



**COUNCIL**

**7.30 p.m. – 9.50 p.m.**

**3 June 2008**

Present: Councillor Hooke (Lord Mayor), Roy Waller (Sheriff) (item 1 only), Councillors Arthur, Banham, Bearman, Blakeway, Bradford, Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Cannell, Collishaw, Divers, Dylan, Driver, Fairbairn, Fisher, George, Gledhill, Holmes, Jago, Jeraj, Lay, Little A, Little S, Llewellyn, Lubbock, Makoff, Mayhew, Morphey, Morrey, Offord, Ramsay, Read, Stephenson, Surridge, Waters, Watkins, Wyatt

Apologies: Councillors Blower and Wright

**1. APPOINTMENT OF SHERIFF**

Councillor Morphey moved and Councillor Ramsay seconded and it was –

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, to appoint Roy Waller to the office of Sheriff of Norwich for the new Civic Year.

Roy Waller then made and signed the declaration of acceptance of office and acknowledged the honour conferred on him.

(There then followed a short adjournment before the remaining business of the meeting.)

**2. LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Lord Mayor announced that:-

- (1) he had attended a number of events including –
  - (a) a private visit to the Eurovision Song Contest during which he had visited Norwich's twin city Novi Sad and met her Majesty's Ambassador to Serbia who sent his best wishes to the City of Norwich;
  - (b) a Rotary Club luncheon;
  - (c) the Maddermarket Ball;
  - (d) Liberty for Lawyers.
- (2) Howard Lee, the Malaysian who had recently been deported, had been given entry clearance to return to the UK;

- (3) he had received a letter from someone in Belgium regarding the war grave of a soldier from Norfolk that he had discovered through research.

### **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

### **4. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings held on 18 March 2008 and 26 March 2008.

### **5. QUESTIONS TO EXECUTIVE MEMBERS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

The Lord Mayor advised members that 20 questions had been received on which notice had been given in accordance with the provision of Appendix 1 of the Council's Constitution. Two similar questions had been received regarding the 20 mph speed limit and these were taken together as question 8. The questions were as follows –

- Question 1** Councillor Wyatt to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development regarding the expansion of Bowthorpe Three Score and a review of the B1108 road.
- Question 2** Councillor Fisher to the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Development on Council investment in areas of deprivation.
- Question 3** Councillor A Little to the Leader of the Council with regard to Area Committees.
- Question 4** Councillor George to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development on the bus lane at Clover Hill Road and Earlham Green Lane.
- Question 5** Councillor Collishaw to the Leader of the Council regarding the Northern Distributor Route (NDR).
- Question 6** Councillor Fairbairn to the Executive for Neighbourhood Development on the lighting of sports playing areas.
- Question 7** Councillor Watkins to the Leader of the Council on passenger figures for Norwich International Airport.
- Question 8** Councillors Lubbock and Dylan to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development on the implementation of 20 mph zones in residential areas.
- Question 9** Councillor Gledhill to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development on the reduction of mercury emissions from crematoria.
- Question 10** Councillor Makoff to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development regarding subsidence.
- Question 11** Councillor Holmes to the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Development regarding the Sustainable Communities Act.
- Question 12** Councillor Llewellyn to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development regarding the request to the Greater Norwich Development Partnership for a study into the impact of development on food supplies.
- Question 13** Councillor Little to the Leader of the Council regarding Flybe.
- Question 14** Councillor Bearman to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development regarding the use of plastic bags.

- Question 15** Councillor Jeraj to the Executive Member for Residents and Customer Care regarding 'hard to reach' residents and access to Council services.
- Question 16** Councillor Read to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development with regard to cyclists and use of the pavements.
- Question 17** Councillor Ramsay to the Leader of the Council regarding the appointment of the Chair of the Norwich Carbon Reduction Trust.
- Question 18** Councillor Stephenson to the Executive Member for Residents and Customer Care on late collection of recycling in the Caernarvon Road area.
- Question 19** Councillor Jago to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance regarding a protocol for Chairs of Committees.
- Question 20** Councillor Offord to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development with regard to the re-opening of the footpath running between St Leonard's Terrace and Gas Hill.

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

## **6. NORWICH CITY COUNCIL 2008-2010: THE BIG PICTURE**

The Chief Executive gave a presentation on the major issues facing the Council for 2008 to 2010.

## **7. STATEMENT BY THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Councillor Morphew presented a statement setting out the main priorities and initiatives which the Labour Group were proposing to pursue over the coming year. (The full statement is appended to the minutes as Appendix B).

Councillors Ramsay, Watkins and Little (A) responded on behalf of the Green, Liberal Democrat and Conservative Groups. They thanked the Leader for his statement and explained how they would provide effective and constructive opposition.

## **8. JOINT SCRUTINY REVIEW OF LOCAL BUS SERVICES**

Councillor Stephenson moved and Councillor Morrey seconded that this Council receives the report of the Joint Scrutiny Committee and asks the Executive to consider the recommendations and it was –

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, accordingly.

LORD MAYOR

## APPENDIX A

### Questions to Executive Members and Chairs of Committees

#### Question 1

#### **Councillor John Wyatt to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'In view of the expansion of 1200 homes at Three Score, will the Executive Member undertake to make representations for a major review of the B1108 road between the old Watton Road and Earlham Fiveways roundabout? As one of only two vehicular access points to Bowthorpe, this road cannot continue to be blocked at the junctions at the BUPA Hospital, Wilberforce Road and the Earlham Fiveways.'

#### **Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'As Strategic Highway Authority, I understand that Norfolk County Council is currently looking at the congestion problems along the B1108, and particularly at the Fiveways Roundabout. Part of the problem at the roundabout is caused by the congestion on the petrol filling station forecourt and the City Officers have had many discussions with Tesco's management to encourage them to change the one way arrangements. The management have indicated a willingness to do so, but so far have taken no action. Unfortunately we have no powers to force them to make a change. I understand officers have again contacted Tesco and are awaiting a response.

With regard to the Wilberforce Road junction, we have to be very careful when looking at improvements here, as anything that makes access to Wilberforce Road easier will encourage vehicles to rat run through the West Earlham estate, a move that I'm sure would not be acceptable to the residents of the area. To some people the obvious solution is to close the road, but this too would cause major inconvenience to local residents who wanted to travel westward, and would add to the pressures at the Earlham Road Roundabout. It should also be borne in mind that this junction is within a conservation area and any possible widening of Earlham Road in the vicinity would have a major impact on the trees and a listed wall.

The BUPA hospital junction is outside of the City, but I am assured by the planners that it was designed to cater for a fully developed Bowthorpe and it will not reach capacity until 2026. It is likely that any delays here are consequent on problems at the adjoining junctions and not on this junction itself.'

**Councillor Wyatt** asked as a supplementary question, whether the Executive Member believed that, in principle, there should be road improvements before 1,200 dwellings are built. **Councillor Morrey** said that yes, in an ideal world, that would happen. However, in relation to the B1108, this was a decision for Norfolk County Council's Cabinet and he suggested that Councillor Wyatt should ask his Conservative colleagues on Norfolk County Council why improvements weren't made.

