NORWICH City Council

MINUTES

Council

19:30 to 22:11 **21 June 2022**

Present:	Councillor Maguire (Lord Mayor), Ackroyd, Bogelein, Brociek-Coulton, Carlo, Champion, Driver, Fulton-McAlister (E), Fulton-McAlister (M), Giles, Grahame, Harris, Haynes, Huntley, Kendrick, Kidman, Lubbock, Oliver, Osborn, Peek, Sands (M), Sands (S), Schmierer, Stonard and Waters
Apologies:	Councillors Button, Catt, Davis, Everett, Galvin, Hampton, Padda, Price, Stutely, Thomas (Va), Thomas (Vi), Wright and Young

1. Lord Mayor's Announcements

The Lord Mayor said that he and the Sheriff had attended the City Service which had processed from City Hall to Norwich Cathedral showing the city's history. He thanked all of the groups that had taken part in the service. The Lord Mayor had also attended a service at the Norwich synagogue.

2. Declarations of interests

Councillor Bogelein declared a pecuniary interest in item 7(a), Motion on the cost of living crisis, and would leave the meeting for the debate and vote on this item.

3. Public questions/petitions

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

The first public question was from Ms Laura Landamore.

Ms Landamore asked the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:

> "Residents have been told by the City Council to remove chairs, plants or other items from the balcony outside their front door. I've spoken to postal workers, a fire and safety officer and a police officer, and no-one saw what was on my balcony as a health and safety or access issue. Those that own their property, like me, understand that ownership stops at the front door, but we believe it's fair, reasonable and justified for the well-being of citizens, to have certain items important to us, and our well-being, on the balconies. People with mental health and anxiety find items on their balcony a comfort

> and joy to them when they sit outside. Seeing as other authorities see no health, safety or access issues, don't you think it's fair, reasonable and justified of you as a City Council to allow us certain items for our well-being on the balcony?"

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

> "The safe management of communal areas falls under The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The order has been designed to keep residents in buildings of multiple occupancy safe. Under the order, local authorities have a duty to keep communal areas free of hazard or hindrance.
>
> A safe limit by of what can go in communal areas was agreed with the Norfolk Fire Service and Rescue – this is one plant pot, one door mat, and one small ornament in low rise communal areas.
>
> The presence of additional items in the communal area can present a hazard, especially in the event of an emergency, and when access is required by the emergency services.
>
> It is also essential that we keep communal areas free of hazard to residents and visitors who may be visually impaired, or those that use a wheelchair or walking aid."

In response to Ms Landamore's supplementary question Councillor Harris said that she sympathised with flat owners and leaseholders, but balconies were not private spaces. The council had carefully considered the decision to allow each flat balcony a potted plant, one ornament and one doormat. This was similar across other local authority areas. The cabinet member encouraged residents to use local community green spaces or one of the parks across Norwich.

The second question was from Mr Liam Calvert.

Mr Calvert asked the cabinet member for resources the following question:

> "When I venture outside of Norwich to places like Old Catton, Sprowston, Costessy and Thorpe St Andrew I'm always amazed by the sense of community and the quality of local facilities such as recreation grounds and halls available to all. When I ask local people they tell me it's because they have a parish council that allows them to respond to local needs and take decisions at a local level.
>
> The vast majority of people in Norfolk are represented and well served by parish councils. Will this council commit to supporting Norwich residents in areas where there is a desire for the creation of parish councils by using its powers granted by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007?"

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources gave the following response:

> "I would point that many of the local parks and services provided in Norwich are as good if not better than those in the suburbs of our city. Furthermore, many parks have been awarded prestigious Green Flags for being excellent parks. As a Mousehold Heath Conservator, I can state that the city council provides support that a parish council could not match. The council works in close cooperation with local people to manage community centres in many neighbourhoods.
>
> Any proposal for a parish council must be bottom up, rather than top-down. 23 years ago, the council formed elected neighbour forums and the scheme eventually failed, so we should learn the lessons of the past. Developing another tier of local government at a time when this council has been cut over 40% since 2010 will simply detract from the overwhelming practical priority of delivering and extending social, environmental, and economic justice."

Mr Calvert asked, by way of supplementary question, what was different about Norwich that meant that parish councils were not appropriate. In response Councillor Kendrick said there was a difference in the demographic between suburbs and city, that meant there would be less people standing for election to a parish council. He said that the demand for parish councils would need to come from the population of Norwich.

The third question was from Mr Joshua Worley, on behalf of the Norwich Market Traders' Association.

Mr Worley asked the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:

> "The cost-of-living crisis has led people across the country to tighten their belts and think more carefully about their spending, coupled with the recovery from COVID and unprecedented threats from rival markets in the City Centre, now is a difficult time to be a small business on Norwich's historic Market. Traders need more support than ever, yet this Council has decided instead to raise our rents by 8.3%, costing some businesses on the Market hundreds more pounds a month. Additionally, Traders were given no warning about this rent increase, meaning businesses which might struggle to keep up with the rent increase had no time to consider their next steps. This has been a devastating blow to the Traders who keep alive our historic Market, integral to the fabric of our Fine City, so would this Council consider reversing the decision to increase rent by 8.3%?"

Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for community wellbeing gave the following response:

> "The council appreciates the financial challenges faced by traders on the market. We have supported Market traders during Covid with rent discounts. There was no RPI increase in rents 2016 – 2021. Footfall remains strong and there is strong demand from traders to take on units.

Traders were notified in March of this year that the rents were being reviewed for 2022/23 in line with RPI. This year's increase is being applied to the 11 months from May 2022 to March 2023, service charges are being held level.

We will continue to work with traders in the future to make the Market as attractive as possible for businesses and visitors. The Council is under significant financial pressure and needs to maintain and improve the services it provides to the most vulnerable in our community. I am afraid these pressures simply do not allow us to reverse the rent increase."

