



## NOTICE OF MOTION – URGENT ITEM – WINTER UTILITY BILLS

The following Urgent Notice of Motion has been received from Councillor Kath Banks, and accepted for consideration by the Mayor:

*"The Council asks that the Government investigate the charges made by all gas and electricity (utility) companies in respect of monthly charges made by direct debit.*

*It has recently come to my attention that householders will this year be required to pay substantial additional amounts per month over and above what they were previously expected to pay.*

*I'm sure that there are many people throughout the country who have received similar requests and who do not understand why such extortionate contributions will be required each month. Nor do I understand how these companies are calculating their bills or why they are not informing customers soon enough when monthly direct debit contributions are not covering the costs of electricity or gas consumption.*

*I am concerned about the impact that this may be having on people, particularly the most vulnerable members of society, who may not be willing or comfortable with challenging the utility companies about such excessive demands.*

*Householders are encouraged to pay their bills on a monthly basis by direct debit so that as customers they don't get into debt, but if monthly repayment requirements are being inflated in this way, it is hard to see how debt may be avoided."*

Proposed by: Cllr K Banks

Seconded by: Cllr J Brunner.

The above Notice of Motion missed the notification period required under Standing Order 6. However, the item has been accepted by the Mayor as Urgent Business for tonight's Council meeting, on the basis of its broad public interest at this time of the year, as winter utility bills are being received by householders, and the fact that there is not a further ordinary Council meeting before 22 June 2009 which could receive the Motion.