NORWICH City Council

MINUTES

COUNCIL

19:30 to 19:45 **17 March 2020**

Present: Councillor Thomas (Va) (Lord Mayor), Carlo, Davis, Giles, Harris, Huntley, Jones, Kendrick, Maguire, Packer, Price, Schmierer, Stonard, Waters and Wright

Apologies: Councillors Ackroyd, Bogelein, Brociek- Coulton, Button, Driver, Fulton-McAlister (E), Fulton-McAlister (M), Grahame, Lubbock, Manning, Maxwell, McCartney-Gray, Neale, Oliver, Osborn, Peek, Ryan, Sands (M), Sands (S), Sarmezey, Stutely, Thomas (Vi), Utton, and Youssef

1. Lord Mayor's Announcements

The Lord Mayor said that a list of events would be appended to the minutes, however, all events for the next eight weeks had been cancelled.

The Lord Mayor invited Stephen Evans, chief executive, to make a statement as follows:

STATEMENT ON NORWICH CITY COUNCIL'S CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE

"I wanted to update Council on our covid-19 contingency planning and the council's role in supporting the wider community action that is beginning to take shape in Norwich.

As chief executive, my primary focus is threefold:

To ensure that, as far as possible, we can continue to provide critical services to residents over the coming weeks – particularly the most vulnerable.

To protect the wellbeing of colleagues and allow them to care for themselves and their loved ones during these difficult times; and

To ensure that we continue progress other priority activities, such as setting a balanced budget for next year and continuing our focus on building new homes.

For the avoidance of doubt, I am asking all staff to adhere to the updated Government guidance on covid-19:

To self-isolate if they develop a new, persistent cough and/or high temperature.
If colleagues live in a household with others who develop such symptoms, they should also isolate for 14 days even if not displaying symptoms themselves.
Colleagues are being advised to work from home if the nature of their role allows and key groups should take specific care.

These include colleagues with underlying health conditions; colleagues who would normally be advised to have the flu vaccine (such as those with chronic diseases); and pregnant women. My advice is that all colleagues who fall into these categories should work from home as a matter of course, starting from today.

We have held a number of manager briefing sessions today, with more to come tomorrow. All managers should be actively planning from larger numbers of colleagues working from home if their presence in the office is deemed to be non-essential i.e. if they have work that could be done just as easily away from city hall.

Clearly, as a local authority we have a duty to continue to provide critical services to residents, some of which cannot be delivered from home. I will say more about this shortly.

If colleagues display the symptoms highlighted, they should not come into city hall or be out in the wider community – they should stay at home and focus on getting better.

I would also like to reiterate the importance of Councillors also following this advice. Thanks for your understanding and support with this.

Doing all we can to minimise the spread of infection will ultimately help our ability to continue to deliver critical services and limit the impact on those who are most at risk.

Business continuity planning

Over the past few weeks, our focus has been on refreshing the council's business continuity plans and working through a range of scenarios so that we can continue to deliver critical services.

As of last Friday, all service business continuity plans had been looked at by teams and re-submitted for central review.

As of yesterday, I have stood up a cross-service team to coordinate our covid-19 planning.

Overseen by the Deputy Chief Executive, the team have scrutinised our refreshed plans and are using them to determine the critical services the council will prioritise – services including, but not limited to, housing options and

homelessness, emergency housing repairs, revenues and benefits, customer services, statutory planning functions, environmental health and licensing.
We are also working with contracted providers to ensure that critical environmental services such as waste collection and disposal continue to function.

A key part of our business continuity planning is increasing our IT resilience. On Friday, we purchased additional capacity to allow for a greater number of people to log on to council systems remotely and have been recalling and updating laptops and tablets that have fallen into disuse. These will be reissued to critical service areas based on need.

As a result of these measures, I am confident that we are now be able to accommodate significant numbers of colleagues to work from home.
In order to increase the resilience of our business critical teams and our IT systems, we will be introducing alternate home and office working patterns for business critical services and locating some teams in other buildings, including our back up site in Lakenham.

Another key work stream is focused on reviewing our HR policies, guidance and support. Anyone who is impacted by covid-19 or follows advice to self-isolate will not have this on their sickness record.

Managers are also encouraged to be flexible if and when schools close and colleagues with children do not have immediate access to childcare.

Wider community support

As of yesterday evening, the Government has moved the country to more stringent 'social distancing' measures, which will have a significant impact on how our residents and visitors live their lives.

They will also have a significant impact on local businesses and we await further detail on the package of financial measures announced by the Chancellor this afternoon.

We are actively working through the council's role in helping to support and facilitate community-based action, most of which will develop naturally within our communities and indeed is beginning to do so.

Partly, this will involve using council communication channels to sign-post people to community based support and continuing to emphasise the need to follow Government advice to combat the spread of the virus.

Many of you will have seen various national and local campaigns where individuals and groups of volunteers are coming together to offer support to at risk residents, for example, to deliver groceries and prescriptions.

The scale of the community response is heartening to see and this has the potential to be of huge benefit. I do see a role for the council in helping

vulnerable people to stay safe in such scenarios, so we will be considering how we use our information channels to provide advice and guidance.
We have a good relationship with the local voluntary and community sector and are looking at how best to engage with representatives from the sector to help mobilise community support.

