



MINUTES

COUNCIL

7.30pm – 9.15pm

27 November 2012

Present: Councillors Gayton (Lord Mayor), Ackroyd, Arthur, Barker, Blunt, Bradford, Bremner, Brimblecombe, Brociek-Coulton, Button, Carlo, Driver, Galvin, Gee, Gihawi, Grahame, Grenville, Harris, Haynes, Howard, Kendrick, Little, Lubbock, MacDonald, Manning, Neale, Price, Sands(M), Sands(S), Stammers, Stephenson, Stonard, Storie, Thomas, Waters, Wright

Apologies: John Jennings (Sheriff) and Councillor Henderson

1. LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

At the invitation of the Lord Mayor, Councillor Arthur said that as this was the first council meeting since Jenny Lay had resigned as councillor on the grounds of ill health, she wanted to acknowledge Jenny's long service as a councillor over many years including last year as Lord Mayor. She had done an excellent job in supporting constituents in Mancroft Ward and latterly in Crome Ward. Her comments were reiterated by Councillor Lubbock.

The Lord Mayor said that he had reached the halfway point in his term of office and had attended 187 tremendously varied engagements and it had been a privilege to meet so many individuals and organisations that made a massive contribution to the life of the city.

Recently he had visited Ipswich to attend a homecoming of the Royal Anglian Regiment. He had taken part in a tree planting ceremony at the Great Hospital organised by Norwich in Bloom and attended prize giving at the Norwich High School for Girls.

On behalf of the council he had laid a wreath at the Remembrance Day ceremony at the War Memorial and took part in the Remembrance Day service at the Cathedral, taking the salute at the parade in Cathedral Close. He welcomed the fact that both events had been very well attended by the public and thanked those councillors who had attended them.

He had attended an 'Art in East Anglia' occasion at the hostry at the Cathedral which was an introduction to an important exhibition planned at the Sainsbury Centre to run from September 2013 to February 2014 to celebrate art and heritage of Norfolk and Suffolk. He hoped the exhibition would include items of the city council's regalia which was second only to that of the City of London.

He had attended a Christmas lights switch on which was enjoyed by a huge crowd in Chapelfield and outside City Hall and the Forum and thanked the events team for its excellent organisation.

He had attended an unusual performance at the Theatre Royal involving three Norfolk schools who had collaborated to produce their own version of the Dvorak opera, Rusalka.

Finally, he had attended the launch at the Forum of the 'Norfolk says no – white ribbon campaign' against domestic abuse. The campaign was launched by the High Sheriff of Norfolk and included a display by organisations involved in assisting victims of domestic abuse.

The Lord Mayor said that he was pleased to announce that the council had been shortlisted for the Local Government Chronicle's most improved council of the year award.

Finally, the Lord Mayor reported that Joyce Morgan, who had been Lord Mayor in 1975/76, had passed away the previous Saturday. There was a moment's silence to reflect on her memory.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Lord Mayor said that four public questions had been received in advance of the meeting.

Question 1

Marion Maxwell to the cabinet member for environment and development:-

"There has been a lot of positive feedback from residents regarding the city council's Switch and Save scheme, with many welcoming the chance to save money on their electricity bills during these difficult times.

Can the portfolio member please update me on the progress of the scheme?"

Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and development replied:-

"Thank you very much for your positive comments on the collective switching scheme. The registration period started on 16 November and came to an end on 25 November.

We have had an excellent participation rate of above 1,768 residents, which is around 2.5% of Norwich's households. The council will be going to auction for the lowest energy tariff on Monday 26 November. The registered participants can accept the offer between the dates of 14 December to 19 December 2012.

The offer is a brilliant opportunity for the residents of the city to have more affordable fuel bills and hopefully make a big difference to people who are finding it hard during these difficult times."

He thanked the staff who had organised the scheme and also the local media who had helped to publicise it.

Question 2

Layla Dickerson to the leader of the council:-

"Last month the local press reported that Norwich City Council's scrutiny committee had received a report, which had been requested by Labour members on the committee, into inequalities and deprivation in this city. The report produced some shocking statistics about differences in life expectancy, rates of ill health, and levels of employment and income across the city. Will the leader of the council explain what actions the Labour administration is taking to address these problems and, in particular, would she explain the role of the council's membership of the Health Cities network in this work?"

Councillor Arthur, leader of the council, replied:-

The report to scrutiny committee set out an overview picture of the deprivation, inequality and welfare issues that people in Norwich experience.

This council has been aware of the many and challenging issues of inequality that were highlighted in this report and have been working continuously to improve the position of many vulnerable groups across the city.

Three years ago, working in partnership with voluntary sector partners Cabinet endorsed a Financial Inclusion Strategy, which led to a range of activity around six themes of:

- income maximisation
- access to free money advice
- increase access to financial products and services
- improve the way people manage their money
- increase access to affordable credit
- working more collaboratively

This has recently been refreshed using a needs assessment for debt and money advice services as part of the evidence base which was developed with partners and

providers and reflecting some of the new challenges facing residents as well as the council.

The revised strategy and needs assessment was used to help commission debt and money advice services from the voluntary sector which will provide debt advice, budgeting management, income maximisation and advocacy and representation for vulnerable groups.

In addition, we are working internally and with partners in order to ensure that people are aware of Government changes that will affect them in the forthcoming months and years due to welfare reform.

People will also be aware of the excellent work carried out by the LEAP team in addressing worklessness and homelessness in young people.

- The council itself is leading the way locally in being a Living Wage employer and will be encouraging more employers through our commissioning process and our influence to follow us in a movement that will affect many more people than just the recipients of the Living Wage.
- Our ground breaking agreement with the Homes and Communities Agency has meant we have been able to provide more affordable homes as well as offer training and apprenticeships to young people who might otherwise have not had that chance.

