



Council

19:35 to 21:50

31 January 2023

Present: Councillors Maguire (Lord Mayor), Ackroyd, Bogelein, Catt, Champion, Davis, Fulton-McAlister (M), Galvin, Giles, Grahame, Hampton, Harris, Haynes, Huntley, Jones, Kendrick, Kidman, Lubbock, Oliver, Osborn, Padda, Peek, Price, Sands (M), Sands (S), Schmierer, Stonard, Stutely, Waters, Wright and Young

Apologies: Councillors Brociek-Coulton, Button, Carlo, Driver, Everett, Fulton-McAlister (E), Thomas (Va) and Thomas (Vi)

1. Lord Mayor's Announcements

The Lord Mayor welcomed members of the public to the meeting.

The Lord Mayor announced that he had attended the Holocaust Memorial Service at St Peter Mancroft Church and had heard poignant speeches on the theme for the service which was 'ordinary people'.

He had also attended a service at Norwich Cathedral for the installation of the new Dean and a service commemorating the Great Yarmouth floods, which had affected the lives of many people in the county.

2. Declarations of interests

Councillor Bogelein declared a pecuniary interest in items 9(b) – Motion – End the unfairness of forced prepayment meters and protect citizens at risk of being cut off 'by the back door' and 9(d) – Motion – Energy for All campaign. She would leave the room for the debate and vote on these items.

(The Monitoring Officer advised that members who were landlords did not need to declare an interest in item 9(e) - Motion – National Housing Crisis – as she did not consider any councillors to be specifically affected to a greater or lesser extent than others by the actions contained within it.)

3. Public questions/petitions

The Lord Mayor announced that four public questions had been received.

Question 1 – Fly-tipping action plan

The first question was from Mr Liam Calvert to the cabinet member for environmental services on a fly-tipping action plan, as follows:

“I’ve followed the saga of the council’s lack of action on fly-tipping. It’s frustrating that fly-tipping makes local neighbourhoods so untidy and increases the likelihood of other anti-social behaviour. It’s even more frustrating that fly-tipping is more likely in areas with a high percentage of council tenants who are much more likely to have communal bins, which attract fly-tipping. A while ago, the council vowed to do something and I followed one of the last cabinet meetings with interest; actions to address fly-tipping hotspots were discussed. I noticed that the cabinet agreed to publish a clear timetable for the commencement of these actions, such as CCTV and more enforcement, at the refresh of the corporate plan so the council could be held to account on its promise to tackle fly-tipping. Could you please let me know how and when this timetable will be made available to members of the public?”

Councillor Oliver, the cabinet member for environmental services gave the following response:

“Fly tipping continues to be a significant issue for the council and our communities. The Scrutiny Committee carried out an extensive review of the council’s arrangements for dealing with this problem during 2021 and 2022, and on 16th November 2022, Cabinet agreed to 11 recommendations from the committee. It also noted the council’s successful bid to the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for a programme of neighbourhood improvements. £0.341m in capital and revenue funding has been awarded to provide a programme of Neighbourhood Clean-Ups in appropriate areas.

Finally, Cabinet agreed that a timeline is set to an action plan with Key Performance Indicators being considered at the annual refresh of the corporate plan.

The action plan is currently being developed and will be completed by 28 February 2023. This will allow it to be incorporated into the refreshed corporate plan scheduled for completion in early summer this year.”

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Calvert referred to a report made by his neighbour of evidence of fly-tipping of which the items were later found fly-tipped on a public road and asked what the likelihood was of seeing those perpetrators apprehended. Councillor Oliver asked that the details of the case be forwarded to her directly for follow up. The council was in the early stages of the Love Norwich campaign and asked that all cases of fly-tipping were reported to the council.

Question 2 – Hay Hill

The second question was from Mr Chris Mardell, chair of Norfolk Contemporary Art Society, to the leader of the council, regarding Hay Hill, as follows:

“Can you please tell me to what extent you worked with the Hay Hill designers and architects to include a design option which would incorporate the Poirier ‘Homage to Thomas Browne’ sculptures as part of the new development of Hay Hill, and how you evaluated the unique cultural, historic and artistic contribution, and potential tourist and educational asset, that will be lost should they be moved to somewhere less relevant and visible?”

Councillor Waters, the leader of the council responded as follows:

“Initial site assessment by the design team highlighted a number of issues which the public realm scheme needed to solve to make the space function better. This was informed by an Equality Impact Assessment that highlighted the poor performance of the space, especially in terms of access for people with disabilities. The significant level changes across the site and numerous mature trees were constraints in the design process.

This initial assessment led the design team to conclude that the retention of the sculptures on Hay Hill in their original format was not compatible with improving the accessibility of the space. An alternative layout of the pieces within Hay Hill was considered at this stage but the team wanted to retain the symbolic configuration of the pieces that was part of the sculptors’ design intent and they would continue to present obstacles to movement and events because of their number and size in the busy setting of Hay Hill.

To test these findings our team conducted a public consultation which received over 400 responses. They asked people if they agreed or disagreed with a proposal to relocate the sculptures off site. 60% agreed that the sculptures should be relocated, 20% of respondents disagreed and 20% responded neutrally. Free text feedback offered a strong message that the current positioning of the sculptures frustrated movement through the space and that they could be better appreciated in another location. The team therefore developed the design for Hay Hill without the pieces.

The council is seeking a new and suitable home for the pieces because we recognise their cultural, historic and artistic value and their potential as tourist and educational assets. I am confident that the new location for these important sculptures will actually better celebrate their artistic merits that the current or redesigned hay Hill ever could.

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Mardell asked whether he could be assured that the public and other interested organisations would be informed and involved in the site of the new sculptures. Councillor Waters responded that objections to the proposed site of the sculptures from local residents and correspondence from the police had given a ‘pause for thought’ about the best location for the sculptures. More time was needed to discuss those concerns as well as looking at other sites with stakeholders, which would include the Norfolk Contemporary Art Society.

Question 3 – Levelling Up fund bids

The third question was from Mr Jasper Haywood to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth, regarding a Levelling Up fund bids, as follows:

“An estimated £15 billion has been cut from council budgets by the Government since 2010 and the Government have handed back just £2.8bn with the Levelling up Fund.

Many communities in great need, such as Norwich, have lost out in the recent round of funding which were announced just a couple of weeks ago. The way this funding is distributed seems to many to be a bit like the Hunger Games with communities pitted against one another, forced to compete in a contest where Whitehall ministers pick winners and losers.

I am concerned that Norwich again missed out with two schemes that would have improved our city, if approved. Living near Sloughbottom Park, the scheme to radically enhance this green space would have provided a fantastic boost to this community which has many needs. Can the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth comment on his views regarding this?”

Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth gave the following response:

“The news last week that Norwich’s two ambitious bids for Levelling Up Funding were not successful was extremely disappointing; as the funding pot was apparently five times oversubscribed no doubt many other areas also feel let down by a process that required the investment of significant time and expense with a very binary “win”/“lose” outcome. Regeneration and levelling-up requires a far more sustained and collaborative approach where transformational projects are developed and delivered in partnership with government and not selected by what feels like a lottery.

The two Norwich bids that we put forward were well prepared and had the support of the local Members of Parliament and a wide range of partners and stakeholders who also put in significant time, resource and had committed matched funding. The projects in both bids would have had a transformative impact on the communities of Norwich and its economic vitality.

Notwithstanding the disappointing outcome of the bidding process we have not given up on delivering these projects and are currently exploring possible options for delivery. Norwich remains committed to regeneration and levelling up for people, businesses and communities. We will continue to seek ways to attract funding and investment to deliver our shared city vision.”

Mr Haywood, as a supplementary question, said that he was pleased to hear that the council had not given up, but the process did not seem fair or transparent and asked the cabinet member to comment further. Councillor Stonard replied that although he was pleased for those areas that had been successful in their bids, the fund was in chaos and was beset by delays and allegations of favouritism. Analysis suggested that of 151 local authority areas, only eight had not experienced real-terms cuts since 2018 even when levelling up funds, including those just announced, were factored in.

Question 4 – Mould and damp in council homes

The fourth question was from Mr Josh Worley to the cabinet member for social housing, regarding mould and damp in council homes, as follows:

“I read, last month, in the Norwich Evening News that this council was ordered to pay compensation to a tenant for not properly responding to reports of damp and mould, for poor communication and for blaming residents themselves for the problem. This came shortly after the Regulator of Social Housing wrote to housing providers saying, “We therefore expect you to have a comprehensive understanding of the extent of potential damp and mould issues in your homes, and to be taking action to remedy them.” There is no evidence that the council is proactively working to remedy mould issues in its properties, and I understand that the council is failing to deal with reported cases. What action is the council now taking to proactively track down damp and mould in its properties, and ensure that tenants are living in safe and healthy homes?”

Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing gave the following response:

“Following the return of the housing maintenance service to the Council’s control in April 2022, work began to undertake a comprehensive stock condition survey, which will provide us with insight into all of the components of the building, including faults relating to damp and mould. With a stock of 14,000 properties this will take a further 12 months to complete, at which point we can undertake planned investment works which will aim to remedy structural issues which cause damp.

In the meantime, we have a robust process for managing reports of damp and mould from tenants. There is a dedicated team of staff who are solely focussed on this activity and who are able to diagnose faults and instruct appropriate works and provide advice when necessary”

By way of a supplementary question, Mr Worley said that he would be interested to know how many cases of damp and mould had been identified since November 2022. Councillor Harris reiterated that the council understood that damp issues could affect resident’s quality of life and the council was reviewing its response to this. As the cabinet member for social housing, her focus had been on getting a strategy in place to deal with the problem and significant improvements had already been made. She did not have the figures to hand but would ask for these from officers and pass them on.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2022.

5. Questions to Cabinet Members

(Full details of the questions and responses were available on the council’s website prior to the meeting. A revised version is attached to these minutes at Appendix A and includes a minute of any supplementary questions and responses.)

The Lord Mayor announced that 24 questions had been received from members of the council to cabinet members, 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 Fulton-McAlister (M) to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on the community payback scheme.
- Question 2 Councillor Huntley to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on feedback on the Kings Arms site.
- Question 3 Councillor Sands (M)) to the leader of the council on Ukrainian refugees.
- Question 4 Councillor Thomas (Va) to the cabinet member for resources on voter ID
- Question 5 Councillor Driver to the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion on heating in properties on Goldsmith Street.
- Question 6 Councillor Thomas (Vi) to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on retail monitoring.
- Question 7 Councillor Peek to the cabinet member for environmental services on the council's fly-tipping campaign.
- Question 8 Councillor Padda to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on the East Norwich Masterplan.
- Question 9 Councillor Kidman to the leader of the council on the climate change murals in the council chamber.
- Question 10 Councillor Stutely to the cabinet member for wellbeing on carparking charges at Eaton Park.
- Question 11 Councillor Sands (S) to the cabinet member for environmental services on the council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol measures.
- Question 12 Councillor Lubbock to the cabinet member for wellbeing on carparking charges at Eaton Park.
- Question 13 Councillor Bogelein to the leader of the council on multi-disciplinary meetings
- Question 14 Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for wellbeing on 3G sports pitches.
- Question 15 Councillor Champion to the cabinet member for environmental services on Christmas tree collections.

- Question 16 Councillor Price to the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion on access to the climate change mural.
- Question 17 Councillor Young to the cabinet member for environmental services on communal bins.
- Question 18 Councillor Haynes to deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on Right to Buy.
- Question 19 Councillor Osborn to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on CIL exemption for the Anglia Square development.
- Question 20 Councillor Schmierer to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on building density.
- Question 21 Councillor Grahame to the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods on environmental health response times.
- Question 22 Councillor Galvin to the leader of the council on Reducing Inequalities Target Areas.

(A second question had been received from Councillor Galvin (Question 23) and Councillor Schmierer (Question 24) and included in the list of questions set out in Appendix A to these minutes. As the time taken by questions had exceeded thirty minutes, these second questions were not taken at the meeting.)

6. Appointment of Section 151 Officer

(This report was included in the supplementary agenda).

Councillor Kendrick moved and Councillor Harris seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, to note the Chief Executive's decision to appoint Neville Murton as Section 151 officer.

7. Report of the Independent Remuneration Panel

Councillor Kendrick moved and Councillor Kidman seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously that:

- 1) All Councillor allowances are increased by 5.6%, being the median increase in staff pay, to be backdated to 1 April 2022;

- 2) Council recommends for officers to liaise with group leaders and the members of the Independent Remuneration Panel on whether a full review of the scheme of allowances should be undertaken prior to January 2025; and
- 3) the Head of Legal and Procurement be delegated to appoint at least 4 permanent members of the Independent Remuneration Panel.

8. Treasury Management mid-year review report 2022-23

Councillor Kendrick moved and Councillor Stutely seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, to note the contents of the report and in particular the treasury management activity undertaken in the first six months of the 2022/23 financial year.

9. Motions

Motion 9(a) Equitable access to voter ID

Councillor Wright moved and Councillor Schmierer seconded the motion.

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, to:-

- 1) note
 - a. that the Elections Act 2022 will make considerable unnecessary changes to the conduct and administration of elections.
 - b. that the Act will reduce the likelihood and ability of certain disadvantaged groups to vote without any gains in electoral security or in tackling many fundamental issues with our electoral law.
 - c. that implementing the Act will cost the public purse a large sum in set-up costs and increasing running costs for elections every year, for no gain to the electors of this city.
- 2) register its concern that the list of identification permitted to be used at polling stations is discriminatory towards young people, as the range of passes allowed is much smaller than for senior citizens. This is likely to deter young voters from voting and make it less likely that they will vote later in their lives.
- 3) recognise that although some identification used by young people is permissible, not all is and the following should be added to the list, including (but not exclusively): an 18+ bus pass, a Young Person's Railcard, a student ID card or NUS card or an 18+ Oyster Card.