In terms of specifics, a key area of concern is access to food for our vulnerable residents and we are developing a specific work stream on this. Amongst other things, we are looking at how food banks continue to keep adequate stock levels. Another priority is the continued support provided to rough sleepers. We are using our multi-agency Pathways programme and identifying options for accommodation where rough sleepers might be able to self-isolate.

The role of ward Councillors as advocates for their local areas and the support they provide support to communities - as well as being a crucial source of local intelligence and advice - is a critical part of the council's response. Please do continue to feed back any areas of concern or ideas you may have.

To conclude, we are in unprecedented times. It is clear that Norwich City Council and the city more widely – our residents and businesses - will be severely tested over the coming months. My priority as Chief Executive is to minimise the impact as far as possible and to support Councillors in their role as the city's elected representatives.

Walking around city hall and talking to staff today, it fills me with a huge sense of pride to see such dedication from colleagues who are continuing to do their best for our residents during such challenging times.

The next few months will undoubtedly test us, but I am confident that – if we all pull together - we will get through it."

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Public Questions/Petitions

Four public questions had been received and the questioners would receive a written response.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2020.

5. Questions to Cabinet Members/Committee Chairs

The Lord Mayor said that 20 questions had been received from members of the council to cabinet members/committee chairs for which notice had been given in accordance with the provisions of appendix 1 of the council's constitution.

The questions are summarised as follows:

Question 1	Councillor Wright to the leader of the council on the council's resilience regarding Coronavirus.
Question 2	Councillor Lubbock to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on producing an online video about the Goldsmith Street development.
Question 3	Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth about the A47 North Tuddenham to Easton scheme.
Question 4	Councillor Neale to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth about the airport masterplan.
Question 5	Councillor Bogelein to the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment about idling engines.
Question 6	Councillor Osborn to the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment on recycling rates.
Question 7	Councillor Price to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing about installing permanent house boats.
Question 8	Councillor Grahame to the cabinet member for social inclusion about an access charter.
Question 9	Councillor Schmierer to the leader of the council regarding EU citizens settled status.
Question 10	Councillor Youssef to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth regarding the Western Link.
Question 11	Councillor Ackroyd to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth regarding bus season tickets for councillors.
Question 12	Councillor Button to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing about a Housing First approach.
Question 13	Councillor Giles to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing about funding of public health.
Question 14	Councillor Stutely to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing about planting 100 trees for 100 years of social housing.
Question 15	Councillor Sue Sands to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth about the St Martin's 'somewhere safe to stay' hub.
Question 16	Councillor Peek to the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods about West End park.
Question 17	Councillor McCartney-Gray to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing about the Riverside leisure centre.
Question 18	Councillor Mike Sands to the cabinet member for resources on the Fair Funding Review.

Question 19	Councillor Huntley to the leader of the council on the TUC campaign.
Question 20	Councillor Oliver to the leader of the council on the Konnect bus strike

(Details of the questions and responses were circulated at the meeting, and are attached to these minutes at Appendix A. Councillor Schmierer said that any supplementary questions from his group wold be emailed directly to the cabinet member in due course.)

6. Motion

Councillor Waters proposed and Councillor Harris seconded the following motion:

(1) under paragraph 52(k) of appendix one of the council's constitution to adjourn debate of the motions set out on the agenda to the next ordinary meeting of council

(2) under paragraphs 52(c) and 52 (h) of appendix one of the council's constitution

a) for the duration of the times meeting, propose that all other business be taken as unopposed; and

b) to note that the nomination for Lord Mayor for the next civic year will be Councillor Kevin Maguire and the nomination for Sheriff will be Caroline Jarrold

It was **RESOLVED**, unanimously to:

(1) under paragraph 52(k) of appendix one of the council's constitution to adjourn debate of the motions set out on the agenda to the next ordinary meeting of council

(2) under paragraphs 52(c) and 52 (h) of appendix one of the council's constitution

a) for the duration of the times meeting, propose that all other business be taken as unopposed; and

b) to note that the nomination for Lord Mayor for the next civic year will be Councillor Kevin Maguire and the nomination for Sheriff will be Caroline Jarrold

LORD MAYOR

Appendix A

Questions to cabinet members or chairs of committees

Question 1

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

> "Reflecting on the current situation, could the leader of the council please comment on the council's preparedness to ensure that services can be maintained in the now likely event of a significant increase in cases of COVID-19"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

> "The Chief Executive's statement to council covers the content of the question and the statement will form part of the minutes of the meeting."

Question 2

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

> "Whilst this council is delighted with the attention that Goldsmith Street has received there is a down side and that is the number of interested parties wanting to visit the site.
>
> Has the cabinet member considered seeking help to make a comprehensive online video not only showing the layout of the site and the high specification but also explaining the details of the build, including technical information?
>
> We have many gifted students well versed in this media who could help with such a production.
>
> This would save the necessity for visitors to spend time and expense to travel to the site, save officer time in showing visitors around and responding to questions and to save the residents the constant stream of visitors.
>
> A very sustainable solution to a problem; just like the Goldsmith Street development itself"

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

> "Thank you for your question.
> I am delighted with the national recognition that Goldsmith Street has received and we are keen to let other interested parties learn from our experiences.
> I have always been keen to promote our development work not only on this site, but previously on Hansard Close, Rayne Park and more recently Bullard Road to other local authorities.