As a supplementary question Mr Worley asked whether the rent for commercial properties in the council's portfolio had also increased. In response, Councillor Giles said he did not have that information, but he would find out and inform Mr Worley. The council had granted market traders rent discounts during covid and there had been no RPI rent increase in the last five years. The rent increase had also been included in the budget that had been passed by the council in February 2022.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings held on 15 March 2022 and the annual meeting held on 24 May 2022.

5. Questions to Cabinet Members

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

The questions are summarised as follows:

Question 1: Councillor Lubbock to the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion on call centre waiting times.

Question 2: Councillor Ackroyd to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on St Stephen's Street scheme

Question 3: Councillor Mike Sands to the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods on Ukrainian refugees.

Question 4: Councillor Kidman to the cabinet member for resources on Voter ID

Question 5: Councillor Erin Fulton-McAlister to the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods on St Peter's House

Question 6: Councillor Brociek-Coulton to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on cashless car parks

Question 7: Councillor Driver to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on "Net Zero Waste" market.

Question 8: Councillor Peek to the cabinet member for environmental services on Kett's Hill.

Question 9: Councillor Huntley to the leader of the council on the social inclusion strategy

Question 10: Councillor Sue Sands to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on Threescore Phase 3.

Question 11: Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on LetNCC

Question 12: Councillor Galvin to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on properties on pre-payment metres

Question 13: Councillor Grahame to the cabinet member for environmental services on the removal of sharps

Question 14: Councillor Champion to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on planning enforcement.

Question 15: Councillor Haynes to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on the planting of edible plants.

Question 16: Councillor Price to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on the promotion of Play Streets.

Question 17: Councillor Osborn to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on the reduction of car parking spaces

Question 18: Councillor Catt to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on Anglia Square.

Question 19: Councillor Bogelein to the cabinet member for resources on the social value score for procurement.

Question 20: Councillor Schmierer to the leader of the council on bringing unused retail or office units into use

Question 21: Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on urban green space.

(A second question had been received from Councillor Osborn to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on the installation of security doors. As the time taken by questions had exceeded thirty minutes, the question was not taken at the meeting. (Norwich City Council constitution, Part 3, paragraph 35) A second question had also been received from Councillor Galvin to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on the painting of Heigham Park courts. As thirty minutes had elapsed since the start of questions to cabinet members this question was not taken at the meeting. (Norwich City Council constitution, Part 3, paragraph 35) A third

question had been received from Councillor Osborn to the cabinet member for community wellbeing on No Mow May policy. As the time taken by questions had exceeded thirty minutes, the question was not taken at the meeting. (Norwich City Council constitution, Part 3, paragraph 35)).

(Details of the questions and responses were available on the council's website prior to the meeting and attached to these minutes at Appendix A, together with a minute of any supplementary questions and responses.)

6. Appointments to outside bodies 2022-23

(An updated appendix to this report had been circulated and was made available on the council's website).

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

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, with 18 members voting in favour, one member voting against and six members abstaining from voting, to:

1) Make appointments to non-executive outside bodies for 2022/23 as set out in appendix A to this report

2) Delegate to the executive director of corporate and commercial services, in consultation with the leaders of the political groups, to make any changes to the appointments arising during the year.

7. Motions

(Notice of the following motions 7(a) to 7(c), as set out on the agenda, had been received in accordance with the council's constitution).

7(a) Motion: The cost-of-living crisis in Norwich

(Councillor Bogelein left the meeting for the debate and vote on this item having declared an interest).

The following amendment Councillor Osborn was received.

Replacing the word "**low**" with the word "**unequal**" in resolution 1a)

Removing the word "**the**" before "**economic inequalities**" in resolution 1b)

Inserting the words "**although many children in poverty do not qualify for free school meals**" after the words "**is increasing**" in resolution 1c)

Replace the word "**Secretary's**" with the word "**Secretaries**" in resolution 2a)

Inserting the word "**Council**" before "**believes**" in resolution 2a)

Inserting the words "**such as a Universal Basic Income**" after the words "**when they need it**" in resolution 2a).

Councillor Huntley had accepted the amendment and as no other member objected, it became part of the substantive motion.

Councillor Huntley proposed and Councillor Waters seconded the motion as amended.

Following debate, it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

"Norwich households are bracing themselves for the biggest drop in living standards in thirty years with a cost-of-living crisis including steep price increases in everyday and essential food items, tax hikes, low growth, falling real wages, and a failure to tackle the energy crisis. Failure of Coalition and Conservative-led governments have left Britain uniquely exposed to a global gas crisis and systemic failure to create an inclusive, sustainable economic model will leave Norwich residents further disadvantaged in the months ahead.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

1) Note that:

a) The decade of low growth under Conservative-led governments and believes that this is holding back our local and national economy, weakening it and making it unable to deal with shocks.

b) That the pandemic has further highlighted the significant health, wellbeing, and economic inequalities in our city and that the increase in the cost of living will impact on most residents in Norwich. Those on the lowest incomes will be hardest hit as incomes are squeezed by inflation, the £1,040 per year reduction to universal credit, the rise in National Insurance contributions for low and middle income workers, increases in council tax, the freezing of the personal income tax allowance from April, the increasing cost of household energy bills, the highest petrol prices since 2013, increased rail fares, the fastest rise in private rental prices since 2008, successive above inflation increases in childcare costs, and rising prices resulting from the supply chain disruption caused by worker and supply shortages.

c) Eligibility for Free School Meal Vouchers in Norwich is increasing, although many children in poverty do not qualify for free school meals, indicating that poverty in the city is increasing, and council hardship funds are coming under ever increasing pressure. The National Food Strategy was a wasted opportunity to tackle this issue, but the plan lacks a clear vision and strategy on how to improve the crisis and that opportunities to set out legal ways to enforce the strategy have been missed and need to be enshrined in law.

