



**MINUTES**

**COUNCIL**

**Time: 7.30pm – 9.35pm**

**26 March 2013**

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

**Apologies:** Mr John Jennings (Sheriff) and Councillors Driver, Grenville and Stephenson.

**1. WELCOME**

The Lord Mayor welcomed the large number of members of the public to the meeting. He was aware that many were there to hear the debate on the two welfare reform motions so he would take those two items earlier than set out on the agenda.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

The Lord Mayor said that two questions had been received from members of the public –

**Question 1**

**Mr Elliott to the cabinet member for resources:**

Train Wood is nearly five hectares of rare urban woodland, river bank and glades, near the city centre between the start of the Marriott's Way and the River Wensum. This County Wildlife Site, once the location of Norwich City Station, is the gateway to Norwich's only non-motorised route linking the city centre to the Norfolk countryside. The riverbank in the wood is very unspoiled and home to the kingfisher, otter, and nightingale among other species. The county council is now proposing to transfer this important public asset for the people of Norwich, with its great potential as a

sustainable tourism draw for the city, into private ownership by putting it up for sale by auction.

Does the cabinet member agree with the many people who have signed the petition (currently over 1000) that there is an important principle of public ownership at stake here, and that the city council should exercise stewardship in this respect by stepping in to negotiate and work with the county council to ensure that Train Wood remains in public ownership?

**Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources to provide an oral response:**

Thank you for your question, which I need to set in the context of the wider position of our budget.

The city council is facing budget reductions over the next four years of at least £8million on top of the £20 million already taken out of our budgets since 2008. We cannot afford additional financial pressures which would arise should we bid to purchase Train Wood from the County Council.

Can I also provide some assurances because whoever owns Train Wood will be subject to strict conditions on its use and constrained by the character of the land.

It's protected by -

- The woodland policy
- It's in a functional flood plain
- It's in the River Valley Environmental asset area
- It's a site of nature reservation being designated as a County Wildlife Site
- It's in a main area of archaeological interest
- It's a publicly accessible open space.

So the sale of the land will be subjected to the continued free use of Marriott's Way for the enjoyment of walkers, cyclists and horse riders. The County Council has also stated that community interest groups have expressed an interest and will have their chance to bid on the land at auction. The important factor in all of this is not about public ownership but about the preservation of the sites biodiversity which can be done through the right conditions being put on the sale. In addition conservation bodies outside of public ownership can often attract funding and other resource that would not normally be available to local authorities.

It is estimated that the costs of basic maintenance to the site would be around £1,500 per year. In the next 10 -15 years many of the trees will come to the end of their natural lives. So there is likely to be a need for a major investment in tree works at that time.

So in conclusion -

- It is the safeguards that are put on the woodland at the time of sale that are important
- Whoever has ownership of the Train Wood would need to adhere to the current planning conditions – one of which is public access.

- In the medium term there are investment costs for not only maintaining but carrying out major tree works to the wood land.

**Mr Elliott** asked, as a supplementary question, if the cabinet member considered it possible that the costs involved in maintaining Train Wood in the longer term might be less than anticipated, and be worthwhile taking in account the council's commitment to the River Gateway and sustainable tourism? **Councillor Waters** emphasised that all the necessary protections were in place for Train Wood, and the city council needed to be able to sustain the green spaces it was already responsible for.

## **Question 2**

### **Councillor Richard Edwards to the cabinet member for housing:**

Could the cabinet member please tell me and my Mile Cross residents why the City council continuously does nothing after three years of me reporting and asking the council to fix the crumbling concrete posts and wire netting fence which surrounds the public green mound in front of 213 to 223 Drayton Road? This has fallen partially on to the pavement and I have reported it several times - so when is it going to be mended please?

### **Councillor MacDonald, cabinet member for housing to provide an oral response:**

The council is aware of the condition of the fence around this green area on Drayton Road. Discussions have taken place with neighbourhood teams with a view to improving the fencing scheme for this area.

Due to a change of repairs contractor and the volume of work the team has had, progress has unfortunately been delayed for an extended period.

With a contractor now in place, a surveyor has recently visited the area and identified a number of posts where the concrete has broken away from the metal reinforcement. In addition, some sections of chain link fencing clearly require repair.