#### Question 2

**Councillor John Fisher to the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Development:-**

'Please can the relevant Executive Member explain how much money has been spent over the past two years by this Council in areas suffering deprivation and as a result of this investment how many people have been lifted out of deprivation across the city in that time. What are the numbers of people within the city suffering deprivation now compared to those in 2002.'

**Councillor Linda Blakeway, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Development's reply:-**

'Councillor Fisher asks an interesting question, but one that cannot be answered fully as it is not possible to disaggregate budget information without significant work by Officers.

Members will be aware that Norwich is the second most deprived district in the Eastern Region (based upon average scores from the indices of multiple deprivation).

**Numbers of people suffering deprivation**

Taking numbers of claimants of benefits shows:

13,130 adults of working age claiming a range of benefits (jobseekers allowance, income support, incapacity benefits) in Norwich in 2002 compared with 13,620 in 2007.

However, due to the increase in population over that time this has been a reduction in the proportion of working age adults claiming benefits from 17% in 2002 to 16% in 2007 (nationally, the figure reduced from 15% to 14%).

There were 13,048 housing benefit recipients in Norwich in May 2002 compared with 14,300 in May 2007.

For this reason the Council not only targets resources to areas of greatest need, but the City has received funding from a number of regeneration programmes over the past two years to develop a range of partnership based interventions.

This has included:

- **Neighbourhood Renewal fund** - £3,926,541 between 2006-7 and 2007-8 to reduce the gap between the most deprived wards and the rest of the City for a number of indicators including health, educational attainment, crime and worklessness
- **Local Enterprise Growth Initiative** £3,572,000 in 2007/08 (of this £952,000 was capital spend) to support the creation of new enterprise in deprived areas; to support the growth of existing businesses in deprived areas and the development of an enterprising and skilled workforce in deprived areas; to attract private investment into deprived areas

- **Investing in Communities** £290,000 in 2006/07 and £290,000 in 2007/08 to support enterprise, skills and employment. Includes Community Learning Mentors and Sure Futures.

The programmes are at different stages of their development and will be fully evaluated. It is however, too early to provide any indicative information about their overall impact and changes to the indices of deprivation at a neighbourhood level due in part to the time lag that deprivation data is captured and reported across all indicators.

However, the Council is aware of the following successes to date:

- **Sure Futures** In 2007-8 nearly 300 young people benefited from introductory training in arts related activities with over 50 undertaking formal accreditation
- **Community Learning Mentors** In 2006-07 150 people were assisted to develop their educational skills and training and 30 were given assistance with entry into employment.

In 2007-08 180 people were assisted to develop their educational skills and training, 40 were given assistance regarding employment and 20 gained a basic skills qualification

The project supports clients' needs with childcare, transport, course fees or materials as well as 1-2-1 support.

- **Neighbourhood Renewal fund** Violent crime, criminal damage and all crime targets have been met in Mile Cross and good reduction achieved in the NELM area.

Targets for preventing youth homelessness and supporting victims of domestic violence have been met

Unemployment targets are being met, although reducing the number of highest level incapacity benefit is proving difficult.

- **Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI)** The Norwich Enterprise Centre opened to the public in May 2008. Three additional BizFizz programmes established in Mile Cross, Thorpe Hamlet and Lakenham

An accredited local purchasing award has been developed and launched in March 2007.

CCTV cameras have been installed in six neighbourhood shopping parades to reduce the impact of crime and anti-social behaviour on local traders and to improve their trading environment.

Overall LEGI outputs to date, include:-

- 64 Jobs created.
- 4 Jobs safeguarded.

- 44 Business start-ups.
- 255 Businesses supported.
- 419 individuals received courses designed to move them towards employment.
- 665 individuals supported in skill development.
- 461 individuals took part in enterprise education activities.

The City Council has also been a substantial partner in a number of other regeneration programmes based in areas of deprivation, these include:

- **Sure Start** - a Government programme to deliver the best start in life for every child which brings together early education, childcare, health and family support
- **New Deal for Communities (NDC)** - a key programme in the Government's strategy to tackle multiple deprivation in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the country, giving communities the resources to tackle their problems in an intensive and co-ordinated way.

It is important to remember that with all regeneration initiatives the aim to provide opportunities for long-term community-led change and improvement, regeneration funding is not about unsustainable 'quick-fixes' – in many cases regeneration programmes offer residents a range of opportunities or interventions; the full effects of which may not be realised for a number of years.

It must also be appreciated that many of the areas which qualify for regeneration funding experience multiple deprivation with residents experiencing a range of issues and inequalities including – low incomes, poor health, low levels of education, skills and training, lack of affordable good quality housing, crime and anti-social behaviour. With the exception of the NDC programme, many regeneration programmes focus only upon specific aspects of deprivation; further interventions in other areas are also required to fully lift an individual out of deprivation.

Reducing deprivation and addressing inequalities is at the heart of all that this Labour administration stands for, later in this meeting you will hear what we propose to achieve in the forthcoming year to tackle issues of inequality and deprivation across the City.'

**Councillor Fisher** asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Executive Member would agree that more people could have been raised from deprivation if the funding spent on unitary status had been spent on that instead.

**Councillor Blakeway** said that funding for dealing with deprivation came from central government and the funds allocated to the unitary status bid was from the Council's own budgets.

### Question 3

**Councillor Antony Little to the Leader of the Council:-**

'It has been suggested that Norwich City Council should "work to devolve power within the City to Area Committees, so that decisions affecting residents in a particular part of the City can be made by Ward Councillors (whether they are from the ruling party or not)". What does the Leader of the Council see as the implications of this policy?'

**Councillor Steve Morpew, Leader of the Council's reply:-**

'I understand that this quotation is taken from the Norwich Green Party manifesto for the recent local elections, and it therefore does not represent agreed Norwich City Council policy.

Having said that I can certainly endorse the principle of subsidiarity, i.e. of decisions being taken as close to the people as practically possible. However, this principle cannot be exercised with out due consideration of other matters such as Best Value, efficiency and democratic accountability, and so it is important to consider very carefully when and where it may be applied. Norwich City Council does have an agreed strategy for developing neighbourhood working. It proposes 2 phases:

- Phase 1 - 2008-2010 - continuing to develop our community engagement approach. For example we are currently implementing a new team of 7 Community Engagement Officers who will be deployed across the City Council area to build local capacity, work with local people and groups to ensure that service delivery reflects local needs and aspirations and inform the shape of the new Unitary authority;
- Phase 2 - 2010 onwards - the potential creation of a new unitary council for greater Norwich provides an opportunity for a more radical approach, including the possible development of a pattern of locality councils across the whole City area. Our initial thoughts for how this might work are set out in our unitary status proposals, and include delegated locality budgets for local ward councillors and area based scrutiny committees.