2) to ask

a) the Leader to write to the relevant Secretaries of State to request government support measures that would immediately cut VAT on domestic energy bills to ease the burden on households during winter – (giving a potential saving of up to £400 for many Norwich residents) – which would be paid for by a one-off windfall tax on booming oil and gas profits; Council believes that we need long-term change to keep energy bills low in the future and that a radical Green New Deal to insulate homes, improve energy efficiency and develop a long-term energy strategy to secure network resilience is vital. This must be combined with an immediate uplift in Universal Credit and its future replacement with a new compassionate social security system that is designed to support everyone when they need it, such as a Universal Basic Income, together with a Real Living Wage for all regardless of age. In particular, government should immediately increase the local housing allowance, cap rents in the private rented sector, abolish the Bedroom Tax, increase Working Tax Credits, remove differential pay rates for young people on the Government's National Minimum Wage and improve employment rights for those on zero hour contracts to better tackle the assault on living standards.

b) Cabinet to ensure the City Council social inclusion agenda continues to respond most effectively to rising living costs, the corporate plan helps to deliver an inclusive economy to better protect Norwich's health and well-being, while making the strongest case for government to provide the additional resource so urgently required. "

(Councillor Bogelein was readmitted to the meeting).

7(b) Motion: Private Renters Deserve the Right to a Secure, Decent, and Affordable Home

The following amendment from Council Osborn was received.

Inserting the words "**and resource**" after the word "**powers**" in resolution 2d)

Councillor Jones had accepted the amendment and as no other member objected, it became part of the substantive motion.

Councillor Jones proposed and Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister seconded the motion as amended.

Following debate it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

"Over 22% of Norwich people live in the private rented sector and this is increasing due to the unaffordability of homeownership and inaccessibility and lack of affordable social housing. There is little incentive for high housing standards due to the significant imbalance between high demand from potential tenants and low property availability.

Private renters face high rents, poor quality housing and insecurity, as well as the threat of eviction hanging over their heads. Action by government is vital to address this chronic emergency facing so many citizens in our city.

This council **RESOLVES** to:

1) Note that many households in our city are facing the stark choices of food, heat, or rent as the Conservative government has increased taxes, and wages have failed to keep up with the rapid price rises. Rents in Britain are rising at their fastest rate on record and often far exceeds the local housing allowance. Private landlords can evict private tenants without giving them a reason by simply issuing a two-month notice after their fixed term tenancy ends under Section 21 no-fault evictions, with renters powerless to fight against this.

2) Call on government to:

    a) Finally introduce the renters' reforms they promised and end Section 21 no-fault evictions, protecting tenants from unfair and unnecessary evictions
    b) Introduce new legislation to create secure, permanent tenancies in line with Scotland
    c) Provide local councils the power to introduce rent controls to protect private tenants from unpredictable and extortionate rent increases
    d) Give councils the powers and resource to introduce district wide licensing schemes setting out minimum standards of landlord accreditation to deter

rogue landlords and drive-up standards in private renting without need for approval by the Secretary of State; and

e) Provide adequate funding for local authorities to increase staffing levels in environmental health, trading standards, tenancy relations and other roles, which are needed to provide effective regulation and enforcement in the private rented sector."

(Councillors Erin Fulton-McAlister, Matthew Fulton-McAlister and Haynes left the meeting at this point).

(As two hours had passed since the start of the meeting, the Lord Mayor asked if any of the remaining business could be taken as unopposed. The below motion was taken as opposed business).

7(c) Motion: Fairer representation

Councillor Osborn proposed and Councillor Bogelein seconded the motion.

Government proposals to make voter photo ID mandatory could prevent 2.1 million people from voting despite voter fraud being negligible. This would disproportionately disenfranchise people from minority ethnic backgrounds: (*e.g.:* 47% of Black people in England don't have a driving licence, compared to 24% of white people) and social-renters. Requirements for voters to have photographic identification could come into effect as soon as 2023, leaving people in Norwich disenfranchised.

People in Norwich are already denied fair representation through the First Past the Post (FPTP) electoral system. The all-out elections in 2019 demonstrated that Norwich is the third most unrepresentative council in England, as Greens needed more than twice the number of votes than Labour councillors to win a seat and Liberal Democrats needed even more.

Norwich South's Labour MP Clive Lewis recently spoke at the launch event of the campaign group Councils for PR, urging all councils to back the campaign.

Council **RESOLVES** to:

1) ask group leaders to write to the Minister of State at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to ask for the government not to bring into effect the requirement for Voter ID in the Elections Act, noting the disproportionate impact it is likely to have on people with protected characteristics.

2) ask cabinet to work with the Electoral Registration Officer to establish a plan of public engagement to ensure that electors are not excluded from voting due to lack of voter ID, including by considering how existing points of contact with residents such as housing officers can be effectively used.

3) ask cabinet to work with the Electoral Registration Officer to engage with partners to work towards ensuring that electors are not excluded from voting due to lack of voter ID.

4) ask cabinet to produce a report considering how the council could support organisations campaigning for a fairer voting system and greater representation in democracy, such as Make Votes Matter, Councils for PR, the Sortition Foundation and others.

5) officially register support for Councils for PR and send a representative to a Councils for PR campaign meeting.

6) ask group leaders to write to the Government, to the Leader of the Opposition, and Norwich's MPs stating that this council supports a system of Proportional Representation for local and national Government elections and to suggest Norwich as a possible pilot area for PR in local government.

The meeting was closed.

