



Council

26 September 2023

Questions to cabinet members

Question 1

Councillor Fulton-McAlister to ask the cabinet member for communities and wellbeing the following question:

“A recent survey from YouGov showed over three quarters of voters wanted more social housing and that the failure to meet the need was reflected in a report last year from the House of Lords Built Environment Committee which found that thanks to a "serious shortage", many current renters who would previously have lived in affordable social homes now live in "expensive private rented accommodation", subsidised by housing benefit, whose total cost has now reached £23.4bn a year. I am aware of the very significant amount administered by this city council. Can the cabinet member for communities and social inclusion comment on whether he thinks it represents good value to the citizens of this city?”

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for communities and wellbeing’s response:

“Housing Benefit (HB) helps those on low incomes to pay their rent. We see that typically for social tenants, the calculation of HB reflects the actual rent charged and rent increases are limited by central government to keep homes affordable. For tenants in the private rented sector the amount of housing benefit payable is capped by the Local Housing Allowance (LHA), depending on the size of the household and where the property is located.

In Norwich, the amount of Housing Benefit paid in 22/23 was c£42m with 45% paid to council tenants, 34% to RP tenants and 7% to private rented tenants. The remainder covers HB paid for temporary accommodation and supported ‘exempt’ accommodation.

The government is currently rolling out Universal Credit (UC). Under UC, six existing working age benefits – including HB – will be made into a single payment. The claimant will typically receive this payment themselves, rather than having their housing costs paid directly to their landlord.

The introduction of the right to buy has significantly reduced the social rented accommodation in Norwich as well as nationally and the reinvigoration of the scheme in 2012 has seen the number of properties being sold accelerate from c40 a year up to around 150 a year. This is national policy and is not an issue either limited to Norwich or one that Norwich can independently address.

We work with partner Registered Providers of Affordable Housing (RP's) and Homes England to maximise the opportunity to build more social housing, through the provision of land, bidding for Government funding or providing grants from retained RTB receipts. The Council is also doing its bit to use its limited resources to build new affordable homes for the people of Norwich.

Over the past decade we have seen the level of Government capital grant funding to support new social or affordable rented accommodation reduce to c40% of the cost of a new home, and with increasing build costs this makes it difficult to develop the number of new homes required in a sustainable way.

This shift from capital expenditure has increased the level of revenue support, through HB, that has had to be paid to tenants. If the Government were to provide greater levels of grant support from Homes England and / or flexibility for the council to use retained RTB receipts, we are confident that this would see a shift change in the numbers of new affordable homes that could be delivered and see a reduction in the level of HB being paid."

Question 2

Councillor Peek to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety the following question:

“In May I listened to the new Sheriff of Norwich, Dr Jan Sheldon, as part of her acceptance speech discuss the impact of partnership working, the Pathway’s initiative and how rough sleeping numbers had been tackled through that form of powerful multi-agency approach. Using a similar approach can the cabinet member for housing and community safety comment on the objective and anticipated benefits of creating the first Norwich Community Safety Partnership that will help contribute to maintain and improve our city as a safe place to live in, work and visit?”

Councillor Jones, the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety’s response:

“The Norwich safety partnership board's primary objective will be to provide a specific focus on community safety issues in Norwich that can be shared with statutory partners, agencies at a local and county level. It will concentrate on what Norwich specific challenges are, providing solutions and opportunities to help make our city feel safer for everyone to live in, work and visit. The partnership will act as a collaborative space for the development of new initiatives utilising a strong evidence base, partners knowledge, data, and expertise. Collectively the partnership will show that we are stronger working together breaking down silos, by sharing our community safety challenges and opportunities making Norwich an even safer place for everyone.”

Question 3

Councillor Huntley to ask deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety the following question:

“The issue of the poorly maintained, under-regulated and sometimes dangerous condition of privately rented accommodation in our city remains a constant source of worry to many of my constituents who live within it. The action taken, most notably at St Faith’s Lane but also more recently at St Peter’s House has been impressive. Can the cabinet member for housing and community safety comment on the progress made to ensure St Peter’s became compliant with building safety measures which includes, as part of this, any action against the owner?”