Our ideas for enhanced neighbourhood engagement will, of course, be further developed in collaboration with local people, residents groups and existing Parish and Town Councils, which already have experience of localised service delivery. At this stage we have not ruled anything in or out, but we are clear that we will not impose a rigid "one size fits all" model - we will develop proposals that can meet local people's needs and capacity.

In developing our proposals we will need to ensure that we take full account of local circumstances. One example of the model that the Green Party manifesto promotes is operating in Birmingham. The city has been divided up into 9 "constituencies" each with an area director and devolved budgets on services such as street cleaning, grounds maintenance and neighbourhood services. However, it is important to note that each of the Birmingham "constituencies" comprises around 100,000 populations. In addition, most of the larger Birmingham City Council services such as children's, adults and education, are still provided strategically across the whole city area.

We will therefore continue to look at best practice in other places, but we will also want to consult with local people and organisations in order to develop a solution that best fits with the circumstances of the City, and the needs and aspirations of local



people.'

**Councillor A Little** asked, as a supplementary question, whether any funding would be available for tenants and residents' associations and whether existing groups being consulted. **Councillor Morpew** said that had Councillor A Little attended briefings that had been given, or spoken to the relevant Executive member, he would know the situation. Widespread consultation was being undertaken after which consideration would be given to increasing responsibility to community organisations. He would be happy to brief him further.

#### **Question 4**

##### **Councillor Niki George to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'Given Bowthorpe's election of a third Conservative Councillor in three years, does the Executive Member agree with us, and local people, that the no entry sign on the Bus Lane at Clover Hill Road and Earlham Green Lane is widely ignored?'

##### **Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'I do not have any up to date information about the level of misuse of this important bus priority measure. I would anticipate, however, that recent traffic calming on Earlham Green Lane may have helped to make the route less attractive for general traffic. However I will ask that the police consider the issue and whether to carry out any additional enforcement.

I am sure that electing 3 Conservative Councillors to Bowthorpe is not because this particular Bus Gate is widely ignored as Councillor George asserts. I would not blame Conservatives for everything people may do wrongly.'

In reply to a supplementary question from **Councillor George, Councillor Morrey** said that bus lanes were introduced to encourage local public transport. It was up to the Police to police bus lanes. If bus lanes were abused, the Norwich Highways Agency Committee would need to consider the matter.

#### **Question 5**

##### **Councillor Evelyn Collishaw to the Leader of the Council:-**

'After May's local election, would the Leader of the Council clarify his views on the need for the NDR?'

##### **Councillor Steve Morpew, Leader of the Council's reply:-**

'I support the construction of a Northern Distributor Route (NDR) but it is conditional on support as follows:

- that an NDR is used to assist the sustainable growth of the City and forms one element of a balanced transport strategy alongside and helping to deliver:

- A high quality public transport network;
  - Improvements for walking and cycling; and
  - The introduction of complementary measures in the City Centre and residential areas that improve the environment and preserve the traffic reduction benefits of an NDR.
- that alongside and in advance of an NDR the other elements of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy are delivered in accordance with a comprehensively funded programme.

This has been the Administration's consistent view and in effect is enshrined within the Joint Core Strategy and Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS). What has been lacking is the will and means to implement the measures needed to make the aspirations a reality.

I am pleased to see some progress being made through the work of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP), like Barrack Street, which will open up access for a bus lane in the future and a number of other planned projects that will contribute. At this stage it is as much the recognition from our GNDP partners that these schemes are as well as and before the NDR priorities, rather than ones that might happen somehow, sometime that is most valuable.

It is important not to lose sight of the reasons for the proposed NDR. Norwich needs jobs and homes. The Joint Core Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy targets are in fact little more than we could have expected to happen in and around Norwich anyway based on past growth patterns and trends. Past record shows development around the city being done in ways that has not taken account of the impact on the infrastructure, need for jobs and services, health, education and community needs.

By joining with our partner councils we have stepped ahead of the challenges and are working on how we deal with them before they are realised. It is important that we continue working to find the infrastructure funding to ensure we are building genuinely sustainable communities, not just a load of houses with the hope that jobs will gravitate towards them and somehow communities will appear. We have seen the problems that causes from developments around the city where insufficient provision or forethought was given to the consequences of the building that has taken place.

However some challenges are upon us now, like the need to provide more housing. I have noted with interest glib suggestions that we should only build on brown field sites and aspiration for 50% affordable housing. In the next ten years allocated land in total in the city provides for less than 10,000 new dwellings, so even a 50% affordability ratio would provide less than 5000 new 'affordable' homes. The council waiting list currently stands at more than 8000, which means we cannot but fail if such a narrow policy was followed.

Driving up the s106 ratio of affordable homes reduces the money available for other community facilities and as there is no such thing as a free lunch, of course it drives up developer costs and the costs of market prices for new homes making them less affordable. Finding new brown field sites means turning employment land into housing land and reducing the job capacity of the city – either preventing investment here through lack of sites or driving it to the edges and hollowing out the centre of the city as an employment area beyond retail.

The NDR allows the opening up of land in the northern areas of the city that can accommodate existing demand and the demand that will grow as households reduce in size, younger people form their own households, the UEA expands its student numbers (some of whom will remain after graduation) and therefore its teaching and support staff, more business is attracted to invest in a place where the quality of life is good, and other factors that will see our population increase. It will also open employment opportunities that will enable us to balance the siting of inward investment in wealth creating jobs and keep the entire city prosperous and vibrant.

The NDR could, just like unfettered house building, create problems in the longer term. It could also help relieve problems we already have in the city and with a positive and sensible policy approach rather than just a knee jerk reaction, help plan a properly managed and integrated economic, transport and community policy for the future. That is why we are determined the NDR will be accompanied by the realisation of the plans to improve the quality of the city centre and residential areas as a prerequisite. The question to council is whether we are big enough for the challenge of whether we would prefer opportunist opposition.'

**Councillor Collishaw** asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Leader believed that introducing a new 20mph speed limit could be done at the same time as providing the NDR with the limited funding available. **Councillor Morpew** said that he believed it could, if that was the priority. However, the NDR should not go ahead without the other environmental improvements. It was important to see how the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy was implemented and to find the funds to do all what was needed rather than to 'cherry pick'.

#### **Question 6**

#### **Councillor David Fairbairn to the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Development:-**

'What progress has been made towards installing timing switches or other user activated mechanisms, on sports playing areas, e.g. by the Harford Community Centre, so that the lighting will only be on when the facilities are in use?'

#### **Councillor Linda Blakeway, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Development reply:-**

'The turning on and off of lighting, which illuminates games areas is currently carried out by timer switches and is overseen by CityCare. This allows users to turn up and play, it means that switches do not need to be present on site and therefore are less susceptible to damage either from vandalism or from the weather.

Officers have investigated the use of various means of energy saving lighting at flood lit games areas. A pilot scheme is being introduced this summer at Sloughbottom Park as part of the development of a new lighting system funded through section 106 funding. All the lights in the games area, bar one, will be controlled by a push button. This means that the lights will automatically turn off after a set period of time. For safety and security reasons, one light will not have a push button and therefore will remain alight. Finally, all of the lights will be completely deactivated in the late evenings.