While we are still receiving a lot of interest from other councils and developers, however the media interest in visiting has generally calmed down. We are happy to provide information and to aid this, officers have pulled together a briefing paper that we are happy to share. I also understand that the architects are working on a more comprehensive guide to the scheme that we will be able to use.

In order to manage the level of interest on the site we haven't been undertaking organised visits but we have spoken at a number of conferences, to get our message out to wide range of audiences, and earlier today I was speaking at the LGA housing and Planning conference.

With regards to creating a film of the site, in our experience most media outlets have their own specific filming requirements so would be unlikely to pay for or utilise anything we commissioned.

Goldsmith Street is a public area, so we can't stop anyone filming or visiting but where we are approached, we offer to provide photos and information to limit the time they spend there and always advise them to be respectful and mindful of residents.

There are already various films available online, that were created during the RIBA and Housing Design awards process. It is particularly fantastic to hear some of the stories from the new tenants on a film that was made for the Housing Design Awards and how happy they were having moved in.
I am incredibly proud that we are leading the way in development of homes that will benefit our tenants and look forward to continuing to shout about our record."

Question 3

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

"Last month, an Appeal Court judgment ruled that a third runway at Heathrow was unlawful because the Secretary of State had failed to consider the Paris Agreement on climate change. Environmental groups consider that the same argument applies to the Government's road building programme. Highways England are consulting on the A47 North Tuddenham to Easton scheme, with a deadline of 8 April. The Preliminary Environmental Information Report refers to a 'probable increase in carbon emissions for both construction and operation'. This runs counter to the Paris Agreement and the Government's statutory target of cutting carbon emissions to net zero by 2050. Surface transport emissions contribute 23% of UK emissions, with 2019 statistics showing an increase in traffic and new car emissions. Transport's share of

carbon emissions in Norfolk stands at a shocking 38%. Will the cabinet member ask officers to respond to the consultation stating the city council's objection to this and other A47 dualling schemes on climate change grounds?"

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

"I believe it would be premature for the city council to lodge an objection to the long overdue improvements to the A47.

The implications of the recent legal judgement about Heathrow are far from certain. The need for improvement to the North Tuddenham to Easton section is well established and something that along with improvements to the remainder of the A47 this council has supported over many years. Delivery of our growth plans are dependant on the timely delivery of supporting infrastructure. This specific scheme will reduce congestion, improve road safety and, more generally, it will help support housing and jobs growth.

I appreciate, of course, the importance of trying to reduce emissions from transport, to reduce the need to travel and promote a shift to sustainable modes. However, I am not convinced that objecting to the scheme is appropriate and am also mindful that Highways England have yet to specify any mitigations. What we need to ensure that we have an overall ambitious strategy to minimise the need to travel and maximise modal shift. This will be best done through the emerging Transport for Norwich Strategy rather than seeking to delay much needed infrastructure investment."

Question 4

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

"Last month environmental campaign groups celebrated an amazing victory as the Court of Appeal ruled that expansion of Heathrow Airport would be illegal under current legislation to cut carbon emissions by virtually 100% by 2050. This will mean that other airport expansions and big road building projects may face similar rulings. In the light of this new legal interpretation, will the cabinet member withdraw support from Norwich Airport's Masterplan which enables growth of the airport?"

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

"Thank you for your question.

I note the recent Court of Appeal decision on the third runway at Heathrow. My understanding is that the challenge hinged on the matters considered in in adopting the national policy statement on new runway capacity in the South-East. As that policy statement didn't address Norwich airport and as it appears likely that the judgement will be subject to appeal to the Supreme Court, it is far from certain what the final implications of the judgement will be for Norwich.

The Council's recent endorsement of the Norwich Airport Masterplan at Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee involved much discussion about potential emissions that are likely to result from the growth envisaged in the Masterplan. The decision to endorse the masterplan was subject to submission of a Surface Access Strategy (SAS) to the council within 12 months of endorsement. There is also an expectation that the airport will produce a carbon reduction strategy alongside the SAS. Therefore the next opportunity to review the council's endorsement of the masterplan is likely in late 2020 upon receipt of the SAS and carbon reduction plan.

Norwich Airport makes a significant contribution to the local economy as an important local employer, with over 1,200 jobs on site, and supports a considerable number of jobs elsewhere in the local economy. It also supports a number of aviation related businesses which operate on the airport site and on the adjacent Norwich Airport Industrial Estate (NAIE), for example the Aviation Academy.

The council has a landowner interest in the airport site, jointly owning land within the airport boundary with the County Council.
When the council reviews the SAS and carbon reduction plan, it will take into consideration the airport's important role for the local economy, its progress on addressing climate change issues, and legal issues, in assessing implications for the status of the masterplan."

Question 5

Councillor Bogelein to ask the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment the following question:

"I have learnt recently that the new powers to fine statutory idling engines on Castle Meadow are not being used at all. The issue of poor air quality on Castle Meadow has still not been addressed. This is a problem in a small, clearly defined area with a clear behavioural cause and a quite straightforward solution. Why is the council failing to tackle this problem?"