Councillor Jones, the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety’s response:

“I am pleased to advise that the necessary works to make the building safe for occupation have been complied with and the emergency prohibition order was lifted on 4 August and residents have moved back into the building. The completion of this work and lifting of the EPO follows extensive work by both the Private Sector Housing Team and CNC Building Control who should be thanked for their tireless efforts in this case.

In relation to action being taken against the owner of the property, as this matter is part of an ongoing investigation, I am unable to discuss details at this time, suffice to say appropriate action will be taken as necessary against those responsible following the outcome of the investigation.”

Question 4

Councillor Carrington to ask the cabinet member for communities and social inclusion the following question:

“An article in the Guardian newspaper from 9 August entitled ‘England’s playgrounds crumble while council budgets fall’ starkly laid out the impact of 13 long years of austerity upon the capacity of local government to maintain such basic but much-loved public services. Some councils – including Sunderland, Gloucester, and Barnsley – have been forced to cut back by more than 80% since 2011. Despite this gloomy national picture, the record of this council - which never sold off its playgrounds or open spaces – has been impressive. As a keen tennis player, can the cabinet member for communities and social inclusion comment on recent further improvements to parks announced over the summer?”

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for communities and social inclusion’s response:

“The article in the *Guardian* was noted and the further publicity which surrounded it. This council has a wealth of locally and regionally important parks, open spaces, play areas, allotments and natural green spaces. We remain committed to protecting and enhancing them wherever possible. We have a great track record on investing our own resources and levering in funding from other sources.

Over the last 12-18 months, we have heavily invested in tennis courts across our principal parks which has seen an increase in use in them, with further improvements planned at Bowthorpe. We have also allocated £375,000 to improve the play areas in our 2 destination parks – Eaton Park and Waterloo Park. These will be completed by Spring 2024.

We are in the process of developing a new 10 year Parks and Open Spaces Regeneration Strategy which we will be engaging on in the next 3-4 months for adoption in 2024. This will highlight what our priorities are for the next decade. We already know that Heigham Park, Wensum Park, Sloughbottom Park and Mile Cross Gardens require investment and as these are historic parks, have already commenced discussions with the National Lottery Heritage Fund.

We have already commenced re-assessing all our play areas for quality and play value including accessibility, and this will shape a new Play Strategy highlighting investment needs over the next 5 years. There is a lot going on to ensure our parks and open spaces are fit for the future.”

Question 5

Councillor Prinsley to ask the cabinet member for climate change the following question:

“As a keen cyclist and councillor that represents a ward which benefitted from some of the investment led by this council’s Push the Pedalways scheme, I was pleased to see that Norwich was recently named the most cycle-friendly city in the UK by Saga Cycling Cities campaign. While the loss of the Norwich Joint Highways Committee and recent weakening of the Transport for Norwich Advisory Committee has further diminished the role and power of this council to illicit the practical and positive changes to advance safe cycling in our city, can the cabinet member for Climate Change comment on what she believes could be the future role of this council to positively support the Highways Authority?”

Councillor Hampton, the cabinet member for climate change’s response:

“Norwich was recently named as the most cycle-friendly city for over-50s in the UK by Saga Cycling Campaign, with us scoring highly in categories such as bike sharing schemes and cycle routes. It is positive that we are performing well compared to other cities, but pushing for improved cycle safety remains a priority. Any one accident or, tragically, death involving cyclists is one too many. Improving safety will also be necessary to encourage more people to take up cycling as an active, sustainable form of transport, with the same Saga study showing that, nationwide, dangerous roads was the main barrier to cycling (with 57% of non-cyclists citing this reason).

We have sought to work closely with Norfolk County Council, as the transport authority, to attract funding and deliver schemes which improve cycle infrastructure and safety. However, the replacement of the Norwich Highways Agency Committee with the Transport for Norwich (TfN) Committee – which was initially set to be decision-making before Norfolk County Council reneged on this commitment – had already diminished our voice on transport issues. The recent news that the public TfN Committee will now be replaced by a behind-closed-doors TfN Steering Group is even more disappointing still. But given how many residents’ daily lives can be affected by transport matters, and the importance of this work with regards to cutting carbon emissions and creating an improved city environment, we will continue to seek to co-operate and influence transport decisions which affect Norwich – while making clear to Norfolk County Council, and the public, our dissatisfaction with current arrangements.”

