



Council

19:30 to 21:15

24 July 2018

Present: Councillor Schmierer (Lord Mayor), Councillors Ackroyd, Carlo, Coleshill, Davis, Driver, Fulton-MacAlister (E), Fulton-McAlister (M), Hampton, Harris, Huntley, Jones, Kendrick, Lubbock, Maguire, Malik, Manning, Maxwell, Packer, Peek, Price, Raby, Ryan, Sands (M), Sands (S), Smith, Stewart, Stonard, Stutely, Thomas (Va), Thomas (Vi), Trevor, Waters, and Wright

Apologies: Ms Ros Brown (Sheriff); and Councillors Bradford, Brociek-Coulton, Button, Henderson and Fullman

1. Lord Mayor's Announcements

The Lord Mayor said he had the honour of attending the Norwich University of the Arts and University of East Anglia's recent graduation ceremonies. He said he had attended a number of charitable events over the summer the highlight of which was Lord Mayor's Procession which had raised over £4,000 for the Lord Mayor's charity.

The Lord Mayor congratulated the council's home options service for receiving gold standard from the ministry of housing, communities and local government's National Practitioner Support Service. The service was one of only 14 gold standard services in the country and it recognised the council's commitment to provide high quality services to vulnerable clients.

The Lord Mayor said he understood the council had won "Best Local Authority" in the East of England at the Energy Efficiency Awards and invited Councillor Maguire portfolio holder for safe city environment to speak. Councillor Maguire said the award was made in recognition of the efforts the council were making.

2. Declarations of interest

Councillor Driver declared a pecuniary interest in item 8 on the agenda; Members allowances and expenses.

Councillor Maguire declared an other interest in motion 10a Police Cuts in that he was a member of the police and crime panel.

Councillor Schmierer (Lord Mayor) declared a pecuniary interest in motion 10b EU Nationals rights to stand at local elections 2019 in that he was an EU citizen. Councillors Malik and Waters declared an other interest in motion 10b EU Nationals rights to stand at local elections 2019 in that they were both married to EU citizens.

3. Questions from the public

The Lord Mayor said that five public questions had been received.

Question 1

Ms Lesley Grahame

“On 22 June 2017, scrutiny made 10 recommendations to cabinet, which were agreed. One of these was ‘Consider the formation of a task and finish group at the work programme setting meeting of the scrutiny committee to progress the idea of a city accessibility street charter’.

In December 2017, scrutiny members were told by a senior officer, Nikki Rotsos, that a draft access charter could be expected 'in the new year'.

What progress has been made, and when will the draft Charter be going out for consultation?”

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

“Thank you for your question. The city council is committed to delivering a meaningful access charter, and understands the importance of this and absolutely wants to get it right. To do this we have been working closely with partners and key organisations in order to shape a document that can go out to consultation.

However, delivering a meaningful access charter has proved more complicated than first imagined. It would be very straightforward to produce a charter that says the city council would like this and that, but to my mind this would be paying lip-service to the request for a charter. What is needed is something that is much more realistic and representative, and says what we can and are doing. To achieve this we need to work with Norfolk County Council as it is the highway authority for the city and much of what would be included in any charter relates to how our streets function.

The county council is in the process of completing a strategic equality impact assessment for the county and one key element of that assessment is transport. Until that is complete it would be premature to prepare an access charter specifically for Norwich. I would like to assure Ms Grahame that works continue in the background, and that since the scrutiny committee meeting in 2017, officers have had meetings with individual organisations to talk about specific areas that they would like covered in any charter. This in itself has presented challenges as often the needs of different organisations have conflicting requirements.

Hull's access charter has often been quoted as a model that Norwich could follow, and having reviewed it I believe that the city already complies with most of what is in that charter. I personally think it is far better that we actually do things that maximise accessibility for all, rather than simply having a piece of paper that says what we would like to do.

As I said this is a joint issue with the county council so any draft charter will need to be considered by both cabinet and the Norwich highways agency committee. Given the committee cycles it is likely to be December before any report will be forthcoming. I appreciate Ms Grahame will be disappointed by the delay, but I'm sure she would agree that it is better to have a meaningful document."

In response to Ms Grahame's supplementary question Councillor Stonard said discussions with groups representing people with disabilities were ongoing and would continue in relation to the development of the charter.

Questions 2 to 5

The Lord Mayor said four questions had been received in relation to the St Thomas Road gate to Earlham cemetery from local residents. He said as these related to the same matter he would ask each resident to read out their question and then the cabinet member would respond. He noted that one resident had not attended and therefore only three questions would be asked.

Question 2 (resident did not attend to ask the question):

"Following the opening of the gate at the top end of St Thomas Road, there are now regular users who walk up the street and some who loiter around the gate area smelling heavily of cannabis, making the residents on the street feel very intimidated.