I am pleased to confirm that the council has placed an order to repair and re-tension the defective chain link and replace the damaged posts. The work is targeted to be completed within the next 20 working days.

## **4. MOTION – WELFARE REFORM ACT**

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor MacDonald seconded the motion as set out as item 9 on the agenda.

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, to ask cabinet to call on the coalition government to withdraw the provisions of the Welfare Reform Act relating to the so called “under occupation” in social housing (“the bedroom tax”).

## 5. MOTION – WELFARE REFORM ACT

The Lord Mayor said that an amendment had been received from Councillor Waters relating to the motion set out at item 10 on the agenda. Councillor Haynes indicated that she was not willing to accept the amendment so it would be dealt with after the motion had been moved and seconded.

Councillor Haynes moved, and Councillor Neale seconded, the motion as set out at item 10 on the agenda.

Councillor Waters moved, and Councillor MacDonald seconded, that the motion be amended by replacing “disregard” in resolution (1) with “take into consideration....”

**RESOLVED**, with 22 voting in favour, 13 against and no abstentions, to approve the amendment.

**RESOLVED**, with 31 voting in favour, none against and three abstentions, that –

“From 1 April 2013, working age householders who live in social housing and are in receipt of housing benefit will face a reduction in their payments of up to 25 per cent if they are said to be “under-occupying” their homes. As well as affecting social tenants financially, this may also cause emotional stress.

People may wish to downsize, but be unable to get a smaller home with the council as availability is limited and demand increases. Estimated figures suggest that 2,744 council tenants and 323 registered provided tenants could be affected in Norwich, and to mitigate the impact of the proposed changes:

Council **RESOLVES** to ask cabinet to –

- (1) take into consideration the sum by which a household’s housing benefit payment has been reduced by under-occupancy restrictions when demanding whether and when to initiate proceedings to recover a tenancy as a consequence of rent arrears;
- (2) encourage housing associations in the Norwich City Council area to do the same by providing them with advice and assistance to help them avoid evicting people due to the bedroom tax;
- (3) work with housing associations to provide as many smaller homes as possible for people who wish to downsize, including keeping the voids process moving as fast as possible and help affected residents access discretionary housing payments.

## 6. LORD MAYOR’S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Lord Mayor said that, since the last meeting, he had accepted a kind invitation to a civic reception from the chairman of Broadland District Council, Councillor Shelagh Gurney, which was held at Hellesdon High School and featured an enjoyable and very proficient performance of the Sound of Music by pupils of the school.

He had attended a technical tournament organised by Norwich Rotary Club at the Hewett School where teams from local schools had competed to design and build a vehicle to travel uphill using only a weight to provide motive power.

He had also attended the Norfolk Schools Project at the Theatre Royal where pupils from three local schools performed a piece they had written themselves based on *Così Fan Tutte*.

Earlier that day he had visited the former Lord Mayor Jenny Lay and her husband Ken who, despite being unwell, were in good spirits.

He reminded members that a memorial service for former Lord Mayor Ron Borrett would be held at St Peter Mancroft Church on Saturday 27 April 2013 at 10am.

## **7. PETITIONS**

There were no petitions.

## **8. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the budget council meeting held on 19 February 2013.

## **9. QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS / COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

The Lord Mayor advised that eight questions had been received from members of the council to cabinet members and committee chairs, of which notice had been received in accordance with the provisions of appendix 1 of the council's constitution and the questions were as follows:

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|-------------------|---|
| <b>Question 1</b> | Councillor Carlo to the leader of the council on the Greater Norwich Development Partnership.   |
| <b>Question 2</b> | Councillor Boswell to the leader of the council on setting priorities for the Norwich policy area of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership. |
| <b>Question 3</b> | Councillor Galvin to the cabinet member for resources on demand for general advice services.  |
| <b>Question 4</b> | Councillor Stammers to the cabinet member for environment and development on sharing information across council departments.                      |
| <b>Question 5</b> | Councillor Blunt to the cabinet member for resources on the liaison board set up to monitor the work of the new joint ventures.                   |
| <b>Question 6</b> | Councillor Harris to the cabinet member for environment and development on the Norwich Big Switch and Save scheme.                                |
| <b>Question 7</b> | Councillor Lubbock to the cabinet member for  |

environment and development on the implementation of 20mph zones.