Question 6

Councillor Packer to ask the cabinet member for communities and social inclusion the following question:

“I visited Heigham Park over the summer and was impressed at the number of people enjoying playing tennis on the new courts and using the play equipment too. Unfortunately, vandalism to the toilets had caused them to be temporarily closed which was sad to see. I was therefore pleased that this Labour led City Council will be investing in the park to provide new toilet facilities. Can the cabinet member comment on the benefits this will offer as part of the wider strategy to protect and invest in our parks and open spaces?”

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for communities and social inclusion’s response:

“It is always disappointing to see such mindless vandalism when it occurs and thankfully it is a rarity in most of our parks. The toilets in Heigham are dated and the programmed replacement within the next few months will be a welcome new Equality Act-compliant facility in Heigham Park and we know it will be appreciated by those who use this much loved park, whether to walk their dog or play tennis on the newly refurbished courts. This all forms part of our evolving 10 year Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.”

Question 7

Councillor Mike Sands to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety the following question:

“As a resident and councillor for Bowthorpe Ward I am constantly proud of the bold ambitions this City Council has to build more social housing in the ward, which benefits not only the community in which I live, but all of Norwich. I was pleased to see that the third phase of the Three Score development, which started only last year, is making excellent progress and the first 25 properties on this development have been handed over to the council ready for new tenants to move in soon. Can the cabinet member for housing and community safety comment on how, when complete, the development will offer more desperately needed council and mixed tenure housing within in our city?”

Councillor Jones, the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety’s response:

“Thank you for the question.

Like you, I have been impressed with the rate of progress being made on the third phase of the Three Score development. This work will complete the development to the north of the tree belt and will assist greatly in making the area feel like a real community.

The first 25 homes on the development are now in the process of being handed over to housing colleagues to let. They will be advertised in tranches shortly to potential tenants and I’m confident that they will all be occupied by Christmas. Providing much needed high quality and affordable accommodation to those in housing need.

Moving forward it is expected that the remaining 51 homes on the development will be handed over progressively between February and September next year.

Plans for the fourth phase of the development south of the tree belt remain in preparation but we are completing the detailed design work over the autumn allowing cabinet to make decisions on the tenure mix, phasing and delivery route early in the new year. The Three Score site will be a key part of housing pipeline for a number of years to come.”

Question 8

Councillor Maguire to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety the following question:

“The history of Argyle Street, over many decades, has been a very challenging one and I recall both the squatting which took place in the 1970s, the re-development of the site and then the problems with subsidence which later affected it. I was therefore very pleased that the planning application to build 14 new council homes on it was passed unanimously earlier this summer. Can the cabinet member for housing and community safety comment on the benefits of the new housing and its environmental and energy efficiency features which mark this out as such a positive new proposed development?”

Councillor Jones, the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety’s response:

“Like you I was pleased to see the Argyle Street scheme progress through planning committee with unanimous support. It’s good to see that we are able to progress schemes such following Natural England’s agreement to our scheme addressing nutrient neutrality through fitting water efficiency measures within our housing stock.

The new housing will not only provide 14 much needed new Council homes in a central location but will further contribute to the ongoing regeneration of the King Street area.

As you would expect the new homes will be built to exemplary standards delivering well in excess of policy requirements in order to minimise energy consumption and of course energy bills for the future residents.

The construction will take a fabric first approach maximising air tightness and insulation. The build envelope will include triple glazed windows and a design to optimise solar gain through provision of openings and shading. Mechanical ventilation and heat recovery will be installed and energy efficiency will be maximised through the use of Air Source Heat Pumps and Solar PVs.

Externally the site has been designed to enhance biodiversity through a soft landscaping scheme including the planting of native trees and a species rich grass seed mix in open spaces and verges. Fencing used will incorporate hedgehog holes and integrated bat, bird (including swift) boxes will be provided.

We should shortly be going out to market to identify a contractor for the build and I’m greatly looking forward to handing over the keys to new residents in due course.”

Question 9

Councillor Lubbock to ask the cabinet member for climate change the following question:

“The 20 mph road speed limit imposed on urban roads in Wales has caused quite a stir and got people talking about the pros and cons of such a limit.