Considering the gate was shut for anti-social behaviour reasons, can the council please put the wheels in motion to once again shut this gate?"

Question 3

"Is the council going to do something about the increase in antisocial behaviour caused by dog walkers allowing their dogs to chase people's pets and Earlham cemetery wildlife such as the resident deer and fox cubs. There has also been an increase in dogs fouling footpaths and graves since the St Thomas gate was opened in November 2017. There still isn't a 'No dogs allowed' sign on the St Thomas Road gate as there is on every other entrance into the cemetery!"

Question 4

"Since the gate at the top of St Thomas Road leading to Earlham Cemetery has been opened I have been shouted at by both cyclists and dog walkers and this is not what I should endure when leaving my house. I have been verbally abused when telling cyclists not to speed up and down our road when

informing them it isn't a cycle path and they risk hitting a small child, cat, disabled person, parked car or a car turning in to the road. I have been sworn at and threatened by people walking their dogs off leash. I feel intimidated by the drug dealers who use our gate to meet clients in the cemetery. I live on my own and this is not acceptable. I have seen an email written by a council officer in which he claims that there are no dog, cyclist or drug issues in the cemetery and that the police have no concerns. I have seen correspondence from the police about the issues the gate has created. The residents want and need the gate shut. Will you shut it?"

Question 5

"What is the council doing to address and resolve the problems caused by the opening of the gate into Earlham Cemetery at the top of St Thomas Road. These problems include:

- Cyclists using the gate to enter and exit the cemetery despite the risk of injury to residents, other cemetery users and themselves and the damage to cars parked in the street. Many cyclists do not slow down when using the street. Residents and other pedestrians have to walk up the centre of the street due to parking and there have already been several 'near-misses' where people and pets have nearly been hit by cyclists coming out of the cemetery. It is difficult to see round the corner from the informal path in the cemetery alongside number 19 that cyclists are using and the cemetery gate. As the gate at number 20 opens right by the cemetery gate it is difficult for the residents there to see if any cyclists are coming out of the cemetery and for cyclists to see them. This means the residents of number 20 and their young children are at risk of being hit by a cyclist as is any pedestrian trying to enter the cemetery. There is also a risk of pedestrians being injured by cyclists at the bottom of St Thomas Road at the junction where it joins Edinburgh Road. It is difficult to see round the corner from Edinburgh Road into St Thomas Road because of parked cars. Cyclists could also be hit by cars driving along Edinburgh Road for the same reason (there has already been an incident where a car narrowly avoided hitting a child on a cycle coming out of St Thomas Road).
- People are now taking their dogs into the cemetery via the St Thomas Road gate - often off lead. Many of these dogs are not under control and residents' pets have been chased both in the cemetery and in St Thomas Road. Some owners have been allowing their dogs to urinate against graves and not cleaning up after their dog has defecated. Norse employees have told residents that they now have more dog mess to clean up and the smell of dogs mess by the yew tree where the informal path from the gate meets the formal tarmaced section is gut-turning. This smell drifts to no 19 St Thomas Road which means it is unpleasant being in the garden. Dogs, especially those off a lead also affect the wildlife in the cemetery.
- The cemetery possibly being used for drug dealing again. There are two men that regularly go into the cemetery via the St Thomas Road gate - often smoking spliffs (the smell is very strong and sickly and can be smelt several

metres away and it lingers). These men act in a suspicious manner and are often only in the cemetery for a few minutes before they come out again. Not only are the men themselves intimidating, they have also attracted other intimidating people including one man who uses the gate to enter the cemetery on a motorcycle or scooter.

- The threat of flooding to no 19 St Thomas Road due to the extra footfall compacting the ground alongside the property. The property has already suffered flooding during heavy rain.
- The verbal attacks suffered by residents of St Thomas Road from users of the cemetery. There have been incidents where residents have challenged cemetery users, for example for taking dogs into the cemetery, and have been met with abuse as a result. The resident at no 20 was verbally abused as she was talking to a friend at her gate by someone wishing to enter the cemetery. Another resident was verbally abused when she challenged somebody cycling carelessly down the street.
- The increased difficulty for residents trying to enter or leave the street by car as they now have to be aware of more pedestrians and cyclists.
- The loss of privacy experienced by residents with the increased use of the street. The St Thomas Road gate is the only cemetery entrance/exit that opens directly onto a residential street. All the others open onto main roads. Often people entering or leaving the cemetery stare into resident's houses. There is also the awareness that there are no alley gates on St Thomas Road and, with the increase in people in the street, an increased fear of theft and house-breaking. People living in the street moved here when the gate was shut and, for many, the privacy and lack of passing traffic (people and vehicles) was one of the reasons they moved here.