The report to Scrutiny was supplemented by an in depth presentation by Dr Augustine Pereira, public health consultant which set out how the levels of deprivation in the city are reflected in health outcomes for individuals. This translated into significant health inequalities, including stark differences in life expectancy. Dr Pereira outlined a number of key health and well being indicators against which Norwich fairs significantly worse than the rest of Norfolk and England. Critically these indicators cannot be influenced by the actions of the NHS alone, but require wider collaboration and action.

It is on this basis that in July 2012, cabinet signed the Zagreb declaration and in our civic leadership role, and working with Norwich Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and wider partners, Norwich City Council successfully applied to become a member of the World Health Organisation UK Healthy City Network. Being a member of the healthy city network does not mean that Norwich has achieved a particular health status – good or bad. It means that partners have demonstrated a joint commitment to work together to improve the health outcomes for the people in greater Norwich. Membership of the UK Healthy Cities Network provides the opportunity to galvanise that energy and drive joint action, learning from good practice of other like minded cities and towns in the network.

For greater Norwich it means:

- a formal commitment has been made to embed health and health equity in all local policies made for the future of the greater Norwich area
- we will benefit from shared learning, experience and best practice nationally and internationally

- we will involve local communities in developing and delivering this programme
- partnership projects, based upon evidence of what works, will be developed to promote the health and wellbeing of greater Norwich,
- current and planned work programmes by the city council, Norwich Clinical Commissioning Group and other partners can be branded under the banner of healthy cities to increase recognition of the network and raise awareness of and engagement with health and well-being issues and work. Co-ordinated action can have greater impact in changing behaviours.

The Healthy City Programme will initially direct its activity to the following themes:

- (1) **Physical Activity** – improving awareness of the benefits of an active lifestyle, and improving access to activities in the city.
- (2) **Diet, Nutrition, and Healthy Weight** – supporting people to make healthier food choices, and provide services to people seeking to achieve a healthy weight.
- (3) **Education, Training, and Employment** – recognising that the socio economic status of individuals impacts upon health and wellbeing; seeking to reduce the numbers not in education, training, and employment and promote the “living wage” for those in employment ; working with the education and employment sectors to raise awareness of health issues, and reduce sickness absence.
- (4) **Sexual Health** – promoting safe sex, providing local and confidential sexual health services, and reducing sexually transmitted diseases and unintended pregnancies.
- (5) **Smoking, Alcohol, and Drug Misuse** – helping people to stop smoking through the provision of local smoking cessation services, and reducing drug and alcohol misuse.
- (6) **Health Screening and Prevention** – improving access to screening opportunities, and encouraging people at risk of future ill-health to participate in regular health screening.
- (7) **A Healthy Urban Environment** – making health and wellbeing a key consideration in urban planning, housing, and transport for the city.

Add to this the fact that as a local authority we are working with the Norwich Clinical commissioning group to develop a joint health and well being strategy linking very closely the work of the NHS and Norwich City Council for the benefit of our citizens and I believe we are on the right road the making a real difference to the lives of all our residents from young to old.

Layla Dickerson asked, as a supplementary question, if the leader of the council could outline what extra in terms of the economy and training the council could do to bridge the economy gap. **Council Arthur** said that the council would use its purchasing power and relationship with contractors to achieve a living wage. Mentoring schemes would be promoted and work would be undertaken with city colleges etc. It would use arts and culture to develop people’s increasing aspirations

and with proposals like the city deal will work with the business sector to help make a real difference to the city.

Question 3

Joy Croft to the cabinet member for resources:-

“Would the council please authorise and allocate funds to have white lines painted on the edges of outdoor steps in the city centre, in particular those at the lower end of Hay Hill and around the War Memorial? Such clear indications would make these areas safer for anyone with impaired eyesight – and of course for anyone who is distracted while walking along, eg parents with small children. I appreciate how limited the council’s funds are in these stringent economic times, but this is a very simple and low cost procedure.

Anyone with unequal sight in both eyes or with blurred vision cannot see depth; so from above, steps look exactly like flat pavement. There is no way to tell the difference until one has fallen down them. This is particularly dangerous in places like Hay Hill, where the steps “grow” out of a slope and have different depths at different points, or the War Memorial, where there are several ways in, confusingly near together, some with steps and some not.

The council has already taken notice by having lines put on the edges of the steps at City Hall. Please add them elsewhere so that visually impaired citizens like me can relax and enjoy their fine city, just like everyone else”.

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources replied:-

“In reference to the Memorial Gardens, English Heritage is generally against the application of paint on listed structures.

However, the city council received planning consent for a listed structure in early November to use brass studs to highlight the steps. This option was reviewed by the Norwich access group and the Norfolk and Norwich association for the blind, prior to submission.

An order has been placed with a stone mason and the works will be carried out this financial year but as the team will be using lime mortars the work is very temperature dependant. Whilst it unlikely to be started this side of Christmas, once the weather is suitable any time after the January sales the team will mobilise to complete these localised works.

With Hay Hill, plenty of background work has also taken place. Team members are devising adjustments to the definition of the steps at the bottom of Hay Hill. They are also looking at the possibility of adjustments further up Hay Hill and outside the Forum. It is likely that a site visit will be carried out with city council staff and a Norwich access group representative to pinpoint the difficulties; what action the council may need to take; what the best design solution could be; how much it will cost and other such concerns.

I am therefore happy to confirm that work has commenced in moving towards improved access for those living with visual impairment in both areas of the city you mention.”

Joy Croft said she was very pleased to hear of the proposals and asked, as a supplementary question, how she would find out about the changes.

Councillor Waters said he would be happy to keep her informed.