**Question 8**

Councillor Ackroyd to the cabinet member for environment and development on work with housing associations to encourage them to take part in the Big Switch and Save scheme.

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

(Two hours having passed since the start of the meeting, the Lord Mayor asked if the remaining items could be taken as unopposed business. With no members opposing, the following two items were taken as unopposed business.)

**10. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT POLICIES PLAN AND SITE ALLOCATIONS PLAN – AUTHORISATION AND SUBMISSION**

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, to –

- (1) endorse the proposed submission version of the Development Management Policies plan (attached at Annex 1) as legally compliant and sound; and authorise it and associated submission documentation for formal submission under Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;
- (2) endorse the proposed submission version of the Site Allocations plan (attached at Annex 2) as legally compliant and sound; and authorise it and associated submission documentation for formal submission under Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;
- (3) authorise the proposed submission version of the Policies Map (attached at Annex 3) for formal submission under Regulation 22 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012;
- (4) delegate authority to the deputy chief executive (operations) in consultation with the cabinet member for environment and development, to approve the detail of any additional or updated technical documents and supporting evidence required to be submitted alongside both plans for consideration at examination; to make any minor edits and consequential changes necessary to either document following Council and prior to submission; and to prepare and give evidence in support of both plans at examination;
- (5) to give authority to the inspector appointed to hold the public examination to make modifications to either or both plans under Section 20 (7C) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended; and
- (6) agree that weight should be attached to emerging policies and proposals in the determination of planning applications.

**11. MEMBERS INTERESTS AND AN APPOINTMENT OF A RESERVE  
INDEPENDENT PERSON (STANDARDS)**

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, to –

- (1) confirm, as set out in the code of conduct for Norwich City Council, that council devolves to standards committee the power to grant dispensations to members under section 33 of the Localism Act 2011;
- (2) formally appoint Mrs Fiona Anthony to the position of reserve independent person for the persons of section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 as recommended by standards committee.

CHAIR

## APPENDIX A

### Question 1

#### **Councillor Carlo to the leader of the council**

Since the GNDP held its first board meeting in public in December 2010, I have attended all sessions and have yet to hear any discussion among council leaders on matters of public interest. It would appear that all substantive discussion continues to take place behind closed doors. Please could the council leader itemise all the face to face meetings (formal and informal), events and telephone conferences relating to the GNDP which have taken place since she took over as chair in December 2012?

#### **Councillor Arthur, leader of the council, to respond**

I am disappointed that you feel that the first meeting of Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) I chaired - where we discussed the detail of the GNDP submission to the Inspector on the remitted parts of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) and where we received an update on City Deals, as not being matters of public interest. I feel that this view is misguided. Having said that, in the context of this evening's agenda your question is timely because I think you have captured a very significant watershed in the work of the GNDP compared with that of the constituent authorities. Responsibility for developing planning policy has moved to a local level and this may be why you feel that the agendas of the GNDP Board are less weighty.

Over the last few years we have had a very active period for the GNDP where a combined inter-authority planning team, supported by regular meetings at Director and member level, have worked on a collaborative basis to assemble a joint evidence base, prepare and adopt the JCS, respond to the outcome of the legal challenge to part of the JCS, and bring forward various associated matters including the development of a joint approach to a community infrastructure levy. This heavy workload was reflected in frequent meetings of the GNDP Policy Group and its replacement Board and the subsequent reports to the respective local authorities for a decision. Today, the requirement is very different and the focus of planning policy and implementation work has, as we all know, shifted back to the district councils where the constituent local planning authorities are developing their detailed development management policies and identifying sites for development. For us, all of the discussions on these substantive planning documents take place in public at the sustainable development panel, cabinet and, as demonstrated by the items on the agenda this evening, the City Council - hardly closed doors!

