



NORWICH
City Council

Council
28 January 2020
Questions to cabinet members or chairs of committees

Question 1

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

"I am quite disappointed that I have to ask this question at a full council meeting. However, it has not received an answer through the councillor enquiry system for the last three months, despite a number of follow-ups and reminders.

A while ago, Mancroft and Wensum councillors were briefed about the pilot scheme run at Dolphin Grove and Watson Grove in order to respond to issues around drug dealing and anti-social behaviour and improve safety in the area.

Could the cabinet member please update me with a comprehensive list of all the measures that have been taken, the estimated cost of these measures, what the outcomes of these measures were and how the council assesses the success of each measure and the overall scheme?"

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

"Thank you for the opportunity to explain to the rest of the City, the wonderful work that we are doing in Dolphin and Watson Grove. When we met to discuss this previously, it was because of the activity extending to Russell Street which is in your ward. It is as ever therefore, particularly gratifying that a councillor for one ward is interested in what is happening in another ward particularly given the significant and sustained catalogue of both physical enhancements and tenancy related changes implemented or planned. For future reference, and to save valuable officer time, please always feel free to ask me or another councillor for the ward about which you are interested. You can do this outside the formal setting of full council. You might also consider following the advice made available to all councillors who do not receive a reply within the required timescale, or are unhappy with the response. This includes contacting a more senior officer for advice.

It is unfortunate, that the service area you directed your enquiry to has been subject to significantly reduced capacity due to absences, which is why your

enquiry has not yet been responded to. I appreciate and understand that this will be frustrating to you.

However, the safer neighbourhood's initiative, for which your question refers to, now has had a dedicated coordinator, in post since mid-December, who is currently working up the programme to take this important work forward.

The work in Dolphin and Watson Grove, which started some months ago, has been an ongoing process of engagement with local residents by officers from across the council. In addition, officers have delivered one community activity day in the area and two engagement workshops with residents to discuss the potential options suggested by their neighbours. This engagement will continue, while the programme is rolled out to other areas of Norwich with police and other partners input.

In terms of what has been improved in the Watson and Dolphin Grove area so far, the following has been undertaken:

Safer Neighbourhood Initiative - The Groves - update			
Activity	Status	Spend (actual or estimate)	Budget
Resident engagement activities	Completed	£600	Safer Neighbourhood Initiative – Community Fund (SNICF)
Thinning of brambles and overgrown area in middle of green space	Ongoing – opportunity for further engagement with residents	£600 (est) – clear £400 (est) to grass or plant	Estate Aesthetics (EA) budget - housing
Rebuilding of tree-damaged sheds	Nearing completion	£17,000 (est)	EA budget
Demolishing fire-damaged sheds	Order raised – work to start once agreed new position for bins	£5,000 (est)	EA budget
New blocks number signs and site maps	Block number signs fitted. Site maps being manufactured	£5,000 (est)	EA budget
Cracked	Completed	n/a	General housing

pavements/walkways repairs			repairs contract
Map to promote local amenities	Map produced. New noticeboard being considered	£110	SNICF
Creation of raised beds and community composter to be managed by residents	Follow-up meeting with 2 key residents to be arranged imminently	tbc – awaiting site visit and quote	EA budget
Repainting car parking lines	Done in one area. To be completed across both car parks	Quote to be obtained	EA budget
<p>Specific issues raised about performance against existing contracts for grounds maintenance, refuse collection and maintenance of internal housing areas were followed up at the time but this issue will also be looked at as part of the wider Safer Neighbourhood Initiative work to explore how regular contract work can be focussed in priority areas.</p>			
<p>Potential improvements to lighting (internal and external) and consideration of secure doors entry systems will be looked at within the context of the overall city-wide programmes</p>			
<p>Further engagement with residents will be undertaken to progress some of the issues previously raised that may provide an opportunity for residents to take some ownership of internal communal areas (there are a number of points that it is the tenants responsibility, helping each other with bins etc.)</p> <p>The raised bed and bramble clearance projects will both provide an opportunity to further engage with residents</p>			
<p>CCTV / tenancy management. Eviction and repossession of the most problematic tenancies has taken place. Other tenancy enforcement is ongoing. Introduction of mobile CCTV and opportunity for further coverage is dependent on evidence base which is monitored constantly.</p>			
<p>Evaluation – the framework for evaluation of the SNI work in specific areas and across the programme as a whole is currently being developed</p>			

With the coordinator now in post, the work at this site provides a model that can be used and adapted as required, in other areas of the city. These areas will be chosen using data drawn from the council and police and other agencies, where drug related crime and disorder are high including where there are high incidents of county lines activity.”