Councillor Packer, cabinet member for health and wellbeing to reply.

“Thank you for your questions.

The cemetery is a public open space and is there for everyone. There are many people who enjoy visiting the cemetery and walking through the site experiencing the tranquillity and the environment within which it is set. The opening of the gate was done to allow greater access to the site giving greater opportunity for more people to visit.

I am however aware of, and appreciate, the concerns of residents and have looked into the issues raised. I asked officers to check the council's anti-social behaviour and nuisance data and since the opening of the gate, the council has not received any reports directly regarding the St Thomas Road gate area. If members of the public do have concerns I encourage them to report any incidents to the council and/or the police.

Anti-social behaviour, such as intimidation and harassment, will be investigated when reported. Officers will then act on any evidence provided by complainants and work to identify the perpetrators and address any offending behaviour. In all cases the council's response has to be proportionate and reflect the need for action. Formal reports provide evidence for officers to build cases against any alleged offending behaviour. If members of the public have concerns after having witnessed potential or actual anti-social behaviour they should report this via the online form on the council's website.

Further details of how and what to report using the online forms can be found on the council's website:

https://www.norwich.gov.uk/info/20302/antisocial_behaviour_asb

The evidence is required by both the council and the police so jointly we can understand the type of issues and when and where they are occurring. This allows the council to work with the police, the friends' group and residents to find a solution. This may be through the provision of information and advice or building a case against individuals for any alleged offending behaviour.

Comments about drug dealers using the cemetery are clearly of concern. Drug use and dealing are criminal offences and must be reported directly to the police. Council officers have seen no evidence of this and neither have any of our partners or the regular cemetery users that we have spoken to. We do work with the police on such issues and as some of you will know I have been in touch with the police regarding the reporting of such issues.

They advise that if somebody is certain drug dealing or taking drugs is actually occurring at the time then the police advice is to call 999. If an emergency response is not required after obtaining more information from the caller then they will be re-directed to the 101 number.

If it is the case that somebody looks suspicious and they have a feeling they might be doing something then the non-emergency number of 101 is more appropriate. Alternatively people can report online via the Norfolk constabulary website: <https://www.norfolk.police.uk/contact-us>

Any issues regarding dogs and dog fouling do need to be reported to the council. This can also be done through the council's website.

https://www.norwich.gov.uk/info/20194/dog_issues

Our partners NorwichNorse Environmental will respond, normally within 24 hours, to clean up any dog fouling. It will also help us to prioritise where we can direct resource to take action to ensure dog owners clean up after their pets. Those areas you mention in your questions with regard to dog fouling were inspected most recently on Friday, 20 July. No evidence of dog fouling was found.

Where dogs are seen in the cemetery grounds council officers will challenge the owners and ask them to leave the site. A temporary sign was put on the gate and is regularly checked to ensure it is still there pending a more

permanent sign being made. The council can take action where dogs are taken into the cemetery, but for this to happen, the public need to report such issues in the first instance.

The situations regarding cyclists who are using St Thomas's Road are similar to other streets in the city. If you look at terraced streets you will see locations where there are junctions and gates with very limited visibility and cyclists and pedestrians manage to negotiate these safely.

St Thomas Road is a public highway, and being a cul-de-sac has few traffic movements a day. The fears about road safety should be taken in the context that it is a public highway. Residents and the council should expect all road users to be using the highway safely.

The council is looking to establish the actual usage of the entrance and is arranging for a "people counter" to be fixed to the gates which will automatically record the number of people passing through the gates thereby establishing the popularity of this entrance.

Greater use of the cemetery will have the benefit of deterring those who are committed to vandalism and other anti-social activity. Experience has shown that popular sites experience far less anti-social behaviour than those that are gated and where use is discouraged.

I would also like to report some of the positive responses received by the council regarding the opening of the gate with residents welcoming the opportunity to use it. Comments include:

"As a result of the gate being open there is likely to be less anti-social behaviour because there are more people in the cemetery"

"..cutting back of the undergrowth and the hedge have increased visibility and made the area more open and inviting"

"As a resident whose property backs onto the Cemetery and who uses the cemetery for running, I've never heard anything untoward, nor, when I have run by or through the St Thomas Gate, have I seen anything untoward. Further I have not seen anyone (lingering or otherwise) at the gate. As a resident, I am so pleased that this gate is now open to increase the leisure amenity available in this one of the many lungs and green corridors of our fine City."

As has been stated previously, the cemetery is a public open space and if it is to survive and eventually thrive then it needs to be open to all whilst reflecting the purpose of the cemetery as a place of rest.

I encourage all residents to report any incident giving them cause for concern so that the council and the police can act upon them accordingly."