Question 4

Helen Whitworth to the cabinet member for resources:-

“Could the cabinet member for resources please let me know what proactive steps the council has taken in order to support businesses in Earham House through the use of hardship relief for business rates, something the council has the discretion to give in special circumstances.”

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources replied:-

“Thank you for your question. Can I take the opportunity to provide some relevant background. The business rate is a national tax and local authorities have no influence over the valuation process. The Valuation Office Agency, part of her Majesty’s Revenues and Customs determines the rateable value and Norwich City Council, as a billing authority, is duty bound to charge business rates using the rating list provided by them. However, in terms of the multipliers that influence the actual business rate due, premises with a rateable value of less than £18,000 are charged at a lower rate, which clearly favours smaller businesses, and in addition, a small business rate relief is available for properties with a rateable value below £12,000, where the ratepayer does not occupy any other business premises in England. Since 1 October 2010 until 31 March 2013 this relief has been doubled so that ratepayers with rateable values of less than £6,000 pay no rates at all and those between £6,000 and not more than £12,000 receive a tapered relief from 100% to 0%.

This information and advice about how to claim small business rate relief can be found on the council’s website with a downloadable form that can be completed and sent back to the revenues and benefits department. Specialist advice on business rates and rate reliefs can be sought from the Business Rates Team”.

4. PETITIONS

There were no petitions.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 25 September 2012.

6. QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

The Lord Mayor advised that 14 questions had been received from members of the council to cabinet member and committee chairs, of which notice had been given in

accordance with the provisions of Appendix 1 of the council's constitution and the questions were as follows:-

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Question 1 | Councillor Price to the cabinet member for play, parks and open spaces on allotment rents. |
| Question 2 | Councillor Howard to the cabinet member for resources on business rates for small and fledgling businesses. |
| Question 3 | Councillor Neale to the cabinet member for play, parks and open spaces on the council's sourcing strategy for new trees and shrubs. |
| Question 4 | Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for a prosperous city on city deals. |
| Question 5 | Councillor Stephenson to the leader of the council on the timescale for city deals. |
| Question 6 | Councillor Gee to the cabinet member for value for money services on the future of 6-9 Ninhams Court. |
| Question 7 | Councillor Galvin to the cabinet member for environment and development on the Big Switch and Save campaign. |
| Question 8 | Councillor Stammers to the cabinet member for environment and development on the big switch and save scheme. |
| Question 9 | Councillor Brimblecombe to the cabinet member for environment and development on car parking policy in respect of schools. |
| Question 10 | Councillor Haynes to the cabinet member for housing on sheltered housing schemes. |
| Question 11 | Councillor Harris to the cabinet member for resources on progress in achieving accreditation as a living wage employer from the Living Wage Foundation. |
| Question 12 | Councillor Ackroyd to the cabinet member for resources on the the possibility of working with local post office branches to deliver council services. |
| Question 13 | Councillor Wright to the cabinet member for environment and neighbourhoods on action in respect of wheelie bins on the street. |
| Question 14 | Councillor Lubbock to the cabinet member for resources on the cost of by-elections. |

(Details of the questions and replies together with any supplementary questions and replies are attached at Appendix A to these minutes.)

7. AMENDMENTS TO POLICY FRAMEWORK AND BUDGET 2012/13

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Kendrick seconded, the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to –

- (1) increase the non-housing capital plan 2012/13 – 2016/17 and non-housing capital programme 2012/13 by £0.8 million for IT investment;
- (2) reduce the general fund prudent level of reserves 2012/13 by £1 million.

8. POLICE REFORM AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ACT 2011 – EARLY MORNING RESTRICTION ORDERS AND LATE NIGHT LEVY

Councillor Kendrick moved, and Councillor Button seconded, the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, -

- (1) to advertise in accordance with section 172(b)(i)(a) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 the introduction of an Early Morning Restriction Order, to be pre-faced by a yes/no question asking whether the principal of Early Morning Restriction Orders is supported, and if yes to indicate the preferred option, namely to introduce either:-
 - (a) an Early Morning Restriction Order (EMRO) to prohibit the sale of alcohol between the hours of 03:00 and 06:00, Monday to Sunday in respect of the whole of the licensing authority area, with the exception of the area currently designated by the council as the Late Night Activity Zone (LNAZ) within which the sale of alcohol will be prohibited between the hours of 03:00 and 06:00 Monday to Friday and 04:00 and 06:00 on Saturdays and Sundays;
 - (b) an EMRO to prohibit the sale of alcohol between the hours of 02:30 and 06:00, Monday to Sunday in respect of the whole of the licensing authority area, with the exception of the area currently designated by the council as the Late Night Activity Zone (LNAZ) within which the sale of alcohol will be prohibited between the hours of 02:30 and 06:00 Monday to Friday and 03:30 and 06:00 on Saturdays and Sundays;
- (2) not to introduce at this time a late night levy as defined in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011.

9. PROVISION OF SOCIAL HOUSING ON PHASE 1 OF THE BOWTHORPE THREE SCORE DEVELOPMENT

Councillor MacDonald moved, and Councillor Arthur seconded, the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to agree an additional allocation of £4,728,000 in the housing capital plan, agreed at the 21 February 2012 council, to enable the council to provide 47 social rented dwellings and eight shared equity dwellings on Phase 1 of the Three Score, Bowthorpe development subject to planning consent.

10. PROVISION OF SOCIAL HOUSING AT POINTERS FIELD

Councillor MacDonald moved, and Councillor Arthur seconded, the recommendation in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to agree the inclusion of £800,000 in the housing capital plan, as agreed at the 21 February 2012 council, to enable construction of seven new council dwellings on land at Pointers Field, subject to planning consent.