As a consequence of this change in focus, during my period of chair of the GNDP Board, the workload has reduced and the need for formal meetings have also reduced - for example the last meeting was cancelled owing to lack of business. Outside of these meetings, as Chair of the GNDP I do, as you would expect, liaise with other members of the Board where there is a need to do so. I do not retain a record of these discussions in the manner requested but the two main events that have occurred since December that have required my involvement are the preparation for the public examination into the remitted parts of the JCS and the



publication of the outcome of the examination in to the CIL charging schedule. The former matter was debated at Council in January and the latter item will be before long. These examples illustrate that there is no 'closed door' mentality, but correct and proper political leadership where all decisions on planning related matters are taken by members of this council in an open and transparent manner.

**Councillor Carlo** said she considered that the major items at GNDP meetings had received no discussion and asked, as a supplementary question, how the leader of the council ensures that council leaders discuss issues in public before making decisions. **Councillor Arthur** said that there had been significant discussion at GNDP meetings and when future items came forward they would be given due consideration as they always were.

## Question 2

### **Councillor Boswell to the leader of the council**

The planning inspector who examined the community infrastructure levy has recommended cutting the charges for residential dwellings by around a third. It is clear that there will be insufficient money to pay for the £500m needed in the wider Norwich area to provide infrastructure for water, sewage treatment, public transport, health centres, schools, community facilities and green spaces alongside new homes, let alone cover the additional £100m which the city council leader has agreed to prioritise for major road building. The leader has said that it is now down to "individual councils" to decide what to do next. Will the leader in the role of GNDP chair now instigate a public consultation across the GNDP area, with other GNDP councils, on setting sustainable, realistic and affordable infrastructure priorities for the Norwich policy area?

### **Councillor Arthur, leader of the council to respond**

The Inspector's report into the Community Infrastructure Levy largely supported what the local authorities proposed, including the boundaries of the charging zones, the differential rates for large and small stores and the levy proposed for all types of development apart from residential. The reduced level of residential CIL will undoubtedly have an impact on CIL revenues raised in the short term, but this is hard to predict as we do not know to what extent the lower rate will stimulate the market. It also should be remembered that it will be possible to change the rate of CIL once it has been introduced if the evidence is there to justify such a change.

The Community Infrastructure Levy is only one of a number of sources of possible sources to deliver funding for infrastructure and what is important is that through City Deals and other routes the City maximises its prospects of securing funding to deliver infrastructure from a range of sources. Having an agreed Joint Core Strategy is key to be able to do this. The strategy is long term and ambitious but it does have flexibility on how it can be implemented. The list of infrastructure required to deliver the growth in Greater Norwich was presented to the CIL examination to demonstrate that there is an infrastructure funding gap which is a legal requirement in order to justify the introduction of CIL. It was not a matter for the examination to review this list. The local authorities in the GNDP will continue to work together to exploit all possible funding sources to maximise delivery in relation to our well thought through

proposals. Now is not the time to introduce uncertainty in the market by seeking to review our infrastructure plans.

**Councillor Boswell** asked, as a supplementary question, in view of the £10 million funding committed to the NDR, when will Norwich people be consulted on their priorities.

**Councillor Arthur** said that the council was ambitious and wanted to give local people the future they deserved. It was vital “to stick to” the joint core strategy. There were opportunities to look at gaps through projects such as the City Deal and she was optimistic about being able “kick start” the local economy.

### **Question 3**

#### **Councillor Galvin to the cabinet member for resources**

Last year the city council granted a total of £99,872 to Norwich citizen’s advice bureau for general and debt advice. This was replaced with £54,000 from the council for a debt service only, and no funding for general advice. Is the council aware that there is currently unprecedented demand for general advice?

#### **Councillor Waters, cabinet member for resources to respond**

I am glad to have this opportunity to respond to Councillor Galvin’s question because it is important to set out the context in which we have provided funding of £81,000 to CAB for providing expert, free debt advice for non-council tenants for the period October 2012 – to March 2014. This is by far the largest of the grants in helping to deliver the council’s financial inclusion work.

In 2010-11, a review of advice services funded or provided by the council was undertaken, due to a number of mechanisms having been developed to provide debt, money and general advice to residents through in-house provision (the money advice and benefits teams) and third sector providers (CAB, Age UK Norwich, NCLS, and MABS).