In response to two supplementary questions from residents Councillor Packer said that he acknowledged the residents present were unhappy with the decision to open the St Thomas Road gate. He said that it was most effective that if there were complaints that these be made to officers who could investigate them. He said the St Thomas Road entrance provided an access which was safer than the other main road entrances for people to use.

4. Petitions

No petitions were received.

5. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2018.

6. Questions to Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs

The Lord Mayor said that nine questions had been received from members of the council to cabinet members for which notice had been given in accordance with the provisions of appendix 1 of the council's constitution.

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| Question 1 | Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for safe city environment about banning the use of sky lanterns. |
| Question 2 | Councillor Raby to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth about a visitor levy. |
| Question 3 | Councillor Vaughan Thomas to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing about progress on the Goldsmith Street development. |
| Question 4 | Councillor Stutely to the cabinet member for social inclusion about the solar panel energy auction. |
| Question 5 | Councillor Malik to the cabinet member for social inclusion about financial hardship relating to the roll out of universal credit. |
| Question 6 | Councillor Stewart to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth about the protection of historic assets. |
| Question 7 | Councillor Hampton to ask the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods about protection for private tenants. |
| Question 8 | Councillor Erin Fulton-McAlister to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth about the Earham Road safer cycling and walking scheme. |
| Question 9 | Councillor Lubbock to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing about installation of slopes in council properties. |

(Details of the questions and responses and any supplementary questions and responses are attached as Appendix A to these minutes.)

7. Amendment to the Minimum Revenue Provision

Councillor Kendrick moved the recommendations as set out in the report. He noted an amendment required to Appendix 1 to the report, paragraph (E) bullet point three, agenda page 37, the last sentence to be deleted.

Councillor Peek seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously to approve an amendment to and rewording of the existing MRP policy, which came into effect in the 2017/18 financial year, as set out at paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report.

8. Members allowances and expenses

(Councillor Driver having declared an interest in this item left the room.)

Councillor Kendrick moved the recommendations as set out in the report. He noted an amendment to the report; paragraph 2 of the report, fourth word of the first sentence, on agenda page 41, the word **not** to be deleted.

Councillor Davis seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously to:

- (1) call the members' expenses panel to consider the current members allowances and identify any expenses element of the allowance; and
- (2) delegate to the director of business services authority to appoint individuals to the members' expenses panel.

(Councillor Driver was readmitted to the meeting.)

9. Local Government Boundary Review

The Lord Mayor said he had received a recommendation in advance of the meeting. This had been circulated to members and copies were available for the public.

Councillor Kendrick noted that an amended impact assessment had been circulated to members prior to the meeting.

Councillor Kendrick moved and Councillor Stutely seconded the item.

RESOLVED, with 31 members voting in favour and 3 abstaining that:

“Norwich City Council approves the following response to the draft recommendations on the new electoral arrangements for Norwich City Council from the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE).

The Council would like to express its concern at the inequality of the numbers of electors by 2023 between wards in the draft proposals by the LGBCE in some cases of up to 20%. Given that it was the duty of the LGBCE to produce wards of roughly a similar number of voters we ask them to review their proposals to improve the electoral equality between wards.

We also propose the following changes to the draft proposals in order to improve the electoral balance of three wards:

- (1) To transfer the part of Town Close ward to the north west of Newmarket Road and to the south of but including Mount Pleasant, Arlington Lane and The Mews from Town Close ward to Eaton ward.
- (2) To add the area around Carrow Hill from Mancroft ward and Thorpe Hamlet ward to the proposed Lakenham ward. The precise boundary of the new area to be added to the proposed Lakenham ward, is to the south and east of a boundary which will proceed down the middle of Finkelgate, along the middle of Ber Street (between Finkelgate to Mariners Lane), down the middle of Mariners Lane, along the footpath to Rouen Road and then down the middle of Rouen Road and King Street until the Novi Sad friendship bridge where the River Wensum shall form the northern boundary.
- (3) That the eastern boundary of Town Close ward should run along Hall Road.
- (4) That Spitalfields should remain in Thorpe Hamlet ward rather than be transferred to Crome ward.
- (5) That the north side of Earlham Road to the east of the entrance to the Earlham Cemetery should remain in Nelson ward rather than being transferred to University ward.
- (6) That part of the TH2 Polling District, south and including the Prince of Wales should be transferred to the Mancroft ward rather than Thorpe Hamlet ward.
- (7) That the LGBCE consider that the area of Saint Augustines between the inner ring road and the northern boundary of the present Mancroft ward should be contained within one ward."

10a. Motion: Police cuts

(Councillor Maguire had declared an interest in this item.)

