



COUNCIL

18:30 to 21:30

29 June 2021

Present: Councillor Maguire (Lord Mayor), Ackroyd, Bogelein, Brociek-Coulton, Button, Carlo, Champion, Driver, Davis, Everett, Fulton-McAlister (E), Fulton-McAlister (M), Galvin, Giles, Grahame, Hampton, Harris, Haynes, Huntley, Jones, Kendrick, Lubbock, Maxwell, Osborn, Packer, Peek, Price, Ryan, Sands (M), Sands (S), Schmierer, Stonard, Stutely, Thomas (Va), Thomas (Vi), Waters, Wright and Youssef

Apologies: Councillors Oliver and Manning

1. Lord Mayor's Announcements

The Lord Mayor introduced the meeting and set out practical arrangements for the meeting.

He thanked those councillors who had stood down in May and welcomed newly elected councillors.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Brociek-Coulton, declared an other interest in motion 9(b), as manager of Silver Road Community Centre which had receive funding from the Holiday Activity and Food programme.

During the debate on item 9(b) Motion: Right to food, Councillor Haynes declared an other interest due to being in receipt of school meal vouchers.

3. Public Questions/Petitions

Two public questions had been received. The first was from Mr James Packham:

Mr Packham asked the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth the following question:

“In relation to the council’s planning application for hard tennis courts at Heigham Park the council did not carry out a pre-application consultation with local residents. This is contrary to Norwich City Council’s policy as stated on p.24 of: Statement of Community Involvement for Norwich - A code of practice for involving the community in planning issues, November 2016 (amended September 2020). Subsequently, once the council’s plan had been submitted and then re-submitted, the plan received 120

formal objections, mainly from local residents, as against 10 letters in favour. The council did not take serious notice of these objections and approved its own application. Local residents to Heigham Park remain very much against the council's plan and are left with minimal faith in the planning process. Will the council now consider carrying out a proper and fair consultation that seeks to understand and leverage the views and wishes of local residents?"

Councillor Stonard, gave the following response:

"The Statement of Community Involvement was included in the council's planning application, describing the communications plan for Norwich Parks Tennis expansion project and arrangements for consultation around proposals for Heigham Park, including discussing outline proposals with Friends of Heigham Park and Heigham Park Tennis Club. A technical recommendation from the Lawn Tennis Association detailing layout and lighting was shared with the groups, who were invited to raise issues before submission.

Before that the council (as applicant) consulted with the Gardens Trust, meeting on site with the drawings, with revisions being made following their objections to the original application. The proposals were revised following this meeting, taking on board the Trust's comments.

The consultation complied with all requirements in force at the time.

Delivery of the project is at an advanced stage and having started there is no requirement for any further consultation as part of the Planning process."

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Packham asked how the council could contemplate spending a quarter of a million pounds without asking people what they wanted through fair and proper consultation.

Councillor Stonard replied that proper procedures was followed through consultation which gave people a chance to comment on the planning issues. All comments received were weighed against planning regulations and planning law. Informal consultations by third parties were not part of the formal process. The council had gone through all legal processes and there was no reason to revisit the matter.

Mr Anthony Mullan to ask the cabinet member for health and wellbeing the following question:

"The council's proposed development of three hard tennis courts to replace the around ten grass courts at Heigham Park was originally conceived in 2017, or before. Much has changed since the proposal was approved, not least peoples' understanding of, and appreciation for, access to open green spaces in the city. The council has recently published its Environmental Strategy and its Covid Blueprint for recovery. Does the council believe that the proposed hard courts development is a necessary expenditure and completely aligned with its own latest strategic guidelines?"

Councillor Packer, the cabinet member for health and wellbeing gave the following response:

"The corporate priorities which the project aimed to deliver are relevant.

Under the priority - People Living Well - the provision of affordable tennis is aimed at reducing inequalities in the city by addressing social and financial exclusion by delivering affordable access to high quality facilities (£35 per household per year).

The grass courts at Heigham Park offered minimal biodiversity. The project will deliver new facilities that allow access to a larger area of the park for the public and provide an opportunity to increase biodiversity. Our proposals for this area will be developed in consultation with the park's users.

The project at Heigham Park will deliver the Environmental Strategy's Action Plan commitments to

- a) investigate the potential for managing some intensively-managed grass areas under involving fewer cuts per year and
- b) continue to involve local communities in the management of their local parks, natural areas and open spaces"

Mr Mullan asked the following supplementary question:

Regarding the proposed expenditure, he understood that the project had cost £260,000 but a response he had received to a Freedom of Information had stated that no detailed breakdown of costs was held. He asked if there was a revised cost in which the public could have confidence and what the rationale was for reducing the number of courts from ten to three.

Councillor Packer replied that he had full confidence in the information that had been provided by officers. Where grass courts were available for some months, all weather courts were available all year round which would help with accessibility and take up of use of the courts.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings held on 16 March and 24 May 2021.