Question 2

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

“Over the last decade, Norwich city centre has seen a huge amount of private sector investment in new developments, ranging from blocks of flats for students to new penthouse apartments. There has been a steady conveyor belt of proposals for tall buildings in different parts of the city, with perhaps the most publicised being the mooted 20 storey tower in the middle of the new Anglia Square development. Norwich, though, is not a high rise city. Its skyline with the spires of its many churches, Norwich Cathedral, City Hall, etc. is as iconic as it is beautiful.

Does the cabinet member agree that this council should provide clear design guidance on the location, form and appearance of tall buildings through a supplementary planning document to ensure that they do not overshadow the historic city centre but instead are successfully integrated into the existing environment, skyline and streetscape? An example of a council that has already done this is Leeds”

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

“The council has a robust framework for assessing the design of new development proposals within the city. This has been demonstrated by the successful delivery of a number of high quality developments within the city centre such as the redevelopment of Westlegate Tower and the construction of Pablo Fanque House.

The starting point for any planning decision will be the development plan. More specifically, when it comes to design and impact on the city’s heritage, policies DM3 and DM9 of the Development Management Policies Local Plan are of particular relevance. These policies provide extensive criteria for the assessment of new building design and include criteria commonly found within supplementary planning documents relating to tall buildings which have been adopted in other cities. For example, the local plan already includes details of long views and strategic viewpoints of the city’s skyline which is a common feature of such documents.

In addition, the council has an adopted City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal which provides detailed information relating to the heritage of the city centre and is used extensively in the determination of major new development.

Many tall building supplementary planning documents which have been taken forward by other cities such as Leeds and Birmingham are designed to identify large areas of the city where tall buildings are actively promoted. It is not considered that such an approach would be appropriate within Norwich

which has such a large number and diversity of heritage assets and a city centre with such varied historic character. However, the existing policy framework supported by the City Centre Conservation Area Appraisal provides a solid basis upon which to assess development proposals on individual sites and particularly those relating to tall buildings.

Furthermore, a full review of our existing development management policies is expected to take place following the Regulation 19 consultation of the Greater Norwich Local Plan which is likely to be reached in Spring 2021. Therefore, any review of policy relating to tall buildings would need to be taken forward as part of that review.”

Question 3

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

“A Norwich City Council spokesperson says that the council is having to spend £350,000 on lawyers for the Anglia Square inquiry because the Secretary of State called in the application for his determination. However, the city council received advance notice from Historic England in October 2018 about its intention to refer the case to the Secretary of State if the Planning Applications Committee approved the scheme.

The destruction of the historic Botolph Street community to build Anglia Square, Sovereign House and the flyover in the oldest part of Norwich was a national tragedy from which the area has never recovered. The city council wants to repeat the same error by letting Columbia Threadneedle and Weston Homes redevelop the site for a twenty -storey tower and six blocks of between one and twelve storeys in height wrapped around a total of 1,500 public and private car parking spaces. There are ways of designing a sensitive, viable, high-density, low-rise, low carbon, housing-led mixed-use development on this site; one which would better support north Norwich.

In ignoring the advice of and request from Historic England not to grant approval, how can the public trust Norwich City Council to act as the responsible custodian of Norwich’s heritage assets?”

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

“The city council’s planning committee resolved to grant approval for the Anglia Square development following consideration of a committee report that included a very detailed assessment of the design and heritage implications of the scheme. The thoroughness of this exercise and the insistence that the developer produce extensive information allowing those implications to be assessed demonstrates the council’s deep understanding and concern for Norwich’s heritage assets. The views expressed by Historic England were included in that report, officers discussed them with Historic England staff and they spoke at the planning committee meeting. The views of Historic England were clearly very carefully considered and taken into account in reaching the planning balance.

The council does need to come to its own view on what is best for Norwich and this includes placing weight on issues such housing needs and economic development. It should not be influenced by either the risk of call-in from government or the risk of appeal by a developer. It is not obliged to accept Historic England’s view of what it right for the city or its heritage and sometimes makes decisions that Historic England does not like. Neither the recent construction of Pablo Fanque House, providing student accommodation on All Saints Green opposite John Lewis, and the earlier

redevelopment of Westlegate Tower would have happened had the council been obliged to refuse developments to which Historic England objected. I regard both developments as bringing considerable benefits to Norwich and demonstrating how buildings of height can be successfully introduced into our historic city centre. I am confident that Anglia Square will do likewise if the scheme proceeds following inquiry.”

