting started, but the Government is already turning its back on millions of people. The furlough scheme is winding down, and job losses have started gushing like a burst pipe, with hundreds of livelihoods down the drain every single day.

“We need a universal basic income to ensure that nobody is left high and dry. By ensuring that every single one of us has enough to meet our basic needs, we have a better chance of weathering this storm together.

“The Government should agree to this trial in Norwich so they can see for themselves how effective it will be.”

The council has called for the evaluation of such a trial to look beyond how many people are able to take up paid work as a result, but also to look at the impact on communities, and people’s attitudes towards each other, and their environment.

Norwich Green Party councillor Jamie Osborn said: "I'm delighted that Norwich councillors have today unanimously supported the Green Party proposal for a Universal Basic Income. Even before lockdown I was appalled by the number of people in my ward who were humiliated and excluded by our current benefits system, and that number is only going up.

"But this motion is also about looking longer-term at the kind of society we want. A Universal Basic Income would mean people can spend more time on education and training, or starting their own business, and it would be vital for the arts. With this motion Norwich has recognised the society-wide benefits of a UBI, and we'll now be working with other local and national organisations to get the Government to listen."

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://norwich.greenparty.org.uk/news/2020/07/16/council-could-support-a-universal-basic-income-pilot-in-norwich/>

2

<https://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/news/business/universal-credit-claims-soar-in-coronavirus-lockdown-1-6655681>

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[Government should abandon privatised test and trace system following failings – Green Party](#)



20 July 2020

- **Greens urge government to instead fund local public health teams who already have expertise and public trust**

The Green Party has urged the government to abandon the privatised test and trace system [1] following reports of a series of serious failings.

Green health spokesperson Larry Sanders has said the money should instead be used to fund locally-based test and trace protection schemes run by local authorities and regional Public Health England teams.

The call follows reports of data breaches within the test and trace system [2] and claims that only half those at risk in towns in the north-west are being contacted [3].

Sanders said:

“It was wholly inappropriate to award this contract to Serco in the first place, particularly when local public health teams were already in place with the necessary expertise and trust within their communities to deliver an effective and transparent test and trace system.

“The failings that are now coming to light show the warnings that were made at the time should have been heeded before lives were put at risk.

“We must be aiming to join the countries which have brought the infection rate to nearly zero, rather than our current position as a country with one of the highest proportional death rates.

“Instead, the privatised system the government has put all of its faith in is deeply flawed and has increased our vulnerability to coronavirus.

“The government must now take urgent action by cancelling Serco’s contract and backing the local teams who are much better prepared to put in place a comprehensive and safe test and trace system.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/06/serco-wins-covid-19-test-and-trace-contract-despite-lm-fine>

2

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-government-admits-its-test-and-trace-programme-is-unlawful-12032136>

3

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/19/test-and-trace-failures-risk-exponential-coronavirus-case-growth-in-england-official-warns>

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Greens lead on first successful motion to demand government reparations for slavery



15 July 2020

A Green Party councillor has led the way on the first successful motion to demand government reparations for slavery.

Lambeth Council this evening [Wednesday, 15 July] passed a motion calling on the UK government to establish a commission to study the impact of UK involvement in the transatlantic trafficking of enslaved Africans and to make reparations. [1]

The motion, initiated by Green Party Councillor Scott Ainslie [2], is believed to be the first such motion to be passed by a local authority. Greens councillors in Bristol and Islington have also raised the issue in what is expected to become a national campaign.

Ainslie, who worked with the social movement Stop The Maangamizi campaign [3] and the ruling group on Lambeth Council to ensure the motion would pass, said it was vital the government took seriously the impact slavery has had on current racial inequalities in the UK.

He said: "This is an historic motion, and long overdue. The repercussions of hundreds of years of slavery are still all too visible in the inequalities and prejudice which exist in our society today.

"I was delighted that we were able to work together and cross party on this important motion calling on the national government to act. I hope other councils throughout England and the devolved administrations will follow this lead, so we can begin to rid this country from the shameful legacy of its colonial past."

The motion draws direct links between the legacy of slavery and current issues of racial discrimination. It states:

"The legacy of slavery is responsible for ingraining racial inequality within Western society, that manifests itself both in overt acts of violent racism, such as the death of George Floyd at the hands of American police, Black deaths in police, prison, psychiatric custody and immigration detention in the UK, or in institutional failings to provide sufficient support and care for Black communities, such as the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black people in the UK."

Greens of Colour chairperson Azzees Minott said:

“Black people have had to work hard to contribute, be great leaders, curators and innovators in spite of the unequal conditions we have had to deal with for centuries. I’m glad that the Green Party has worked with campaigners to lead the way and address the social injustices that Black people have had to live with for far too long. This motion is the start of something new and it is really exciting.”