5. Questions to Cabinet Members/Committee Chairs

The Lord Mayor said that sixteen questions had been received from members of the council to cabinet members/committee chairs for which notice had been given in accordance with the provisions of the council's constitution.

The questions are summarised as follows:

Question 1	Councillor Manning to the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods on private renter protection.
Question 2	Councillor Button to the leader of the council on the installation of central heating at Templemere.
Question 3	Councillor Huntley to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth on Rayne Park.
Question 4	Councillor Oliver to the leader of the council on the Pathways scheme.

Question 5	Councillor Peek to the leader of the council on the delivery of eco-friendly homes.
Question 6	Councillor Giles to the sustainable and inclusive growth on the East Norwich development.
Question 7	Councillor Bogelein to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing on a Biodiversity Strategy.
Question 8	Councillor Galvin to the cabinet member for resources on questions to council deadlines.
Question 9	Councillor Youssef to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing on the Pesticide Action Network.
Question 10	Councillor Schmierer to the leader of the council on election materials.
Question 11	Councillor Grahame to the cabinet member for resources on parking fees.
Question 12	Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth on Anglia Square.
Question 13	Councillor Osborn to the cabinet member for resources on Community Municipal Investment Bonds
Question 14	Councillor Haynes to the cabinet member for resources on estates aesthetics programme underspend.
Question 15	Councillor Lubbock to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing on parking at Eaton Park.
Question 16	Councillor Wright to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing on the closure of the Tourist Information Centre.

(Details of the questions and responses were made available on the council's website prior to the meeting, and are attached to these minutes at Appendix A, together with a minute of any supplementary questions and responses.)

6. Appointment of a Monitoring Officer

Councillor Kendrick moved and Councillor Mike Sands seconded, the recommendations in the report.

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously to approve the appointment of Leah Mickleburgh as Monitoring Officer for Norwich City Council.

7. Appointments to outside bodies

The Lord Mayor highlighted that an updated version of appendix A had been circulated to members and published on the council's website.

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

Following debate, it was **RESOLVED**, unanimously, to:

- 1) Make appointments to outside bodies for 2021-22 as set out in appendix A to the report; and

- 2) Delegate to the executive director of corporate and commercial services, in consultation with the leaders of the political groups, to make any changes to the appointments arising during the year.

8. Annual report of the scrutiny committee

Councillor Wright moved and Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister seconded the recommendations in the report.

Following debate, it was **RESOLVED**, unanimously, to approve the annual report of the scrutiny committee.

9. Motions

(Notice of the following motions, 9a to 9e as set out on the agenda, had been received in accordance with the council's constitution.)

9(a) Motion: Advertising

The following amendments from Councillor Waters had been received.

Replacing "**devise**" with "**develop and enhance**" in resolution 1)

Inserting "**Review and**" at the start of resolution 2)

Inserting "**within legal restrictions**" after "**to ensure**" in resolution 2)

Inserting "**to which we as a city council can influence**" after "**to our communities**" in resolution 3)

The mover of the motion had indicated that he was willing to accept the amendments and as no other member objected, they became part of the substantive motion.

Councillor Schmierer moved and Councillor Osborn seconded the motion as amended.

Following debate, it was **RESOLVED**, unanimously, that:

"Paid promotion of activities or products that are potentially harmful to mental or physical health or the environment, such as junk food, gambling, alcohol or the most polluting forms of transport, are very common on our television screens, radios, social media feeds and across a variety of out of home advertising media.

There is a strong precedent for precluding such forms of advertising. Most forms of tobacco advertising and sponsorship were banned from 2003 (e.g. on billboards and in printed publications): tobacco sponsorship of international sport was banned from 2005.

Other councils, including Bristol, have developed more ethical advertising policies.

This council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) ask cabinet to develop and enhance an advertising strategy for Norwich City Council which recognises the harmful effects that junk food, environmentally polluting products and activities, payday lenders, gambling and alcohol can have on local residents. This policy would then be used to ascertain which companies and products the council wishes to associate itself with and support, including local businesses, and ban harmful products, companies or services from being advertised in council owned premises, e.g. car parks, in our communications, or from sponsoring council organised events.
- 2) Review and update the council's planning policy to ensure, within legal restrictions, that new advertising hoardings cannot be installed within the proximity of schools.
- 3) Ask cabinet to work with partners to phase out all forms of advertising, especially via outdoor media across the city, that are potentially harmful to our communities, to which we as a city council can influence, such as gambling, alcohol, junk food and environmentally damaging products.
- 4) Write to the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, asking for a ban on such forms of unethical advertising nationally and asking to follow the lead of Italy, which in 2018 introduced a 'Dignity Decree' that banned all advertisements for gambling services across all channels in the country, meaning gambling advertisements were no longer allowed on television, radio, print media, the internet, or any other public forum in Italy.

9(b) Motion: Right to food

(Councillors Brociek-Coulton and Haynes had declared an other interest in this item.)