Question 4

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

“The EDP reported last month that “more than 1,700 mattresses have been dumped in Norwich over the last two years, more than almost anywhere else in the UK”. Does the cabinet member now accept that the “tread softly” approach adopted regarding the issue of fly tipping, which only saw 1 fixed penalty notice specifically for fly-tipping issued in Norwich (compared to 695 issued in Cambridge) in 2018/19, isn’t working and needs to be radically altered?”

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

“Fly-tipping incidents are investigated by officers in citywide services and our colleagues at Norwich Norse Environmental, all of whom have been trained to identify evidence to a standard suitable to support a prosecution if required.

A dumped mattress will rarely, if ever, contain any evidence that can be related back to a person or property. Therefore the investigation of any incident of a single dumped mattress will rely entirely on the incident having been witnessed - and the witness being ready, willing and able to pass accurate information to the authorities in order for an investigation to be launched. Unfortunately, fly-tipping is, by its nature, a secretive affair that is rarely witnessed.

A fixed penalty notice can only be issued against a person where there is evidence to implicate that person, so in the case of a dumped mattress it would require a witness.

The council encourages members of the public to report any incidents they may see. The public’s support, combined with our own data, helps to identify fly-tipping hot-spots and, in some cases, fly-tippers themselves. Where possible and appropriate, a legal sanction can be applied, but the council is yet to see any clear evidence that proves a causal link between the imposition of fixed penalty notices and a reduction in fly-tipping incidents within the district.

When dealing with fly-tipping (and other environmental crimes) this council applies the principle of ACE – advise, confirm, enforce. By this method those who have made mistakes are given advice and information to ensure that they can dispose of their waste safely and legally in future. The consequences of further transgressions are also explained fully. Enforcement is a last resort, principally because the costs and resources required for education and encouragement are significantly less than those required for legal action and significantly more effective for the majority of the issues that arise in Norwich.

The number of fixed penalty notices issued is no guarantee that the financial penalty imposed is actually paid by the perpetrator. Furthermore, when considering the full costs of managing environmental crime, a fixed penalty notice may not actually recover all the expenditure involved in investigating and prosecuting the incident.

Officers from area management and environmental protection teams regularly work together to pro-actively investigate both business and residential waste issues with the primary intention of ensuring that everyone is aware of their responsibilities around the safe disposal of their waste. This is a continual process given that the general population 'churn' in the city is equalled by the turnover of business and staff, meaning that the messages need to be continually repeated to a changing audience.

Unfortunately as most fly-tipping is unlikely to be witnessed, there is often little evidence to link the waste to the person that disposed of it. However, we do work hard at prevention through various measures –

Providing information about the safe and responsible disposal of waste

Encouraging residents to report fly-tipping and provide as much evidence as possible

Quick and effective clearances of waste accumulations so as not to encourage further deposits

The online reporting service links directly to the removal crews and results in numerous compliments to the council from those who report fly-tipping online and are pleased to see it removed within 24 hours, often on the same day as it's reported."

Question 5

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

“I have recently come across a number of examples where important council work is being delayed due to policies or works being, in the council’s words, under review. Examples I have come across include:

- Ely Street play area, where the council is reviewing what options are available.
- The installation of security doors, where I have been told that the council is reviewing the situation but without a timescale.
- Delays in repairs to council-owned sheltered housing due to reviews of the sheltered housing schemes.
- Delays in repairing a communal window – delayed 2 years due to a review of doors and windows.

In response to my councillor enquiry about the process for these reviews, I have been told that “As an elected member you should expect to be given information either for what the timescale is for the review, assuming it is known and any relevant criteria or if it is simply capacity and the specific piece of work is being paused.” However, when I have asked about timescales, for example about the installation of security doors, I was told that no such timescale exists. As a result, residents are left in limbo, not knowing when they will see progress. Nor is it clear what the conditions or objectives of reviews are, or what the evaluation, sign-off and publication process is when they conclude.

Does the cabinet member agree that it would not be simpler and more effective for all involved to establish a process that would make clear the timescales for all reviews, as well as their objectives and what the evaluation, sign-off and publication process is when they conclude, so that residents and members alike can see the progress the council is making or where there is need for change?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“Thank you for your question and there are a number of issues that I can provide some clarity on.

On the broader point I agree that if services are subject to a formal review then councillors should be able to access and be party to the terms of reference for the review, any timescales and the actions (should there be any) arising from any review.

There are other times when ‘repairs’ are ‘under review’ or held in abeyance as there may be plans to carry out programmed works and to do responsive repairs would be a waste of money.