LORD MAYOR

NORWICH
City Council

Council
21 June 2022
Questions to cabinet members

Question 1

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

> "During the last few weeks of April residents were contacting me as they were frustrated by not being able to get through to the City Council using the phone.
>
> On calling the contact centre the message was 'we are experiencing a high level of calls, please call back later or you can access services online'.
>
> On enquiring what the problem was I was told it was a combination of high level of demand, backlog of housing repairs, staff training and staff shortages.
>
> I would now like, a fuller explanation to understand the extent of the problem up to the present time, with details of how many days/hours the phonelines were unresponsive and how many calls have been lost."

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

> "Since April, the volume of calls has continued to be high because of increased contact about the £150 energy rebate, and increased repair enquiries. Current data based on calls answered show a 44% increase compared to last year. In addition, March and April are generally always busy times of the year due to Council Tax and business rates bills going out.
>
> Since April, there have been two occasions when the telephony system has not worked due to a technical issue, but this only resulted in 65 minutes of downtime. Apart from those occasions our phones have not been unresponsive. However, at times customers have received the message to call back later when the queue limit has been reached. It is not possible to provide details of customers who have not managed to get through/lost but I can confirm that in April we answered 16,657 calls and in May it was 23,567.
>
> To address the increased demand, we are recruiting to fill vacancies and have employed additional temporary staff to help with energy rebate calls, starting week commencing 13 June."

(As a supplementary question Councillor Lubbock asked whether any research had been undertaken about how many customers and tenants do not have access to the

internet. As Councillor Hampton had sent her apologies a written response would be provided.)

Question 2
Councillor Ackroyd to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

> "During regular discussions with local residents in Eaton, a frequent question that comes up is about the work currently being carried out in St Stephen's. Residents are concerned about disruption to bus journeys, difficulty accessing shops and facilities in St Stephen's, the length of time needed to complete the works and, not least, the huge sum of money involved.
>
> Does the cabinet member feel that the ends justify the means given the significant amount of time and money being spent?"

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

> "This Transforming Cities Fund scheme will improve bus services, particularly from areas to the south like Eaton. The sawtooth kerbs will reduce delays and help people with restricted mobility who struggle to board buses that cannot park against the kerb. It will complement projects recently completed on Thorpe Road, Cromer Road and Aylsham Road and save passengers considerable time, promoting sustainable transport and improving air quality. There will also be more places to sit and an improved environment in St Stephen's Street. This should in turn promote further investment in Norwich City Centre which is already seeing considerable levels of investment being made in its retail sector.
>
> The construction project is being managed by the county council. I know they are working hard to minimise disruption. However, they have kept all bus services running and shops open, which necessarily lengthens the build. I echo the thanks given by Councillor Wilby, my counterpart at the county, to the public for their patience.
>
> I am confident that the disruption will indeed be worth it in the longer term. The city cannot afford to stand still at the current time and needs to promote further investment in the city and more sustainable patterns of transport."

(Councillor Ackroyd, asked by way of supplementary question, whether the cabinet member was confident that St Stephen's Street would be safe for pedestrians and cyclists with buses reversing out of the bays. Councillor Stonard said that the city centre did not have the space to accommodate another large bus station that it needed, but that the planned layout of St Stephen's Street would alleviate the queuing of buses. He added that the evidence from other places that had implemented a similar layout suggested there were no health and safety issues.)

Question 3

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

"I have warmly welcomed Ukrainian refugees into my ward, though remain appalled at the lack of support from central government in promptly processing visas and allowing easier safe routes to this country. Many residents have volunteered to host a refugee and I am aware that checks on properties and the suitability of hosts must be carried out. Can the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods' comment on the work of this council to deliver the Homes for Ukraine scheme in practice?"

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

"Norwich City Council continues to work hard to ensure we can safely welcome Ukrainian refugees to our city, despite the difficulties created by central government processes.

The data from central government has been challenging in its quality, but by using the Norfolk Vulnerability Hub which was developed during the Covid-19 pandemic, we have been able to process information in a timely manner.

Before the guest's arrival, Norfolk County Council undertakes a DBS check on the host and members of the household, and we at Norwich city council undertake property checks on the host location before arrival, and welfare checks on the guest, which we aim to complete within 48 hours of their arrival. We have been able to undertake these checks in a timely manner and have employed three new officers two of whom are Ukrainian speakers, to assist with this.

This is a well-established process and there are weekly partnership meetings to ensure we continue to deliver successfully. Where there are issues with the suitability of the property or the host, we work in partnership to resolve these issues. There is also a robust process in place for any breakdowns of placements which ensures that guests are relocated quickly and with consideration for any arrangements such as school placements or work.

I am pleased to say that we have processed 71 host properties and have 149 expected guests with 81 having arrived already."

(In response to Councillor Mike Sands' supplementary question, Councillor Jones said that the city had a proud history of helping refugees, but the Government needed to provide the right support for Local Government and those members of the public who were hosting refugees.)

Question 4

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

> "Many residents in my ward expressed their thanks for the smooth running and effective management of the recent City Council elections. I am pleased that this council continues, uniquely now in Norfolk, to elect by thirds, which gives our citizens a yearly opportunity to cast their vote. This will however be the last election before Voter ID is implemented with all the concerns and significant risks this entails. Can the cabinet member for resources firstly thank those officers involved in the recent elections and comment on how we can best ensure that the hindrances of Voter ID are ameliorated?"

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources' response:

> "The council's Electoral Registration Officer is awaiting further information around implementation and funding of all aspects of the Elections Act, including the parts related to implementation of Voter ID. This has not yet been provided by Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities however the council will be working with the Electoral Registration Officer, all members and other stakeholders, partners and the public once further details have been announced, in order to mitigate the effects of the Government regrettable legislation on Voter ID.
>
> I would be delighted to pass on my thanks to staff for the excellent work they undertook in the running of the recent election."