Councillor Huntley moved and Councillor Davis seconded the motion.

Following debate, it was **RESOLVED**, unanimously, that:

“The current National Food Strategy (NFS) review, the first since that commissioned by the post-war Labour government, represents a rare opportunity to influence the approach, practices, and direction of future food planning. Alongside addressing acute food poverty, including child hunger, this strategic review must call for a fundamental ‘right to food’, to be enshrined in law, thereby ensuring that government obligations on food poverty are clear and government bodies can be held to account for violations of this right, as argued for by the Right to Food campaign in order to address the 11 million U.K. residents experiencing food poverty.

The recommendations outlined in Part 1 of the NFS report include:

- 1) expanding the eligibility for the Free School Meal scheme to include every child (up to the age of 16) from a household where the parent or guardian is in receipt of Universal Credit or equivalent benefits
- 2) extending the Holiday Activity and Food programme to all areas of England, so that summer holiday support is available to all children in receipt of free school meals

3) increasing the value of the Healthy Start vouchers to £4.25 per week, and expand the scheme to every pregnant woman and to all households with children under four where a parent or guardian is in receipt of Universal Credit or equivalent benefits

4) the support of supermarkets and convenience stores (with the support from the Association of Convenience Stores) in supplementing these vouchers with additional free fruit and vegetables

This council **RESOLVES** to:

1) Call on the Chair of the National Food Strategy, Henry Dimbleby, to recommend in addition:

- a) for a 'right to food' to be established in law, thereby ensuring a recognisable governmental responsibility for this provision.
- b) that accessibility to the Free School Meal scheme is given equal importance as eligibility (so that digital poverty doesn't precipitate food poverty)
- c) that accessibility to the Holiday Activity and Food programme is given equal importance as eligibility (so that digital poverty doesn't preclude participation and precipitate food poverty)
- d) raising the value of the Healthy Start vouchers to £5.00.
- e) that all food for sale in the U.K. on reaching its 'best before date' is automatically donated for distribution through delivery networks such as foodbanks.
- f) that all local schemes encouraging environmentally sustainable food production, including communal allotments or appropriate foods grown in communal areas, be eligible to funding drawn from tariffs imposed upon products not meeting the standards of certification schemes covering animal welfare, environmental and climate protections as outlined in recommendation 5.

2) Ask the Lord Mayor to write to thank those local supermarkets and convenience stores actively donating food for distribution through local delivery networks such as foodbanks to Norwich residents.

3) Ask the Leader of the council to write to the relevant Secretary of State urging the National Food Strategy recommendations"

9(c) Motion: Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill

The following amendments from Councillor Galvin had been received:

Insert "**through continuing to increase its practical action, together with partners**; at the end of resolution 1)

The mover of the motion had indicated that he was willing to accept the amendments and as no other member objected, they became part of the substantive motion.

Councillor Packer moved and Councillor Giles seconded the motion as amended.

Following debate, it was **RESOLVED**, unanimously, that:

Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt in the UK and around the world. Global temperatures have increased by 1 degree Celsius from pre-industrial levels. Atmospheric CO₂ levels are above 400 parts per million (ppm) and continue to rise—this far exceeds the 350 ppm deemed to be a safe level for humanity. Without more significant and sustained action, the world is set to exceed the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit between 2030 and 2040.

This council:

1. Notes, that the current UK target of net zero by 2050 is not satisfactory. It is too little too late. The increase in harm caused by a rise of 2°C rather than 1.5°C is significant. This is described by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C published in October 2018. According to the IPCC, limiting heating to 1.5°C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, and local communities. This action requires appropriate resources from central government to enable cities, like Norwich, to deliver the change needed to avoid the worst impacts of climatic change and to drive a sustainable and socially just post Covid-19 recovery.
2. Recognises once again that the evidence is clear. The costs of failing to address this crisis will far outstrip the investments required to prevent it. Investing now will bring many benefits in the form of good jobs, breathable cities and thriving communities.
3. Notes that many local authorities are playing an important role in the UK taking action to achieve net zero
4. Notes that there is a Bill before Parliament—the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill (published as the Climate and Ecology Bill)—according to which the UK Government must develop an emergency strategy that:
 - a) requires that the UK plays its fair and proper role in reducing greenhouse gas emissions consistent with limiting global temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial temperatures;
 - b) ensures that all the UK's consumption emissions are accounted for;
 - c) includes emissions from aviation and shipping;
 - d) protects and restores biodiverse habitats along overseas supply chains;
 - e) restores and regenerates the UK's depleted soils, wildlife habitats and species populations to healthy and robust states, maximising their capacity to absorb CO₂ and their resistance to climate heating
 - f) builds on the findings of the parliament's climate assembly, to engage further with the UK Government to help develop the emergency strategy.