The Sloughbottom Park floodlights have been designed to meet the guidance given by CIBSE (Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers) for general training and recreational activity areas.

As this is a pilot, once installed, the energy use and effectiveness of the new floodlights will be monitored to ensure that they provide the most cost effective energy efficient solution for lighting Council games areas but do not act as a barrier to play.'

**Councillor Fairbairn** asked, as a supplementary question, what the length of the monitoring period for the pilot scheme would be. **Councillor Blakeway** said she believed 3 months would be a reasonable period but would be advised by the officers. When she knew the answer she would inform Councillor Fairbairn.

### **Question 7**

#### **Councillor Brian Watkins to the Leader of the Council:-**

'Earlier this month, it was revealed that passenger figures at Norwich International Airport have dropped by nearly 100,000 in the past year. Many would blame this situation on the high cost of flying from Norwich, together with the imposition of the £3 development charge. Does the Leader of the Council share this view, and if so, what influence (if any) can the Council bring to bear on the airport to re-appraise its current pricing policies?'

#### **Councillor Steve Morpew, Leader of the Council's reply:-**

'The evidence suggests that the drop in passenger numbers has more to do with the reappraisal of operators of viable routes and some routes consequently being withdrawn.

Despite the unpopularity of the Airport Development Fee it has enabled the continued investment in the airport that is required into the future. Low cost airlines demand low prices from the airport for use of facilities and that squeezes the profits and so investment capacity of the airport. It was in anticipation of this that the Council agreed to sell most of its shares. Omniport has exceeded its investment promises, but if the airport is to continue to develop its contribution to the economy of the City it is clear more investment will be required.

The airport is crucial to the economy of the City. Passenger flights are a part of the equation, but too many people ignore business that uses the airport as a gateway, and the businesses that are based at the airport and airport industrial estate. The airport supports around 2000 jobs and many of them are in skills areas like engineering, providing important job opportunities to the City. So investment is not just about passenger numbers and flights, but substantial numbers of jobs in flight related businesses.

It is important to the City that the airport continues to develop in order to improve or competitiveness as an economy. The jobs and access the airport offers are an important factor and an efficient and effective route structure will help us attract inbound business and tourism. The development has to be more sustainable and there is more that should be done to mitigate the carbon impact of the airport to

achieve a sensible balance between what seem like currently irreconcilable economic and environmental imperatives.'

**Councillor Watkins** asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Leader of the Council thought, given the importance of Norwich Airport, that's its stagnation or reduction in growth was bad for the local area. **Councillor Morpew** agreed that the value of Norwich Airport had been long under-estimated by the Council and it was vital for the city to see Norwich Airport grow in a sustainable way.

#### **Question 8**

#### **Councillor Judith Lubbock to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'On 22 May 2008 the Joint Highways Committee decided in principle to implement 20 mph signed zones for all residential areas of Norwich. I am extremely pleased by this decision as it was a Liberal Democrat motion back in June 2006 which called on the Council to investigate such a scheme.

Despite the negative report from officers of Norwich City Council, the scheme falling off the work programme last year and the obvious lack of enthusiasm from the Executive Member it would appear that Norwich is to become a pioneer in 20 mph signed zones which does much for its credibility as a walking and cycling city and its aim to cut road traffic accidents.

Please would the Executive Member give a statement so that the full implications of the decision can be understood by everyone, especially in relation to what constitutes a residential area, the time scale for the plan and its subsequent implementation including costs?'

#### **Councillor Tom Dylan to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'A number of residents have contacted me who are pleased about hearing of the very recent Norwich Highways Agency Committee decision to bring in 20mph speed limits for 'unclassified' residential roads across the city. Could the Executive please advise me of what the rough timetable will be now for implementation of this landmark decision?'

#### **Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'I too am pleased that the Committee decided to go ahead with the implementation of the 20mph limit. This is despite Councillor Lubbock's usual groundless assertion about my views, the only problem I have ever had is that having signed only areas does not work in all cases and there may have to be engineering solutions that are very expensive. I believe officers prepared a fair report that pointed out the possible pitfalls of such a proposal, but on balance the Committee decided the benefits of the scheme outweighed any disadvantages.

For those of you who are not aware, the Norwich Highways Agency Committee (NHAC) has decided to implement a 20mph speed limit on all unclassified residential roads in the City. An unclassified road is one that is not designed to carry through traffic, just local traffic. For example Rosary Road, Bowthorpe Road and Hall Road are all C roads, and therefore are outside the scope of the project mandate at the current time. The intention is that the limit is signed only with no physical traffic calming measures

Following the Committee decision, officers are now looking at how to introduce the measure. Budgets for the current financial year are fixed and while it may be possible to find some limited funding to start the ball rolling, without dropping schemes that have already been started, funds will not be available to carry out any substantive works until 2009/10. This is more or less on the target contained in the motion passed on 27 June 2006.

It is intended that NHAC receives a report in September detailing how the scheme will be implemented, how much it will cost, how it will be funded, whether it needs to be phased in and its impact on the traffic calming schemes that are already in the programme for this year and next. Once that report is available I shall be able to give a clear answer on the timescales. This of course depends on the funding body which is at present the County Council.

I think I need to caution however that the NHAC decision is the first part of a long process. Any change in speed limit requires a legal order, known as a Speed Reduction Order. Before a Speed Reduction Order can be implemented there needs to be a formal consultation process where the public, stakeholders and most importantly the police have the opportunity to comment on the proposals. If there are any formal objections to the proposal these will need to be considered by NHAC before the final go ahead for the scheme can be given.

I know many of you are anxious to see this implemented quickly but realistically it is likely to be 15 to 18 months before we see the first of the new limits created as part of this scheme on the streets of Norwich.'

**Councillor Lubbock** asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Executive Member would do everything he could to see the 20mph scheme happen quicker.

**Councillor Morrey** said that the requirement for legal procedures meant that the timescale could not be speeded up. A report would be presented to Norwich Highways Agency Committee in September, 2008.

**Councillor Dylan** asked, as a supplementary question, whether the regulations allowed for feedback on emission levels, what were the targets and have they been exceeded. **Councillor Morrey** said that he would get figures from officers and make them available to members.

## Question 9

**Councillor Bob Gledhill to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'According to projections, crematoria will soon become the largest single source of mercury emissions in the UK. What is the Council doing to meet government and/or EU targets and guidelines regarding reduction of emissions?'

**Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'As the Norwich Crematoria is in private ownership the Council is not responsible for meeting the government or EU targets concerning mercury emissions. However, the Council does regulate the process under the provisions of the Pollution Prevention Control Regulations 2000.'

**Question 10**

**Councillor Ruth Makoff to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'A recent incident on Newmarket Road has highlighted serious problems of subsidence in Norwich. What is being done to identify these problems across the city and to address them?'

**Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'The recent incident on Newmarket Road was caused by the collapse of a main sewer. However, such events are rare. It would be up to Anglian Water to identify such problems and take action if required as such sewers are their responsibility.'