(As a supplementary question Councillor Kidman asked whether the cabinet member would impress upon the MP for Norwich North and the Government the dangers of the implementation of Voter ID and that the city council would work as hard as possible on ensuring that no elector is disenfranchised. In response Councillor Kendrick said that the council continued to oppose the legislation and the council would work with the Electoral Registration Officer and other partners to ensure that as few people as possible are disenfranchised. He added that the council was waiting for further detail on the implementation of Voter ID and the funding that would be made available.)

Question 5

Councillor Erin Fulton-McAlister to ask the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods the following question:

"I am proud to represent a ward which contains many private renters but am concerned over how many of these homes contain significant hazards. Earlier in April all of the people living in the 53 apartments in St Peter's House were forced to move out at around 10pm after the building was deemed unsafe. Can the cabinet member for Safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods' comment on the work this City Council to protect these people and pursue the landlord?"

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

"Five years after the Grenfell tragedy the case of St Peter's House was deeply shocking, with a large properly in central Norwich being occupied without any power, working fire protection or alarm systems and many serious breaches of building and housing regulations. This necessitated rapid action from many Council officers to address a clearly dangerous situation and provide considerable support to those displaced.

It is disappointing that two months following the action we took to keep residents safe that the developer of the block has not taken the action necessary for us to lift the Emergency Prohibition Order and get leaseholders and tenants back into their flats.

The council's private sector housing team are continuing to work proactively with the developer and other agencies including UK Power Networks, Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service and CNC Building Control to ensure the safety of the building for the residents of St Peter's House.

Meanwhile officers are still carrying out investigations into this matter and therefore it would be prejudicial to the investigation and any potential enforcement action to comment further at this time. I would be happy to provide an update at a future council meeting once the investigation has been concluded."

(By way of supplementary question Councillor Erin Fulton-McAlister asked whether there were any similarities between the situation at St Peter's House and St Faith's Lane and the reasons these were so dangerous. In response Councillor Jones said that investigation was ongoing with regard to St Peter's House. However it was already clear that it showed a worrying trend of inadequate fire protection and alarm systems within buildings. She added that one of the biggest concerns was the lack of concern for private sector tenants by landlords, and this would continue to be raised to the Government as a concern. The development of former office accommodation into properties for habitation was a concern for this council.)

Question 6

Councillor Brociek-Coulton to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:

> "I was pleased to see that the City Council carparks now have a cashless option together with the opportunity to pay with coins. Can the cabinet member inclusive and sustainable growth comment on the benefits to the council through offering this additional option to users?"

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

> "The arrival of cashless payments in our carparks is long overdue and I am delighted that we have now achieved it. In a time where the demand for physical cash has declined, it is important that other payment options are available to our customers. This gives our customers increased flexibility on how they chose to pay and makes our carparks much more attractive to use. Paying is made much simpler for customers and will generate additional income to support council initiatives, at the same time as reducing our running costs."

(In response to Councillor Brociek-Coulton's supplementary question Councillor Stonard said that an increase in income from the cashless carparks would be likely. This was partially driven by the fact that the council had a number of contracts related to the collection of cash from carparks that would be reduced and therefore would help the financial position of the council. He highlighted that the income generated would be used on council services such as the council tax reduction scheme.)

Question 7

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

"Like most people in the city, I am proud of our historic and important Norwich Market and try to support it whenever possible. In recent years it has continued to grow, prosper, and provide a range of products and services which are appreciated. I was particularly pleased that it has recently become the first 'Net zero waste' market in the country and how this will help the environment. Can the cabinet member for community wellbeing discuss how this implemented and the benefits delivered environmentally?"

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

"The council has been working in partnership with Market Traders and the BID to reduce the environmental impact of the Market by minimising the waste that is produced there.

This work has identified that the vast majority of the materials and by-products found on the Market can be re-used or recycled. These include packaging (predominantly cardboard, paper, plastic and pallets), cooking oil, coffee grinds and other types of food waste. The project has also looked at minimising the use of single use plastics such as cutlery and coffee cups.

New waste and recycling storage and collection methods are aimed at improving the quality of material that is sent for recycling and minimising the amount of processing required to produce new items from this material.

We are confident that they will deliver that this work will provide significant financial and environmental benefits for the Market."

(Councillor Driver confirmed that he had no supplementary question.)

Question 8

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

> "Homelessness and rough sleeping have risen rapidly in recent years as access to social security, housing and support has been steadily diminished. It is likely to increase further as the cost-of-living crisis grows and we risk entering yet another recession. I was therefore pleased to see that work to build to build seven one-bed homes on Kett's Hill for people who have experienced rough sleeping is well underway and should be completed later this year. Can the cabinet member for environmental services comment on progress and the importance of our city providing such specialist accommodation?"

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

> "This work forms part of our Norwich tackling rough sleeping strategy to provide people with homes and support to help rebuild their lives. The funding for these homes comes from a successful bid with Broadland Housing Association to the Government's Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme in 2021-22.
>
> We have worked successfully with Broadland Housing Association to secure capital and revenue funding for a similar project at Lakenfields, which saw six one-bed modular flats delivered and ten homes purchased on the open market at the end of last year.
>
> Our ambition is to build and secure more homes like these to help break the cycle of homeless for people who have faced multiple disadvantages during their lives. We have therefore, submitted a further bid this year for additional rough sleeper accommodation funding for a seven one-bed house development with Broadland Housing Association and an eleven one-bed flat development with Flagship Housing Association."

(As a supplementary question Councillor Peek asked whether the council would continue to support partners to ensure accommodation is built. Councillor Oliver said that she had visited the Kett's Hill site had been impressed by the work that was being undertaken to build this accommodation. She said that she was looking forward to this being completed as it included plans for a small communal garden.)