Council therefore **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) Support the Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE) Bill through continuing to increase its practical action, together with partners;
- 2) Inform the local media of this decision;
- 3) Write to local Members of Parliament, asking them to support or thanking them for supporting the CEE Bill; and
- 4) Write to the CEE Bill Alliance, the organisers of the campaign for the Bill, expressing its support (campaign@ceebill.uk)

(As two hours had passed since the start of the meeting, the Lord Mayor asked if any of the remaining business could be taken as unopposed. The remaining motions below were all agreed as unopposed business).

9(d) Motion: Excess profits

Whilst smaller High Street non-food retail outlets were forcibly closed, and some are facing business failure, because of the COVID-19 lockdown, larger national businesses and multi-national businesses offering on-line products have thrived, reporting bumper profits.

Recent proposals from the UN and the EU are working to establish an international consensus on business taxation, to minimise profit-shifting for the purpose of avoiding corporation tax, but that these proposals are not likely to be introduced in time to have any impact on the excess online profits that some companies have made off the back of the coronavirus epidemic.

Council **RESOLVES**

- 1) To affirm its support for raising a bespoke tax on excess online profits has precedent in the UK.
- 2) Expresses its disappointment that the Chancellor has not yet introduced such a tax and believes that if we are, as the Prime Minister claims, 'all in this together', then the excessive profits of such on-line businesses should be subjected to a fair level of tax, and that the revenue raised employed to support our hollowed out public services (local government, schools and health) and the financial recovery of our high street retailers.
- 3) To ask group leaders to write to;
 - a) The Chancellor of the Exchequer, The Rt Hon Rishi Sunak MP, urging him to introduce such a tax as one means to ensure that we are 'all in this together'.
 - b) Our local MPs to seek their support for such a tax.
 - c)

9(e) Motion: Single parent's rights

In Norwich, 7.3% of households consist of a lone parent with dependent children. A third of children in single parent homes live in poverty, despite most single parents being employed. Single parents face discrimination throughout their daily lives, including in the workplace and when accessing housing. This has knock-on effects for them, their children, and society as a whole.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, many single parents were left isolated by lockdown rules which prevented them from accessing support networks and, often, the ability to interact with other adults. Single parents were more likely to have been furloughed than other adults.

The Equality Act 2010 outlaws discrimination towards certain groups who are deemed to have one of the nine protected characteristics. We believe single parents deserve similar protection.

This council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) ask group leaders to write to the Minister for Women and Equalities asking for single parenthood to become a protected characteristic in the Equality Act; and
- 2) add a question monitoring single parenthood status to council equality and diversity monitoring forms and staff surveys

(The Lord Mayor closed the meeting.)

LORD MAYOR



Council
29 June 2021

Questions to cabinet members or chairs of committees

Question 1

Councillor Manning to ask the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods the following question:

“Representing a ward, like most councillors, with an ever-increasing number of private renters, I am acutely aware of the need for better protections and safeguards to control this largely scandalously unregulated sector. I have watched with interest the powerful success, now made public with the conclusion of the court case, of the St Faith’s Lane trial and am very pleased with the outcome for tenants involved. Can the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods comment on the importance of this success and how the council can build on this to further protect private renters in this city?”

Councillor Jones, the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods’ response:

“Thank you for your question and support of the PSH officers who investigated, gathered evidence, served notices and gave evidence at the Upper Tier Tribunal appeal.

I attended the tribunal, and our evidence was professional fully justifying the council action resulting in the successful outcome. The subsequent criminal case against the landlord returned a guilty plea with resulting fines.

This case placed Norwich in the spotlight, with other local authorities watching closely the first case appealed to the Upper Tier Tribunal: this success gave LA’s the legal guidance for similar enforcement action, showing landlords cannot hide behind a company entity.

Equally, we can now confidently take further enforcement action where necessary to protect private sector housing tenants.

In addition, the current HMO licensing scheme is to be fully reviewed to improve HMO enforcement and developing a PSH citizens charter will demonstrate our commitment to supporting PSH tenants.”

Question 2

Councillor Button to ask the leader of the council the following question:

“Fuel poverty has been a persistent and growing problem in this city and the different actions and steps taken to address this over many years have been warmly welcomed by all members. The latest initiative, in Templemere Catton Grove Ward, has seen the successful installation of 80 gas central heating systems into some of the coldest homes in the city through the mobilisation of the Warm Homes Fund. Residents have received these installations for free with landlords paying a third of costs in private rented homes. This project has been a huge success for all involved and has helped to ensure the estate is suitable for habitation for many years to come. Can the leader comment on this initiative and the benefits attained?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“Over a million pounds was invested into Templemere to install first time central heating. Alongside the 80 central heating systems, mains pipework was laid so all residents can choose to connect to the gas network. The new heating systems should reduce heating bills by almost half, making a drastic difference to people’s ability to heat their homes.