- 4) ensure that this council continues to take all possible measures through its communications channels to achieve maximum awareness of this legislation and implications.
- 5) express its regret that the ‘fatal motion’ tabled in the House of Lords that would have killed off the passage of this legislation did not receive the necessary support from opposition peers: and
- 6) ask Group Leaders to write to the Minister responsible and the city’s two MPs to ask them to support this policy of a wider range of acceptable ID and to press for its speedy incorporation into the guidance for the next set of elections in May 2023.

(Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister left the meeting at this point.)

Motion 9(b) End the unfairness of forced prepayment meters

(Councillor Bogelein, having declared a pecuniary interest in this item, left the room for the debate and vote on this item.)

Councillor Galvin moved and Councillor Haynes seconded the motion.

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

“Due to rising energy prices, many households are struggling to pay their bills.

Homes with prepayment gas or electric meters, which require people to pay for energy before they use it, are in an increasingly difficult position. In contrast to billed customers, who are given warnings before being cut off, they lose their energy supply when their money runs out (after a small emergency credit), yet standing charges carry on racking up, from 5p-80p a day, meaning customers can build up debts even when not getting any energy. Households with prepayment meters cannot have more than £10 of debt and if they are unable to pay in advance they are essentially disconnected, leaving them without power in their homes.

Norwich City Council has supported some residents on prepayment meters through its discretionary rebate scheme. The council does not hold information on how many people in its properties (or the wider city) have prepayment meters, but the council stock stands at 14,500 homes and around half of social housing tenants are likely to have prepayment meters. Government figures show at least 7642 meters in Norwich in 2019 (not including smart meters operating in prepayment mode, which will now sizeably increase this number).

Rules state that suppliers cannot force-fit a prepayment meter under warrant for people in very vulnerable situations if they don’t want one, charge them for warrant costs on debts, or use warrants on people who would find the experience very traumatic. However, nearly half a million warrants allowing energy firms to forcibly install prepayment meters in people’s homes have been approved by courts since July 2021 (these are often approved in batches at courts far away from the customer’s home). Citizens Advice said it was continuing to advise “high numbers” of

people each month who were having prepayment meters forcibly installed. About 65% of the people being moved on to one for debt reasons are disabled or have a long-term health condition, and 40% are single people with children.

Cutting off people's water supply is banned; energy is likewise essential and fair access to it must be protected."

Council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) Ask group leaders to jointly write on behalf of the council to The Business and Energy Secretary to express its profound and urgent concern that warrants are being issued without the appropriate checks being undertaken to make sure that the rules are being followed, and to underline that nobody should be left without energy this winter as a result of them not being able to afford bills; and call for the Government to immediately implement a legal ban on prepayment meters being forcibly installed (or smart meters being turned onto pre-payment mode) without the explicit, informed consent of households-
- 2) Use all communications methods at its disposal (website, letter, tenancy agreement, tenant involvement panel, social media, Citizen magazine, local press, etc) to explain, inform and continue to underline to residents that they do not have to accept a prepayment meter; and offer assistance to those who wish to move to other forms of payment if appropriate.
- 3) Continue to provide where possible discretionary help to residents with pre-payment meters.
- 4) Make extra attempts to ascertain which city council tenants have prepayment meters, especially those who might be at extra risk of being cut off, and monitor them to offer assistance, for example through housing officer and other support.
- 5) Write to Norwich Magistrates Court to ask what processes magistrates followed prior to granting energy firms warrants of entry, how magistrates could be sure these households were not classed as vulnerable and what sanctions magistrates can take if it is found that energy firms did not complete vulnerability assessments on customers before applying for a warrant.
- 6) Ask group leaders to write to local MPs to ask them to support EDM (Early Day Motion) 690: tabled on 12 December 2022 - Involuntarily installation of prepayment meters; and
- 7) Ask group leaders to write to OFGEM asking them to carry out an urgent review of prepayment meters and their effects particularly on people on low incomes, in poor health and at risk of fuel poverty.

(Councillor Bogelein was readmitted to the meeting at this point.)

(As more than 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. Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Stonard seconded a motion without notice, under section 72 (d) of the Council's constitution to withdraw the remaining motions on the agenda. With 17 members voting in favour and 13 voting against, motions 9(c), 9(d), 9(e) and 9(f) were withdrawn.)

The meeting was closed.

LORD MAYOR

Appendix A

Council

31 January 2023

Questions to cabinet members

Question 1

Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:

“I have long been a supporter of rehabilitation for people that offend in our community, with a positive chance provided for them to ‘pay back’ a debt to society in a socially constructive and mutually respectful way. Can the cabinet member for social housing comment on the success of a new partnership with the probation service which has impacted University Ward?”

Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing’s response:

“Community Payback is a scheme managed by the Probation Service which allows low-risk offenders to make amends for their crimes by carrying out unpaid work on local projects, such as re-decorating community centres, tidying public spaces and removing litter in their communities. The scheme is a part of a Community Order sentence which is passed by Crown and Magistrates Court in England and Wales. It can also form part of a Suspended Sentence Order. Offenders can be sentenced to between 40 and 300 hours of unpaid work in the community and must carry this out in their spare time. Community Payback have partnered with Norwich City Council and will provide 3-days’ work per week for the foreseeable future. They have already completed some estate improvements at Northfields.

Community Payback are currently on-site at the Magdalen Close estate. Our tenancy management team approached tenants to ask if they needed help and assistance with overgrown and unsightly gardens in the close.

Twelve households agreed, and community payback members have completed the following tasks so far:

- Removal of overgrowth, shrubs, weeds, and green waste from 12 tenanted front gardens
- Trimming back of trees in gardens to bring them to a manageable height
- Tidy of communal green spaces, removing waste, cutting back overgrowth, bushes, and clearance of hard standing areas

In total, three large skips of waste and debris have been removed from site so far.

Community Payback will continue on-site for the coming weeks. They are due to lay bark cuttings in the cleared gardens, which will help tenants manage these areas more easily going forwards. To boost greenery in the area, Community Payback will be planting several trees in the communal areas,

using saplings from Community Payback's own nursery, which is also managed and maintained by people on probation.

We have received positive feedback from both members of Community Payback scheme, who have gained new skills and work experience, and residents who have been pleased with the results. This scheme operates in addition to the estates improvement programme run by the council all year round."

(In reply to Councillor Fulton-McAlister's supplementary question, Councillor Harris said that although some residents had concerns about activity in their ward, as the work progressed, residents were feeling comfortable with the amount of supervision and the work being undertaken.)