Question 9

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

"A recent article in the Evening News earlier this month highlighted that foodbank use in the NR3 area had rocketed in recent months and that the Phoenix Hub in Mile Cross, which is one of our city's poorest, is supporting ever more families across the community. Given the lack of action by central government to respond to the cost-of-living crisis can the Leader explain again how the social inclusion strategy of this City Council can provide a measure of assistance during these difficult times?"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

"The city council recognises the pressure that the cost of living crisis is placing on people in Norwich, particularly those on lower incomes. We have a well-established approach to supporting financial inclusion, including our Council Tax Reduction Scheme, funding charities to advise on financial issues and help people facing homelessness, supporting the city's new social supermarkets and helping with energy costs. Longer-term, we are making Norwich a Living Wage City, so people earn a good wage.

However, the cost of living crisis requires an additional urgent response. We are exploring what more we can do to, ensuring everyone is able to claim the benefits, discounts and support they are entitled to and helping charities meet the increased levels of demand. We are also getting every penny that we can from central government, to pass to people in need.

Many of the issues underlying this crisis can only be tackled nationally. However, this council is committed to making Norwich a Fair City and we will continue to do everything in our power to help those struggling the most."

(By way of a supplementary question Councillor Huntley asked whether there was an explanation for the increased levels of poverty. In response Councillor Waters said that current cost of living crisis was not only due to the pandemic and the war in Ukraine but was also driven by over 10 years of austerity. He added that the cuts to benefits also impacted residents who were in work.)

Question 10

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

"I am proud to represent Bowthorpe Ward which has seen some amazing new Passivhaus council housing and other properties built in recent years thanks to the investment of this council. Approval for Threescore Phase 3 has recently been given which will ensure the majority of the 76 properties will be used as council owned social housing, with some to be sold on the open market. They will be built using a fabric first approach to provide eco-efficient homes. Can the cabinet member for social housing comment on how work will soon proceed and when these new homes should be completed?"

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

"Following approval by cabinet in January contracts for the construction of Three Score Phase 3 have now been let and the groundworks started in April.

Over the summer you should be able to witness the frames for the first of the new council homes being erected on site. I am very much looking forward to handing over the keys to these new homes to council tenants in March 2023.

My understanding is that our wholly owned housebuilder Norwich Regeneration Limited will commence marketing of the 24 excellent quality new homes for private sale in autumn this year. The entire development should be complete by September 2024."

(In response Councillor Sue Sands' supplementary question Councillor Harris said the delivery team were aiming to strategically move towards being recognised as an intelligent, responsible and sustainable developer during the year. This would involve identifying best in class practices and therefore the have worked closely with contractors to register with the Considerate Constructors Scheme. The scheme was designed to raise standards in the construction industry through a number of ways. The delivery team were working hard with the contractors to ensure that the Three Score Build would aim to be recognised as the highest level status under this scheme.)

Question 11

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

"I have long supported the excellent LetNCC scheme which successfully works with landlords to provide affordable accommodation for people who may not be eligible for social housing. A few years ago, the 1000th tenancy achieved through the scheme was celebrated. Can the cabinet member comment on this with regards to the national Afghan Locally Employed Staff Relocation scheme?"

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

"The funding from Norfolk County Council for Private Sector Leasing (PSL) to participate in the Syrian Refugee Program (SRP) commenced in November 2016 with the first families arriving in February 2017.

Since then, under the original SRP scheme, we have met our commitment to accommodate 150 people.

Since the scheme was widened to become the UK Resettlement scheme (UKRS) we have accommodated a further 25 people. We are now recruiting for an additional Private Sector Leasing Officer, funded by Norfolk County Council, so we can meet our commitment to accommodate 90 refugees per year for the next 3 years at least, with an equal 45/45 split across the schemes.

In addition, we have accommodated 52 people since the emergency situation in Afghanistan in August 2021. Most recent figures show that 36 of these are civilians (under the Afghan Citizen Resettlement Scheme).

Moving forward we have been asked to offer 5 properties of at least 2 bedrooms by July 2022 for the next cohort of families seeking refuge under UKRS. Once we have secured these, we will then look to bank the next properties for October/November.

We are trying to secure new properties to the scheme to do this, so we do not impact the waiting list of people being assessed by Housing Options as in housing need.

Total number of refugees accommodated via PSL since 2017 is 227."

(As a supplementary question Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister asked whether the cabinet member to explain the detail of the benefits of LetNCC. In response Councillor Harris said that the scheme was a private sector leasing scheme, the benefits of which were on the council's website. She said that a variety of properties were needed for this scheme, so she encouraged anyone to have a look at the website and use the contact details provided. There was also a case study available on the website from a landlord where they discuss the benefits they had experienced using the scheme.)

Question 12

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

> "I am concerned that the council does not hold any information on how many of its homes have prepayment gas or electric meters, which require people to pay for electricity before they use it. In contrast to billed customers, who are given warnings before being cut off, those with meters lose their energy supply when their money runs out (after a small emergency credit). Even worse, they still have to pay standing charges which carry on racking up, from 5p-80p a day. This means customers can build up debts even when not getting any energy. What is the council doing to find out who is in this position to assist them in the current energy price crisis, which is set to get worse?"

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

> "Our tenants make their own arrangements for energy supplier. In some circumstances tenants may choose a pre-payment meter or may be required to have a pre-payment meter by their supplier. As household circumstances may change, we do not hold this information.
> If a tenant is experiencing financial difficulty then they can self-refer to our money and budgeting advice service via our website or speak with our staff who can refer on their behalf: Housing, budgeting and money advice.
> We also have an affordable warmth officer who can assist residents with their energy bills, and those who may be experiencing fuel poverty, through emergency interventions and longer term support, including support to reduce long term fuel debt. We also provide advice on the most appropriate tariffs for residents."