Please will you say what this council’s aspirations are for Norwich for those areas which do not presently have a 20 mph limit?”

Councillor Hampton, the cabinet member for climate change’s response:

“We applaud the bold move of the Labour government in Wales to introduce 20mph limits on urban roads. In our response to the County Council’s consultation on the Local Transport Plan in December 2020 we urged them to consider the feasibility of introducing 20mph as the default speed limit across Norwich. This would reduce the number of people killed and injured in the city and give people more confidence to walk and cycle. The proportion of the city’s roads that were covered by 20mph limits was dramatically extended by our cycling ambition programme but since the County took back complete control of highways and transport there have been very few examples of new speed limits being introduced. We will continue to encourage them to expand these areas and one of our officers recently highlighted to their engineers how Mile Cross could benefit from the introduction of 20mph restrictions in association with a planned active travel scheme.”

Question 10

Councillor Catt to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety the following question:

“A resident reported issues with their gutter in need of repair back in October 2022. Eleven months later and endless appointments missed with seemingly no effort to follow up the repair until repeated interventions by myself, this repair is still outstanding as we approach nearly a year since the original report for a simple repair job. Meanwhile, another resident has been waiting a staggering 5 years for their front door to be replaced. These issues are a common occurrence with tenants losing confidence in the council's ability to maintain and repair their properties. Can the cabinet member say whether or not alternative reporting systems have been investigated to improve the level of service being provided to tenants?”

Councillor Jones, the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety's response:

“Without the addresses of these particular properties it is not possible to provide a definitive answer to the cases referenced.

The newly purchased NEC housing management system is a market leader for housing providers.

At the present time a review is underway of the initial system setup of the key repairs priorities to ensure that from point of call thorough to completion of the repair, we are capturing the key stages adequately within the repairs reporting and management system.

We are also working collaboratively with NEC, NCSL and NCC representatives to improve outcomes for our residents, including exploring system updates and changes that improve the journey.

To support this a number of reporting functions to highlight areas of operational concern are in operation so that we can focus resource where it is most needed.

In parallel, colleagues are seeking best practice from other authorities and exploring alternative solutions to ensure that we are robust in our ability to deliver this key service.”

Question 11

Councillor Haynes to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety the following question:

“All properties (freehold and leasehold) sold under Right to Buy legislation since 18 January 2005 contain a covenant which compels the owner, if the property is offered for sale within ten years of the original purchase, to offer the property back to Norwich city council. Between 1 April 2018 and 31 March 2023 370 such homes were offered back, and the council decided to purchase none of these. The trend in terms of homes sold is increasing and has almost doubled in five years. Is the cabinet member sure that the correct processes are in place, when zero homes offered back come back into public ownership?”

Councillor Jones, the cabinet member for housing and community safety’s response:

“The Council’s priority is firstly to invest in existing stock and then to develop new stock. This approach requires the focus of the Housing Revenue Account finances to be focussed on these two strands, in particular the recycling of receipts raised through right to buy.

Inevitably, properties which have been sold under the right to buy will have been modified by their owners which may require rectification work and will usually be costly to repurchase give the average price of a semi-detached property has increase by 508% since 1995.

I can assure you that each property offered is reviewed by housing and development staff to determine if they are of use to the Council in any way, and this approach is consistent with other local authorities.

Finally, the covenant only applies in the first 10 years after the property’s initial purchase and after five years they no longer have to repay the discount.”

Question 12

Councillor Young to ask the cabinet member for resources the following question:

“Following enquiries I understand that consultants have been bought in ‘to draw up options for a business case review’ of how city hall is used. A lot of city hall is underused or unused and it could be a wonderful civic centre. I would like to understand how the council is assessing public need and input as part of this planning process for how city hall will be used in the future. Please could you outline how we input residents’ ideas and suggestions from the very beginning, and what opportunity and risk mapping is being carried out?”

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources’ response:

“Thank you for your question about this Councillor Young.

As I’m sure you’ll agree, City Hall is one of the council’s most treasured and important assets and contributes so much to the rich flavour of our wonderful city.

Over the decades the grade II* listed building has served as the operational centre for important council business, a landmark building that we light up to mark important events and which we use to celebrate citywide achievements.