**Councillor Makoff** asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Council would look at incidents more generally across the City. **Councillor Morrey** said he would ask officers if they intended to do so.

**Question 11**

**Councillor Adrian Holmes to the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Development:-**

'In October 2005, Council resolved to "make full use of the powers the [Sustainable Communities] Bill would give to the Council (if adopted by Parliament) to promote local sustainability in Norwich". This Bill received Royal Assent last year, and imposes upon the Secretary of State "a duty to assist local authorities in promoting the sustainability of local communities. The Secretary of State is required to invite, and select for implementation, proposals by local authorities for the implementation of measures designed to promote sustainable communities. The Secretary of State must then make regulations and produce an action plan on the implementation of the proposals by the local authorities." Given that the Council has already resolved to make full use of these powers, how does it intend to do so, particularly in protecting local post office services?'

**Councillor Linda Blakeway, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Development's reply:-**

'The Sustainable Communities Act aims to promote the sustainability of local communities. It begins from the principle that local people know best what needs to be done to promote the sustainability of their area, but that sometimes they need central

government to act to enable them to do so. It provides a channel for local people to ask central government to take such action.

The scope of the Act is very broad, covering economic, social and environmental issues. It does not limit the type of action that could be put forward, provided the action is within that broad scope. It is for local people to decide what they think needs to be done to promote the sustainability of their area.

The Act has 4 main elements:-

- The Secretary of State invites suggestions from all councils to improve the sustainability of the local community (timetabled for October 2008).
- Local authorities have a representative community panel to discuss priorities for their community and to consult on any proposals.
- Local authorities will be able to request local spending plans, which show all of the government spending in their communities, to help them prioritise actions.
- All the proposals will then go through a selection process, and a shortlist is decided by the Secretary of State in co-operation with a 'selector'- the Local Government Association.

Although the Act received Assent in October 2007, Government implementation has not been completed, and is progressing slowly:-

- Formal consultation on Regulations and Guidance: February to May 2008.
- Lay Regulations before Parliament: May 2008.
- Bring together Sustainable Communities Bill Guidance with Creating Strong and Prosperous Communities Guidance: May 2008.
- Secretary of State issues first invitation for proposals by October 2008.
- Consultation on Local Spending Reports: Summer 2008.
- Secretary of State makes arrangements for first Local Spending Reports: Autumn 2008 (required by April 2009).

At present, therefore, although the City Council has made a commitment to use the powers of the Act, they are not yet in place. This means that it is not possible to use them to address the current post office closure programme. However, although limited information is available about the scope of the Act, it does seem likely that it could be used to apply in similar circumstances in the future.

Councillor Holmes will have heard in Councillor Morphew's response to Question 3 (from Councillor A Little) that the City Council is pursuing a two stage approach to its community development and engagement work. The implications of the Sustainable Communities Act will be picked up as part of Phase 1 by the new Community Engagement Team which is currently being put into place, although clearly detailed implementation will need to await further action by central Government'.

**Councillor Holmes** asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Executive Member would be willing to put pressure on government to get the Act in place as soon as possible to help fight future closures. **Councillor Blakeway** said that she would do so.



## Question 12

### **Councillor Tom Llewellyn to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'In October, Council agreed to call upon the Greater Norwich Development Partnership to add a study on the impact of the proposed development on food supplies to the list of background studies taking place, and subsequently Councillors were informed that this would be raised through the GNDP Policy Group by Councillors Morpew and Morrey. What response did they receive?'

### **Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'Most food production, distribution and supply is of at least regional, national at global significance and policy needs to operate at that level. Strategic Directors have not recommended this is progressed as a Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) workstream of the Joint Core Strategy since it cannot set or control food policy. At a practical local level however, the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative can support new local Norwich businesses that may wish to set up and grow and produce food.

We did raise this at the Policy Group and as far as I can remember it did not get universal support.'

## Question 13

### **Councillor Stephen Little to the Leader of the Council:-**

'As a Shareholder in Norwich Airport, what is the Council doing to prevent a repeat of the recent issue of FlyBe advertising for actors to be paid to travel to Dublin and back?'

### **Councillor Steve Morpew, Leader of the Council's reply:-**

'I don't think either party came out of that debacle with much credit, so I am pleased to report that future arrangements between FlyBe and Norwich International Airport will not include the type of passenger number related rebate that led to this happening'.

**Councillor S Little** asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Council would use its influence to encourage flights with less emissions. **Councillor Morpew** said that, in his capacity as Board Member, he had a legal duty to act in the best interests of Norwich Airport Ltd and all discussions were private. However, as a Council we will seek to influence more wherever possible and a reduction in emissions was one idea amongst a number he would wish to speak to Norwich Airport about.

## Question 14

### **Councillor Janet Bearman to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'A resident has suggested to me that the Council could set up a "pledge" so that residents could promise to reduce or cease their plastic bag use. Is this something the Council would be willing to set up and promote?'

**Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'Norwich City Council is committed to promoting waste minimization including the using of reusable bags instead of plastic ones. Promotion of alternatives to plastic bags is very much a part of our campaigning about waste issues. For example, the Council recently purchased a supply of jute bags for promotional use such as at road shows and school visits which are given out by officers whilst at the same time providing information about recycling and bag use. The Council has also linked with other initiatives such as those run by the Norwich Carbon Reduction Trust which ran a plastic bag free day on 28 March 2008. It is also putting notices into shops across the City urging people to change their ways. It will also be running features in the Eastern Daily Press highlighting how traders are reducing the number of bags they are giving away.

The focus of the campaigning at present is geared towards the roll out of the Alternate Weekly Collection programme with tips on how people can manage their waste more responsibly. Included in this is the message about reuse of plastic bags. Once the main campaign has finished we will be looking to other areas to promote and all ideas will be considered at that time to ensure a sustainable approach to waste management is taken by all.

Of course campaigning to reduce plastic carrier bags can have an unfortunate side effect which Eire has found out after introducing their ban. A year after they began the ban the country imported 2/3 million more tonnes of plastic suitable for bags etc than the year before the ban. This was the result of people changing to other plastic bags/liners for things such as bin liners. So if we do go down this route we will have to make sure the campaign is not as simple as just banning bags otherwise we could end up with more plastic having to be disposed of.'

**Councillor Bearman** asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Carbon Reduction Trust would be interested in taking up the idea. **Councillor Morrey** said that they were working on this and he would raise it with them.

**Question 15**

**Councillor Samir Jeraj to the Executive Member for Residents and Customer Care:-**

'Many 'hard to reach' residents in Norwich find it difficult to access Council services. Does the Council have a plan for combating this by, for example, achieving level 5 (the highest level) of the IDEA Equality Standard?'