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

Question 13

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

> "Residents whose gardens are endangered by the contaminated sharps of others have to choose between removing the danger themselves, leaving it there or paying for someone else to remove it. I understand that NCSL are looking into quoting for a future service. I would like to know when this will happen, the likely price-range and who should bear the cost. Would we consider providing sharps boxes, gloves and training to residents where there's a recurrent problem?"

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

> "Norwich City Services Limited respond to reports of discarded needles in open spaces, and where they carry out garden and void clearances on behalf of Housing Services.
>
> NCSL would provide this service for a fee, where requested by owner occupiers or tenants in privately rented property, and that the fee would depend on the number and location of the sharps. There are no plans to provide a universal service at this time.
>
> With regards to the provision of sharps boxes, gloves and training to residents, the Council would not consider providing these and would recommend that residents contact NCSL to have discarded sharps removed."

(In response to Councillor Grahame's question Councillor Oliver said that if there was a specific issue that Councillor Grahame should contact her to understand the situation. She said that if private gardens were being trespassed into and needles being left there, then these instances should be reported to the police.)

Question 14

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

> "I am aware that planning conditions are not always met by developers after being agreed at a planning committee meeting. This includes hedgehog gaps in fences. What are planning officers doing to ensure that such conditions are met?"

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

> "Our approach to conditions is the same regardless of the issue that they cover. If a detail is secured by a condition, it is considered necessary to make the development acceptable. If we become aware that a condition has not been complied with then we will first of all seek to resolve the situation by talking to the developer. In the rare event that we are not able to find a solution by negotiation, then we can serve a formal breach of condition notice that would require compliance with the condition. Ultimately, we would need to pursue any failure to comply with a notice through the courts"

(By way of a supplementary question Councillor Champion asked that given the historic delays of enforcement action whether the council would commit to an increase in capacity to deal with the backlog of enforcement actions. Councillor Stonard said that there was not a need to increase capacity for this.)

Question 15

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

"Urban fruit trees could be considered as nature's food banks, and a sensible use of urban green spaces of any size and designation, given the current economic climate, obesity epidemic and supply chain troubles. Can we agree in principle to seek opportunities for edible planting and to use opportunities as they arise, for example, by planting edible varieties of, say, cherry trees, rather than inedible ones, and to actively seek such opportunities?"

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

"The creation of orchards for production of fruit through community-lead projects could have many benefits for local communities. We would be keen to hear from tenants and residents' associations with such proposals.

Residents are also encouraged to grow fruit and vegetables in private gardens and/or our allotments which can be rented at an affordable rate.

Increasing the growth of fruit and vegetables would support the development of a Nature Recovery Network for Norwich, as outlined in our ambitious draft Biodiversity Strategy, through enhancing nature corridors.

There are challenges for the City Council in growing fruit trees itself on public land, due to their significant maintenance requirements, in the context of the significant financial pressures on the General Fund revenue budget"

(Councillor Haynes asked, as a supplementary question, what the response was to residents who had spoken to the council about growing fruit trees on public land. In response, Councillor Giles asked Councillor Haynes to send correspondence on to him so that he could look into this.)

Question 16

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

> "The local Norwich Play Streets group is working hard to promote the idea of play streets for their social and health value. Although the highways function is the responsibility of the county council, I know the city council has supported the concept in the past, including by lending play street equipment. Key to success is publicity. Please let me know what specific promotion through council communications channels is planned, including social media and publications, signposting interested residents, covering play streets and their positive aspects, and working with the Car Free Norwich group?"

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

> "As Councillor Price will be aware, with the recent transfer of responsibilities for Highways functions back to Norfolk County Council, responsibility for the Play Streets scheme now sits at County Hall. We at the City Council have been very supportive of the initiative; for example by offering road closure kits to residents and community groups through the excellent relations we have. We are very happy to continue to support the scheme and share promotional and communication material about it in line with County Council communication plans."

(As Councillor Price had sent his apologies there was no supplementary question.)

Question 17

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

> "The city council's response to the Local Transport Plan consultation in December 2020 stated that the council's vision would aim to: *Raise long-stay parking charges in public car parks, designed to incentivise use of park & ride; maintain overall revenue levels by offsetting fewer car park users with the higher amount paid by each; facilitate redevelopment of redundant car parking space and intensify the turnover of the spaces that remain.* The Corporate Plan approved in February 2022 committed to a *Review of potential development sites, including surface car parks, to improve their management and develop a pipeline of potential housing development sites.* Could we please have an update on work done to reduce the amount of car parking space in the city?"

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

> "The development strategy team is actively progressing work to identify a housing pipeline to provide sites suitable for direct development or through our housebuilder NRL. This should be concluded later in the year and will have been informed by high level feasibility of sites including some surface car parks"

(In response to Councillor Osborn's supplementary question Councillor Stonard said that the council was looking to identify surface car parks which are redundant to seek how these could be better utilised, for example for housing.)

Question 18

Councillor Catt to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth's the following question:

> "Given the housing and cost of living crises we are seeing in Norwich, will the Anglia Square development be subject to the Community Infrastructure Levy and subject to providing the quota of affordable housing as stipulated by Joint Core Strategy policy 4 for housing delivery in the affordable housing Supplementary Planning Document?"

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

> "The council always seeks to maximise the amount of affordable housing provided on any redevelopment site that triggers the requirement for it. Anglia Square is no exception. However, our planning policies have always allowed for the viability of a development to be taken into account when calculating how many affordable units a site should provide. A viability appraisal of the scheme submitted for Anglia Square is being prepared and will need to be taken into account in determining the planning application in due course.
>
> As far as CIL is concerned, the council has adopted a policy on exceptional circumstances relief for sites that would deliver wider regeneration benefits. It will be down to the applicant to make an application for such relief should they consider it necessary. Such an application can only be made if planning permission for the development is granted"

(As Councillor Catt had sent his apologies there was no supplementary question).