As proud guardians of this very special building, we are carefully planning for its future. We will be bringing in experts to help us with this piece of work.

The initial stage of this work will involve putting a plan in place to progress the project. At the heart of that plan will be stakeholder and resident engagement at an early stage to inform next steps.

Establishing the mid-long term plans for City Hall will take some time so in the short term we will be investigating some minor alterations we can make to improve the use of the building for staff and customers.

This is an extremely exciting project which has the potential to drive substantial benefits for the city.”

Question 13

Councillor Hoechner to ask the leader of the council and cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable development the following question:

“Recent performance indicators show that the percentage of household waste sent for recycling, reuse and composting has flatlined for several years at below 40%. Increasing this percentage is crucial for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and pollution. According to letsrecycle.com (using DEFRA data), nearly two thirds of English local authorities do better than Norwich, with many sending as much as 50% more household waste for recycling, reuse, and composting than Norwich. Can the cabinet member please explain why we do so poorly, and commit to making sure there is turnaround followed by sustained progress, starting in the next quarter?”

Councillor Stonard, the leader and cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable development’s response:

“The council offers a class leading range of recycling services. Whilst the council’s recycling rates have not changed over the last few years, the amount of waste and recycling collected have reduced over the last 3 years. In this, we are similar to many councils nationally and locally, and the latest published national recycling rate for 2021 is the same as it was in 2015.

Despite this, we are working hard to put the foundations in place for a new waste strategy that will deliver the council’s environmental commitments. Whilst we are disappointed that the government has delayed the introduction of new legislation to extend producer responsibility for packaging, and the introduction of a deposit return scheme for drinks containers, we are committed to improving our services and recycling rates over the next 12 to 18 months. This will be done through a range of interventions from redesigned collection services to improved engagement and enforcement. We have recently engaged consultants to help us with this work, and aim to have our review completed in the coming months.”

Question 14

Councillor Champion to ask the leader and cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable development the following question:

“As part of tackling river pollution, the climate emergency and supporting a good food economy, Planning for the Planet is asking councils to commit to developing and adopting local planning policy to support sustainable food and farming, as appropriate to our area. The scheme gives access to resources and advice and demonstrates that this council takes river pollution from factory farming seriously. Will the cabinet member confirm political support for this initiative?”

Councillor Stonard, the leader and cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable development’s response:

“The Council will not be joining Planning for the Planet. Membership involves a commitment to certain planning policies without any local political input, public consultation, or evidence to support it. This would be profoundly undemocratic. It also would be completely wrong to pursue policies without a supporting evidence base.

The council has been and remains very active in working with other Norfolk authorities to address planning issues in relation to the environment. We have jointly developed a calculator which quantifies the additional nutrient load of new residential developments. We have jointly commissioned a report from Royal Haskoning which sets out suitable short, medium, and long-term mitigation options that could potentially be used to offset the additional nutrient load from new residential developments. We also have jointly developed proposals for a joint venture company to be established jointly with Anglian Water to address the issue of nutrient loading. The company is called Norfolk Environmental Credits and it develops and implements schemes which mitigate nutrient loading and passes the cost of such schemes onto developers. All this work had been done in partnership with other local planning authorities and in the context of existing local and national planning policies, and is evidence based.”

Question 15

Councillor Galvin to ask the cabinet member for communities and social inclusion the following question:

“The scrutiny committee made 16 excellent recommendations in July, having worked with refugees and asylum seekers on how we can provide a welcoming environment as a city. Thanks to the organisations involved, the cabinet member and the committee, we are now taking forward some practical and much-needed actions as a council. However, one of the nine scrutiny recommendations that cabinet appear to have chosen not to take forward is to condemn home office policies in relation to refugee and asylum seekers. Presumably, an oversight. Will you please now condemn the costly, cruel, chaotic, and inhumane treatment our government is imposing on people who come to the UK?”

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for communities and social inclusion’s response:

“Thank you, Councillor Galvin. I apologise for inadvertently not using the opportunity at the last Cabinet meeting to condemn current Home Office policies in relation to asylum seekers and refugees.