CHAIR

APPENDIX A

Questions to cabinet members and chairs

Question 1

Councillor Price to the cabinet member for play, parks and open spaces:-

“Next year's increase in allotment rents represents a 65 per cent increase, I acknowledge that the council needs to make savings and that the changes were made following last year's public consultation. The impact that this will have on residents' finances is negative at a time when everybody is feeling squeezed. Could I have an assurance that rent increases will only increase in line with inflation from now on?”

Councillor Gihawi, cabinet member for play, parks and open spaces' reply:-

“As part of the consultation carried out in October 2011 for reducing council costs, a number of saving options were put forward including the proposal to increase allotment fees to £70 per year. The results of the consultation put this option in the top 10. As a result it was included in the budget savings proposals. It is expected this will generate additional income of £20,000 per year for the council. However, even with the increase in fees the allotment service is still subsidised by the council with the income generated not covering the full costs of the service. Any future rises will be determined by the cost of the service, needs of the council and according to the priorities at that time.

Members will also wish to note that allotment holders who are registered for our Go for Less card or who are of pensionable age are entitled to a 50% reduction in the fee. This does mean a significant number (approx 40%) of allotment holders do not pay the full price.”

Councillor Price asked, as a supplementary question, if the cabinet member could confirm that future increases would not be above inflation. **Councillor Gihawi** said that she couldn't give any assurances about the future. She said that officers were always looking at ways to reduce costs but emphasised that there was still a £25,000 gap between the cost of delivering the allotment service and the income received.

Question 2

Councillor Howard to the cabinet member for Resources

“Norwich has a unique range of local business and retailers which attract many thousands of visitors to the city. The result of this high level of tourism is that many millions are spent here. The news that Norwich is in the top ten shopping districts must come as a relief to many business that are struggling in the current economic climate. In order to improve our local economy, what are the possible measures that

the council can offer to small and fledgling business in order to help them cope with business rates and how many of these measures are being taken?"

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for Resources reply:-

"I am delighted that Norwich continues to be recognised as one of the leading retail tourism and cultural centres in the UK. I am also pleased that as part of the City Deals proposal, the government has identified Norwich as one of the regional centres that is most likely to grow in the future. Equally in my role as a Member of the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership, I am very much aware of the challenges facing new enterprises during their early years.

The Business rate is a national tax and local authorities have no influence over the valuation process. The Valuation Office Agency, part of Her Majesty's Revenues and Customs determines the rateable value and Norwich City Council, as a billing authority, is duty bound to charge business rates using the rating list provided by them. However, in terms of the multipliers that influence the actual business rate due, premises with a rateable value of less than £18,000 are charged a lower rate, which clearly favours smaller businesses, and in addition, a small business rate relief is available for properties with a rateable value below £12,000, where the ratepayer does not occupy any other business premises in England. Since 1 October 2010 until 31 March 2013 this relief has been doubled so that ratepayers with rateable values of less than £6,000 pay no rates at all and those between £6,000 and not more than £12,000 receive a tapered relief from 100% to 0%.

Furthermore in terms of specific help for fledgling businesses, Norwich City Council signposts all small and start-up businesses to local business support services for help with business planning and always recommends that professional business advice is sought in order to avoid many of the pitfalls associated with taking on business premises, for businesses which have been started from home. In addition to specific advice on business rates and available rate reliefs from the Business Rates Team, two City Council initiatives offer support to fledgling businesses - Norwich Enterprise Centre offers professional business advice to start-up and growing small businesses and in partnership with Norfolk County Council the City Council is providing free workshops to support those looking to start online businesses from Business Revolution at The King's Centre."

Finally, we should not forget the macroeconomic context which businesses of all kinds, including small businesses have to operate. Demand has been sucked out the economy in the past two years. 'Expansionary Austerity' has failed and the International Monetary Fund have reassessed their multiplier for the impact of spending cuts from a 0.5 reduction in GDP (£10bn of spending cuts will reduce GDP by around £5bn) to an impact figure of 0.9 – 1.7% reduction in GDP (£10bn of spending cuts will reduce GDP by between £9bn & £17bn). Sadly, the Prime Minister and Chancellor remain committed to further cuts in public expenditure, to be announced in the Autumn Statement, including further cuts for local government which can only compound the problems faced by businesses in the city. In Norwich, Welfare reform changes alone will – using the Government's own estimates – suck about £11million out of the local economy. What is growing of course is the number of food banks; but I find it difficult to believe that this type of growth can provide the foundations upon which a strong economy can be built and healthy businesses sustained."

Councillor Howard asked, as a supplementary question, what a councillor could do if they noticed that a business was struggling to pay rates. What could the council do to help. **Councillor Waters** said that businesses could seek a meeting with the council and be considered for business rate relief. The council worked with other partners to give specified advice on setting up and sustaining businesses etc. It was worth noting that the government had closed Business Link and the council had picked up the additional burden as a result.

Question 3

Councillor Neale to the cabinet member for play, parks and open spaces:-

“In addition to the current problem with Ash dieback disease we already have several other threats to trees and plants present in the UK, many with the potential to devastate native plant stock. To compound this it's expected that more than 30 plant attacking alien species of insects, bacteria, viruses, disease, pathogens and invasive plants could reach Britain from various countries in the next few years so it would seem wise to at least source the city's tree and shrub stocks from local growers with good credentials. Could the cabinet member responsible for environmental issues give details of the sourcing strategy in place for new trees and shrubs used by the city, specifically their country of origin?”

Councillor Gihawi, cabinet member for play, parks and open spaces reply:-

“All trees and plants are procured in accordance with our policies and procedures. Where possible plant material for our landscape schemes are sourced using the National Plant Specification, which details information on origin and provenance. Where possible we try to source from local suppliers ensuring plants are grown in a local climate therefore giving the best chance of success when used in planting schemes. In the case of trees these are grown in this country by our current supplier and Defra undertakes an annual inspection to guarantee the quality and the origin of the trees.”

