



NORWICH
City Council

Cabinet

18 October 2023

Questions to cabinet members

Question 1

Councillor Hoechner to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety the following question:

“A resident who has been affected by anti-social spitting near their house has been told by the police that this was an issue for the council to deal with, but the information provided by the Council is that it doesn’t currently hold powers for dealing with anti-social spitting. Will the cabinet member commit to looking into possibilities for adopting a byelaw tackling anti-social spitting, as for example the London Borough of Enfield has done?”

Councillor Jones, the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety’s response:

“I agree that spitting in public – whether that be directed at a person or not – is wholly unpleasant and not something anyone would wish to witness. Spitting directed at a person is classed as assault, could and should be dealt with by the police. Following Covid, I believe we are far more conscious of this now. The issue of spitting not directed at a person is not a simple one to resolve and an initial scan of how other areas attempt to deal with it suggests there are a variety of ways that it may be tackled - each with its own complications. I will instruct council officers to investigate how other areas approach the issue with a particular focus on the legal issues, the practicality of enforcement and resource implications”

Question 2

Councillor Catt to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety the following question:

“While numbers of residents in temporary accommodation is lower than other comparative councils, the bill to the taxpayer for this service has increased year-on-year for five years (discounting an outlier in 2020-21 as a result of the ‘Everybody In’ initiative during the pandemic), representing a 41% increase from 2019 to 2023. Lots of councils are investing in innovative solutions in the long term to improve standards while reducing the cost of this critically important service. A good example of this is in altering allocation rules to allow tenants to retain priority banding when accepting a private-sector offer, which has been seen to reduce the need for use of BnB’s in large councils like Manchester. While the average time spent in temporary accommodation is currently at the legal limit and some families recently being moved out as far as Ipswich, will the cabinet member investigate solutions such as these?”

Councillor Jones, the deputy leader and cabinet member for housing and community safety’s response:

“We continue to intensively manage our use of temporary accommodation and the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation remains consistently under target, a remarkable achievement for a city of our size with the pressures we face.

We are working hard to improve the availability of temporary accommodation in our area to reduce the disruption to homeless households caused by placements outside of our area. We are in regular communication with the Department of Levelling Up Homes and Communities and other councils with a similar profile to ourselves to discuss best practice and are always open to new ideas that will benefit our residents.”