Councillor Maguire, the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment's response:

"I'm not sure that I agree with Cllr Bogelein that the problems described have a straightforward solution; the engine switch off powers have not proved as effective as any of us would hope them to be.
Under the law, before issuing a fixed penalty notice (FPN), the enforcement officer is required to ask a driver of an idling engine to switch it off. Unsurprisingly, no FPNs have been issued as when spoken to every driver complies with the request. The enforcement officer has to witness the infringement personally to be able to issue a FPN, they cannot be issued retrospectively following a report from a member of the public, for example.
Drivers became aware of when civil enforcement officers were in the area and made sure that they had their engines switched off. Given the numbers of staff that are available, it is not possible to have a member of the enforcement team in Castle Meadow all the time.

The real solution to the air quality problem in Castle Meadow, and other areas of the city, is to get the bus and coach operators to invest in cleaner vehicles. Both the city and county councils would be keen to encourage that."

Question 6

Councillor Osborn to ask the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment the following question:

"The Integrated Waste Management Strategic Objectives Document approved by cabinet in February 2014 set targets including:

"To achieve a recycling rate of 50% and to seek to achieve a recycling rate of 60% by 2020"

In 2012, the recycling rate in Norwich was 40.6%. The most recent figures that Norwich's recycling rate is at 38.3%. Can the cabinet member explain why we are not only so far off the target of 60% recycling, but also why recycling rates are worse now than they were eight years ago?"

Councillor Maguire, the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment's response:

"Norwich's recycling performance is a reflection of the national picture. Recycling rates in England increased substantially in the years between 2000 and 2010 and many local authorities subsequently set ambitious 'stretch-targets' for the next decade. Unfortunately recycling rates have flat-lined since then. The average rate for Local Authorities in England was 43% in 2011/12, but has increased to only 43.5% in 2018/19, reaching a high-point of 43.7% in the intervening years.

For Norwich to be consistently recycling in the region of 40% is a significant achievement for an entirely urban local authority. Most of the nation's top recycling performers are predominantly rural areas - such as the East Riding, South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse. In areas with less urban development properties tend to have larger gardens and the predominance of properties with larger gardens, sometimes accompanied by a free garden waste collection service, encourages a very significant tonnage of green waste. Substantial quantities of green waste will always 'skew' the recycling figures. The garden waste collected in Norwich is typically less than 20% of the total recycling tonnage, whereas in less urban locations it can be more than a third by weight. Recycling statistics are based solely on the weight of material collected, therefore urban areas will always appear to be performing less well than areas with a significant tonnage of green waste.

Our neighbouring authority, Broadland, regularly performs much closer to the national average, but this is not surprising given that they have over twice the number of garden waste customers and collect on average three times as much garden waste by weight.

Over the last few years messages about sustainability have had an impact on households, a positive development but one which also impacts on recycling rates – e.g. where consumers are consciously seeking products with less packaging and manufactures are responding to the change in consumer habits. In recognition of this our own corporate performance indicators now show the greater importance of reducing household waste, rather than relying solely on seeking to recycle more. Norwich residents have consistently performed better than those in other Norfolk districts in terms of kg of waste per household and this trend is continuing as the headline rate moves below 400kg per household per year towards the target of 375kg."

Question 7

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

"The council-owned moorings on the eastern bank of the River Wensum between Foundry Bridge and Carrow Bridge are often used illegally by boats which may not meet environmental standards. Two boats have been recovered from the river-bed here in the last month, having, no doubt, leaked pollutants into the river system. In order to provide much-needed city centre housing, reduce anti-social behaviour and generate a revenue stream, I would like to see these moorings developed by the council with permanent houseboats and appropriate ancillary services installed to be rented out at market rates. Would the cabinet member agree to explore installing permanent houseboats?"

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

"Thank you for your question.

The River Wensum Strategy, a multi-agency strategy to revitalise the river corridor, was adopted by the council and its partners in 2018.

The strategy supports the provision of permanent residential moorings on the River Wensum and considers that they could deliver a range of benefits. Permanent houseboat sites with proper on-site facilities could help to bring life back to the river in the form of revenue-generating housing in a pleasant environment, contribute to meeting local housing need, and benefit the local economy.

The Broads Authority is the planning authority for the River Wensum within the city centre up to New Mills, and is also part of the River Wensum Strategy Partnership. The City Council made successful representations to the Broads Authority Local Plan public examination to allow for residential moorings in Norwich, so there is now a policy basis in the adopted Broads Local Plan for provision of such moorings along the Wensum, subject to a number of considerations.

The River Wensum Strategy does not identify specific sites for residential moorings, however there may be a number of opportunities for provision of serviced residential moorings that would benefit from being explored. If provision of residential moorings is progressed it is important that an assessment is made of all potential sites, not just the site between Foundry and Carrow bridges. This would involve development of options and feasibility assessment, and would require a multi-agency approach.

The River Wensum Strategy Board is currently developing a Delivery Plan and as part of this is likely to consider the potential for further investigation of the potential for residential moorings, subject to funding and in light of other priorities."