Councillor Neale said that he was pleased that trees and shrubs were sourced locally. However, he asked, as a supplementary question, if the cabinet member was concerned that Defra was the body making annual inspections when it hadn't taken the ash dieback situation seriously. **Councillor Gihawi** said that this was a specialised area and she would happily email a website address that would give relevant information to Councillor Neale.

Question 4

Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for a prosperous city:-

“Can I ask cabinet members on the Greater Norwich Development Panel (GNDP) to advocate a framework for identifying and selecting projects for any City Deals submission bid based on the following criteria: meeting all sustainability criteria, including the critical need to be carbon-neutral; addressing widespread, long standing inequalities within the City of Norwich; addressing the democratic deficit

within the GNDP including the need for transparency, openness, public participation and equality? “

Councillor Arthur, Leader of the Council reply:-

“It is excellent news that the city council and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) have been invited, along with 19 other cities, to submit proposals to the government to establish a city deal for the greater Norwich area. A city deal is an agreement between local authorities and the government and aims to give cities the powers and tools they need to drive local economic growth, unlock projects or initiatives that would boost the local economy and strengthen the governance arrangements for each city. In the case of Norwich, the city council is working in partnership with Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils, the county council and the LEP, to prepare a city deals submission.

As well as capturing opportunities to build on the growth potential of the greater Norwich area, an essential part of a city deal will be how the whole community will benefit from this growth. This inclusive approach will, over the 20 year timeframe of a city deal, seek to address fundamental social inequalities. Furthermore in implementing the key policies in the joint core strategy, the local authorities will be also be promoting the delivery of sustainable new development supported by appropriate infrastructure.

Although it will be a submission made on behalf of all of the authorities that currently constitute the Greater Norwich Development Partnership, the governance arrangements required to deliver a city deal will be very different and separate from this bid. The form and nature of this governance structure will need to reflect the deal negotiated with central government and the requirement to secure private sector commitment. However it is clear that there will be significant local authority involvement in any future decision making structure that will ensure local democratic accountability.”

Councillor Carlo asked, as a supplementary question, if the cabinet member could share the main ideas that the Greater Norwich Development Partnership would be outlining to civil servants regarding city deals. **Councillor Arthur** said that the latest position had been explained fully at the all councillors briefing the previous week. She emphasised that nothing was ‘set in stone’. The final bid would be made by the Greater Norwich Development Partnership but the body that would set out the proposals within city deals would not be the Greater Norwich Development Partnership. She anticipated that projects would be included around infrastructure, superfast broadband, skills and employability. The cabinet office would be reviewing the work undertaken so far by all the councils involved. The final bid would be made in January 2013 after further discussions with the cabinet office and all the partners.

Question 5

Councillor Stephenson to the leader of the council and the cabinet member for city of character and culture and prosperous city:-

“Given that other councils around the country in the “second wave” began to work on a city deal in June 2012 or earlier, and the Greater Norwich Development Panel was

aware of the possibility at their meeting in September, why did Norwich City Council not begin work on this project before it did?"

Councillor Arthur, leader of the council and cabinet member for City of character and culture and prosperous city's reply:-

"One of the many positive characteristics of the council is that it is constantly scanning the 'political horizon' of government announcements, intentions and possibilities to look for potential opportunities and new initiatives that will benefit the city. In doing this the council became aware early in 2012, through its work as a member of the growth cities network that there was a possibility of another round of city deals. However it was less than clear if this would involve two tier authorities and there was no information on the nature of any proposal.

Therefore it is not a surprise to me that based on this possibility our officers took the initiative to investigate this further. As a starting point they presented a report to the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) Board in March 2012 suggesting that the partnership should be pro-active and advise the Government that it had a 'willingness' and an 'appetite' to establish a city deal for the Greater Norwich area. Councillors on the board recognised that even though there was a major lack of information and some uncertainty around this issue it could have significant benefits for the area and they supported this approach.

Therefore for many months the council was alert to the possibility of a second round of deals. Furthermore officers with colleagues across the GNDP area and within the Growth Cities network and with the support of cabinet members worked hard behind-the-scenes to ensure that Norwich was recognised as a suitable location.

This work did not have any formal status because the Government had not released any details and for this reason it was not the subject of a report to cabinet – which is probably where the impression has been gained that the council was not looking at this issue. Having said that, within days of the council being informed of the invitation to submit a proposal for a city deal a report was presented to the November cabinet, members of the cross party transformation working party were advised, an all member briefing was held and the chief executive and I hosted a number of round table discussions with major business, academic institutions and other service providers. At these sessions it was explained that the surprise element of the second wave was a requirement to submit an expression of interest within a five week period that captured, albeit at a fairly high level, the major economic issue that needs to be addressed to unlock the growth potential of the area.

From discussions with other cities included in Wave 2 this unexpected element of the bid process is proving to be a major challenge.

However our work ground breaking work with the Homes and Communities Agency and our work with the Greater Norwich Partnership and the New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership has put us in a stronger position than many of the other 19 cities. The feedback we are receiving from government is that we have built a very strong base to use as a platform from which to grow the economy. The Greater Norwich partnership has a track record of reacting quickly to new initiatives and I am confident that working as a collective partnership together with the New Anglia LEP, we will meet this submission deadline to help secure our goal of a 'deal' for the city. "

Councillor Stephenson said that council officers had spent a great deal of time persuading the government that Norwich was a suitable place for a city deal. She asked, as a supplementary question, couldn't work have been started much earlier on what Norwich needed from a city deal and shouldn't we already have such a plan in place. **Councillor Arthur** said that the council was very clear about what was needed in the city. This was an opportunity to make government aware of the excellent work that was going on in the local authority and the bid would build on the good work undertaken so far which was emphasised by the Local Government Chronicle shortlisting the council in the most improved council category. The aims and objectives are outlined in the corporate plan. A city deal would give access to more funding and the government would cede certain power to allow the partners to use the increased funds in the way they knew was required locally.