**Councillor Julie Brociek-Coulton, Executive Member for Residents and Customer Care's reply:-**

'We recognise that some people do find it more difficult to access services than others. Therefore the City Council already undertakes a wide range of initiatives in order to make its services accessible. For example, publications are available in a

number of formats and languages and, along with other partners in Norfolk, we make use of the INTRAN translation service. We provide specialist gym facilities at the Norman Centre for people with disabilities, took the lead in launching the Disabled Go programme in the County, which describes access arrangements to a large number of buildings in and around Norwich, and have made successful joint bids with housing and care partners to provide accommodation to people with learning difficulties and to those with mental health problems. We provide homes to a large number of older people and also work to support more vulnerable people in their own homes. Our work in supporting victims of hate crime is well regarded by other partners. If Councillor Jeraj has particular concerns, or has other examples of specific difficulties people experience I will be happy to consider these and work with the appropriate service to address them.

Over the last year we have put in place a number of actions to address equality and diversity issues and the most recent IDeA peer review recognised the progress we had made. We are now working actively with the Norfolk Coalition of Disabled People to further develop our access arrangements, policies and procedures.

As it stands, Norwich City Council currently meets Level 1 against the Equality Standard. We have a service plan commitment to reach Level 2 by September 2008, which is the level that most small District Councils have achieved (currently 206 out of 238 District Councils are at Level 2 or Level 1). We are confident that our plans to develop new information collection arrangements, along with a programme of diversity impact assessments across key service areas, should help us achieve that.

Once we achieve Level 2 then we will commence work to progress further. However, it is important to recognise that this is very likely to have significant resource implications, as Level 3 and above require major policy and procedural changes which only larger councils tend to be able to resource. To illustrate this, there are at present, according to IDEA figures, just four councils who consider themselves to be at Level 5, three of which are unitary London boroughs. Only another thirteen councils (twelve of which are unitary London boroughs or metropolitan councils) rate themselves at Level 4. Once there is a new unitary Council for greater Norwich there may be greater scope for further advancement on the assessment scale'.

#### **Question 16**

#### **Councillor Rupert Read to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'Inconsistency in when cycling is allowed in parts of the city centre leads to confusion for both cyclists and pedestrians. Does the Executive agree that it would be sensible to allow cycling on London Street between 5 p.m. and 10 p.m. to bring it in line with Gentleman's Walk'?

#### **Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'Cycling on footways and on pedestrianised streets is a major concern for pedestrians and I can see that applying more consistent rules might reduce confusion and also help the police to enforce restrictions.

However, leaving aside the specific pros and cons of allowing cyclists to use London Street between 5:00 p.m. and 10:00 a.m. which require careful consideration, I would be concerned at an isolated change such as this. It would not address other anomalies and without changes elsewhere I believe that it could add to confusion at least in the short term.

Officers have been discussing these issues with the police safer neighbourhood team for the City Centre. The emerging proposal would be to review all pedestrianised street restrictions in the City Centre. This would seek to balance the needs of pedestrians and cyclists, mindful of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS) mode hierarchy, seek to reduce confusion, enable more effective enforcement and it would also allow possible changes to delivery hours for service vehicles to be examined where there are also issues of confusion and complicated signage.

As this is quite a substantial piece of work – requiring capital funding – it is something that could only be taken forward as part of service planning for 2009/10, however.

I suggest that Councillor Read raises the issue with the City Centre Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel (SNAP) to get their views as I know the SNAP in my area have had a campaign to stop people cycling on the pavement and I believe other SNAPs have had the same issue raised.'

#### **Question 17**

#### **Councillor Adrian Ramsay to the Leader of the Council:-**

'What was the decision-making process for appointing the Chair of the Norwich Carbon Reduction Trust'?

#### **Councillor Steve Morpew, Leader of the Council's reply:-**

'This question represents a low for the main opposition party.

Councillor Ramsay could and should have saved time by asking this question of me personally and some time ago if he was not clear. The decision to establish the Norwich Carbon Reduction Trust (NCRT) (originally referred to as the Norwich Carbon Offset Trust) was taken by the Executive on 7 June 2006, reported to Scrutiny in November 2006 and approved as part of the revised policy framework in November 2006 by Council. Councillor Ramsay was present on every occasion. It was established as an independent, self governing charitable organisation supported by the City Council to promote carbon reduction through using initial council funding and money gained by offsetting contributions from the wider Norwich community to fund local projects aimed at behavioural change which encouraged more environmentally sustainable practice.

The administration's priorities were reported to Scrutiny Committee and noted on 9 November 2006 (which Councillor Ramsay attended as its then Vice Chair) in these terms.

*We will establish a stand alone charity to collect carbon offset funding to invest in the Norwich area to help offset actions that might bring about climate change and in particular flying. We will encourage people who travel to or from the city to contribute and seek the support of businesses who have a base in the city to help towards Norwich becoming carbon neutral.'*

As is usually the case when such organisations are founded it requires somebody with the skills, drive and commitment to set up and get the organisation going. The ethos of the project and the lack of council resources available to put into such a task made it appropriate to seek help from beyond the City Council.

Brenda Arthur was at that point stepping down from her role as a Chief Executive of a successful voluntary organisation and so she had just the skill set required for the task. In her previous position and as a recent Sheriff of the City she also had the respect and contacts that would enable NCRT to attract others to sit on the board to bring influence and specific knowledge relevant to the work of the trust. As Leader of the Council I asked her if she would take on the role of getting it up and running and she was generous enough to agree. Since then she has put in a huge amount of work and to impugn her motives would be contemptible.

The Board, once established, chose their own chair. It is not and has never been in the gift of the City Council. As it was always clearly stated it would be a stand alone body there is no justification for city council to insist on rights to appoint to any position, and neither does it need somebody who is an expert in carbon reduction. I hope it will become a focus for ordinary people, who are concerned about environmental issues, not another elitist, worthy or self righteous body that turns people off or is used as a party political football.

The Green Party has never raised any issue about NCRT or the Chair in Council or with me previously. The first inking was a press release from the Green party a few days before the election this year which is reproduced below:-

**'Greens question party political appointment**

*22 April 2008 - The Labour Administration at City Hall has recently appointed Brenda Arthur as Chair of the newly formed 'Norwich Carbon Reduction Trust'. Greens today question why she has been chosen for this important position.*

*Brenda Arthur is the Labour Party Candidate for University ward in the current local elections. Norwich Green Party says that she has no particular expertise or notable past interest in carbon reduction and are calling upon the Labour Party to explain why it appointed Brenda Arthur to this post.*

*Councillor Adrian Ramsay, Leader of the Green Party Group on Norwich City Council, said: "We believe that the chair of this important new body should have been either (a) an elected Councillor or (b) an expert in carbon reduction, or even both. We have no bone to pick with Brenda Arthur personally, but, with all due respect to her, she is neither. The question has to be asked of why Labour chose to appoint her.*

*"Recently the Trust has organised the publicity for the Council's support for the Plastic Bag Free Day and for Earth Hour, both of which have garnered*

*Brenda a lot of free positive publicity. Perhaps there is some perfectly innocent explanation as to why Brenda Arthur was chosen. I suspect and fear, however, that it was a matter of Labour wanting to improve the green credentials of one of its candidates in a ward where the Greens are putting up a strong fight and in a city where we are a large and growing opposition group on the City Council."*