Question 2

Councillor Huntley to ask the deputy leader and social housing of the council the following question:

“I regularly walk past the site of the former Kings Arms Pub site and am delighted to see that new residents have moved into this new, excellent quality council housing. Across Mile Cross there is both interest and pride in the steps taken by this council to take land from a failing private developer and turn it into something which enhances and helps build a new community, showing the capacity of this council to make real change. Can the cabinet member for social housing comment on the feedback received from new tenants?”

Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing’s response:

“Turning this once derelict plot into much-needed family homes is a fantastic outcome for the city and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to social housing.

By acquiring the Kings Arms site through a compulsory purchase order and working with partners to deliver three four-bedroom houses, a five-bedroom house and an adapted two-bedroom bungalow, we have shown our determination not only to address vacant sites and the issues which they attract but also to deliver positive outcomes for local people. The properties have been built to a high standard, exceeding national space standards and with a ‘fabric first’ approach to reducing energy use, ensuring properties are compliant with emerging standards for low-carbon heating and hot water.

These are modern, high quality homes, designed to save tenants money on heating and hot water with extra insulation, triple glazing and solar panels amid the growing cost of living crisis. Feedback from the new tenants has been overwhelmingly positive, with residents particularly pleased with the additional space which they now have and the energy efficiency they are able to achieve. Purchasing the King's Arms site to benefit the community just shows how creative we are when addressing the demand for affordable housing and I am pleased that the positive feedback, from tenants and Mile Cross residents alike, recognises the success of our approach.”

(By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Huntley asked whether the council would commit to pushing this model forward to unlock stalled sites for homes. Councillor Harris said that the development came about after the Compulsory Purchase of the derelict site and put down a marker that the council would take action against developers. Compulsory Purchase was a long and rigorous process but the council would not shy away from taking the same action in the future.)

Question 3

Councillor Mike Sands to ask the leader of the council the following question:

“Next month will represent the anniversary of the illegal and devastating war unleashed by Russia upon the people of Ukraine. Since the onset of the war, and despite the significant limitations of the government Homes for Ukraine scheme, hundreds of people have now settled within our city society, welcomed by families, organisations, and communities. Can the Leader comment on the work taken by this council to support refugees from Ukraine and whether ongoing support from central government can be secured for its future?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“Since March 2022, our community support team has been working in collaboration with Norfolk County Council and other Norfolk districts to support people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. In Norwich, we have welcomed 199 Ukrainian guests (138 adults and 61 children) who have been hosted by Norwich residents in their homes.

Many of our guests have now successfully moved on from their initial hosting arrangement and are now settled in rental accommodation, have moved away or returned to Ukraine. At the present time Norwich has 66 active hosts supporting 124 Ukrainian guests (84 adults and 40 children).

Supporting guests with these moves can often be complex and sensitive. In addition to this work the team undertake accommodation checks, liaising with hosts, welfare checks, safeguarding checks, resourcing drop-in sessions at community locations such as the Millennium Library, answering any questions or queries. Our Ukrainian speaking welfare officers have been key in breaking down language barriers and supporting guests’ adjustment to living in the UK, and many of our guests settle in quickly with their host families. All our team are on hand to support hosts and guests alike with any concerns, queries or issues throughout the scheme.

We have worked closely with community focused organisations, in particular Norfolk Polonia, to ensure there is a broad level of support for guests and a good infrastructure for conveying accurate information.

Funding for this work has come from central government through Norfolk County Council and on current numbers we have sufficient funding to continue delivering this scheme in 2023/24 with a smaller indicative allocation that would allow us to continue supporting guests and hosts up to the end of 2024/25 when the initial three year visas granted to Ukrainian guests will expire.

At present, we have been given no indication from central government on the scheme and the path to resettlement after 2024/25”

(In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Waters replied that the conflict in Ukraine was unlikely to end soon so Ukrainian guests may be in Norwich for longer than the government funding timescales. A chronic housing shortage also made this challenging, but he was pleased to hear positive stories of work between the city and county councils. There was a need to continue to press the government for certainty for those whose lives had been disrupted.)

Question 4

Councillor Driver to ask the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion the following question:

“Late last year the *Guardian* newspaper carried a feature on the Goldsmith Street housing scheme in our city, which when it was completed in 2018 was the UK’s largest social housing estate built to Passivhaus standards – an ultra-low energy approach. Tenants at the 105-home development, which won the Stirling architecture prize in 2019, said they did not need to turn on their heating, even on the coldest day of the year so far. Will the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion comment on this claim and agree that this city and country needs 1,000 more Goldsmith Street’s? ”

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

“Thank you for your question.

This council has a proud reputation for delivering highly energy efficient homes and I was delighted to read the article where tenants were expressing the benefits of such homes.

We are well aware that increasing fuel costs are contributing to a cost of living crisis for many people and thanks to the Passivhaus principles adopted on our new-build homes, our residents should see up to 70% savings on their energy bills, due to a fabric first approach and the technology in use – a big help to a significant proportion of residents in Norwich who we know are in fuel poverty. We have built on the learning from the Goldsmith Street project, and other projects recently developed, to understand the building forms and technologies that will continue to be included in future developments of council homes. The recently completed five homes on the former Kings Arms site and the current development under construction at Three Score have continued to adopt these higher standards, with further projects at Argyle Street and Mile Cross in the pipeline.

In addition we work in partnership with local Registered Providers to learn from each other and to consider future standards to meet the zero carbon ambitions of the City.

I agree with the sentiment that all new homes built in the UK should adopt higher standards, with the costs to residents at the heart of the design, however we must also recognise that new-build is only a small part of the solution to achieving net zero by 2050 and we must also continue work to make our adapting and retro-fitting existing homes warmer and more affordable for residents, which is why we have approved £290m in our Housing Revenue Account business plan to achieve this on our existing stock. All in all, as a council housing provider, we’re taking bold steps to provide energy efficient, high quality homes to meet housing demand for the people of Norwich and surrounding areas. And that’s something we’re deeply proud of.”

(Councillor Driver asked, as a supplementary question, whether the cabinet member could comment on the steps the council could take to assist tenants

with improvements around energy efficiency. Councillor Hampton commented that there were still homes across the city that had not been built to the same standard as Goldsmith Street and retrofitting remained a priority. Fuel poverty was being tackled through the Affordable Warmth Strategy and the corresponding action plans showed the improvements being delivered along with their environmental benefits.)

Question 5

Councillor Peek to ask the cabinet member for environmental services the following question:

“The issue of fly-tipping and rubbish has significantly increased since the Conservative controlled Norfolk County Council imposed higher fees for DIY waste at their recycling centres in 2017. The following year fly-tipping had gone up by a quarter and there were nearly 36,000 fewer visits to the recycling centres. Now I read that they intend to close some centres. Despite moving the costs of this fly-tipping to farmers, landowners, and district councils like ours, I am pleased that this council has launched the ‘Love Norwich’ campaign to tackle this problem. Can the cabinet member for environmental services comment on progress with this?”