Question 6

Councillor Gee to the cabinet member for value for money services:-

"I am concerned about the future of the council-owned property at 6 and 9 Ninham's Court. I am aware that some local residents have expressed concerns about the current state and the future use of this beautiful and historic building. Could the cabinet member reassure me that the council will do all it can to ensure the upkeep and use of the building in the future?"

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for value for money services' reply:-

"This property, which has been gifted to the Council, was until some 6 years ago occupied as a residential dwelling. Since the death of the tenant, several attempts have been made to secure the long term future of the property whilst adhering to the obligation to enable public access and ensure that it is brought back into a state of good repair.

Discussions are at an advanced stage with a specialist "not for profit" registered charitable trust, whose specific aim is to secure and preserve for the benefit of the nation historical, architectural buildings of interest. The trust are fully conversant with the restoration of such buildings and are currently undertaking a full options appraisal and feasibility study, with professional consultants appointed. Applications for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other sources are being prepared as are discussions with English Heritage and other appropriate bodies. The intention is for the trust to be granted a long lease at a peppercorn rent to enable it to fully restore and sympathetically modernise the property to a high standard to provide short term holiday letting accommodation together with appropriate access for members of the general public and educational links with the local community."

Councillor Gee said that the discussions were 'at an advanced stage'. He said that councillors had found this out recently by email and asked, as a supplementary question, if officers could inform local councillors of such proposals in future.

Councillor Waters said that asset disposals were alerted towards the councillors. The property had been empty for a long time and the council was always looking at ways to bring such buildings back into use. There would be an opportunity to give more information and if Councillor Gee wished to visit the building it could be arranged.

Question 7

Councillor Galvin to the cabinet member for environment and development:-

"I hope that the council's Big Switch and Save campaign will help the council achieve its aims of tackling the major problem of fuel poverty in the city. I hope that the council can achieve the best possible deal for its residents. After the auction has taken place, will participants be given a comparison of the deal negotiated with the best possible alternative scheme on the market, in addition to their current plan? Will information given include details of all "transfer fees" and any other costs? For each participant in the Big Switch and Save scheme, how much money will be paid to the council as a "sign-up fee" and what will it be spent on?"

Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and development reply:-

"Thank you for your best wishes with regards to the Norwich Big Switch and Save scheme. I am pleased to report that over 1500 households have registered with the scheme. We too hope to achieve the best possible deal for our residents.

Once the auction is completed registrants should expect to receive notification of their new deal. They then have up to 4 weeks to consider whether they wish to take up the deal or not. They are under no obligation to do so. The deal will detail any costs which may be incurred if the resident chooses to accept the deal. It will also detail the savings to be made.

I'm happy to share with you on a confidential basis the amount of money the council will receive from its switching partner for each household that switches but as this information is commercially sensitive and subject to a confidentiality agreement under the terms of the contract with the switching partner it can't be shared in a public answer. Once the council's costs have been covered, if there is any additional income created by the scheme it will be proposed as part of the council's budget for next year that this will be used for future affordable warmth work. Further details of our planned affordable warmth work programme can be found in the new Affordable warmth strategy, approved at cabinet last week."

Councillor Galvin said that of the people signing up for the Big Switch and Save campaign only 5% had done so offline. Other councils had achieved 20% of offline sign ups. She asked, as a supplementary question, if the cabinet member was concerned that the way the Big Switch and Save scheme had been rolled out meant it was reaching those that could afford internet access rather than others who were in greater need. **Councillor Bremner** said that the number of people signing up has proved the campaign was a big success and the council would look at how to increase offline sign ups with future similar schemes.

Question 8

Councillor Stammers to the cabinet member for environment and development:-

"I was interested to read that participants in the council's Big Switch and Save scheme were being joined up at the auction stage with four other schemes in order to boost the bargaining power at auction. Which other schemes are joining us, and

would having a very large number of potential participants not rule out smaller electricity providers from being able to bid?"

Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and development's reply:-

"Thank you for your interest in the Norwich Big Switch and Save scheme.

During this particular tranche of the collective switch Norwich City Council will be joined at the auction stage by four other collective switching schemes which include: two local authorities (Oldham Council and South Holland District Council), a national political group (the labour party) and a national union group (Unison).

Norwich City Council is currently one of the first councils to participate in a collective switching approach. In the new year we will run a second tranche and may be joined at the auction stage by a number of other switching schemes. The aim being that the higher the number of registrants, the greater bargaining power when the group of schemes goes out to the energy market for a competitive deal, and ultimately the better energy deal for Norwich residents.

Small energy providers are not precluded from becoming the successful bidder as evidenced by the recent selection of OVO energy as the winning bidder of the recent South Lakeland energy switching scheme."

Councillor Stammers asked, as a supplementary question, if the council talked to other councils when negotiating terms. **Councillor Bremner** said that the council talked to a number of different organisations to get the best deal.

Question 9

Councillor Brimblecombe to the cabinet member for environment and development:-

"Rare funding for a new playing field - for the children of Henderson Green Primary School - was gained at the beginning of this year after a long campaign by local residents and councillors that saw a petition of 800 signatures submitted to Norfolk County Council. However at the planning stage there was one objector. Unfortunately it was the city council, on the grounds that there should be more space for car parking. The city council has a different policy on car parking for schools than the county council and the Highways Agency. Thankfully, the objection was not sustained at the county council's planning committee last Friday. I am sure cabinet agrees that a playing field is entirely desirable, especially when funding for such projects is extremely rare. This put the city council in an embarrassing position, especially as the objection was reported in the EDP and evening news. Will the cabinet look at revising policy in this area to prevent such embarrassment in the future?"

Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment reply:-

"The much needed investment in the playing field is indeed very welcome and the representation welcomed the provision of the new school playing field. In fact,

because of my other role I was able to vote in favour of the application when it was considered at the county council's planning regulatory committee.

But the playing field proposal also included an enlarged car park for the school which is to be fenced off from the surrounding community playing fields, fenced off from the open space and fenced off from an area that has planning permission for a community centre. The nature of the objection that the city council officers made to the application was not as you suggest in the question. You say in your question 'Thankfully, the objection was not sustained at the county council's planning committee last Friday'. Did you not realise that the city was calling for less parking not more? Another statement in your question 'Unfortunately it was the city council, on the grounds that there should be more space for car parking.' is therefore wrong - the city council were calling for less space for car parking to serve the school.

The level of car parking proposed is over the parking levels set out in our local plan for schools and the city representation recommended that a joint use of the car park be sought to service not only the school but the adjacent community park uses. That will now not happen.

The representation from the city did not agree to the increased level of parking above the city urban standard. We have a longstanding issue with the County Council with them insisting on applying county wide parking standards for school sites which may be appropriate in the middle of the country but which are not right in urban areas where many of the staff will live within walking and cycling distance, and many staff at city schools do walk, cycle and use public transport.

So embarrassed at promoting more walking, cycling and use of public transport in the city? No"

Councillor Brimblecombe said that this council had been the only objector. She asked, as a supplementary question, if the council would consider these objections in future and take into account the risk. **Councillor Bremner** said he was very surprised at the question as this position did not risk anything. He suggested Councillor Brimblecombe should consider apologising to the planners because she seemed to have the situation the wrong way round.

Question 10

Councillor Haynes to the cabinet member for housing:-

"Which sheltered housing schemes are proposed to be decommissioned for general needs housing?"

Councillor MacDonald, cabinet member for housing reply:-

"In June 2012 Cabinet considered future investment in the sheltered housing stock. It was agreed to develop a five year investment programme for inclusion in the housing capital programme, estimated to cost £2.6m, to improve and reconfigure high demand purpose built flatted sheltered housing. I am pleased to say that work is progressing on developing this investment programme and a number of options are being assessed. Cabinet also agreed to review, on a scheme by scheme basis,

the future of all other sheltered housing for which there is a lower level of demand. As shown on the forward plan a report is scheduled to be made to the next meeting of cabinet on this review. Further to the consultation we have already carried out with tenants through the sheltered housing forum and CWB and general communications/updates to tenants in sheltered we will engage and consult with tenants on a block by block basis subject to the proposals and timetable for their specific block."

Councillor Haynes said that some members of the public had indicated that they had seen a list of properties and asked, as a supplementary question, if the cabinet member could email her a copy of the list. **Councillor MacDonald** said that she was sorry that Councillor Haynes, as a shadow portfolio member, had not come direct to her to talk about this matter rather than asking a question to council. The council would continue to have discussions with tenants when they brought ideas forward and nothing had been labelled yet.

Question 11

Councillor Harris to the cabinet member for resources:-

"Could the deputy leader give an update on the Labour administrations progress in achieving accreditation for the city council as a living wage employer from the Living Wage Foundation?"

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources reply:-

'In October, cabinet took an important decision to seek living wage status for the council. Living Wage has been an aspiration of this administration for a number of years which has been driven by the need to respond to the embedded issue that exists for many working residents of Norwich who have to rely on benefits for housing and council tax costs and tax credits as they still earn below what is required to live to save or fully participate in society.

This can lead to increased debt, increased risk of use of illegal money lending, higher levels of stress and family breakdown.

Following the cabinet decision to seek living wage accreditation from the living wage foundation, staff have undertaken a detailed assessment of the Council's main contracts to indentify the financial implications of implementing the living wage so that a timeline for implementation could be established.

In order for living wage accreditation to be accepted by the foundation, a timetable needs to be developed that shows when all contractors will be paying a living wage to all workers engaged in work for the council.

Paying a living wage has been incorporated into the council's procurement process to ensure that contract documents include payment of a Living Wage. We are currently in the middle of a tendering process that for the first time included provisions relating to the payment of the Living Wage.

As this work has progressed, informal discussion has taken place with the Living Wage Foundation regarding this timetable and they have confirmed that they are happy with the agreement and schedule.

Therefore, it is with great pleasure that I can announce to council that our application for accreditation will be signed this week and we will join the growing numbers of local authorities, businesses and other bodies that recognise the benefits of a Living Wage.

Nearly 100 organisations across the country have received accreditation including 9 local authorities. Many more are currently seeking this status because of the recognisable benefits it brings to communities.

80% of the employers who are paying a Living Wage report enhanced quality of work from their employees and a 25% fall in absenteeism in contracted out services that are now paying a Living Wage. In London alone over 45,000 families have been lifted out of working poverty during the last 5 years.

The discussion at cabinet quite rightly identified that a key beneficiary of a Living Wage will be women and I echo that fact and additionally say that by paying a Living Wage working families will be able to spend more time with their family and not suffer a growing problem – that of ‘time poverty’.”

Councillor Harris asked, as a supplementary question, how the council was applying the living wage policy. **Councillor Waters** said he could report two initiatives that were using the living wage. The re-let of the swimming pool contract was living wage compliant and discussions were ongoing into introducing living wage for the street/trees and grounds maintenance contract. He said that this was an opportunity to thank colleagues in other political groups, particularly the Green group, for following the Labour Group’s lead on this issue.