Councillor Raby moved and Councillor Carlo seconded the motion as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED, unanimously:-

"Nationally, police numbers are now at the lowest level in three decades, crime is soaring and the independent inspectorate starkly warned that the lives of vulnerable people are at risk as there are not enough officers to respond to emergency calls. Locally, eight consecutive years of cuts have helped damage community safety and

public security in our city culminating last month in what Chief Constable Simon Bailey said was the first time a firearm "had been discharged in the county under these circumstances" and a critical incident.

Council **RESOLVES** to write to both Norwich Members of Parliament and the Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner to raise concerns that;

- (1) A £2.3bn real term cut in government funding between 2010-15, leading nationally to the national loss of 21,000 police officers, 18,000 police staff, 6,800 Police Community Support Officers and reduction in the number of armed officers has damaged community safety and public security.
- (2) The local loss of 143 police, 150 PCSOs in Norfolk, the cut of £30m government funding to Norfolk Constabulary's budget since 2010 and still another £10m demanded by 2020, will further weaken the police service.
- (3) The severe consequences of organised crime embedding within the city, particularly through the emergence of 'County Lines', placing all statutory agencies tasked with helping to provide community safety under further strain.
- (4) Continual severe funding cuts to local government which has reduced the capacity to carry out associated works and activities which both directly and indirectly contribute to local safety".

10b. Motion: EU nationals right to stand at local elections

(The Lord Mayor having declared a pecuniary interest in this item left the chamber. Councillors Waters and Malik had also declared an interest in this item.)

The deputy lord mayor (Councillor Ryan) was in the chair.

RESOLVED, unanimously:-

"Currently EU citizens living in the UK can stand for and vote in local elections. Last month the Government outlined its Statement of Intent for EU nationals living in the UK post-Brexit. The intention is that they will be allowed to remain in the UK subject to certain conditions, and will be given Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) status. Commonwealth citizens are eligible to stand in local elections but there has been no confirmation from the Government on these rights for EU citizens post Brexit.

Council therefore **RESOLVES** to:

- (1) Recognise that EU citizens have contributed a great deal to the democratic process in Norwich, as candidates, councillors and voters.
- (2) Recognise that the government's response thus far to the question of the rights of EU citizens living in the UK, especially vis-a-vis their democratic rights is insufficient, disruptive and potentially stressful for many sitting councillors and potential candidates, with EU citizenships; and

- (3) Ask all group leaders to write to the LGA and Norwich's MPs to lobby the government for urgent clarity on this matter and to ensure that EU citizens continue to be able to vote in and stand for local elections post Brexit."

(The Lord Mayor was readmitted and closed the meeting.)

LORD MAYOR

Questions to cabinet members / committee chairs

Question 1

Councillor Carlo to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:

“In view of the hot dry weather that the UK has experienced over the past weeks, would the cabinet member agree that the council should ban sky lanterns given the potential fire risk they pose to open spaces in Norwich such as Mousehold Heath and to the Norfolk countryside?”

Councillor Maguire, cabinet member for safe city environment’s reply:

“Councillor Carlo will be pleased to hear that this has already been put in motion with a report to be considered at cabinet on the 19 September recommending the prohibition of releasing sky lanterns on council owned land. Councillor Carlo may be aware of this as the report it is listed in the published forward plan which is available to members.

The recommendations in the report will not only seek approval to ban sky lanterns but also the mass release of balloons into the outdoor environment. Sky lanterns and balloons not only pose a fire risk but are also a significant threat to wildlife and livestock from ingestion and entanglement through the panic they cause. They are also a potential source of litter and waste in our environment.

I am sure Councillor Carlo will welcome the approach taken by the administration in ensuring our local environment is protected from such issues.”

In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Maguire said that the council intended to encourage residents from using sky lanterns through other means such as publications.

Question 2

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

“Over the last decade or so, councils have faced massive cuts to their funding from central government and a greater emphasis has been placed on the ability of local authorities to raise their own money. The hotel and guest house sector is separately concerned about the impact of unregulated on-line operators such as Airbnb.

One of the ways local authorities deal with these concerns elsewhere in Europe is through levying a small charge on visitors. In the Balearic Islands for instance, those staying in luxury hotels pay €4 per person per day; €3 for mid-range hotels; €2 for apartments and cruise ship visitors and €1 for campers and hostels. A charge paid by visitors

staying in visitor accommodation would help to guarantee adequate standards, maintain a level playing field in the sector and safeguard the cultural and social offering of historic cities such as Norwich. Would the cabinet member agree that lobbying the government to allow councils to introduce such a levy would be a positive move?"

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

"Thank you for your question, which has several aspects.

You will not be surprised to hear that I think local government really needs to lobby central government for proper funding for services. The idea that councils and the rest of the public sector can, after years of austerity, valiantly soldier on in the face of what is swift becoming an impossible funding climate really needs to be addressed.