The motion calls on the UK government to establish a commission to study the impact of UK involvement in the transatlantic trafficking of enslaved Africans.

It also calls for the UK government to establish an All-Party Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry for Truth and Reparatory Justice to commit the UK government to atone and make reparations to the descendants of enslaved African people, in accordance with international human rights law. Lambeth Council will also commit to supporting a more inclusive historical curriculum in schools.

ENDS

Notes

1

The Council Meeting and full motion text is publicly available:
<https://moderngov.lambeth.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=142&MIId=13766>

2

Scott Ainslie is one of five Green Party Councillors in Lambeth, and former MEP for London. The Green Party is the official opposition group on Lambeth Council.

3

Since 2015, the Stop the Maangamizi Campaign (The Maangamizi is the African Holocaust of chattel, colonial and neocolonial forms of enslavement) in association with the Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March Committee have been organising the annual Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March. The campaign presented the Stop the Maangamizi Petition to the Office of the UK Prime Minister calling for the establishment of an All-Party Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry for Truth and Reparatory Justice:

<https://stopthemaangamizi.com/2015/10/12/about-the-commission-of-inquiry-appcitarj/>

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Caroline Lucas MP response to Rishi Sunak's summer statement on stimulus



8 July 2020

Caroline Lucas response to Sunak statement

"This was yet another Government statement which didn't live up to the hype and does very little in the face of the huge challenges we face.

"For all the promises, repeated again, that this would be a green recovery with concern for the environment at its heart, all we got was a rehash of announcements made earlier this week on a voucher scheme for home insulation – covering less than 3% of homes in England.

"While this is work that desperately needs to be done to tackle emissions from buildings, the scale of what the Government is proposing will have a minimal impact, cutting just 0.14% of UK emissions. It's a pittance in the face of what's needed.

"The can is being kicked down the road to the Autumn Budget when we need to be accelerating action on the climate and nature crises, not delaying it. The Committee on Climate Change said the recovery from Covid needed to be a defining moment in the fight against climate change". All that Rishi Sunak's statement defined was a lack of ambition.

"It was also hugely disappointing that the Chancellor failed to recognise the unfairness of the self-employed support scheme which has far too many gaps to cover all those who are self-employed. He could have done something about that and he failed, washing his hands of millions who've lost their livelihoods.

"I have been campaigning for a cut in VAT for years, doubling down on those calls in recent months because of the terrible impact of coronavirus on the hospitality sector – most recently asking ministers in mid-June to cut the rate to 5%.

"So I'm glad the Chancellor has listened and done exactly that – but it needs to be made permanent. A lower rate of VAT for the next six months could be a lifeline for restaurants, hotels and other businesses in Brighton and Hove, where tourism and hospitality is worth about £900 million to the local economy.

"This industry will not fully recover by itself. The cut in VAT is a good place to start. But as the Chancellor said himself, what is deterring people going out is the lack of public confidence about visiting pubs, restaurants

and other venues. Without an effective track and trace system for Covid, people will be reluctant to go out and spend. The Government has had months to sort this, with money being thrown around with no coherent policy or results.

“This has to be sorted or we will risk new outbreaks of coronavirus and more lockdowns, with potentially devastating impacts on Brighton and Hove’s economy.”

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[Green Party announces leadership candidates as campaign gets underway](#)



2 July 2020

The Green Party has today announced the list of candidates running to be the next leaders of the party before voting gets underway next month.

Three candidates have been nominated for leader, while six candidates have been nominated for the position of deputy leader. Nine other positions on the Green Party Executive are also up for election.

With nominations announced the campaign period has begun with national, regional and special interest hustings being held online through July. Members will then be able to vote between 3 and 31 August and the results will be announced shortly after.

All fully paid-up members are eligible to vote by single transferable vote, with ballots issued by email and, where required, paper copies.

The candidates for leader are:

Shahrar Ali

Jonathan Bartley and Sian Berry

Rosemary Sexton

The candidates for deputy leader are:

James Booth

Andrea Carey Fuller

Nick Humberstone

Cleo Lake

Tom Pashby

Amelia Womack

Green peer and former leader Natalie Bennett said:

“I’m proud to see such a strong and diverse group of candidates ready to build further on the growing strength of the Green Party, following record-breaking European and council elections last year and a strong performance in the general election.

“As we face environmental collapse and social crisis, Britain needs a strong Green voice now more than ever. Greens will always speak truth to power, offering a wholly different model of a society that provides security for all while caring for this fragile, damaged planet.

“I know the whole parliamentary team is looking forward to working with those elected, and the whole of the party as it gathers strength in all of the nations.”

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