Question 8

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

"Can I please have an update on the access charter?"

Councillor Davis, the cabinet member for social inclusion's response:

"In a response to a public question at the July 2018 council meeting it was explained that a charter, such as Hull's setting out the council's promise to people with disabilities regarding highways issues, is contingent on an impact assessment having been completed by Norfolk County Council as the highway authority. Councillor Carlo asked for an update in March 2019 and it was explained that the assessment had yet to be completed. We are not aware that the county work is complete and meanwhile staff resource to develop a charter has not been available.

As Councillors will be aware the highways agency agreement with Norfolk County Council will end on 31 March this year. Thereafter this council will have no highway authority responsibilities and direct role over highway improvements in the city. All works that may come forward as part of the Transforming Cities Programme, therefore, will be designed and implemented by Norfolk County Council who will also be responsible for existing highway infrastructure.

In view of this change, an access charter is not something this council can take forward in any meaningful way. Any need will be something for Norfolk County Council to consider."

Question 9
Councillor Schmierer to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:

"I see that over 7000 EU citizens have applied for settled status in Norwich. However, it is estimated that there are roughly 20,000 EU citizens living in Norfolk who are yet to apply - according to 2018/19 government figures. Does

the cabinet member believe that this council is doing enough to publish information about settled status, and overcome any reluctance to apply, partly because of potential language difficulties, or because of uncertainty about the system in particular the lack of any tangible evidence when someone is awarded settled status?"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

"We have put in place a streamlined appointment system at city hall where EU citizens can have all their relevant documentation processed by the council to enable them to get their settlement status established. In case of language difficulties, INTRAN are an integral part of the service. I would urge all EU citizens to contact the council in a timely fashion."

Question 10

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

"'In the midst of a climate emergency and communities struggling under 10 years of austerity, we believe the Western Link Road is simply not justifiable.' Does the cabinet member agree with this statement?"

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

"As I have said when asked this question previously, the south of the city has for many years benefited from the southern bypass, which has removed through traffic (including slow moving HGV's and other vehicles). This traffic now flows freely along the A47 and mostly does not enter the city. This has been a welcome development.

The city council has a duty on behalf of the whole city – north as well as south. The Western Link will deliver benefits for everyone, but especially those who live in the north and west of the city: an area that still experiences traffic similar to that in the south before the southern bypass was built. These citizens deserve the same benefits.

Saying that, we have said all along that city council's support for the Western Link is dependent on a package of other transport investment and mitigation measures being provided. Those measures need to increase walking, cycling and the use of public transport as well as improving air quality and encouraging inclusive growth and economic development.

Many claims are being made about the effects that the Western Link will have on the environment and climate change, much of which is based upon conjecture. I would prefer to wait until the full analysis and modelling results, of all the impacts that of the creation of the new link road will have, are published and then an informed decision can be made. If at that stage the planned mitigation measures do not offset the potential environmental harm of the road; then will be the time for the city council to reconsider its support for the Western Link"

Question 11

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

"As part of our ongoing leadership in mitigating the effects of climate change, would the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth consider options around providing an appropriate season ticket for those councillors who surrender their car park pass?

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

"I have been advised that our current approach already allows councillors to claim for the costs of using public transport to attend meetings, and this includes the ability to buy a multi-trip ticket provided these are only used for council business. It wouldn't be possible to provide season tickets that could be used when not on council business."

Question 12

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

"Many councillors will be aware of the benefits of the 'Housing First' approach that offers permanent, affordable housing as quickly as possible for those experiencing homelessness, and then provides the supportive services and connections to the community-based support people need to keep their housing and avoid returning to homelessness. This council already has a powerful record in substantially investing and prioritising homelessness services but I would be grateful for the comments of the cabinet member for social housing as to whether this might be something which could be explored further within the city?"

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

"Norwich city centre, like many urban centres, faces a number of complex issues, driven by austerity, welfare reform and cuts to public services often overlaid by issues of drug and alcohol dependency. Our role is to support the city in the best way we can with the resources we have available and our 'Tackling rough sleeping strategy' has identified the development of a Housing First programme as a priority action.

Subsequently, through funding from the 'rough sleeping innovation fund', a Housing First project has been successfully launched, with the council providing suitable properties and Pathways Norwich co-ordinating services around the client, including wrap-around support tailored to the needs of each individual.

Each client will have an existing local connection to Norwich and a full risk assessment is carried out prior to referral. While careful consideration needs

to be given to ensure balance between the needs of the client and of the community which they may be moving into, I am happy to report that to date we have moved nine Housing First clients off the streets and into council flats, bypassing traditional hostel routes which, for various reasons, may not be appropriate for the client. Numbers are expected to increase further as other housing partners are now joining the scheme and offering their accommodation to Housing First client"

Question 13

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

"Several constituents have raised concerns over the spread of the Covid-19 virus. I am aware of the active steps Norwich City Council is taking, as part of its emergency planning function, but also acutely mindful that local authorities responsible for public health services have seen their budgets cut by £1 billion in real terms over recent years. The government have still not announced the public health allocations for the next financial year starting next month. This must be hampering the ability of local Directors of Public Health to plan effectively to respond to Covid-19. Will the cabinet member for health and wellbeing join me in demanding that the Secretary of State for Health adequately supports and funds local government to discharge its important role in tackling this issue?"