On the specific points you raise:

- **Ely Street play area.** This is space that has fallen into disuse and is in a poor condition and currently secured. Officers are considering options for bringing the space back into use. Any plans will be included in the programme for Estate aesthetics currently being developed and prioritised.
- **The installation of security doors.** The current door access control installation programme is ongoing and will continue in 2020/21 with the installation of new systems to West Pottergate. At present, a majority of the door access system money is being spent on upgrading the existing systems, which will also continue into 2020/21. After 2020/21, we anticipate the delivery of new systems will continue. A list of potential sites for new installations has been created and these are being assessed to create a programme of works over the coming years based upon highest need. This process has only just started as next year's programme has already been determined and falls within an existing contract. However, we are working toward creating a new programme for 2021/22 so we can ensure system design, procurement and any relevant leaseholder consultation is completed well in advance.
- **Repairs to council-owned sheltered housing.** Any part of the sheltered housing service which was under review has not resulted in the delay of repairs or upgrades programmes. Sheltered housing has received significant and continuous programmed investment delivering kitchens, bathrooms, electrics, heating, windows and doors. This will continue going forward maintaining homes to the agree Norwich standard.
- **Delays in repairing a communal window.** Windows and doors continue to be installed across the city HRA portfolio. The priority of programmed investments is targeted toward replacement doors now that nearly all properties benefit from double glazed windows. Some delays to the doors programme have occurred due to the increased requirements for the testing of fire doors since the Grenfell Tower fire in 2017. We are also replacing some of the older double glazed timber windows in a programme that spans the next 4 years. Communal windows have been a lesser priority to date as they do not affect the energy efficiency of individual dwellings, however we do realise they affect the general aesthetics of a block. We will repair communal windows on the existing cyclical programme and replace them where required".

Question 6

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

“Various councils across the country have created incentive schemes to encourage use of reusable nappies over disposable ones, including by providing “starter packs” for residents, a borrowing scheme or even offering a laundry service to wash the nappies efficiently. Councils that have done this include North Hertfordshire, St Albans, Bradford, Dorset, South Gloucestershire, and several London boroughs, among others. Will the cabinet member take forward a similar scheme for Norwich which would help residents send less general waste to landfill?”

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

“The *Norfolk recycles* website includes a dedicated nappies page – “Nappies are rubbish, not recycling”. This is principally aimed at reducing the 400,000 nappies that are put in recycling bins across Norfolk every year. Recycling is hand-sorted, so putting nappies in recycling bins is both unpleasant and unhygienic for the workers at the recycling facility in Costessey.

Alongside the efforts to reduce the incorrect disposal of nappies, *Norfolk recycles* also seeks to encourage parents to try washable, fabric nappies and provides links to a number of local providers.

- Real nappies can be bought second hand and can be used on more than one child
- One child can use up to 5,000 disposal nappies compared to around 20 fabric nappies
- That’s a saving of £500 on the nappy cost for one child

As part of the continual development of waste and recycling services officers are investigating various initiatives for the promotion of reusable nappies. Consideration has been given to the possibility of bulk purchase, allowing savings to be passed on to parents, alongside the promotion of reusable nappies in conjunction with the county council and local reusable nappy groups.

These investigations are at a formative stage and by necessity have to form a part of a coordinated response to a range of waste and recycling issues. Consideration will be given to current schemes in other areas and when a coherent option, or set of options, has been developed these will be provided for discussion with members.

As always, any such developments will have to fit within the cost envelope currently available.”

Question 7

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

“I am concerned that there is a growing amount of sexual harassment in clubs in Norwich, of which the council may be aware. Is the council, or any other organisation, in a position to use any available data to ascertain the true extent of this problem and set about tackling it?”

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

“Sexual harassment is a crime that the police have powers to respond to and the police confirm that they take reports of sexual harassment very seriously and investigate appropriately.

This includes providing support directly from police officers and via referral to partner organisations such as Victim Support, The Sue Lambert Trust and The Harbour Centre (the county sexual assault referral centre), as appropriate.

If the Police, any other responsible authority or any member of the public have ongoing concerns regarding the operation of a licensed premises, that fall into any one of the four licensing objectives, then they can make an application to the licensing authority for the review of that licence at any time.

The licensing objectives are, the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, prevention of public nuisance and protection of children from harm.

The council licensing team work very closely with the Police Licensing unit to ensure that where such ongoing matters come to light, they are tackled jointly and swiftly.

The police do not routinely run reports on sexual harassment reports in Norwich clubs. However, on a weekly and monthly basis The Constabulary do review all incident and crime reports and police analysts look for patterns, trends and prevalence to guide the work they do.”

Question 8

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

“I believe the leader of the council stated that Norwich City Council had declared a climate emergency at the third annual conference of the Norwich 2040 Vision. Could he explain when and how this declaration was made as the only record I can find is of the council actually suspending standing orders in order to water down a Green Party motion which then did not specifically declare a climate emergency.”