Councillor Oliver, the cabinet member for environmental services’ response:

“Love Norwich – Play Your Part is a targeted, data-driven environmental improvement campaign, that will target environmental anti-social behaviour across Norwich. It is being delivered in partnership with our communities, the Business Innovation District and our key service delivery partners Biffa and NCSL.

The campaign is delivering a programme of activity across the 3 key themes of: engagement; enforcement; and operational and structural improvements. Since the campaign was launched in November 2022, we have

- Developed high profile branding for the campaign to allow consistency in messaging
- Delivered our first community event, aimed at delivering environmental improvements in one of our environmental ASB hotspots.
- Offered free bulky uplifts to approximately 720 residents there to reduce incidents of fly tipping, and aim to deliver a similar programme of activity next month
- In the city centre, we have been working with businesses, the BID and NCSL to reduce litter and fly tipping, and this has delivered significant improvements to the cleanliness of the city centre

The next phase of the campaign include a review of refuse storage arrangements in our housing estates, opportunities for increased enforcement, particularly in the city centre, and delivering of further community events”

(By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Peek said that fly-tipping in the Wensum Ward was an eyesore and asked how the Love Norwich - Play your Part campaign would encourage people to do the right thing. Councillor Oliver replied that the initiative tackled the issue by giving information and encouragement to residents. The campaign would begin with education but CCTV would also be deployed alongside enforcement action.)

Question 6

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

“I remember fondly the pioneering work of this council, and its former Leader Baroness Hollis of Heigham to build the Bowthorpe community in the 1970s onward. In a similar vein the East Norwich Masterplan offers our city the same opportunity with the potential for the 3,500 homes and 6,000 jobs in the city. Can the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth comment on progress since June to ensure the four key sites within the plan will be included in the Greater Norwich Local Plan and hoped opportunities this will bring?”

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

“Since Cabinet endorsed the stage 2 masterplan for East Norwich in June last year work has continued on delivering the masterplan for the largest brownfield redevelopment in the East of England. If delivered in the right way we will not only see and vibrant and sustainable new quarter of the City but something that massively benefits the whole of the city through making accessible a truly remarkable historic legacy, providing infrastructure which massively improves access to green and blue infrastructure, and creates a new interface between the City and the Broads.

Main areas of progress have been:

- promotion of the policy framework for East Norwich through the GNLP examination;
- commencement of stage 3 of the masterplan process, being led by Homes England this is looking at matters related to delivery including financial modelling, detailed viability appraisal and assessment of delivery options. It will report in March; and
- the formation of the East Norwich Delivery Board. This took over from the previous partnership board which oversaw development of the masterplan in October 2022. Its membership is Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council, South Norfolk Council, the Broads Authority and Homes England and has a clear focus on delivery.

Throughout the master-planning process, landowners, residents, businesses and other interested parties have been closely involved. Further engagement is scheduled to take place in spring 2023.”

(In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Stonard said that the East Norwich project would generate a new quarter of the city which included up to 6,000 new jobs, access to community and social facilities, green spaces, the river and heritage buildings.)

Question 7

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

“I note with interest the piece of public art, called a ‘Climate Mural for Our Times’ which has been displayed in this chamber since our last meeting. Can the Leader comment on it further and the message it hopes to send?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“There is a growing awareness that climate change and the impacts of global warming is an existential threat. Norwich City Council has made significant progress on reducing carbon emissions, but we know the choices we make as a city now will be vital to securing a sustainable future. By placing a 10-metre wide climate mural in our council chamber, decision makers in Norwich have an ever-present reminder to take urgent action.

2019 saw a step change with the Council’s formal declaration of biodiversity and climate emergencies and crucially, recognition of the link between the climate emergencies and the socioeconomic emergency.

The scale and breadth of these tasks and challenges is not something that the local authority, or any one organisation, can or should tackle alone. Many of the solutions lie in local communities, including the vital voice of young people - with the city council using its convening role in bringing people and organisations together and working to create a consensus to enact positive change.

The mural is the outcome of a close collaboration between the artist Gennadiy Ivanov, Norwich City Council, the University of East Anglia Climate Research Unit, the Transitions Art-Science Project, and Global Water Futures, an international research programme whose headquarters are based at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada.

Entitled ‘A Climate Mural for Our Times’, includes a record of global temperature over time (66 million BC through to the end of the next century) represented by the hues of the sky, and informed by CRU’s ‘state-of-the-art’ climate science.

The mural also features images of the impacts of climate change on the local landscape and its human inhabitants. It is believed that this is the first time that art and leading-edge science have been combined to give such a vivid portrayal of the challenges posed by climate change and its impacts in the past, the present, and the future.

J.W.Turner, the 19th Century artist, through his painting, taught people to understand they were living through an industrial revolution. Our climate change mural serves a similar purpose both as a call to act and avoid the worst effects of the climate crisis, but also demonstrating how local people and organisations can coalesce around a local council that is prepared to invest/ lead/ facilitate solutions to the climate and biodiversity crises. We hope

that it will not only help focus minds in the council chamber, but also help reach new audiences across Norwich.”

(In response to Councillor Kidman’s supplementary question, the leader of the council said that Norwich was a city which enabled people to embrace the cultural richness of the city. There were exciting exhibitions planned at the Sainsbury’s Centre and there was an ambition to have a sculpture trail leading from the city to the UEA. A piece of research suggested that councils that spent more on cultural events could demonstrate more democratic engagement with citizens, therefore cultural events would always have a place in the city.)

Question 8

Councillor Stutely to ask the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:

“Public consultation over proposed charges for parking in Eaton Park began last year and I note that some constituents have enquired why this proposed parking fee is indeed necessary. Can the cabinet member for community wellbeing explain why this council must consider such options to generate the income to keep our award-winning parks both open and invested upon?”

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

“The Council is having to make a number of tough decisions due to mounting financial pressures and a lack of sufficient sustained investment in local government.

The decision to introduce charges was made as a result of these financial pressures. The move to introduce these charges has the backing of those who responded to the council’s 2022-23 budget consultation in which they gave their support to the council to prioritise increasing fees and charges to protect services.

We have tried to keep the charges low for those who have to pay to park and responded to feedback from the consultation.

The council has purposely kept fees low – with costs starting at £2 for up to four hours and introduced a season ticket option, as it understands the effects the cost of living crisis is having on households. But the council has had to work hard to close the budget gap of more than £6million and this sort of measure is unfortunately necessary if we are to protect vital services for residents and continue to invest in keeping our parks free to use spaces of which we can be justifiably proud.”

(In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Giles said that he could confirm that the money raised would continue to protect vital services. Parking charges had been set at an affordable rate with a reasonably priced season ticket for regular users. Those with a blue badge would be exempt from the charges.)

Question 9

Councillor Sue Sands to ask the cabinet member for environmental services the following question:

“I am proud of the record of this council, over decades, to rightfully prioritise services and support to tackle rough sleeping and homelessness. Can the cabinet member for environmental services comment on the work achieved by the council since the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol measures were instigated last year?”