On tourism taxes, it's quite a complex picture. What we need to be mindful of in Norwich is that we already have a levy, which is raised through Norwich BID, which contributes to animating the city and publicising Norwich as a visitor and commercial destination. I am not sure another levy on top of this one would be helpful to local businesses. However, there is some national research and discussion at the moment looking at the pros and cons of tourism taxes and we will watch that with interest.

But ultimately I fear more local taxes just absolve and distract the government from tacking proper central funding of public services."

In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Stonard said there was national research due out in relation to visitor levies; if this proved favourable other councils taking such measures could be contacted.

Question 3

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

"I was impressed by the front page Evening News coverage last month, entitled "Stunning new council housing", of the ongoing progress to develop and finish the Goldsmith Street site. The Times newspaper indeed hailed it amongst the best in the world which is a sentiment shared by residents living near to the development. Given the significance and importance of this site, can the cabinet member for social housing comment on ongoing progress for this new community?"

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

"Thank you for your question. We welcome Goldsmith Street being recognised as the Best New (World) Architecture of 2018 by The Times, and I am particularly pleased that the local community is recognising the positive contribution this will make to the area.

Development is continuing to progress well on site, with internal fit out of the units moving at pace and utilities to the site starting to be connected. It is anticipated that the first dwellings will be complete in September and we will be having a phased handover of new homes a terrace at a time. We have a current anticipated completion of all the dwellings in late October / early November.

In order to ensure a smooth handover process for the new tenants we will also be setting up a porta-cabin close to the site for staff from lettings to be based. Other departments such as the income team, customer contact, NPS Norwich, community engagement, revenues and benefits will also offer services at times within the porta-cabin to make sure settling into their new homes is as easy as possible for tenants and to make sure they have all the information they need.

We will be providing a home user guide for tenants that will provide details of local services, amenities and local groups alongside hints and tips about getting the most from their new Passivhaus home which will help them quickly feel part of the community.

Following on from the completion of our first Passivhaus scheme at Hansard Close last year this will be a fantastic addition to our housing stock.”

Question 4

Councillor Stutely to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:

“Like many residents in Norwich I was pleased to receive a targeted letter encouraging me to join in the new Solar Panel Energy auction, building on the model of success achieved by Big Switch and Save. Can the cabinet member for social inclusion comment on this latest initiative and potential benefits for residents who join it?”

Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion’s reply:

“It is wonderful news to see “Solar Together” return. It is also great news to see other councils around the UK adopting this innovative approach to solar purchasing which was piloted here in 2015 (A UK first).

As you will know solar panels are a great way to access clean renewable energy and make a difference to the sustainability of our communities. In fact year on year solar is increasing as part of the UK’s energy mix, helping to reduce the carbon intensity of our electricity consumption and lower UK carbon emissions.

The price of solar panels has been falling every year making prices far more affordable than ever before. So now is the perfect opportunity to buy high-quality solar panels with the Feed In Tariff before this regrettably ends on 31 March 2019.

Solar Together will guide households through every step in the process of buying solar panels. The scheme ensures that they receive high-quality solar systems with extended guarantees. The scheme works by

bringing people together to drive prices down. Just like the Switch and Save!

On the 22 August, Solar Together will hold an auction where suppliers will compete to offer the best price possible for high-quality solar panels. In 2015 over 3,500 households signed up for the scheme. This gave households an average saving of 16% on market prices.

This time round other counties such as Suffolk are joining in. So the deals will hopefully be very competitive and appealing.

I hope we can all pass on the word about this wonderful scheme.

You can register via the Solar Together Website:

www.solartogethernorfolk.co.uk”

Question 5

Councillor Malik to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:

“I note that the Labour Party moved a motion of censure of the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, the Rt Hon Member for Tatton, for her handling of the roll out of Universal Credit and her response to the National Audit Office (NAO) report, Rolling Out Universal Credit; which noted that the DWP’s own survey of claimants published on 8 June showed that 40 per cent of claimants are experiencing financial hardship even nine months into a claim and that 20 per cent of claimants are unable to make a claim online. Will the cabinet member for social inclusion join me in once again calling on the government to pause the roll out of universal credit and further request the government to reduce her ministerial salary to zero for four weeks?”

Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion’s reply:

“Thank you for your question, Councillor Malik. Yes, I will join you in calling on the government to pause the rollout of Universal Credit and reduce the Rt Hon Member for Tatton’s ministerial salary for four weeks, with some slight changes – which mirror real-life for our Universal Credit claimants. In addition to reducing her ministerial salary for one calendar month (plus another 7 days for the payment to reach her bank account), I would also suggest no access to savings, £5 worth of gas and electricity (on a pre-payment meter), removal of all credit/debit cards, no ministerial expenses for rent/ travel/ subsistence and perhaps an eviction notice from her private sector landlord? As a consolation, she may approach her local authority for a food bank voucher.”