The Government’s Illegal Migration Act which has removed the right to claim asylum from those entering the UK via irregular means is almost certainly in conflict with the Government’s public international law obligations under the Geneva Convention, the ICCPR (International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights), and the ECHR (European Convention on Human Rights). Suella Braverman’s rhetoric on the topic is not dissimilar from that used in 1930s Europe. The Court of Appeal have ruled the Government’s plans to process asylum seekers in Rwanda contrary to the principle of non-refoulement emanating from the ECHR, Art 3, and the matter will go to the Supreme Court in October.

While Labour wants to maximise the provision of safe and legal routes, and the tackling of humanitarian crises at source, such options will clearly not always be possible and some asylum seekers will need to use irregular means as their only option. Labour proposes to significantly increase the quantity of UKVI caseworkers to speed up the processing of asylum claims, many of which take several years to be determined, leaving asylum seekers in limbo unable to work and in unsuitable long-term accommodation.”

Question 16

Councillor Francis to ask the leader of the council and cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable development the following question:

“At the scrutiny work programme workshop, it was agreed that the scrutiny committee would look at the topic of how the council communicates with and consults with residents. When the Scrutiny committee came to formally approve its work programme however, this topic was removed from the work programme. We were assured then that the issue was being reviewed by Cabinet anyway. Can the cabinet member provide a detailed breakdown of the review into council communications being carried out by Cabinet?”

Councillor Stonard, the leader and cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable development’s response:

“We are committed to always looking for new ways to engage and communicate with our residents and communities, and some of this good work has already started on the tenant engagement side of things. We will also capitalise on the success of last year’s budget consultation which saw a record number of people contribute their views – in part due to the richer engagement opportunity that Get Talking Norwich offers. We are also pleased that our forthcoming consultation on the Corporate Plan will allow us to widely engage and have conversations across the city that will help shape our future priorities.

All of this good work will continue as we accelerate and prioritise plans to strengthen how we go about having meaningful conversations on all that we do for our residents and other key stakeholders across the city.”

Question 17

Councillor Osborn to ask the cabinet member for climate change the following question:

“Other councils such as Lambeth are introducing emissions-based parking charges for parking permits, and councils such as Bath and North-East Somerset are doing the same for council-owned car parks. This will raise revenue that could be put into supporting sustainable and affordable transport. Will the Cabinet Member explore this idea?”

Councillor Hampton, the cabinet member for climate change’s response:

“Tariffs for on-street parking permits are determined by the county council, and basing these on vehicle emissions would be a decision for them.

The city council will shortly begin work on a strategy for its own car parks, and emissions based tariffs will be considered as part of our commitment to our Air Quality Action Plan.

In order to introduce this new approach, there will be a number of challenges to address. These include the current lack of meaningful guidelines on applying such tariffs, and the limits of the technology available. However, the potential benefits available to us should be investigated as well as solutions to these challenges.”

Question 18

Councillor Worley to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety the following question:

“Leaseholders have reported broken front doors that pose a security risk as they cannot be fully closed. When this has been reported, the leaseholders have been told that the council will have to find a supplier to install new front doors – but no timescale has been given for this. Can the Cabinet Member commit to finding a supplier to install these fire-safe front doors as soon as possible, to prevent the security risk posed by doors that do not fully close?”

Councillor Jones, the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety’s response:

“I can confirm that officers have been working to identify a suitable replacement door to be installed in our blocks of flats.

I have been advised that orders have now been raised for the initial purchase and installation of fire doors and that this will commence in October.”

Question 19

Councillor Calvert to ask the cabinet member for climate change the following question:

“Whilst the council provides garages to allow any resident to store motor vehicles securely, there is no similar option for bicycle owners. Will the council look to use land it owns to provide secure cycle storage available to any resident?”