Councillor Oliver, the cabinet member for environmental services’ response:

“This council has a proud record of providing assistance to the most vulnerable and supporting people sleeping rough is a key commitment for us. We are particularly aware of the need to provide safe, warm accommodation for people sleeping rough during the winter months. This commitment extends beyond the severe weather emergency provision advised by government and, in Norwich, runs continuously from November until March. In addition to beds available through the city’s hostel system, the winter night shelter is offered, which is also supported by our rough sleeping strategy.

The accommodation is provided by two local churches and ensures that nobody has to stay on the streets during the winter months. Accessing the winter shelter is often the first step toward building relationships with these clients and encouraging further engagement with the help and resources we have available.

We take the opportunity to work with the client to understand their needs and wishes and ensure that they have the right support in place to help keep them off the streets.

Our approach is successful. The annual DLUHC (Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) verified rough sleeper count (November 22) shows a 30 percent decrease in rough sleepers in Norwich since 2021. This is the lowest figure for seven years.”

(In response to Councillor Sands’ supplementary question, Councillor Oliver replied that the latest rough sleeper count showed that there had been a 30% decrease in people sleeping on the street which was the lowest in 7 years. There was provision in place from November to March in the Winter Night Shelter.)

Question 10

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

“Please can the cabinet member for community wellbeing explain the rationale of this council’s decision to impose car parking charges into Eaton Park despite there having been a consultation with over 700 responses?”

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

“The Council is having to make a number of tough decisions due to mounting financial pressures and a lack of sufficient sustained investment in local government.

The decision to introduce charges was made as a result of these financial pressures. The move to introduce these charges has the backing of those who responded to the council’s 2022-23 budget consultation in which they gave their support to the council to prioritise increasing fees and charges to protect services.

We have tried to keep the charges low for those who have to pay to park and responded to feedback from the consultation.

The council has purposely kept fees low – with costs starting at £2 for up to four hours and introduced a season ticket option, as it understands the effects the cost of living crisis is having on households. But the council has had to work hard to close the budget gap of more than £6million and this sort of measure is unfortunately necessary if we are to protect vital services for residents and continue to invest in keeping our parks free to use spaces of which we can be justifiably proud.”

(By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Lubbock said that she was disappointed that a delegated decision had been taken on parking charges despite 700 responses to the consultation and asked how many of those were in favour and how many against the proposals. Councillor Giles replied that he would ask officers for the breakdown of responses, but charges had been set at a reasonable rate. If decisions to raise income were not made, cuts would have to be made elsewhere.)

Question 11

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

“I have recently dealt with cases where residents have been struggling with a mixture of issues including potential homelessness, difficulties claiming benefits, illness, financial struggles and even suicide in the family. Their rent exceeds the level of benefit they receive, and they are running up debts, but cannot access home options until an eviction notice is served, impacting their mental health in the meantime. In such cases, it would be beneficial to have a multi-disciplinary meeting including different council teams, but this has been declined. I have been informed if a GP refers the individual a meeting would take place. Why is it so hard to get teams in a room together to decide the best way forward, to stop wasting resources and to ensure that highly vulnerable residents feel like someone cares?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“Thank you for your question, which allows me to describe what we have in place to support residents who find themselves in dire circumstances. With regard to the case management for housing options applicants and tenants, through the NEC housing management system staff have visibility of a housing applications status, household debt, and the status of the tenancy, and use this to information to co-ordinate their activities and provide support. There are legislative, policy and evidence based, triggers which determine the points at which staff can and do take action, with staff from different services co-ordinating their activities as appropriate through complex case management meetings.

In a wider context the city council operates an Early Help Hub where council teams meet with representatives from over 30 partner agencies. This provides a forum for professionals to seek advice regarding case management and co-ordinate activities, establishing links to manage high needs and complex cases.

You know as well as I do that much of what the council does is to mitigate Government policies that have undermined people’s financial resilience: the ‘bedroom tax’; the two child benefit limit; cuts in working tax credits, five week wait for Universal Credit Payments, pay freezes. You are right to identify the fact that Local Housing Allowance is frozen while private landlords can increase rent levels for their tenants unconstrained. So, if you know any private landlords you might make them aware of that fact – to see if they care. I would correct you on your final point. The Government doesn’t care but our council staff do.”

(In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Waters asked Councillor Bogelein to send him the details of the resident’s case so it could be taken forward.)

Question 12

Councillor Carlo to ask the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:

“In December, the Greater Norwich Growth Board approved several 3G sports pitches. 3G artificial pitches consist of synthetic turf, sand infill and rubber infill. The latter generally comes from waste tyres and the rubber granules and microplastics contribute to air, soil and water pollution. The European Commission has proposed banning the supply and sale of products containing intentionally-added microplastics. It has chosen a ban after a transitional period rather than containment of the rubber crumb because infill material used in synthetic turf sport surfaces is the largest contributor in terms of use of microplastics in products at European level. In the light of this, will the cabinet member comment on and agree not to support 3G pitches?”

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

“Artificial grass pitches are recognised as a durable, safe, year-round playing surfaces, able to withstand intensive use and all weathers. They mean more people can benefit from the social and health benefits of physical activity. However, Sport England, the Football Foundation, the FA, RFL and England Rugby and several other organisations are aware of the European Chemicals Agency’s proposed restrictions around the use of intentionally added microplastics. The aforementioned are playing an active role in the response to this proposal. Currently, the Football Foundation is proactively limiting the loss of infill. Some of the measures they have introduced are perimeter infill containment barriers, smooth bar industrial grate and recess pits with filters to collect infill, and shock absorption pads to reduce the amount of infill required. The Football Foundation are also conducting research into alternative organic infill. It would therefore seem premature to suggest we would not support 3G pitches when the concerns raised are being addressed.”

(As Councillor Carlo had sent her apologies, there was no supplementary question.)

Question 13

Councillor Champion to ask the cabinet member for environmental services the following question:

“Many councils offer Christmas tree collections in January so local residents can dispose of real Christmas trees in a responsible manner. In Norwich, residents with appropriate transport can take Christmas trees to recycling centres to be disposed of or put them in garden waste bins for collection. Will the cabinet member consider introducing a Christmas tree collection scheme for Norwich or, alternatively, offer advice for anyone who is unable to dispose of a tree and does not want to add to the city’s fly-tipping problem?”

Councillor Oliver, the cabinet member for environmental services’ response:

“The council already provides a class leading range of recycling services, although this does not include the collection of Christmas trees. However, the council’s 15,000 garden waste collection customers can dispose of their unwanted real Christmas trees in their brown bins if they cut it down to size. Alternatively, real Christmas trees that still have their root ball can be replanted either in a tub or in a garden if available. Replanting Christmas trees is an effective way to reduce your carbon footprint and help our efforts to plant more trees. Alternatively, if residents have a compost bin or heap, a tree can be broken up and added to the compost. Finally, charities often offer a ‘treecycling’ service. For example, this year, EACH (East Anglia’s Children’s Hospices) offered a Christmas tree collection service in the NR1 – NR8 postcodes for a voluntary donation.”