*Councillor Ramsay continued: "Councillors and Group Leaders have not even been informed let alone consulted about Ms Arthur's appointment or about the membership of the Steering Group in general. The new Carbon Reduction Trust is an important body that has the potential to do a lot of good - but that's all the more reason to get the right person as chair."*

Many of the assertions in the statement are just wrong. The true position could have been found out easily if the author had any interest in accuracy. Claims that they had no information are demonstrably inaccurate. The following article appeared in the 'Eastern Daily Press' (EDP) on 23 March 2007 – 13 months before the Green press release:-

### ***'City's pioneering carbon cutting plan***

*A pioneering scheme to cut carbon emissions and stem the tide of climate change by funding local eco-projects is to be launched in Norwich today.*

*The Norwich Carbon Trust is the brainchild of the city council which is seeking contributions from businesses and individuals to help fund local green schemes.*

*City Hall has earmarked £20,000 to get the scheme going and has approached a number of leading city businesses to take part and pledge donations of at least £10,000.*

*It is also thought that Norwich International Airport is keen to get on board - after resisting plans to levy its own carbon offset fund when it introduces a £3 terminal tax next month to pay for some of its expansion plans.*

*And the council is keen for schools in and around the city to come up with carbon cutting ideas.*

*Council leader Steve Morphey said the aim is to convert people's concerns about their 'carbon footprint' into a tangible contribution to help combat their individual impact. The trust will collect voluntary contributions from local people and businesses and allocate it to fund community-based carbon schemes that will help to reduce carbon consumption and encourage people lead a less polluting lifestyle.*

*"There are a number of people around who are looking at ways of offsetting their carbon footprint," he said. "It's about getting people involved rather than what we've had a lot of up to now which is hectoring and lecturing and hand-ringing. This is about getting people to contribute money so that they can do things in their own community.*

*"There's a limit to the number of trees you can plant," he added. "It may be communities can come together to look at alternative heating systems or*

*ways of using recycled materials to make things in their own communities.”*

*A new board chaired by Brenda Arthur, outgoing chief executive of Age Concern Norwich and former Sheriff of Norwich, will oversee the trust with the day to day administration carried out by the Norfolk Community Foundation.*

*While the UEA's carbon reduction project Carbon Reduction Project (CRed) has worked closely with the council to develop the initiative, and will help develop a procedure to calculate the carbon footprint of donors. CRed will also assess applications from local projects that could deliver carbon reductions and assess the level of carbon reduction they can achieve.*

*Brenda Arthur said she was keen to bring together a wide ranging board dedicated to make sure the money was used effectively.*

*“The idea of being able to reduce the carbon footprint while at the same time to root that in communities and particularly schools is a good one and I'm delighted to take part,” she said.*

*But critics said that the project did not go far enough and was more about easing consciences rather than promoting a fundamental change in lifestyles.*

*Adrian Ramsay, Green group convener, said he feared the initiative would distract attention for firms to do more to cut emissions.*

*“We don't want to give the impression both to businesses and individuals that simply giving money they can continue to have a high carbon life style,” he said.*

This clearly demonstrates that Councillor Ramsay knew about this well over year ago and he has had ample knowledge and opportunity to raise issues properly. Since that time he has not attempted to speak to me or written to me despite the press release saying he was calling for an explanation. He did not even have the courtesy to tell me he was issuing a press release more than a year after the event. I leave others to draw conclusions about his motives for using negative campaigning during the election but note the press showed more integrity than the Green party by not publishing the story. Brenda can certainly be proud to add her work for NCRT to her distinguished record of service to the City.

If Councillor Ramsay believes something was done improperly for party political purposes I assume he would have reported it to the monitoring officer and I would have heard by now. However, two years on since the matter was first introduced into the council process this is the first contact from Councillor Ramsay on any issue about NCRT.'

**Councillor Ramsay** said his question was about the process for appointing the Chair of the Trust. The Council was not involved in the decision and he asked, as a supplementary question, why that was. **Councillor Morphew** said that the Trust was an independent body and it was up to it to decide who it appointed as Chair, not the Council.

## **Question 18**

**Councillor Claire Stephenson to the Executive Member for Residents and Customer Care:-**

'Residents in the Caernarvon Road area more often than not have their green recycling boxes collected several days late. The problem is especially bad on the top part of Caernarvon Road (between Denbigh Road and Milford Road). The residents and Green Councillors have raised this issue with Council officers on several occasions but the problem continues, and we often don't receive a reply at all. When will a permanent solution be found?'

**Councillor Julie Brociek-Coulton, Executive Member for Residents and Customer Care reply:-**

'Unfortunately there have been a series of access problems for the collection vehicle created by indiscriminate parking which was compounded with the one way system and a tight left turn. This meant that we were unable to gain access on several occasions resulting in delayed collections taking place. Caernarvon Road has now been placed on the "Access Round" which utilizes a smaller vehicle to collect from areas where we have access problems. I have asked that the collections are monitored and that all queries are responded to so that residents are reassured that we are working to resolve the issues'.

**Councillor Stephenson** asked, as a supplementary question, whether other roads in the area were also being helped. **Councillor Brociek-Coulton** said that Councillor Stephenson should speak to her about what roads she was interested in and they could discuss the matter.

**Question 19**

**Councillor Howard Jago to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance:-**

'Could it be made common practice for the chair of committees to explain who the councillors are, who the officers are and to ask people to give their name and position before they speak whenever members of the public and other guests are in attendance at meetings? At present this only happens in certain committees and in the others it means that members of the public are not informed about the process for the meetings and how the decisions are made.'

**Councillor Alan Waters, Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance reply:-**

'The simple answer is yes. I have spoken to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and he has agreed to prepare a protocol whereby Members chairing a public meeting will explain how the meeting will be conducted and introduce those present. This will be addition to the name plates currently used.'

**Question 20**

**Councillor Peter Offord to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**



'Residents living in and around St. Leonard's Terrace have for several years now been asking the Council to re-open the footpath that runs between St. Leonard's Terrace and Gas Hill. I understand that the path was closed because of subsidence problems and that structural work is needed before it can be re-opened. However, residents of nearby properties are concerned about the wider implications of not carrying out this work, in terms of whether the subsidence could spread to their properties. When will this work be carried out and the footpath re-opened?'

**Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Executive Member for Sustainable City Development reply:-**

'The following is the only comment I can make on the subject tonight because of the possibility of legal action.

As a responsible public body, the Council is considering legal action to resolve the situation. The matter is complicated and given the possibility of court action it would be inappropriate to comment further at the present time. However I will ask officers to brief Councillor Offord privately on the matter'.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Statement by the Leader of the Council – 3 June 2008**

Firstly can I welcome newly elected Councillors to their first full meeting of Council and to recognise the contributions of former Councillors Ferris and Westmacott. I would also like to thank the Chief Executive Officer for her presentation earlier in the meeting which recognised the progress made to date and the hard work undertaken and ask her to pass Council's thanks to all staff. There was still a lot more work to be done and he commented on the need to reflect on the immediate needs and to decide where, as a Council, we needed to be in the future.