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

""At a critical time for the UK it is essential that central government follows through on its words by providing adequate funding and support for local government to play its key role in tackling Covid-19. Norwich City Council, as with all councils, is ready to play its part. However, to do so we must receive the funding which is desperately needed.

Funding alone though will not solve this situation. This government must take action to improve the wretched situation our residents currently have to experience through Universal Credit. If people have to self-isolate and cannot earn money to pay for their heating, their food or their rent, they will only be penalised further if they end up on Universal Credit and are forced to wait for 5 weeks to receive benefits they are legally entitled to. This will result in people being forced to take out loans, increased hunger and homelessness.
Dame Louise Casey recently neatly encapsulated the problems which are being exacerbated through the Covid-19 crisis when she stated, "What this virus is doing is throwing a spotlight I think on whether we as a nation want to help people less fortunate than ourselves and actually it puts a spotlight on how precarious our social welfare system is.

The government must suspend face-to-face assessments of sickness and disability welfare payments to protect vulnerable claimants, without penalising them.

In the recent budget, the Chancellor stated that the NHS would get "whatever resources it needs to cope with coronavirus". There needs to be a similar commitment to local authorities in relation to social care – particularly due to the fact that older people and those with long-term health conditions are at significant risk from the virus. Action must be taken to ensure that the most vulnerable in our society are not continued to be let down as they have been since 2010. One would hope that this should be the start of local government, across all of the UK, receiving the required funding levels which have been dramatically cut since the Coalition government came to power.

The Prime Minister, the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Health must provide the funding, clarity and details without delay to enable local government to tackle this issue."

Question 14

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

"I was very pleased to see the city council not only celebrate the 100th anniversary of council housing with the amazing success of developments such as Goldsmith Street, but also planting 100 new trees across the city. Many parts of Norwich have benefited from this but can the cabinet member update council on where these new trees are and the difference they are hoping to make to further enhancing our local environment?"

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

"The council has had a tree planting programme for many years and it will continue to plant trees within its assets to benefits the city, the residents and its visitors.

The council in fact planted 135 trees across the city this year, with 100 of those being planted in housing communal areas to celebrate the 100th anniversary of council housing.

The trees are planted in 9 wards across the city at 25 different locations, to improve not only the local environment for our tenants but, also the wider wellbeing of the city.

Trees do indeed provide many benefits to people and the communities they live in.

It is recognised that trees provide social, environmental and economic benefits. Over time as the trees grow so will the benefits.
The trees will have a positive impact on people's mental health and wellbeing and create focal points, and in some cases landmarks around which children play games. All this helps to give people a sense of 'place' and a greater sense of place leads to people having an increased pride in their local area. This in turn can also lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviour.

For out tenants the trees will provide shade in the summer, keeping areas cooler and they will contribute to the reduction of the 'urban heat island effect' of the city. During wetter times they will reduce the rate at which rainfall reaches the ground, reducing the effect of localised flooding and soil erosion. The trees will also absorb and deflect sound to help reduce the impact of noise on people's lives; as well as improving local air quality through their ability to absorb pollutants, CO2 and producing oxygen.

As well as benefiting the residents of a place, the trees will also help improve the biodiversity of an area, providing a new habitat or food source for some of the city's 'wilder' inhabitants."

Question 15

Councillor Sue Sands to ask the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth the following question

"As a city councillor who feels strongly about the appalling rise in homelessness since 2010 in both Norwich and across the United Kingdom, I welcomed the successful planning application by St Martin's Housing to create a new 'Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub'. I was therefore particularly concerned to read that due to legal challenge the delivery of the application could not commence leading to the chief executive of St. Martin's claiming that some of the most vulnerable people have missed support over the winter. It deeply worries me to think that some of our most vulnerable citizens experienced the winter we have seen without the resources or security this initiative and facility could have offered. With this in mind, can the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth comment on whether or when this application can move forward?"

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

"As you are aware planning applications committee approved the applications for the somewhere safe to stay hub on Recorder Road on 10 October. This following extensive consultation about the proposal and exhaustive debate at the committee.

Shortly following the issue of the decision we received notification of a legal challenge to the decision. The first stage in the legal challenge process is for the claimant to seek leave for judicial review. This was contested by the council and the judgement reached on 26 February. I'm pleased to report that the council was successful in resisting the claim for judicial review with the judge concluding that each of the grounds of challenge were unarguable for the reasons set out in the council's case.

I'm also pleased to report that the timescale for this decision to be appealed has now lapsed with no such appeal having been lodged so the planning consent issued by the council stands. It will be down to St Martin's Housing as to whether they choose to implement the consent but my understanding is

they are looking to bring this much needed facility forward over the coming months."