Beyond Templemere we have invested considerable resources to reduce fuel poverty and improve housing stock. Only around 30% of UK homes meet EPC band C but we have upgraded our council homes to an average of EPC band C. Other work includes Cosy City, to help residents access funding for home insulation, our renewable collective energy switching scheme, our “Warm and Well” programme and work with private landlords to improve the city’s poorest housing stock; last year alone we secured £2.5 million for private sector home improvement.”

Question 3

Councillor Huntley to ask the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth the following question:

“I last visited Rayne Park earlier this year to view the development of the new Norwich Regeneration Limited properties. Returning just a couple of weeks ago I was deeply impressed by their quality, design and pleased to see new owners moving in. As we continue to develop this part of Norwich, and see NRL return to strong growth, can the cabinet for inclusive and sustainable growth, comment on progress and the new opportunities which future development can offer?”

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth's response:

“I am delighted to see the residents moving into Trinity Gardens at Rayne Park and the remainder of the development progressing so well. I too am very impressed with the revised designs and quality of development.

The development, when completed, will provide 153 new homes for the residents of Norwich, of which 49 will be for social rent, 2 for shared equity, 8 for private rent and 94 for open market sale.

Looking to the future and building upon the recent success of sales at Trinity Gardens, cabinet in March welcomed the NRL business plan, subject to independent assurance, and sought business cases for investing in two further sites, Three Score phase 3 and Ber Street.

The independent assurance report, along with an outline business case for Three Score phase 3, will be reported to cabinet next week seeking access to the finance to take this development forward.

Question 4

Councillor Oliver to ask the leader of the council the following question:

“Everyone in’ showed what is possible if we want to “end rough sleeping for good”, but gains made nationally in March last year were quickly lost, as funding was quietly withdrawn over summer and by autumn 2020 at least 2,688 people were sleeping on the streets in the United Kingdom. In Norwich, in the spirit of “doing different”, we have continued to develop and build on the success of our Pathways scheme, working in partnership with others, to provide a better response to rough sleeping. Can the leader comment on the success of this work and the future strategy to tackle this most serious of problems in our city?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“Our focus is to get people off the street and identifying sources of rough sleeping such as prisons and other public services. We have adopted a systems approach, creating referral systems so that less people end up on the street. Unfortunately, many people we find have suffered trauma at some point in their lives. Our strategy is helping people rebuild their lives through our wraparound services and reconnecting them with society thus breaking the cycle of homelessness. Throughout the pandemic we have housed 199 rough sleepers with 176 positive outcomes.

Despite this we continue to have flow on to our streets due to the transient nature of rough sleeping. To combat this, we are investing in support to connect rough sleepers to their home areas. Our long-term vision is to provide more Housing First opportunities adding to our growing stock of homes providing lasting change for people with support.”

Question 5

Councillor Peek to ask the leader of the council the following question:

“Representing a ward near the famous Goldsmith Street I am aware of the difference which developments such as this can deliver to practically improving the environment in our city. Earlier in the month I was pleased that Norwich took the top spot as the UK’s best place to live for the most energy-efficient properties, with Cardiff, Glasgow, Liverpool and Edinburgh making up the rest of the top five. The findings were taken from this year’s Rated People Home Improvement Trends Report, where different UK cities were scored against a set of 20 ‘eco-home criteria’, ranging from how many homes have smart heating controls and energy-efficient lightbulbs to electric car charging points, smart meters and heat pumps. Can the leader comment on this success and our strategy for further delivering on the practical environmental agenda to deliver more eco-friendly homes in our fine city?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“Addressing fuel poverty is a key action for this council. Presently our council housing stock condition outstrips the private sector with a Grade C average EPC rating. The council recently agreed to a carbon neutral housing stock by 2030.

The council has a strong record for retrofitting engagement. Examples include:

- In 2020 we secured £2.5 million to undertake private sector home improvements.
- Our collective group purchase solar scheme – Soar Together.
- Launch of the Sustainable Warmth competition last week
- plans to help more low energy efficiency, fuel poor homes. In particular EPC rating homes of E,F and G for residents with low incomes.

High environmental standards for our own development projects at Hansard Close, Rayne Park & the Goldsmith Street development. Design work on Argyle Street, Three Score phase 3 and the Mile Cross depot will draw high levels of insulation, renewable heat sources to maximise natural energy to help tackle fuel poverty.

Question 6

Councillor Giles to ask the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth the following question:

“There has been ongoing coverage in the local press on the work and aspirations to develop the East Norwich area, particularly since the closure of the former Colman’s site a couple of years ago. Some misinformation about the proposals, designed to worry residents, has been disseminated in Thorpe Hamlet and Lakenham. Given the significance and importance of regeneration, new homes, new jobs, and sustainable growth, can the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth explain the work that has been done to date, the decisions that have and have not been made and the development process going forward, with reference to public and stakeholder engagement?”

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

“Thank you for your question about engagement on the East Norwich masterplan.