Our job as a City Council is not just to run the services people depend upon as effectively and efficiently as possible. The City looks to its council to lead the way to the future – these days we call it "place shaping".

The last 2 years have revolved around two dominant themes – getting our finances right and improving performance, and looking at the best way of dealing with the opportunities and challenges that face the future – which we call Unitary Status for short, but remembering that this is about how best the city fulfils its potential not simply about "moving the deckchairs".

The Chief Executive Officer has set out what the big picture challenges look like. It is appropriate that she should as this will be equally a task for all of us to be engaged in – not a party political task, although we shall have plenty of room to debate differences within the development and delivery process.

We must take care not to confuse the things that are common to us with those that may divide us. Once the decision on the way forward is clear, we must move on

from differences about preferred configuration of councils in Norfolk to how do we make the new Norwich Council the right vehicle – to deliver the homes, jobs, communities, services, sense of place, environmental excellence, transport system, protection for our heritage, sense of pride, safety and sense of well-being, engagement and fun. It was important to put divisions away to help shape the new Council.

Our manifesto is built from the policy framework adopted by this Council and we will enshrine that into the Corporate Plan coming before you later this month. In truth, while there are many initiatives we want to see and policies we want to pursue, there is one underlying theme the administration intends to promote this year. The scourge of deprivation was something we could now turn our attention to as many of us had been yearning to do.

What was a good idea back in February as our manifesto was being crafted, became an imperative as the credit crunch started to bite chunks out of economic confidence. How long that will last we shall see, but either way there is a job to be done for the people of the City who are finding it hard to make ends meet and enjoy the quality of life they are entitled to aspire to.

Some of the initiatives we are proposing are not new. However, for the first time they will be co-ordinated and developed as part of a financial inclusion strategy – to be led by Linda Blakeway and Alan Waters – a concerted effort to make a difference over the long term rather than look for short term fixes or one off initiatives that make little real difference. These will be set out in a report to the Executive in due course but will include –

- Campaigning for a fair wage policy – this will become a major plank in our social policy agenda for this year.
- Providing more affordable housing and improving existing Council houses – housing is the great debate the City needs to have and we will seek to lead.
- Helping save money to reduce outgoings – especially through energy saving measures.
- Providing more local facilities people can afford to use – there is clearly a shortage of affordable leisure centres and some sports facilities.
- Building on the Go4Less Scheme.
- Strengthening money advice services – to help those facing problems to avoid the worst, including benefits take up campaigns.
- Expanding credit unions to reduce debt and tackle loan sharks.
- Prioritising the spending of Council money in less well off areas.

The administration would be open to many other suggestions as well.

In two years we have made good progress dealing with crime, grime and anti-social behaviour. The job isn't done yet and we will continue to focus the Council's

attention on cleaning our streets, reducing bad behaviour and introducing peace of mind measures like Parks for People teams to help make the entire City available for people to use safely. Bert Bremner will expand his work on social cohesion and to also look at ways we can use community level art to bring people together, including new communities.

Julie Brociek-Coulton will close the loop on driving up services residents receive by also taking responsibility for the way we contact people and how well we respond to those contacts.

Perhaps foremost amongst those we need to help secure a future for are older people in Norwich. Ringing hands and telling others what they should do is easy enough, complaining about our lack of powers and shortage of resources is a doddle. Turning to our influence to get the City to work together to achieve what we want rather than making excuses are more difficult – but we would all hope to grow older, have already got to the point where it is personally relevant or have family, friends and neighbours whose quality of life means something to us. It should be a matter of pride.

We know better than to simply prescribe answers. We will set up an Older Persons Commission to advise on the details and take evidence from individuals and organisations.

Brenda Arthur, the new Portfolio Holder for Housing and Adult Services, will chair a new commission for older people to give local organisations and local people the chance to have a say on what is important to them.

We expect to hear discussion about suitable new homes to help people manage in their own homes longer, feel safer, keep healthier and stay part of the community.

We will seek to set standards for access to services. Those who benefit most will be people who find it more difficult to get around – often older people but this will be of help to all. Doubtless more ideas will be considered by the commission, but as a start let us suggest –

- A bus stop within 400 yards of every home so free bus transport can be best use of.
- Post Office services within reasonable walking distance.
- Convenience store within a defined distance.
- Open space within half a mile.
- Organised activities at a centre within half a mile.
- Library services within half a mile.
- GP facilities within easy reach.

I'm sure there will be many more.

Setting standards will inform investment decisions and will drive the Council priorities. Standards we can all aspire to and work towards across the City – a move towards genuine equality of access.

So the Labour administration will introduce policies that prioritise tackling the problems of the least well off. But these policies will not apply to those who are too

idle and expect everything done for them. It won't help those who create problems for the neighbours or damage public property and peace of mind – costing a fortune to mend or prevent.

These are policies for local residents who want to be proud of their area, want to see their City thrive, make the best of themselves and their families.

We are not responsible for children's services, but we do provide a lot of services that affect children and young people, and there is no doubt much of our activity is directed towards the sometimes less than acceptable behaviour of a small minority of young people. Trying to prevent that, giving a fair share of the resources to those young people who are not part of any problem and readying ourselves for the work to integrate what we do into a new unitary authority, drives the new portfolio for children and younger people Sue Sands has taken on. It is trite to say the children are our future – but it is also true.

The challenges of the future growth of this City are enormous and historic. In answer to a question earlier, I set out some of the issues about jobs and housing. We cannot throw a fence around Norwich and forbid people to move here. Not making provision for a growing population will simply mean under provision of homes and services driving up prices and driving down quality – making the less well off worse off and discouraging investment in our future prosperity. Fine if you want to witness a spiralling decrease in the wealth and well-being of our City, not so good if you aspire to making this a world class place to live, work, learn and enjoy yourself.

We know the difficulties in balancing the environmental and the economic needs of a City like ours – simple solutions there are none – simplistic solutions that don't work there are in abundance. Personally, I don't think anybody doubts Brian Morrey's environmental commitment, so having him responsible for the sustainable development of the City sends a message about how we expect the challenge to be met.

Norwich is a world class city and we have a duty to make our voice felt – as part of our Regional Cities East network, as an influential voice in government and beyond, so reaching out to extend our influence beyond the city is important to us. Yes, we want to be heard on the great environmental, social and economic issues of the day, and yes, Norwich is that important to the debate that we need to be heard. Not just the Council, the city's voice needs to be heard.

I have left out much, most about the things we may argue about but that we actually have few practical differences over or are covered in substantive or process terms in policies or plans already adopted that need working through. Other party leaders will have their views on the way forward and we will listen and debate as we have done in the past two years. And, as in the past two years, we will seek consensus but will be ready to take decisions in the interests of the city rather than risk dithering, delay or reaching the lowest common denominator when a challenge needs to be faced properly.

For the past two years I have stood here and said we stand on the verge of an historic moment in the history of the City. This is the year we step across its threshold. Let us make sure it is a threshold of opportunity for the whole city.

Steve Morpew  
Leader of the Council