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

“Councillor Price, let me refresh your memory. We declared and passed a Climate Emergency motion at full council on 29 January 2019. The original motion was strengthened to acknowledge that the Climate emergency we face is inextricably linked with social and economic emergencies. On the website ‘Climate Emergency UK’ it lists all the local authorities that have declared a ‘Climate Emergency’. The first was Bristol City Council in November 2018. Norwich is listed as one of the very earliest local authority signatories at the beginning of 2019.”

Question 9

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

“The interconnectivity between homelessness, rough sleeping and substance misuse is well documented and I am proud of the active steps this council has taken to develop a wide ranging and holistic array of services in tackling this problem. This is ever more difficult given the substantial cuts to agencies engaged in this vital work. I am aware of efforts to bid for funding to provide a new service of detox and recovery for people experiencing chronic addiction together with additional support workers to deliver it. Can the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment comment on the outcome of this bid and the exciting new service which could be delivered through it?”

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

“The council has made a bid to the government’s Rough Sleeping Initiative Fund for 2020/21 to remodel some existing housing for people who require residential rehabilitation for their substance misuse issue. If the bid is successful, the new service will start in April 2020 to run alongside our “dry” provision. This service will provide a safe pathway for people from the street to recovery from their addictions. The existing dry house has helped provide housing for 19 people from July to December 2019 to help them stay substance free and to rebuild their lives. Since the dry house opened in July 2019, no one has returned to rough sleeping.

In addition to the above, we are looking to provide two posts to specialise in providing outreach to people with substance misuse issues; working alongside Pathways Norwich. The posts will help people specifically who are rough sleepers and need help to overcome their substance misuse issues.

We are expecting to hear the result of the bid in the coming weeks.”

Question 10

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

“Given it is some months since we last discussed the incredible success of Goldsmith Street can the cabinet member for social housing comment on any further recent awards and the ways we are sharing our knowledge from the success achieved for this city council?”

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

“Thank you for your question.

I last updated you on the fabulous success of Goldsmith Street in September when the scheme had just been shortlisted for the RIBA Stirling Prize, the first ever nomination for council housing.

We were delighted that on the evening of 8 October, not only did Goldsmith Street win the main Stirling Prize but also the inaugural Neave Brown award for social housing. This is great timing with councils across the country celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the Addison Act that kick started the great council house building of the 1920’s and 1930’s.

The scheme has continued to win awards since then having also picked up the Norfolk and Norwich design and craftsmanship award in the civic and community category and also the Architects Journal awards for housing over £10m and Mikhail Riches won architect of the year.

On the back of the local, regional and national success of the scheme both myself and officers have been inundated with enquiries from the other local authorities, registered providers and private developers wanting to learn the secret of our success.

We have spoken at various conferences, from as far afield as Swansea, London, and Salford to spread the message of how Goldsmith St was delivered, and some of the lessons learnt, as well as providing briefing papers and answering specific questions about the scheme.

Only last week we gave a presentation to the Eastern Region National Housing Federation chairs network and shortly we are presenting to a Future of Housing conference in London.

It is fantastic that Goldsmith Street may become the catalyst to a wave of fabulous social housing schemes across the country and interesting to see that the government is starting to recognise that design quality and making great places for residents has greater benefits than just providing housing. Mikhail Riches have subsequently gone on to win a number of commissions from other local authorities and I look forward to see them continuing their success.

Goldsmith Street has also received further recent media recognition having been voted No 1 in the top 10 architecture of 2019, was a question on University Challenge and David Mikhail was a guest on the Andrew Marr radio 4 show Start the Week talking about Goldsmith Street.

More important than the awards and the national recognition from other local authorities is the feedback I pick up from tenants with comments such as:-

- 'I moved in November and haven't had the heating on once' (April 2019)
- 'I am the envy of my friends and love having people visit and be bowled over by my beautiful and clever new home'
- 'Someone did care that I liked my home. That means a lot to me'
- 'It's very child friendly on this street and very quiet and I like the fact there are things for the children - a little slide and wooden play things'

I will continue to promote our development work to date not only on this site but previously on Hansard Close, Rayne Park and Bullard Road. I remain incredibly proud that we have lead the way in developing homes that will benefit our tenants and look forward to continuing to shout about our record in the future."

Question 11

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

“I am continually impressed by the efforts of this council to expand and promote the cycle network through the Push the Pedalways initiative. I am aware from talking to constituents that access to affordable bikes, for those who do not want to or cannot afford to own them, can sometimes be a problem. I was therefore very pleased to learn of the new partnership through this council, Transport for Norwich and ‘Beryl bikes’ to deliver 600 new cycles for hire in this city. With this in mind, can the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth comment on the scheme and the opportunities it might provide the city?”