(By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Champion asked how the council could communicate with residents around other organisations that collect waste for charity. Councillor Oliver said that there was information on the website on how people could work with partners on recycling, and she would be pleased to take any suggestions for additions to the council website on this topic.)

Question 14

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

“The climate change mural by Gennadiy Ivanov currently in our chamber is hailed as a mural for our times and Councillor Waters has said that the council is hugely proud to host it and that by ‘placing this impressive, evocative artwork in the centre of City Hall we have an ever-present reminder to take the urgent actions required and that we know the choices we make as a city now will be vital to securing a sustainable future’. Unfortunately, it is not open to the public and there is no booking system to see it. Do you agree that it is important for people to know the truth about climate change and that the council can play a part in that by arranging viewing?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“Thank you for your question. Bookings are already in the diary. I attended an event in the council chamber last Friday involving the ‘Kick the Dust’ group from the Castle Museum working with scientists from the Climate Change Unit at UEA and artists to develop their perspective on climate change and report back in March to an event that will be held in city hall. During the Science Festival the council chamber is booked for a session on climate change using the murals as a focal point. Interpretation boards to go with the murals are being completed. Articles are being placed in national scientific journals and in the local government press. Look out for the 9 February issue of the Municipal Journal which will cover the story of the creation of ‘A climate change mural for our times’ and the ambitious environment strategies of the Labour administration. We will be making schools and other education institutions across Norwich aware of the opportunity to come to city hall to see and use the murals for lessons.

If anyone would like to visit the mural arrangements can be made with office facilities, please email (officefacilities@norwich.gov.uk) with details so that they can make sure the Chamber is not in use at that time

(As a supplementary question, Councillor Price asked what activities the council had in the pipeline to increase public engagement with climate change and to showcase environmental strategies. Councillor Waters replied that there were opportunities for the public to view the climate change mural in the council chamber. The council worked closely with the Climate Commission which meant a high level of engagement and awareness and work was undertaken with a wide range of partners.)

Question 15

Councillor Young to ask the cabinet member for environmental services the following question:

“Many Norwich residents living near communal bins are plagued by fly-tipping of furniture; in the last month alone there have been sets of dining chairs, mattresses, sofas, tables, bedside tables, shelving units and more. West Pottergate residents have asked if they can have a garage from the council to store bulky items in as a community, so that items can be shared and reused, and periodically taken to the tip when transport is available. Can the cabinet member commit to exploring this idea through Love Norwich?”

Councillor Oliver, the cabinet member for environmental services’ response:

“Love Norwich – Play Your Part is a targeted, data-driven environmental improvement campaign, that will target environmental anti-social behaviour across Norwich. It is being delivered in partnership with our communities, the BID and our key service delivery partners Biffa and NCSL

The next phase of the campaign will include a review refuse storage arrangements in our housing estates. Pilot schemes can be considered that are tailored to the needs of each area. We value ward members’ local knowledge and community networks to help develop these proposals, along with the data and findings of the Scrutiny Task and Finish group. We would be happy to consider the use of vacant garages and lock ups as part of our delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund programme, and will work with our colleagues in Housing Services and Community Engagement to identify suitable locations.”

(In response to the supplementary question, Councillor Oliver said that data on target and success measures would be provided, and the work would be evaluated on an ongoing basis.)

Question 16

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

“A recent cabinet report stated that 752 homes for social rent have been lost in the past five years and that these losses have significantly increased over the last year. Given the rising demand and the difficulty of building new properties, this is particularly worrying. Will the administration be writing to the government to end this practice and to the leader of the Labour Party and the Shadow Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities who have confirmed that the Labour Party would continue right-to-buy in England and who said, “I agree with Michael Gove that right-to-buy is sustainable”, asking them for a commitment to end the right to buy if they enter government at the next election?”

Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing’s response:

“Thank you, Councillor Haynes, for this question. As you said you were quoting one of the Labour Shadow Front bench MPs, namely Lisa Nandy, I thought that I best contact her office directly for some clarification on the quote within your question.

I am sure that it was not your intention to deliberately misquote, or take a partial quote out of context, but for clarification what Lisa said was that she agreed with Michael Gove when he said Right to Buy is sustainable ONLY when sold homes are replaced like for like. We all recognise that this is not happening.

We know that this Tory government has failed miserably with supporting council house building, has only marginally improved the bureaucracy around the use of retained Right to Buy receipts and that is why Lisa committed at the last Labour Party conference to review the Right to Buy policy once in government.

I would also like to refer you to motion 9e on this agenda, when this Labour Administration as part of that motion is proposing that we should call on this Tory government to “Abolish the Right to Buy in favour of expanding the provision of high-quality energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable social housing stock providing homes for residents and their families.”

I am hoping that there will be support right across this council for that motion and I will be sending a copy to Lisa Nandy to show this council’s commitment to good housing across all tenures in this Fine City.

If there is indeed any need for a supplementary question I trust that Councillor Haynes will be acknowledging that the inaccurate quote within her original question was to say the least misleading.”

(By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Haynes asked whether the Labour Party would commit to ending Right to Buy. Councillor Harris referred Councillor

Haynes to a motion later in the agenda which did just that and said that a copy would be sent to the relevant government minister's office.)

Question 17

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

“I understand that Weston Homes may be exempted from CIL for the Anglia Square development, exempting them from paying £9m towards the local community. Yet last year Weston Homes’ pre-tax profit increased six-fold, and their revenue also grew despite building fewer homes. For the Anglia Square development, they have budgeted £23m for professional fees alone. Can the cabinet member comment on whether it is fair to allow Weston Homes to be exempted from CIL when the CIL represents only a very small part of the cost of development of Anglia Square, and would make little dent in the growing profits of this company?”

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

“The Council has adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy exceptional circumstances relief policy. Under the policy developers can apply for CIL relief.

Since its introduction no applications for CIL relief have been submitted. This is because of the rigorous process required which includes an assessment of viability carried out by an independent person and demonstration of wider community and regeneration benefits including the delivery of affordable homes and community facilities.

Weston Homes have indicated in their planning application that they intend to apply for this relief in relation to Anglia Square. They will only be able to apply for the relief should they obtain planning consent for the development and the determination of any application will fall to Planning Applications Committee. I will leave the Committee to determine any application should it be submitted although would point out the level of profits the applicant has obtained from development of other sites won’t be relevant to any decision.”

(Councillor Osborn asked, as a supplementary question, whether the CIL exemption policy that had been introduced was sound as no other developer had applied. Councillor Stonard replied that he did not accept the logic that as only developer had applied, the policy had been introduced specifically for them. The policy was sound, and each case would be looked at on its own merits.)