Engagement is indeed a key element of the masterplan process, aiming to ensure that all relevant stakeholders including landowners, elected members, local residents, businesses, and community and amenity groups have their say in shaping the masterplan. Good progress has been made by the consultants so far, including meetings with a range of stakeholders including landowners, member workshops, and stakeholder engagement workshops. Public drop-in exhibitions are planned for late July following relaxation of covid restrictions.

No decisions have been taken on the content of the emerging masterplan yet. The purpose of this stage is to listen to the views of stakeholders and the wider community. This will then set the framework for the development of masterplan options during the summer, with a final concept masterplan developed by late summer / early autumn.”

Question 7

Councillor Bogelein to ask the cabinet member for health and wellbeing the following question:

“A Green Party motion was passed in September 2019 to address the biodiversity emergency. One of the actions in this biodiversity motion was to update the council’s biodiversity action plan, which, shockingly, was last updated in 2002. The response on the motion tracker says that this work would start in 2020 and would be brought to climate and environment emergency executive panel for discussion in 2020. So far, we have not seen any updated action plan. Could you please clarify when, after almost two decades, an updated action plan will come to members for discussion?”

Councillor Packer, the cabinet member for health and wellbeing’s response:

“Work to improve biodiversity across our city has not stood still since the last action plan. There have been major improvements for our local nature reserves and wildlife sites, significant changes in how we manage formal parks, open spaces and communal gardens, and improvement in how we interact with our community groups.

Work is underway on the new biodiversity strategy and action plan. The next step is engagement with communities and partners, given the important role they have to play. This will take place over the autumn and include members.

Royal Assent of the, much delayed, Environment Bill, expected this autumn, is also a key milestone. It proposes significant changes around the relationship between local and national government, with potentially a greater responsibility sitting with councils.

Nonetheless, our ambition is to have this strategy and action plan in place during this financial year.”

Supplementary question:

Councillor Bogelein asked if the action plan would cover all services, including those provided by Norwich City Services Ltd to the council and other clients, and whether this would be reflected in the NCSL Business Plan.

Councillor Packer said that he believed this would be the case but would confirm this.

Question 8

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

“Cabinet is the decision-making body of the council. 224 pages of papers for its meeting on 9 June contained important items, including its *Equality Diversity and Inclusion Policy*; *Customer Experience and Digital Strategy*; *Budget Monitoring Provisional Outturn* and *5 Year Air Quality Action Plan for Norwich*. A standing item is *Public Questions/Petitions* - 'to receive public questions/petitions from the public **by 10am** on Tuesday 1 June 2021 in line with the council's constitution.' However, the cabinet papers were not published until the **afternoon** of 1 June. I was surprised the Leader of the Council did not use his discretion to allow questions received from members of the public. It is not possible to send in questions on reports before they have been published. What will the council do to ensure members of the public can ask questions about council reports at the meeting at which the report is tabled?”

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources' response:

“A question may only be asked if it has been received by Democratic Services no later than 10am five clear working days before the meeting. The clear days does not include the day the meeting takes place. There is a statutory requirement for a forward plan for key decisions which Norwich maintain, and this is done to give early notice of what is to be discussed at any meeting which give details of items on the cabinet agenda. Part 4, points 23 and 28 of the constitution (Access to information rules) note that the 5 clear day period also applies to publication of agendas and notice of meetings – this is in line with the statutory position for the publication of agendas. I appreciate that this may have caused some concern and individuals might feel disappointed not being able to read the report until after the deadline had passed.”

Supplementary question:

Councillor Galvin asked if the cabinet member agreed that it was right that members of the public could not see the agenda papers before deciding if they would like to ask a question.

Councillor Kendrick reminded members that all parties had been represented on the constitution working party which had put thorough those changes to the constitution.

Question 9

Councillor Youssef to ask the cabinet member for health and wellbeing the following question:

“In September 2019, this council agreed, as part of a motion to urgently tackle the biodiversity emergency, to continue *‘to work with the Pesticide Action Network, to lead Norwich to becoming pesticide free’*. In March 2021, the council agreed to *‘continuing work with the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) to lead to an end in use of pesticides in Norwich’*. Could the cabinet member give an update on the work that the council has done with the Pesticide Action Network over the last two years?”

Councillor Packer, the cabinet member for health and wellbeing’s response:

“I am sure that all councillors will appreciate that the impact of Covid 19 has restricted the work that Council officers and NCSL / NNE staff have been able to undertake. This, inevitably, restricted the time available to identify alternatives to pesticide use in maintaining the Council’s Parks and Open Spaces. Furthermore, there had always been the intention and opportunity to have greater control of the contracts once they had transferred to the newly created NCSL.

Despite challenges, we have made progress. An audit of existing pesticides has been completed and we have been preparing for a trial of non-pesticide methods of weed control next spring. It is intended to be completed with a final report presented next summer.

Working with Norwich City Council and the Pesticides Action Network on the aim to remove all pesticides is included as a key deliverable in the NCSL business plan for 21/24.”

Supplementary question:

Councillor Youssef asked when the findings of the pesticide audit would be presented.