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

“£6.1 million has been awarded from the Department for Transport for the first tranche of the Transforming Cities Fund. From this award, £800,000 will be used to introduce a publically available bike-sharing scheme across the Greater Norwich area.

Following a competitive tender process, a contract to provide and operate the bike share scheme was awarded to Beryl bikes in August 2019. Beryl operate similar schemes in Bournemouth, Hereford and London. The contract between Norfolk County Council and Beryl is initially for five years with the option to extend this if both parties agree.

Since August, officers from Norwich City Council and Norfolk County Council have worked with Beryl bikes to develop the Norwich scheme and identify a network of bays. The scheme will see the implementation of 70 dedicated bike bays and 580 bikes. Of these bikes, 115 will be electrically assisted. These electrically assisted bikes will still require input from the rider but will open up the scheme to a much wider group of users and make longer distances and steeper gradients much more manageable for all. Proving a viable, cost-effective alternative to the car will help improve access to education, employment and services whilst helping to tackle vehicle emissions and congestion along with providing many health and wellbeing benefits.

Of the 70 bays, the majority will be on public highway with some on private land (such as at the University) with agreement from the landowners. In addition, 17 of these bays will feature enhanced design in the form of planters and some will feature seating. Five of the bays will be in the carriageway requiring traffic regulation order: in locations where space is not sufficient on the footway.

The operating model does not require revenue from the councils but is priced for the user to maximise uptake with Beryl managing the day-to-day operations from the scheme income. With options for Pay as You Ride costing

£1 to unlock the bike and then just 5p per minute, the scheme presents truly flexible and cost-effective travel in the city. There will also be bundles available to riders that avoid the £1 unlock fee and simply cost 5p per minute with the electrically assisted bikes costing 10p per minute.

The scheme is due to launch in March, initially with 300 bikes and around half of the full quota of bays with remaining bikes and bays to follow from April to June.

It is an exciting project that will bring many benefits to the city, its residents and visitors.”

Question 12

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

“Representing a ward that contains significant poverty, I am acutely aware of the vital difference our council tax reduction scheme makes for the poorest in our community. I believe that we are one of the very last councils in Britain to offer this scheme, at our discretion. Late last year the University of Birmingham Financial Inclusion Monitoring Briefing Paper 2019 and the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) report identified council tax debt as particularly problematic. There seems little doubt that changes to council tax support have increased the rate of non-payment. Analysis by the IFS on local council tax support schemes shows that reducing council tax support entitlement increases the probability of council tax arrears by half, and this is almost all down to defaults from households who would previously have received full council tax relief. The IFS found that many low-income households, when faced with having to pay a proportion of council tax for the first time, are opting not to pay it and are prioritising other household debts, despite the potentially adverse consequences of council tax non-payment. Given this evidence, can the cabinet member for social inclusion comment on the importance this city council scheme makes to our overall financial inclusion strategy and the difference it delivers for those least well off in our community?”

Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion:

“I am proud that Norwich City Council can still offer a 100% scheme to protect and support the most vulnerable in our community. This has gone some way to mitigate the ongoing impact of welfare reform.

The Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme undergoes an annual review with officers, the cross-party member working group and stakeholders, where consideration is given to the effectiveness and equality of the scheme, as well as the opportunity to propose enhancements.

All residents on a low income can claim a reduction in their council tax liability, based on their domestic and financial circumstances and the same maximum discount is applied to all resident and client groups. The proposed introduction of an income tolerance rule will reduce the need for customers to revise their repayment arrangements, thereby assisting household budgeting.

The proposed changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme will not disadvantage any resident or client group. In fact, the continuation of the Scheme along with proposed changes is intended to be beneficial to all groups and residents”

Question 13

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

“At a time when nationally investment in parks and open spaces is declining, I was proud to see, once again, our historic Eaton Park receive Green Flag status. Can the cabinet member for health and wellbeing comment on the investment and effort achieved, working with the successful Friends Group, to ensure this great historic Norwich public park continues to go from strength to strength?”

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

“I would like to thank Councillor Maxwell for her timely question.

Like her, I too was extremely pleased to see that despite the financial climate faced by this council following 10 years of austerity, Eaton Park not only retained Green Flag status but that assessment scores have improved year on year.

Eaton Park has now reached the highest score band possible this year. This is something that I am sure council will be very proud of.

This achievement has not been realised by the council alone. It is a reflection of the hard work and effort put in by officers from across the council, the friends of Eaton Park who play an extremely important role, and colleagues in our joint venture, Norwich Norse Environmental, who have worked collaboratively to improve things in the park and also for visitors.