On Thursday 19 July, 2018, Esther McVey admitted there are continuing problems with Universal Credit. This came within hours of the publications of a critical report by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) that savaged the DWP for its six-year failure to fix system errors in the transfer of claimants from incapacity benefit to ESA. Tens of thousands of ESA claimants will receive back-payments of £5,000 - £20,000 as a result of what MPs have called a series of “avoidable”

mistakes. The DWP was warned of the error as early as 2014, but failed to take action until 2017.” This is the same person who, on 21st June, 2018 hailed Universal Credit as “a great British innovation.”

Question 6

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

“Representing the beautiful Thorpe Hamlet ward I have actively supported the campaign to keep Unilever and Britvic on the Colman’s site and regret, like all councillors, the news that they are closing. I am also acutely aware of the Grade 1 listed remains of the Carrow Abbey, (listed with the help of the city council in 1954) together with the Colman’s family mansion and other notable historic assets which will need careful preservation. Indeed, significant preservation of the wider site and home was actively supported by the city council during the 1980s. As the future of the site is considered, can the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth ensure that all efforts are made to ensure the owners protect this valuable historic asset for the benefit of our shared city?”

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

“Thank you for the question and I share your sentiments about both the sad news of the closure of Carrow works and the remarkable heritage of the site. The council and its partners are doing everything possible to support those who are risk of redundancy, for redundancy arrangements of this scale Jobcentre Plus is the lead partner.

With regard to the reuse of the site, this is something we are in discussions with Britvic and Unilever, and their representatives, about. This process is early days so there is not a lot I can say at the moment. However, you are right to draw attention to the importance of Carrow Abbey which is the site of a Benedictine Priory, built in 1146 on the site of an earlier religious hospital following a gift of land from King Stephen and the adjacent house built in the 16th century as the Prioress’s lodgings but which was extensively remodelled in the 19th Century for members of the Colman family. In addition to these nationally significant features there are a wealth of archaeological remains, important gardens and trees and other listed buildings which are important in their own right but which also sit alongside other features such as Victorian industrial buildings, the school building for the children of Colman’s employees, the pet cemetery and air raid shelters which collectively tell a remarkable story about the social history of Norwich.

Please be assured that preserving the unique heritage of the site will be a priority not only because of the remarkable intrinsic value of the heritage assets themselves but also because of the value that the retention of such assets can bring to any place should it stop being used for food production.

If you are interested in understanding the heritage of the area can I draw to your attention the Conservation Area Appraisal for the Bracondale Area that was published by the City Council in March 2011 and which remains available on the website.”

Question 7

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

“Like many residents in Norwich, I privately rent and am aware of the appalling lack of protection and support for those who do. I note that the government is consulting on bringing in 3 year tenancies but agree with John Healey MP that this promise is meaningless if landlords can still force tenants out by hiking up the rent.

Would the cabinet member for safer stronger neighbourhoods comment on the excellent work this council undertakes, despite rapidly diminishing resources to protect private tenants, but also join me in calling for the government to go further and give England’s 11 million tenants even greater security by abolishing Section 21, the law that allows landlords to evict without giving a reason.”

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

“In common with the rest of England, private renting in Norwich has increased significantly and many private tenants can now expect to rent for many years before being in a position to become a home owner, if indeed, they will ever be able to. A particular concern is households with children in the private rented sector whose numbers have increased faster than other household types.

People, particularly families with children, need more than a roof over their heads: They need a settled and secure home from which they can establish long-term connections with schools, health services and the community. The current system of providing that security for only six months falls a long way short of this ideal with private tenants constantly facing the possibility of having to move with only two months’ notice.

The other concern for the council is poor living conditions in the privately rented sector, particularly hazards to health. Privately-rented family homes are actually no more likely to be hazardous than owner-occupied ones. The obvious difference, however, is that an owner occupier is generally in a position to deal those problems.

Private tenants have to weigh up the consequences of raising disrepair and poor conditions with their landlord which could include the loss of their home through ‘no fault’ eviction. This means that poor conditions are often not challenged and continue from one tenancy to the next.

This council carries out excellent work to force landlords to tackle poor conditions but that work can be hampered by the current lack of security. Whilst the government’s proposals are a welcome move in the right direction, they do not, in my opinion, go far enough. I

understand that landlords need to be able to repossess their properties where, for example, a tenant fails to pay the rent or damages the property but this should be decided by a court examining all the circumstances rather than the current system where the landlord holds all the cards.

I would therefore agree that no-fault eviction, through the use of Section 21 powers, should be abolished.”