Question 16

Councillor Peek to ask the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment the following question:

"The shooting in West End Park, in July 2018, shocked the community in my ward and was declared a critical incident by the Chief Constable. Since then significant multi-agency work has been invested to improve community safety but also enhance the park itself. I was therefore very pleased to support the excellent work of city council officers and the Wensum Residents Association Parks (WRAP) to develop their application for funding significant improvements. This was recently announced as successful, providing £25,000 towards the park, which will be combined with another £22,000 from the City Council. This will enable worthwhile improvements to be made across the park. Will the cabinet member join me in thanking both officers and the fantastic WRAP group and comment on the improvements which shall commence and timeframe in which they will be delivered?"

Councillor Maguire, the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment's response:

"Thank you, Councillor Peek for your question which is very timely. I am sure everyone in this chamber was shocked by the incident last year and will agree that a great deal of work is in progress by this council working with partners as well as residents. This includes the launching of the safer neighbourhoods work, which has its own dedicated coordinator; joint work with the police to ensure we share information and work jointly in problematical areas as well as work with residents to encourage and help them take control of their neighbourhood.

The work being undertaken with Wensum Residents Association is another great example of this activity, where joint working with the residents will result in considerable benefits to the neighbourhood as well as West End Park.
The award of £25,000 external funding which will be combined with a further £22,000 of external funding awarded to the council for improvements to parks.
The improvements that are planned include:

- **Restoring parts of the footpath** that have become worn and damaged to improve accessibility for the residents of the sheltered housing complex, people with disabilities and parents with prams
- **Improve the current park lighting by upgrading to LED lights** to make people feel safer at night - residents cut through the gardens from other areas to access the health centre and other public amenities

- **Design and install an information board** to inform residents and visitors of the gardens biodiversity, sensory and herb plantation. Boards to include the name of the gardens

- The site was planted with trees during the 1970's, the trees have now matured giving the site a woodland feel that is dominated by semi to maturing Alder trees. Part of the improvements will be to **remove some of these alder trees** (approx. 10-15%) and **coppice some of the hazel** to open up the canopy to allow more light into the space and ground flora

- Provide a peaceful seating area that blends into the woodland. Currently there are 6 x benches within this part of the open space that are in a state of disrepair and are no longer useable. The funds from this grant will be used to **purchase 6 natural woodland hardwood benches** that will blend better into the improved environment

- The site has a single piece of play equipment consisting of a toddlers swing situated within a sand pit. The funds will help contribute to the cost of **removing and disposing of the swing** including removal of the sand. The sand will be **replaced with bark and a hardwood woodland / metal sculpture** erected in its place

- There are some raised planters that are retained using old railway style sleepers that are coming to the end of their life (almost 50 years old). The project will replace these and install **recycled plastic sleepers for increased longevity**

- Replanting of the raised beds with an **herb garden and sensory garden** that the local residents and school can utilise.

- There are a number of brick raised beds that will remain but will be planted up as a sensory garden with **cottage style planting, ornamental grasses and bulbs** to engage ones senses of sight, smell, touch, taste and sound.

- As part of the refurbishment the project will **provide both bird and bat boxes along with some bird feeders that WRAP will ensure are topped up**.

- The project will make provisions for a **book swap library**, this has proved successful in other areas of Norwich a prime example is Old Library Wood in Thorpe Hamlet

- Plantation of **woodland bulbs and wildflowers** under the trees

- **Widening of entrance to Waddington Court** to improve the sightlines of the park and link up to the houses in this area. Removal of shrub and installation of wooden bollards to prevent vehicle access.

A first meeting to start to plan the design options has recently taken place and these will be discussed and agreed with the WRAP group and an opportunity for the wider community to comment will be provided. A timetable for the implementation of the works has yet to be finalised. The aim being to start on site as early as possible and for works to be completed by December 2020 as planting schemes may need to wait until the autumn to be completed.

This is a really exciting project and builds upon the good work to support residents to enable them to get involved and change their local green space into a 'place' rather than just a space. This work builds further on the success achieved working with an increasing number of groups that are helping to look after the city's open spaces."

Question 17

Councillor McCartney-Gray to ask the cabinet member for health and wellbeing the following question:

"We are lucky as a city to have a great range of leisure and sporting facilities which have been built up and maintained over many years. Several of my constituents use the excellent Riverside Leisure Centre on Wherry Road and have commented to me regarding the many positives achieved through the new investment of £100,000 in facilities. Can the cabinet member for health and wellbeing comment on the upgrades achieved and the difference this will make for users?"

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

"In the last 18 months Places Leisure who operate Riverside Leisure Centre have invested in excess of £190,000 with the dryside changing rooms undergoing a total refurbished in addition to the afore mentioned gym and dance studio. The changing rooms were made more accessible with additional space created to make it easier to move around.

The Dance Studio has been redecorated with LED lighting added, it has a new sound system and all lights have been made dimmable and new equipment has been added. This allows the studio to be a more flexible space and accommodate a greater variety of activities as well as classes. The public can now benefit from additional classes such as yoga, Pilates and HIIT as well as specialist classes such as cardiac rehab. The space is also much improved for the monthly Dementia Café.

The gym has undergone a full refurbishment including redecoration new flooring which has now incorporated an AstroTurf runway. New functional equipment has been added to offer a great variety of exercises. The gym is now more spacious allowing for great accessibility for those with disabilities. Although these improvements have been beneficial to all users, they have specifically increased the confidence of people on the GP referral scheme who can now do functional exercises relevant to their daily life, which increase recovery time.

