

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



Green Party

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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