Question 18

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

“Secretary of State, Michael Gove, wrote to MPs saying he would “give local communities a greater say in what is built in their neighbourhood” and “local authorities will not be expected to build developments at densities that would be wholly out of character with existing areas or which would lead to a significant change of character, for example, new blocks of high-rise flats which are entirely inappropriate in a low-rise neighbourhood.” He concluded: “these reforms will help to deliver enough of the right homes in the right places and will do that by promoting development that is beautiful, that comes with the right infrastructure, that is done democratically with local communities rather than to them, that protects and improves our environment.”

Could the cabinet member confirm this council will adhere to these principles and update us changes for larger planning applications, especially the proposed redevelopment of Anglia Square, please?”

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

“No, I think it is more appropriate for me to leave the decisions on planning applications to the Planning Applications Committee as it will up to them to assess how they wish to take the latest in a long line of ministerial announcements about the planning system into account in relation to the determination of applications.

The Council, through its local plan policies and conservation area appraisals, already has considerable policy and guidance in place to support decision making which protects and enhances the character of our City whilst delivering much needed new homes.”

(In response to the supplementary question, Councillor Stonard said that there were many robust policies in place. The issue of capacity to deal with applications was a different issue from those policies.)

Question 19

Councillor Grahame to ask the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods the following question:

“I have been working on cases where residents have made reports to Environmental Health and expected to be visited by an Environmental Health officer. Sometimes, visits are finally made after several months, and sometimes they don't happen at all. Residents' situations are unlikely to improve until an expert such as an acoustic consultant visits and measures the problem. Therefore, are there plans to introduce recording and monitoring of environmental health visit response times?”

Councillor Jones, the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods' response:

“The council's environmental protection team deal with noise from commercial premises affecting residential properties. In order for the team to prioritise the work, complainants are requested to complete noise logs with the date, time and type of noise disturbance that they are experiencing and send them back to the Environmental Protection Team. If no logs are returned within one month then the officer will close the case. Once the logs are returned an officer will examine them and then determine what further action, if any, is required, this could range from, onsite visits to the premises causing the disturbance, to installing noise equipment in the complainant's house. Not all cases will require the installation of noise equipment.

With regard to the recording and monitoring of response times, a review of the digital systems used within the team is currently underway as part of a service wide project. Once complete it is anticipated service level performance targets will be introduced.”

(In response to Councillor Grahame's supplementary question, Councillor Jones referred to the fact that the service was being restructured and there was a clear plan to move forwards to a responsive service with a better experience for residents.)

Question 20

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

“I was concerned that in the last scrutiny meeting, officers explained that the work on the RITAs (Reducing Inequality Target Areas) has no clear success indicators. I have been concerned about the lack of impact assessment for big interventions that cost a lot of taxpayers money for a while, however officers said that they conduct logic mapping for such interventions. Now it seems that this is not the case. Can you please explain whether policy interventions like the RITAs or the community connectors are thought through using logic mapping which should result in a clear set of predefined success measures and a pre-planned impact assessment, all characteristics of good, evidence-based policy making?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“The work on the Reducing Inequalities Target Areas aims to tackle the root causes of inequality in Norwich, which are complex and embedded across deprivation, social, health, employment and education. Reducing inequality is an ongoing challenge that requires statutory bodies, VCSE groups and communities to come together.

We use large datasets with numerous indicators to establish the areas where inequality is greatest. A NODA (the Norfolk Office of Data and Analytics) report for us in October 2022 updated our original analysis following the impacts of covid and the cost of living crisis. Datasets were chosen that are published regularly and it will be these indicators which we track over time to establish the overall impact on inequality; the desired short and medium term outcomes we are seeking have been identified within the project.

However, reducing inequality is a generational challenge. We do not expect to see significant movement in these indicators in the immediate future and have to rely on analysis of particular interventions with strong theories of change. One such piece of work is that of the community connectors. The aims of this piece of work are to provide intelligence as to what is of value to people in communities and to build trust to point people towards the right support. There is a strong theory of change behind this work which links to the short and long term impact it will have on communities. We monitor these interventions on an ongoing basis through data collection and analysis of conversations. Further evaluation is undertaken through recognised methodologies such as ripple effect mapping and collecting impact stories.

The forth coming Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategy will build on our long-held commitment to tackling inequality, with our partners, not just because it is our legal duty but because doing so helps create a more successful and inclusive city”

(In response to Councillor Galvin’s supplementary question in which she asked to see a monitoring and evaluation plan, Councillor Waters replied that this work would be seen in the Equality Diversity and Inclusion Strategy which had been developed with the Good Economy Commission.)

The following questions were second questions from members and were not taken at the meeting due to the time for questions exceeding thirty minutes. This is in line with paragraph 53 of Part 3 of the council's constitution.

Question 21

Councillor Galvin to ask the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods the following question:

“Air quality was raised as a topic at scrutiny last year and yet the council has done little beyond a few tweets to make residents aware of the issues with wood burning, for example even ‘ecodesign’ wood burning stoves produce 450 times more toxic air pollution than gas central heating. Other councils have full communications campaigns on this issue. Will the cabinet member commit to a communications campaign on this topic in order to protect residents?”

Councillor Jones, the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods' response:

“At the scrutiny meeting held in September 2021, two resolutions regarding air pollution from woodburning were ratified and brought forward to cabinet in November 2021. They were:

- Prepare a communications strategy for residents
- Discourage the use of bonfires across the whole of the city and encourage people to use their brown bins and composting

These were taken forward and delivered using a number of different and far reaching communications approaches, including an article in the winter 2021 issue of Citizen magazine, distributed to about 67,000 homes, around the new laws on wood burning, information on the ‘ready to burn’ logo and tips on how to reduce pollutants caused by wood burning in homes. A similar article was published in the spring issue of our tenants’ and leaseholders’ magazine, TLC - distributed to approximately 14,500 homes. The 2022 spring issue of Citizen magazine also carried messaging about discouraging the need to light bonfires and promoted the use of brown bins for composting.

Delivery of the communications plan also included using our official social media channels to post messaging which supported the resolutions agreed by cabinet.

We will continue to work across the council to agree any future communications actions concerning the wider issues that make an impact on the city's air quality”

Question 22

Councillor Schmierer to ask the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion the following question:

“The government recently announced that there would be a ban on some single-use plastics that will come into effect in England from October. From then, takeaways, restaurants and cafes must stop using single-use plastic cutlery, plates and bowls. Full council in 2016 and again in 2019, committed us to moving towards a single-use plastic free future. Could the cabinet member please commit to phasing out single-use plastics entirely, so that from October 2023 no single-use plastic items will be allowed at any council premises or events?”

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

“The phasing out of single use plastics in council operations is included as a proposal in the Environmental Action Plan, details of which are coming to the Climate and Environmental Emergency Executive Panel in February. The Environmental Action plan will be finalised, consulted upon and adopted during the course of 2023”