Councillor Packer said that he would check this and let Councillor Youssef know.

Question 10

Councillor Schmierer to ask the leader of the council the following question:

“I was very concerned to read in election literature from the Labour party, which forms the administration on Norwich City Council, that only Labour councillors have the ear of the administration. Can you please reassure me that the administration respects the outcomes of elections and equally listens to concerns of residents which are raised by opposition councillors who represent a significant proportion of Norwich residents?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“Councillor Schmierer, as an experienced councillor and former Lord Mayor, I would have assumed a familiarity with the accountability arrangements that operate within the council.

There are of course the realities and different roles that come with being in administration or being in opposition. Labour has been elected to deliver its manifesto. We have always adopted an open and inclusive relationship with all political parties represented on the council. By way of illustration, this evening’s council agenda demonstrates this both in the opportunities provided to ask questions, comment on reports and the work done cross party, prior to council, to achieve a consensus on the motions for debate this evening.”

Supplementary question:

Councillor Schmierer said that the national news had reported on ‘pork barrel politics’ which funnelled government spend by ruling parties into particular political considerations at the expense of broader public interest and wanted to give the leader of the council a chance to distance the council from those politics.

Councillor Waters said that Councillor Schmierer had answered his own supplementary question by saying that he would not compare the administration to the Conservative Government.

Question 11

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

“I was very disappointed to see in the CITIZEN magazine a full-page advertisement of city council car parks, without any indication of how people could travel into the city in a more sustainable way. This illustrates the big elephant in the room: the council wants to be sustainable, but big parts of its income come from parking charges. Can the cabinet member please update me about how the council is planning to reduce its unsustainable reliance on car parking fees?”

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources' response:

“The Council’s Financial Plan forecasts that £11.8m of gross savings will need to be found over the four year period from 2022/23. This quantum of savings represents 21% of the 2021/22 proposed gross expenditure budget. The car parking service makes a considerable direct contribution to the Council’s current revenue budget, and this will be required to meet the significant financial challenges that the Council faces due to Tory austerity.

It also makes a significant indirect contribution through supporting the City’s economy by providing an appropriate level of parking to support economic vitality, ensuring that parking is inclusive for all users, delivering efficient parking and traffic management to support the local economy, and providing access to key services and facilities.

The Council is currently reviewing its asset management strategy and the future approach to car parking provision will be influenced by this and forthcoming review of the Transport for Norwich Strategy.”

Supplementary question:

Councillor Grahame asked how the council planned to navigate the conflict between a reliance on car parking income and clean air aspirations.

Councillor Kendrick said that the council would have to make massive budget cuts if there was no car parking income and some people needed to use cars to come into Norwich. Visitors were encouraged to use the council’s car parks which played an important role in protecting vital services.

Question 12

Councillor Carlo to ask the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth the following question:

“We hear that the council and Weston Homes are considering their options for Anglia Square. An indication of the council’s thinking was a new policy in the Regulation 19 Greater Norwich Local Plan, proposed, regrettably, without public discussion, which does not bode well for the need to achieve wide support. The main change is lower housing numbers (from 1250 to 800 units) but new student housing has been added. This still represents a substantial amount of housing for a 4.79 ha site and makes high-rise development in the oldest part of Norwich likely. There was no mention of green space despite the city becoming hotter due to climate change and extensive building and paving over. When will the city council open up the debate on Anglia Square and involve ward councillors and stakeholders in crafting a sensitive, imaginative and forward-looking, climate-aware planning brief for this important site?”

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

“Anglia Square has been a priority for comprehensive regeneration for many years now. The need for regeneration was first highlighted in the Local Plan of 2004, Northern City Centre Area Action Plan, and in advance of considering the last application for the site a planning guidance note was produced. All these documents involved extensive programmes of public engagement.

The timing of the secretary of state’s decision to go against his own inspector’s recommendation and refuse the proposed redevelopment of the site last November came at a time that wasn’t ideal for the preparation of the local plan. Nevertheless, it was possible to consult on the emerging policy in the GNLP earlier this year.

The council continues to work closely with all concerned to identify the appropriate next steps in development of the site and I’m confident there will be extensive engagement with all interested parties.”

Supplementary question:

Councillor Carlo asked when and how the council would engage with stakeholders on the future on Anglia Square and whether green space would be included within the plans.

Councillor Stonard said that it was important to remember that the council was in the very early stages of considering the future of Anglia Square. The landowners and developers were reconsidering their proposals and engaging with organisations such as Historic England to try and find a mutually acceptable solution. When proposals were put forward, there would be full consultation and engagement. Green spaces would be included in the development.

Question 13

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

“At the budget scrutiny committee meeting, Green councillors asked whether Community Municipal Investment Bonds (CMIBs) could be included as a potential funding source for capital projects with social or environmental benefits. At the time, the council said that no projects were proposed that would be appropriate for such funding but that it remained an option. Does the cabinet member agree that the council should be actively looking for investment opportunities that could be funded through CMIBs to provide social and environmental benefits while generating a local financial return, for example investing in local solar power?”