Councillor Hampton, the cabinet member for climate change’s response:

“Having a secure and dry place to store a bike is an important way to encourage people to adopt the healthy and affordable option of cycling. The majority of our multi-occupancy housing estates properties come with a dedicated shed for each flat. These offer a secure and private area for cycle storage. Where the council identifies a need for additional cycle storage, dedicated storage areas will be installed. We are in the process of installing a communal cycle storage facility for the West Pottergate Estate, via the Estate Aesthetics programme. This will create secure storage for West Pottergate residents who lack sufficient space in their shed or homes. If councillors have suggestions for additional storage they can let the Estate team via the online ‘Estate Improvements’ webform. I am aware that Cllr Calvert has been invited to do this. On the Planning side of our work, we oblige developers to provide sufficient cycle parking so users of new development can park their bikes in a convenient, safe and secure place”

Question 20

Councillor Price to ask the cabinet member for communities and social inclusion the following question:

“The riverside is an important element of our history and culture in Norwich. Over the last few years, the areas between Carrow and Foundry bridges have become overgrown and covered in litter and Graffiti. Thorpe Hamlet councillors have asked that Norwich City Council look after this area of the city better, but these requests have been ignored. Will the cabinet member share with me the maintenance schedule for this area, confirm if it is being followed, and make sure that this area of the city is cleaned up and remains tidy in future?”

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for communities and social inclusion’s response:

“The council recognises the historic significance of the Riverside area, and the maintenance schedule reflects this. Litter is collected from the area once a week and the grass is cut every three weeks. Shrub beds are cut back and cleared once a year in the winter. The council is responsible for removing graffiti from our own property, and this will be removed as soon as it is reported. We work with building owners where their buildings are affected by graffiti.

This maintenance programme is monitored closely, and the council is satisfied that it is being followed.”

Question 21

Councillor Fox to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety the following question:

“Residents in Canterbury Place have been raising enquiries about the unkempt condition of the communal gardens and footpaths in their neighbourhood for over a year. The footpaths are overgrown with weeds and the garden looks uncared for, having not had any work done on it since January, giving the area an air of neglect. At a recent planning meeting for the new development on Argyle Street Councillors were assured that the communal gardens there would receive proper maintenance and attention. If the council can budget to properly garden an Argyle Street garden, that doesn't yet exist, Norwich residents should be able to expect the same treatment. Will cabinet members ensure that all community gardens and footpaths are properly gardened and maintained going forward?”

Councillor Jones, the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety response:

“All of the council's housing estates receive a measure of grounds maintenance dependent on the nature of the site. Canterbury Place is included within the grounds maintenance programmes, and these are works are delivered by Norwich City Services Ltd and managed and monitored by Citywide Services.

Canterbury Place is included in this programme of work.”

Question 22

Councillor Schmierer to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety the following question:

“On this administration’s watch, CCTV coverage of the city has dramatically contracted in the last decade, while concerns from residents reported to me about antisocial behaviour have gone up since 2015. We could work with partners and other districts to provide more coverage. Will you outline what the plan is for more CCTV in the city, to help keep people safe?”

Councillor Jones, the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety response:

“The council are committed to providing safe streets and neighbourhoods for those that live in, work in, and visit Norwich. Working with partners and learning from elsewhere is essential.

CCTV plays an important part in achieving our community safety goals.

The 2017/18 review of the network resulted in significant investment in upgrading cameras and creating a new monitoring suite. The Council also funded equipment for Police providing additional opportunities for viewing and monitoring. Four deployable cameras were purchased providing support for specific operations in ASB hotspots.

The council is actively exploring opportunities to expand the CCTV network capacity including discussions with other districts. Expansion of the static network involves many partners and resolving technical compatibility and integration issues.

A Safer Streets Fund 5 bid has been submitted for additional deployable CCTV resource which will increase the number of cameras and provide greater flexibility in deployment.”

Question 23

Councillor Ackroyd to ask the leader of the council and cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable development the following question:

“Councillors regularly receive complaints about problems relating to bin collections. Is the portfolio holder satisfied that the service is achieving and maintaining a good performance level?”

Councillor Stonard, the leader and cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable development’s response:

“Waste and recycling collections are provided to all of Norwich’s 68,000 households at least once a week. This means that over 100,000 collections take place every week when one takes into account residual waste, comingled recycling, garden waste, food waste and bulky uplifts.

The council closely monitors Biffa’s performance with regards to missed collections, and we are satisfied that they are performing to a high standard. Their performance is also benchmarked with similar contracts throughout the UK, confirms this.

We are always seeking continuous improvement in the performance of our contracts, and a project has started to review how we can improve the way that we manage all of the enquiries that we receive with regards to waste and recycling.”