All those involved quite rightly take great pride in their achievement.

There are also many other volunteers and groups who provide activities all of which contribute to people’s enjoyment of the park and the Green Flag Award.

Over the last two years the council has invested £90,000 as part of a path upgrade programme and this year upgraded the depot site which is now much improved practically and visually and at the same time took measures to protect the trees on the access road from being ‘strangled’ due to parking compaction.

I would like to thank the Friends of Eaton Park for their passion and commitment, on a voluntary basis, working with the council and Norwich Norse Environmental to help make Eaton Park what it is today, a high-quality park, befitting of its recognition as a park of national importance.

The Friends of Eaton Park, working with the council, have made a major contribution to the upkeep of the park and its enjoyment by visitors. Their achievements in the past 24 months are incredible.

They have been successful in obtaining £9,500 to provide a new petanque terrain and the use of the park as a hub for community bike rides later in 2020. They have supported the use of the park by local schools, providing young children with an opportunity to learn about and care for their local park.

A wide range of activities are also organised and delivered directly by them or with support from partners including; guided walks, roof top tours, an annual carol concert which attracts in excess of 400 people and in 2019 they started the 'Great Get Together' aimed at getting the community together which was attended by 200 people.

The friends also get hands on themselves. They have had training from TCV and the Norwich Fringe Project to enable them to run their own volunteer tasks safely. Volunteer activities have increased to twice a month all year round and for some tasks they work in collaboration with Norwich Norse Environmental. They developed and now manage a wildflower meadow and a young orchard.

The council encourages the involvement of the community in its open spaces and is currently working with a number of new groups, in the hope that these groups will develop and work with the council to deliver the positive outcomes achieved by the Friends of Eaton Park.

I am pleased that this year Waterloo Park will also be submitted for a Green Flag Award along with a submission from the Mousehold Heath Conservators for Mousehold Heath.

I hope that later in the year we will have three Green Flag Awards to recognise these wonderful spaces in this fine city."

Question 14

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

“I was saddened to see the tennis pavilion at Heigham Park severely damaged by fire late last year. As part of the wider hopes to see this tennis ground protected and made more accessible for users, can the cabinet member for health and wellbeing comment on the steps that will be taken to restore this iconic feature of the park?”

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

“Thank you for your question, I was also saddened to see footage of the fire and the resulting loss of the pavilion.

As council will know, Heigham Park is one of the city’s main parks laid out in the 1920s and 1930s by the council.

The matter is being dealt with by the police and officers are supporting them in bringing the perpetrators to justice. The pavilion has been severely damaged by the fire and investigations have found that it is structurally unsound and sadly will have to be deconstructed and rebuilt.

Any materials suitable for including in the rebuild will be retained however, due to the extent of the damage, what can be reused is limited.

The pavilion will be surveyed and drawings made before this happens to inform the rebuild work. The possibility of reducing the risk of fire to the thatch will be explored, or an alternative appropriate roofing material used.

The loss of the pavilion is a tragic one to one of the city’s gems and I look forward to it being restored to its former glory as soon as possible.

It is extremely sad that this has occurred and the council needs to be as vigilant as it can be, working closely with the police as well friends of groups (where they are established) and park users to prevent vandalism and damage from occurring in all of our parks so they are available to be enjoyed by the residents of our city.

Despite continued cuts to the council’s funding from the coalition and successive Conservative governments, we will continue to promote and increase the use of our parks and open spaces by residents year-round, this will contribute to increased monitoring by users and reduce the likelihood of vandalism and damage from taking place.”

Question 15

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

“As the impact of enhanced right to buy continues to ever deplete our council housing stock and reduce the opportunity for my constituents to have access to affordable, secure and socially rented housing, the success of the city council LetNCC scheme remains a welcome and important alternative. A few years ago, I recall the 1,000th tenant being successfully housed through this scheme whereby a landlord hands over their property and the city council places a tenant from our housing list into it and then supports the tenancy. Given the need for more housing choice can the cabinet member for social housing comment on the success of the scheme and encourage responsible Norwich property owners to take part?”

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

“The Council’s LET NCC team currently manage 281 properties and these properties vary from bedsit accommodation to 4 bed houses to enable people who are in housing need and may be unable to obtain social or private rented accommodation, a sustainable housing solution. The scheme is now heading toward housing its 1400th tenant with total occupants housed at around 3000.

The scheme was awarded funding from a Government’s Private Rented Sector fund in 2019 to bolster the scheme and offer landlords a financial incentive to rent through the scheme. This has resulted in 24 new properties being signed up since March 2019 with a further five properties in the pipeline.