The upgrades have come at no cost to the users, with prices being maintained and Places Leisure continuing to help provide an affordable community leisure facility. At a time when other councils are having to reduce their provision of leisure services, I am proud that we are able to maintain and improve our facilities whilst at the same time increasing accessibility for all of our residents."

Question 18

Councillor Mike Sands to ask the cabinet member for resources the following question:

"There has been much discussion about the governments so called 'Fair Funding' review. Research from the Local Government Association has revealed that this funding review would see hundreds of millions of pounds of social care funding cut from local authorities like Stoke-on-Trent and Rotherham, and channelled towards shire county councils including Surrey and Buckinghamshire. The ten most deprived local authorities in England will face a 13% cut on average, whilst the wealthiest will see their budgets grow on average by 13%. Given the deprivation contained within our city will the cabinet member for resources comment on how this council will respond to the review and advocate for it to be a truly fair for this city?"

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources' response:

"The cuts in Government Revenue Support Grant have affected Norwich City Council, between 2013 and 2020 the level of Government Revenue Support Grant has been cut from £7.86 Million to just £0.22 Million. The cuts in Local Government funding has fallen much more heavily upon Labour councils rather than Tory Councils and in the Government's proposed fairer funding review, deprivation will no longer be a factor but rurality will take its place shifting yet more resources from Labour towns and cities to rural Tory district councils. To quote from the Local Government Association First magazine, "*Labour controlled councils would lose a total of £327 million, while Tory councils would gain £298 million*".

A little over a year ago, the present Chancellor, then a junior minister in the Department of Housing and Local Government meet in Parliament with District Council Finance spokespeople including myself. Labour Councillors made it very clear how damaging the Government's proposed 'fair funding formula' would be to Local Government in our Cities and Towns.

It is precisely those 'Red Wall' seats won by the Tories at the last General Election, which have been so hard it by the cuts in funding to Local Government over the last decade and it is very much in those areas that the 'fairer funding review' would produce further cuts in important local services.
I should state that not all urban areas with levels of high poverty are in the north. Just as in Norwich so there are areas in the South of England such as Plymouth, Thanet and Hastings (where I was once a Councillor) and other towns.

However it is written that there is a disrupt within Government as to wisdom of the 'fairer funding formula' given the need to retain support in the now Tory 'Red Wall' seats, if this is so, I welcome it."

Question 19
Councillor Huntley to ask the leader of the council the following question:

"Representing a ward which contains many low paid workers and those working in the 'gig economy' I was interested to hear the Chancellor comment that he is "actively looking at" changes to sick pay for lower paid workers in the Budget last week. An estimated 2 million employees are currently ineligible for Statutory Sick Pay (SSP), which is available to those earning at least £118 a week. The self-employed and gig workers are not entitled to any support if they stay away from work because of illness. Given the threat this poses to workers being able to safely take time off, will the leader support the TUC campaign to introduce an emergency support package for workers affected by the virus, including emergency legislation to ensure Statutory Sick Pay coverage for all workers from the first day of sickness, regardless of how much they earn, an increase in the amount of sick pay to the equivalent of the National Living Wage, a requirement that those asked by their employer to self-isolate on public health grounds remain on full pay and an emergency fund to assist employers with the cost and to cover workers not currently eligible for Statutory Sick Pay?"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

"I fully endorse the TUC's campaign and we will be making our own representations to the relevant government department."

Question 20
Councillor Oliver to ask the leader of the council the following question:

"I was pleased to see Councillor Waters and other councillors give their support to Konectbus drivers protesting at Norwich Bus Station against poor working conditions. This sees drivers working 14-hour days and only getting a break of 30 minutes after five and a half hours work. I believe that hardworking bus drivers provide an essential service to many of my constituents and it is time for Konectbus to respect drivers and address the problems of fatigue and exhaustion. Given the importance of public transport in this city and interest in the bus service in particular to many in this council, will the leader write to the managing director of Konectbus and ask him to meet both union representatives and management to pursue a positive outcome?"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

"We have already had conversations with union representatives with further planned and we will be writing to management to meet with unions to address the concerns that have triggered the actions by Unite."

APPENDIX B

Lord Mayor's announcements 17 March 2020
Events and meetings since the last Council meeting 25 February 2020

February 2020

(3) Attended the Rotary Technology Tournament
(28) Attended the Norwich School senior school play
(29) Attended the Norwich Welsh Society annual lunch

March 2020

(4) Attended Access to Justice Law event
(5) Attended the Jarrold 250 Book launch
(9) Attended the Commonwealth flag raising
(9) Attended the Marriage of Figaro performance
(10) Attended the St Augustine Gateway Trust Annual General Meeting
(11) Attended the opening of 16 Elm Hill
(11) Presented a certificate to Debut restaurant City College
(11) Attended 80 year celebration of Citizens Advice
(11) Attended the Norfolk and Norwich Rouen Friendship Association Annual General Meeting
(12) Attended the Dare to speak event
(13) Interviewed by BBC Radio Norfolk
(14) Attended the Norwich City Football Club match
(15) Attended the Justice Service
(16) Attended the Round Table annual dinner