Question 12

Councillor Ackroyd to the cabinet member for resources:-

“At our meeting in July, council resolved unanimously to ask cabinet to consider the potential benefits of working with local branches and Post Office Ltd to deliver council services.

In light of the recent announcement that DVLA has awarded a new contract to Post Office Limited to provide services locally, enabling motorists to tax their cars and apply for driving licenses, could the cabinet member please update me as to what work has been undertaken by cabinet to date following our motion.”

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources reply:-

“We continue to develop our channel shift programme and as part of this we are looking wherever possible for opportunities to use post offices and improve access to local services for residents. Payment of services through the Post Office network is actively encouraged through the use of barcodes on documentation. This enables our customers to pay in cash at one of the post offices if they have not already

arranged for payment via another method like direct debit or chosen to use an electronic method of payment using a debit card.”

Question 13

Councillor Wright to the cabinet member for environment and neighbourhoods:-

“On 14 November the Norwich Evening News carried an article about the potential for issuing an £80 fine for those people who persistently leave their wheelie bins on the street. A city council spokesman is quoted as saying “We have never had to issue a fine, since introducing this way of working in October 2008, as residents seem to understand the need for keeping the pavement clear.”

A Labour Party leaflet being distributed in Nelson states that “This could include issuing an £80 fixed notice to householders. There are instances in the local community where this has already happened.”

Could the cabinet member please confirm who is correct here – the city council spokesman or the Norwich Labour Party?”

Councillor Driver, cabinet member for environment and neighbourhoods reply:-

Section 46 of the Environmental Protection Act provides a local waste collection authority with the power to serve a fixed penalty notice for what is termed ‘a failure to comply with a waste receptacle notice’. This notice could include, amongst other things, enforcement for a failure by the household to use the bins provided for the purposes intended, failure to retain bins within the curtilage of a dwelling etc.

I recognise that bins left on the street for a long period can cause frustration and annoyance at a local level. In seeking to address this the Council, like most other local authorities, has adopted the approach of working with local residents to find a solution. This task is undertaken by the neighbourhood teams and our focus is on education before formal enforcement. This is normally successful but with changes in residential occupancy, particularly student areas, I accept that this is can be a constant challenge.

Although the city council has never issued a fixed penalty notice to a resident for leaving their bins on the pavement. we have issued fixed penalty notices under the same provision (Section 46) of the Environmental Protection Act. This was for the misuse of the bin and not putting waste out correctly. In this particular case they were issued after a long running period of reminders and other issues leaving the council no option but to serve the notices. This option would also be available for addressing persistent refusal to remove a wheeled bin from the highway. Therefore I see no contradiction between the response to the question from the press and the observations in the leaflet.

Councillor Wright asked, as a supplementary question, if the cabinet member could confirm the council has been using every opportunity possible to communicate with residents. **Councillor Driver** said yes.

Question 14

Councillor Lubbock to the cabinet member for resources:-

“There is to be a by election on 19 December in Nelson Ward. This has been brought about by the resignation of a Green Councillor David Rogers who was elected in May, just 6 months ago. His reason for resigning as stated in the EDP and EN is that he ‘can no longer support the Green Party. I have seen the dangers that the Green Party presents and I must oppose the Green Party’. He went on to say that he was ‘dissatisfied with how the Green Party was run and that it attracted the gullible and the authoritarian which was a dangerous combination in party politics.’

While his reasons for resigning are a matter for the Green Party and the electorate of Nelson Ward I am very concerned that this election is an additional cost to the council tax payers of Norwich and that an election in December with fewer polling stations will have an effect on turnout.

Please could you say just how much this by election will cost at a time when money is tight and what the new arrangements with regard to polling stations will be? I also wonder whether there is anything the council can do to ensure that candidates to elections understand the demands of the role and their responsibility to the electorate emphasising the normal 4 years as the length of time in office and the annual May elections for those who wish to resign?”

Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources’ reply:-

The cost of the last by-election, for the county council’s Lakenham Division in 2011, was £10908. On that occasion it was the sitting Liberal-Democrat councillor who resigned their seat. There will be economies of scale which means that the total cost of the Crome and Nelson by-elections which will both be held on 19 December will not be double that, but this is an indication of the costs involved.

In Nelson Ward two of the four polling stations usually used are available for the by-election. However, the Belvedere Centre and St Peter’s Church Hall, Park Lane are unavailable so St Thomas’ Parish Hall will be used as a double polling station instead.

Democratic Services has produced a leaflet “Becoming a Councillor” which sets out the role and length of service for a councillor. If any individuals approach the council direct to ask about becoming a councillor they are given the leaflet and these points are emphasised to them. However, the usual route is for candidates to be identified through political groups and all groups have a responsibility, when selecting candidates, to ensure that those chosen are well aware of the responsibilities they are taking on.

That said, the elections laws allow for people to resign during their four year term and there are clear rules that determine the timescales for a subsequent by-election, triggered by two electors asking for the vacancies to be filled.

For all of us, currently sitting as councillors, circumstances in our lives can change. Former councillor Jenny Lay resigned on ill-health grounds recognising that she could not continue to carry out her duties as a councillor to the high standards she

has always set herself. The former Liberal Democrat County Councillor for Lakenham Ward, resigned, I believe because of a new job opportunity overseas. As for the resignation of former Councillor David Rogers, apparently unresolvable internal party differences made it difficult to stay on the council.

We have to accept that situations of this kind will arise from time to time and some by-elections can't wait until the next May election cycle - on the important grounds that citizens in wards where there is a vacancy, deserve a full slate of councillors to represent them.