Whilst these all generally provided positive support to some of the most vulnerable residents in the City, the services had developed over time without having clear objectives and whilst the services were all slightly different to whom or how they were targeted, debt and money advice was a common factor. At this time, additional grant aid was allocated to the CAB from the financial inclusion budget for debt advice.

This period also saw unprecedented reduction in Government funding for the council and this area of work was identified to achieve a budget reduction to reflect that the council had considerably less money.

To ensure that future service provision was as informed as possible, the council worked with partners and providers during 2012 to develop a needs assessment for these services, with this assessment being used to inform the commissioning of these services in 2013-14 through the council’s commissioning framework. As the grant agreements for these services ended at different times, providers were informed that the agreements would be amended so that they all ended on 30 September 2012 and that future funding would be through a commissioning approach.

The commissioning approach also provided the opportunity for the council to identify the outcomes it wanted to achieve, with potential service providers proposing how these would be achieved through their grant submissions. It also ensured that the allocation of council funds and the outcomes were more transparent and open to a potential broader range of providers.

Grant agreements were endorsed by Cabinet in September and October 2012 for the period October 2012 to March 2014 with £176,000 being allocated from the general fund to the CAB, Money Advice and Budgeting Service (MABS), Age UK Norwich and Norfolk Community Law Service (NCLS).

The current services have been commissioned through to March 2014 so that the impacts of welfare reform on residents and providers can be fully understood, so that when the commissioning process starts later in 2013, it can be informed by understanding these impacts.

Debt and money advice is also available to council tenants through the money advice team in the housing service and there is also a range of other debt and money advice available in the city including:

- Kings Centre Money Advice service
- Money Wise, Home Safe (Partnership with Cotman Housing), a 3 year lottery funded programme to support new social housing tenants.
- Norfolk Community Law Service provide debt advice for ex-offenders and their families

The council is aware of the increasing demand on advice services and the collaborative work with partners will inform any future decisions that the council makes. However, Council will be aware that demand is increasing across a number of council services whilst council budgets are declining. Approx £20m has had to be saved from the General Fund over the past four years and further savings are required.

Therefore the ability for the council to respond to these demands is more limited, much to the frustration of this administration.

By working better with our delivery partners and funders and having a better understanding of need across the city, the aim of the administration is to make as informed decisions as we can and equally ensure this information is available to other funders.

**Councillor Galvin** asked, as a supplementary question, if the cabinet member was concerned that the council did not hear the CABs concerns. **Councillor Waters** said no. His answer above described the process for looking at priorities for funding advice services. Meetings had been held at which the CAB was present. The CAB transition to a Norfolk wide model meant the council needed to ensure funding committed was spent on city residents. The CAB received the largest grant “by some distance” given to financial advice organisations. The government has changed the legal aid system. Funding has reduced and many CABs have closed in other areas. The city council would continue to work closely with the local CAB.

#### **Question 4**

##### **Councillor Stammers to the cabinet member for environment and development**

In instances where a new business goes through the process of applying for a licence or for change of use, is it not possible for the council to share information internally so that the department responsible for issuing business rates bills know there is potentially a new business in operation?

##### **Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and development, to respond**

Thank you for your question. The short answer is yes, there are no data restrictions on us using information about planning and licensing decisions in identifying and assessing business rates on commercial premises as such information is in the public domain. Currently though it not worthwhile establishing any processes to do this systematically. The grant of planning permission has no bearing on business rates at all until such time as that planning permission is implemented by a particular business. This may not be for up to three years or indeed, it may not be implemented at all. The planning department deals with the planning permission itself and may not be aware of when or if a business utilises that permission. Similarly, with licences, the premises licence holder is often not the person running the business. It is therefore not reasonable or practical for the licensing or planning departments to give any advice that could assist business rates.

It is the responsibility of the business to inform the local authority when it is occupying a premises in order for an accurate bill to be issued.

You may be interested to note that one of the benefits of introducing the Community Infrastructure Levy should be that the council has far better information about the rate of implementation of planning consents that are issued. Assuming we decide to adopt the CIL I will ask officers to look at this matter further as there may be some knock on benefits to other sections of the council and it will be important that the council exploit these fully to maximise the efficiency of our processes.