To publicise the scheme to a wider audience there have been two adverts in the Norwich Citizen magazine in 2019 with quotes from existing landlords about their positive experience of letting through the scheme. In December 2019 there was an advert and front page coverage in “The Triangle” magazine which is delivered to a number of properties and businesses in the Norwich area. The team are also working with internal services such as council tax to try and target empty properties to see if these could be let within the scheme.

24 existing tenants have been assisted to “move-on” into settled accommodation in the last 12 months which has in turn freed up their accommodation to offer back to people on the waiting list. In addition over the same period there have been 48 new tenancies housing 85 people as part of these households.

The team also continues to work with county council to provide accommodation for families arriving in Norfolk through the Syrian vulnerable persons resettlement programme.”

Question 16

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

“Last November, the Evening News graphically reported the scale of fly tipping in Norwich following disposal fee increases by Norfolk County Council. Representing a ward where this issue has become ever more acute and visible will the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment repeat our calls to Norfolk County Council to review their charging policy to better encourage the safe disposal of waste and consequent reduction in fly-tipping.”

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

“Fly-tipping is a criminal offence and this premeditated illegal disposal of waste is not an act that is influenced by the reasonable charges imposed by local authorities. Previous changes to charges and opening times at recycling centres have not shown an increase in illegally disposed waste and there is no evidence nationally to show that charges for the disposal of waste increase fly-tipping. The data available shows that there is no consistent link between the trends of incident numbers and changes to local authority waste services and over the last three years the incident numbers in Norwich have remained broadly constant. The majority of fly-tipping is actually of items that can be collected at kerbside in the city or accepted free of charge at recycling centres.

In common with other district, borough and city councils, Norwich imposes reasonable charges on the collection of some waste, such as garden waste and bulky items. This is in order to recover some of the costs associated with operating a waste collection service. It is equally reasonable for the county council to seek to recover some of the substantial cost of waste disposal – costs which are a burden on all council tax payers throughout Norfolk.

As well as being a prudent measure, the imposition of reasonable charges can also help to focus the public’s attention on the costs of waste disposal and to recognise that these costs arise, in some part, because of the actions of people generating their own waste in their daily lives.

Officers will continue to work with county council colleagues to consider the ‘best-fit’ of waste collection and disposal policies in order to meet the increasing demands for environmental improvement and sustainability. As this council pursues the aims of the Norwich 2040 City Vision we all have to recognise the requirement to limit, as much as is reasonably possible, the amounts of waste we produce. The waste we do produce must then be disposed of responsibly, something which is easier in Norwich than anywhere else in the county due to our comprehensive kerbside recycling service.”

Please note that the following questions are second questions from members and will only be taken if the time taken by questions has not exceeded thirty minutes. This is in line with paragraph 39 of appendix 1 of the council's constitution.

Question 17

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

"I was proud to participate in the events marking Car Free Day in Norwich on 22 September 2019, and subsequently to learn that the council will close roads on Car Free Day in 2020. In order to ensure that future Car Free Days have maximum impact, could the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth confirm what targets will be set and how the Council will measure success?"

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

"Thank you for your question. I am pleased to inform you that we wish to continue the success of the Norwich Car Free Day 2019 and work with the community. Norwich was the first council in the country to create a pedestrianised street when in 1967, London Street was closed to traffic. Today much of our city centre is pedestrianised, with the impressive Westlegate scheme the most significant recent closure. The council has also attracted significant and substantial funding in recent years to improve cycle networks in the city.

To promote the 2019 Car Free Day, we placed an article in the summer edition of the Citizen magazine, which was delivered to 70,000 households in the city, and our social media engagement reached 57,010 people and our website link received 1,410 views. Consequently, there were seven road closures and a publically organised street event to recognise Car Free Day last year.

The city council's communications, events, community enabling and environment teams will continue to work with partners to provide support, promote and initiate relevant action, and appraise what can be done this year. Obviously, the city council will no longer be the highways authority by the time the next car free day is with us but as soon as we have firmed up plans, we will of course share them with members.

Question 18

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

“Electronics Watch is an international organisation which allows public buyers to ensure social responsibility in their public supply chains. Affiliates to Electronics Watch incorporate the Electronics Watch Contract Conditions or equivalent clauses in their ICT hardware contracts, thereby participating in the struggle against precarious employment and unhealthy environments for workers. Will the cabinet member consider signing the council up to this scheme to ensure respect for human rights and sustainability in its purchasing of IT equipment, when the Procurement Strategy is rewritten in 2020?

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources’ response:

“Yes consideration will be given to the inclusion of the Electronics Watch Contract Conditions principles into the Procurement Strategy when rewritten in 2020.”