Question 8

Councillor Erin Fulton-McAlister to ask the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth the following question:

“Thanks to the hard work of Labour councillors additional funding has been actively sourced to improve the physical infrastructure across Norwich to bolster safer cycling and walking. Earlham Road has remained a significant problem for many years, so I was particularly pleased to learn that two projects have been developed to change this, following a consultation which closed on 24 July. Can the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth comment on this new proposed scheme and the widespread benefits that it will offer the communities around Earlham Road?”

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

“I would be pleased to.

For a third consecutive time, Norwich City Council has been successful in securing cycle ambition funding from national government, to fund improvements for walking and cycling in the city. As many of you know Norwich is one of only 8 cities nationwide that has been awarded cycle ambition status and, as such, that entitles us to bid for funding pots that aren’t open to the majority of towns and cities across the UK. Building on the significant improvements to cycling that have been achieved with the £12M previously awarded to us, we have been granted a further £1.7M of cycle ambition money to fund much needed safety improvements along Earlham Road.

We actually have 2 separate schemes on Earlham Road; the first is at the Earlham Fiveways Roundabout where Earlham Road meets Bluebell Road, Earlham Green Lane and Gypsy Lane. For a long time there has been a troubling history of accidents involving cyclists at this roundabout. The low cost solutions that have been introduced over the years through the local safety scheme budget have only gone so far in addressing the problems. The cycle ambition funding has finally given us the opportunity to completely redesign the roundabout to make it safer for everyone, but especially cyclists and pedestrians. The scheme involves converting existing crossings to Toucan crossings, a reshaping of the roundabout with improved splitter islands to add those who wish to cross directly at the roundabout and relocating the street lighting to avoid it being obscured by the tree cover. We have based the design on a scheme in Cambridge which saw 15 accidents

involving cyclists at a roundabout prior to the scheme being implemented, and in the 2 years since it was remodelled there have been none.

The second scheme involves creating better crossing facilities for pedestrians and cyclists at the Earlham Road / Outer ring road junction, which also has a history of pedestrian and cycle accidents. These new crossings lead into carriageway cycle lanes on Earlham Road between the roundabout and Christchurch Road. Then, as Earlham Road narrows past Christchurch Road, we are looking to create a highway space that can be comfortably shared by all road users. The speed limit will be reduced to 20mph, additionally zebra crossings will be provided and the footpath will be given priority across all side roads. The final element of the scheme, which is actually funded by CIL, is the complete remodelling of the Earlham Road Mill / Hill Road again to make it safer for everyone to use.

Consultation on these 2 schemes closed today and I am pleased to hear from officers that we have received a large number of positive comments about the proposals. Officers will now be working through the full detail of the consultation responses and will be reporting the results to the highways agency committee in September, where I very much hope we can give agreement for the schemes to be implemented next year.

I am sure you will agree that these long overdue safety improvements will offer benefits not only to the local community in the Earlham Road area but for everyone who uses Earlham Road either regularly or occasionally. I would like to congratulate the officers, who have been aware for many years what improvements are needed to Earlham Road, for their efforts in securing this very welcome funding.”

Question 9

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

“An elderly couple who are tenants of the city council need a 7 inch step removed. The step is between the footpath and their shared access leading to their front door and side passageway.

It would appear that the council are unwilling to reduce this step to a slope which would enable better mobility for the couple. Instead the council are offering a half step – two smaller steps instead of one big step. This solution would be of little use to somebody who has or will have a mobility scooter, a mother with a pram etc.

Surely common sense would dictate that a slope which in this case could be accommodated would be preferable to 2 steps.

Could the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing comment on why the city council has not offered a slope?”

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

"I would like to thank Cllr Lubbock for bringing this to my attention.

Without going into the detail of the case which would be inappropriate, I would like to refer Cllr Lubbock to the council's aids and adaptations policy. This says that works such as this are not carried out unless there has been a referral from Norfolk County Council Social services that a tenant requires aids and/or adaptations to their property to help them live independently. Once a referral has been made one of our occupational therapists will visit and make an assessment of the requirements and specify the necessary works.

Tenants usually work with us so that we can assess whether and what adaptations are needed taking into account a whole person and whole house approach. This means that we would not do some works if it meant that the house required other adaptations for the property to be accessible as a whole. There would be little point in installing a ramp if the front door was inaccessible or the passageways and living quarters too narrow for wheelchair access.

In the example highlighted, officers may work with the tenant to see if there are other ways to support independent living for example removing other obstacles such as fences. For the council to fund these works it would require a clear medical or social care need to do so.

It does not appear that a referral has been made by Norfolk county council in this case. Therefore, I would suggest that Cllr Lubbock advises the tenant of this or perhaps she could contact her County Councillor to help expedite an assessment being carried out".

In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Harris said that the residents in question should reengage with social service and council officers to assess if their circumstances had changed.