#### **Question 5**

##### **Councillor Blunt to the cabinet member for resources**

I am pleased that the three liaison boards to monitor the work of the new joint ventures with Norse are being set up as part of the arrangement, with much of the work of these boards requiring due regard to the needs of customers and stakeholders. Could the cabinet member please clarify to what extent members of the liaison boards will be free to share details of matters discussed by the boards?

##### **Councillor Alan Waters, cabinet member for resources to respond**

The liaison boards are an important part of the new service delivery arrangements adopted by the council. Each one will agree and set relevant performance measures,

monitor the partnership's balanced scorecard and make recommendations regarding the delivery of the service to the company or the council.

The boards allow members the opportunity to engage in both monitoring performance and outcomes and to discuss service development matters. It is envisaged that each board will adopt a similar agenda and reporting framework but that they will develop their own style and focus depending on the service remit they cover.

All political parties are represented on each board and as group representatives it is expected that, in performing this role, members will need to engage with other councillors in their groups. However, the boards are not decision making bodies and their meetings are not open to the public. Therefore it would not be appropriate for information discussed at liaison board meetings to be shared outside to a wider audience without the prior agreement of that board.

The work of the joint venture will be in the public domain through quarterly performance monitoring by the scrutiny committee and cabinet. Scrutiny committee can, at any time through its work programme, review the work of the joint venture.

**Councillor Blunt** asked, as a supplementary question, how the discussions at the liaison boards would be communicated with the wider public. **Councillor Waters** said the council's existing structures gave ample opportunity to "drill down" into services provided by the council. The scrutiny committee could put the work of the liaison boards on its work programme if it wished. Also, cabinet would have regular reports on its agendas so there were opportunities for the public and robust discussion by members.

## **Question 6**

### **Councillor Harris to the cabinet member for environment and development**

Could you please update us on the second tranche of the Norwich Big Switch and Save scheme? In particular it would be interesting to have information on the number of registrations by residents with prepayment meters and how the total number of registrations compares to our first very successful Big Switch and Save scheme.

### **Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and development to respond**

I hope Norwich people are proud of what their City has achieved with the Norwich Big Switch & Save. Their City has lead the way to try to get cheaper energy, cheaper electricity and gas, for all citizens and was the first City in England to do so.. In the first Big Switch and save last year three quarters of those who signed up were offered a saving, with one person saving over £500 a year. Since then 13 other councils have done the same and 56,000 people came together to get a better deal with auction at the end of January. In that auction there was a saving of an average of nearly £150 a year for those on direct debit dual fuel but what was a real thrill, Scottish Power offered a deal for those with pre-payment meters, saving an average of £54 a year. The collective switching schemes like the one Norwich pioneered are really starting to work and our next auction with even more councils, including six out

of the seven Norfolk Councils, is likely to be massive, possibly over 150,000 homes signed up. It's exciting times but there is even better news. Homes on prepayment meters in Norwich who missed out on deals to save money on their gas and electricity bills last December are now being offered savings. They were unfortunately not offered money-saving deals but the City officers didn't give up and they secured a retrospective deal for this group with Scottish Power meaning prepayment dual fuel customers will save an average of £54 and electricity-only prepayment customers an average £44 a year.

I hope this positive result will prove to all households, including those on prepayment meters, that it is well worth signing up for the current second wave of Norwich's Big Switch and Save, or Norfolk Big Switch and Save. Unfortunately there have been some people who have constantly found fault with what we are doing even though it is a collective switching scheme which uses people power to negotiate a better energy deal for anyone living in the city and is completely free and could potentially save households a significant sum of money. The more people who sign up, the stronger the bargaining power, and ultimately the better the deal. This is a real example of people power, working together, cooperating, for the greater good. And it means people are saving money on their energy. What can be wrong with that?

To get to the detail of your question it is unfortunate but we will not be able to give you the exact number of registrations by residents with prepayment meters in this second tranche until the auction date. This is when all registration data is collected to go to auction to find a good deal for electricity and gas. (On-line and Off-line). However, we do have access to the offline registrant information which is processed by the council. This is showing an increase of prepayment meters from 4% to 8%. In the last tranche we had 2% of our total from prepayment meters.