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources’ response:

“Community Municipal Investment Bonds (CMIBs) are a potential funding source for future capital projects. However, depending on the nature of the investment, other forms of finance might be more suitable. Consideration should be given to all viable options.

The council actively looks for investments and has investigated community energy, grid flexibility and energy saving in partnerships. These proposals require significant work to be viable and regrettably many don’t make it over the line for various reasons including a changing regulatory landscape.

The council has developed an expression of interest for funding from the Community Renewal Fund. This proposal intends to find new commercial solutions for the emerging hydrogen economy and localised energy sectors. This could result in funding from variety of sources.

I would welcome any costed commercial business cases from councillors which allow for a return on investment whilst also providing social and environmental benefits with minimal risk.”

Supplementary question:

Councillor Osborn said that although he was pleased to see that all viable options were being considered, he was disappointed that not much progress had been made so far compared to other councils such as West Berkshire and West Suffolk.

Councillor Kendrick said that the financial situation of the council could not be compared with others. He would welcome fully costed commercial business cases which could provide a return on investment whilst providing services at no risk.

Question 14

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

“The financial outturn for the last financial year shows an underspend of £396,000 for the estates aesthetics programme. This underspend has been explained by Covid restrictions. This programme is vital and a number of estates could really benefit from crucial investment in aesthetics. We know from research commissioned by the council and research on the broken window theory that the aesthetics of an area have an important link to feelings of safety and reductions in anti-social behaviour. It is one of the ways in which the council can make a crucial contribution to improving residents' lives. I understand that a request has been made to carry this underspend over to the next financial year. Can you please commit to carrying over the full amount so the council can ensure that as many estates as possible can be included in this programme going forward?”

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources' response:

“I completely agree that the estates aesthetics programme is crucial to improving our estates and neighbourhoods which is why we have increased the budget over the past few years. The current projects total £608,684.52 from a of budget of £1,000,000 and we are assessing further bids. For now, this this area of work does not require any financial carry forward. Should there be a need for additional finance to deliver any additional works identified throughout the year, and as circumstances change then this will be subject to separate business cases requests throughout the financial year.”

Supplementary question:

Councillor Haynes said that residents were being told that finances were the reason that the issues were not being sorted and asked why therefore this area was not in need of financial carry forward.

Councillor Kendrick said that the last financial year was different year due to covid and the council was not able to do as many works as its would have liked. The money was not being lost as it would be invested in the future with the council continuing to prioritise investments and striving to provide excellent services to tenants.

Question 15

Councillor Lubbock to ask the cabinet member for health and wellbeing the following question:

“I would like to know what progress the administration has made with their plans to charge for parking in Eaton and Waterloo Parks.

Details such as the cost of installing the equipment and estimating the potential net income and consulting with local residents?”

Councillor Packer, the cabinet member for health and wellbeing’s response:

“The council has identified the key milestones that need to be completed before we can implement charges for parking in our parks. These milestones include conducting Stakeholder Consultation, options appraisal on payment methods, and finalising projected income and expenditure, including start up costs. Much of this work will be carried out as part of an integrated approach to the introduction of cashless parking at our other off street and on street parking sites.

Resources for this work are being allocated, and this work will be completed over the summer for a decision by cabinet in early autumn. It is anticipated that full implementation will be achieved by the end of this calendar year ”

Supplementary question:

Councillor Lubbock said that the slow progress on the implementation of charges suited local residents as there were very unpopular. If the consultation revealed similar negative responses, would cabinet change its mind.

Councillor Packer said that if Councillor Lubbock could identify where the money could be found instead, he would be very happy to discuss this.

Question 16

Councillor Wright to ask the leader of the council the following question:

“The council’s recent announcement about the closure of the Tourist Information Centre has caused much local interest and disappointment.

Whilst the council clearly has to look for savings, and the over £100k saved from this closure is not insignificant, a city the size of Norwich should be able to maintain an in-person tourist centre.

An alternative might be the provision of a market stall to be used by VisitNorwich and resourced by the excellent City Hosts.

Has the cabinet member given any consideration to alternatives such as the one suggested?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“Fewer tourists are visiting Tourist Information Centres, even before Covid19. The national trend is for customers to use multiple channels giving increased visibility and flexibility to learn about their destination.

The City Hosts are organised by the Norwich BID and they provide an excellent source of accessible information with a face-to-face service. There are many other alternatives for visitors before and during their visit; the council responds to phone and email enquiries and there is a ‘Live Chat’ function on the VisitNorwich website, which we support via funding. We support marketing, such as the current ‘Summer is on’ campaign and work in partnership with organisations to make improvements, such as with the new Wayfinding totems across the city centre.

I feel confident of a strong and safe tourist season ahead, and that visitors will be able to access the information they need to make the best of their stay.”