In addition to this, offline registration has increased from 69 to 202 registrants so far. This has been achieved through a number of methods including:

- A dedicated Switch and Save phone line (and officer) in the Customer Contact Centre
- Community Centre Events and direct leafleting and advertising prior to the events
- Shopping Centre and Supermarket information stands
- Coffee morning attendances and talks
- Luncheon club attendances and talks
- Working with voluntary organisations and housing associations

The coffee mornings and luncheon clubs were organised by Age UK and Cotman Housing and we have worked hard to make good links with them.

In regard to the question about the total number of number of registrations compares to our first very successful Big Switch and Save scheme. I am please to say we have surpassed this number with 1833 so far which is rising about 300 per week.

## **Question 7**

**Councillor Lubbock to the cabinet member for environment and development**

This council has made a commitment in its corporate plan to achieve 20 mph zones in the city (without the need for costly road humps), acknowledging the health benefits as well as road safety benefits and in turn encouraging more walking and cycling.

Recent press coverage indicates that Norfolk County Council are now getting on board and instigating a report into 20 mph zones outside its schools. Hopefully the county's report will be used to inform Norwich about the benefits and the costs of implementation.

Will the cabinet member for planning and transportation explain how this council will proceed with its commitment to 20 mph zones - not just outside schools but across the city as a whole? Whether resources will be committed from the 2014/15 budget to start the process and whether an area has been identified?

**Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and development respond:**

As Cllr Lubbock is well aware Norfolk County Council are the Highway authority in Norwich and have been since reorganisation of the councils back in 1974, the year I came back to Norwich to teach in Mile Cross, 39 years ago. We are lucky to have a Highways Agency and a Highways Agency Committee and as Cllr Lubbock is also well aware the budget for safety and similar schemes has been massively cut, mostly due to the massive cut in support from the Government.

In terms of advancing the corporate commitment to introduce 20mph speed limits in residential areas, we are doing what we can within the very limited budget available. While no specific funding has been allocated to the introduction of 20mph limits in 2013/14 they are being introduced as part of other schemes when appropriate. As Cllr Lubbock is aware a colour coded cycle network was adopted last year and as we roll out the implementation of those routes, 20mph speed limits will be introduced in the localities.

With regard to the 2014/15 programme, it would be premature at this stage to make any commitment on funding. We need to wait until the county council has completed the review of their policy as this will help inform the level of funding that the county council as highway authority need to allocate to speed limit changes

In terms of 20mph and schools Norfolk County Council have set up a working group to review their overall speed limit policy in light of the recent revised guidance from the Department for Transport that recognises that 20mph speed limits in residential areas are a positive set forward. A member of the city council's transportation team is on that working group and one issue they will be considering is the use of 20mph speed limits outside schools.

**Councillor Lubbock** asked, as a supplementary question, if the cabinet member could give her confidence that if funding became available the 20mph limits would be introduced. **Councillor Bremner** said yes. The council had informed the Department for Communities and Local Government that it would welcome the opportunity to do such a project if it made funding available.

## Question 8

### **Councillor Ackroyd to the cabinet member for environment and development**

It has been very encouraging to read about the positive responses to the current wave of Norwich's Big Switch and Save. It is particularly good to see that not only are households on prepayment meters who missed out on deals last year being offered a retrospective deal with Scottish Power savings but that homes with prepayment meters are also included in the current scheme.

Clearly a great deal of work has gone into including people in the scheme with, for example, dedicated events around the city.

Could the cabinet member for environmental strategy outline any ways in which housing associations have been targeted with a view to them working with their tenants (often on prepayment meters with resulting higher charges) to ensure that they are aware of the scheme and encouraged to take part in it?

### **Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and development respond:**

We have worked hard to make good links with housing associations. For example we have been working closely with Cotman Housing where we have been attending their coffee mornings and luncheon clubs. The "Money Wise, Home Safe" project manager and the customer involvement coordinator at Cotman Housing has been very active in the promotion of the Switch and Save with their tenants. We have also been working with Wherry Housing Association, Orbit Housing and Flagship Housing by giving out leaflets to every tenant of theirs in Norwich and putting up posters in all public noticeboard areas.

In reply to supplementary comments by **Councillor Ackroyd**, the cabinet member said he would ensure that the relevant team received the appropriate praise.