Question 19

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

"The council is aiming to review its procurement social value guidance this year. Central government procurement policies require a minimum of 10% scoring on social value in the assessment of contract bids, based on consistent criteria. The benefits of an explicit score have been clearly argued, as it:

- gives a much clearer signal to contractors that social value related improvements must be considered for any contract, leading to longer-term changes in contractors' approaches to social value
- enables the inclusion of explicit social value KPIs and therefore a much higher leverage in contract management of social value contributions
- gives the public and councillors a clear signal and confidence that contracts adequately consider social value.

Local government should follow the lead of Government and adopt this more stringent social value consideration. Will the cabinet member advocate for an explicit social value score for Norwich City Council Procurement?"

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources' response:

"Our procurement strategy makes clear our commitment to investing in social value within our contract and commissioning work whilst balancing the need to ensure we secure good value for money for the people of Norwich.
There are excellent examples in the work we do to secure social value in our commissioning. By way of example, the recent tennis court operator contract, which received a great deal of attention at the scrutiny committee, included a 25% weighting for how the contractor will engage with the community and reduce inequality. However, it's not just the work we directly undertake, but the influence we can have on others; we work with providers of framework contracts, such as our partner Eastern Procurement Limited, to encourage them to promote social value in the setting up of framework contracts and in this regard recently secured the creation of eight apprenticeships in the building materials contract we procured on behalf of Norwich City Services Limited. You may recall that as a Cabinet, when we reviewed our strategy, we specifically considered whether to have a target and elected not to, recognising that it's fundamentally about how we build social value into what we buy and the guidance we provide to staff.

Whilst you advocate that the government is taking the lead, unfortunately historically central government have placed barriers in the way of local authorities for securing better social value outcomes, most notably the local government act 1988 which bans us from taking non-commercial considerations into account when procuring, except to the extent that it is necessary to secure compliance with the social value act. We can all hope that the forthcoming procurement act removes some of these barriers."

((By way of supplementary question Councillor Bogelein asked whether the council would commit to using the Procurement Policy Note (PPN) 06/20 and PPN 06/21 as part of the procurement strategy review. Councillor Kendrick said that the council had recently reviewed the procurement strategy. As the question was of a technical nature, he said that he would need to seek advice from officers before replying in detail.)

Question 20

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

> "The city centre has recently seen a string of closures of shops, with the national decline in high streets hitting Norwich as we emerge from the pandemic. Other councils, such as Camden, have introduced policies and initiatives to revive high streets. There are also schemes where councils have partnered with businesses to open "meanwhile spaces" for start-up businesses which see premises leased out rent free or for peppercorn rents to promote small businesses, innovation and entrepreneurship. This anticipates the potential legislation that will give councils powers to force landlords to let out empty retail units. Will this council introduce a policy for bringing vacant retail or office units in the city centre into use, potentially as meanwhile spaces for temporary use by start-ups, artists, charities or other less established businesses?"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

> "The council's policies aim to maintain a prosperous and vibrant city centre. Whilst there are empty units in the city centre, the monitoring work that we've carried out reveals that Norwich continues to hold its own in relation to other centres as can be seen by the number of people coming into the centre. We continue to work with property owners and other partners such as the BID to promote the centre and we have seen places like Castle Quarter responding to changing patterns of town centre use by moving towards a more leisure-based offer. We see similar patterns on a smaller scale in other locations, such as Magdalen Street, which has continued to thrive despite a very challenging few years.
>
> If the proposed Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill does indeed contains useful powers to allow the councils to take control of buildings for the benefit of their communities, transforming boarded up shops or derelict buildings into thriving businesses, shared community spaces or housing we will of course consider their use very carefully."

(As a supplementary question Councillor Schmierer asked whether the council would commit to making sure that the retail offer is as dynamic as possible especially with regard to council owned property and offering these to small businesses. In response Councillor Waters said that the council was working closely with partners such as the Norwich Business Improvement District and the Towns Deal Board to draw people into the city. He said that the independent and small businesses of Norwich had grown in recent years.)

Question 21

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

> "Over the last thirty years, Norwich's urban footprint has expanded dramatically, engulfing a large amount of countryside and parts of the city's patchwork of green spaces. Examples include: the loss of parts of school playing fields for all-weather sports pitches and gardens to house extensions and parking. The drive to development is taking a terrible toll with a loss of space for nature, more light pollution and more hard surfaces that increase the risk of flooding and make the city a hotter place. A reduction in greenspace and greenery also impacts on people's physical and mental health. Natural England's call for 'nutrient neutrality' in planning new overnight accommodation is just one manifestation of the failure to protect our natural environment. Will the portfolio holder explain what the Council will do to increase urban green space and greenery in heavily built-up areas such as the city centre and Norwich more generally?"

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

> "The local plan contains policies to protect open space, promote sustainable drainage and protection and provision of trees within development. The council also undertakes regular monitoring of the loss of designated open space. Planning applications are assessed against these policies and continue to seek enhancements to the natural environment as appropriate.
> The council has long been involved in efforts to protect and enhance the environment such as through past green infrastructure and tree planting strategies.
>
> Various workstreams are ongoing aiming to improve the quantity and quality of the city's natural environment. These include the production of a new Greater Norwich Green Infrastructure Strategy, implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain ahead of the requirement of the Environment Act (to include a citywide biodiversity baseline study), natural environment policies within the GNLP, and projects facilitated through the River Wensum Strategy.
>
> Prior to notification from Natural England that nutrient neutrality affects our area, the city council has had water efficiency policies which are the most demanding the Government has allowed to be set and aim to reduce the impact of housing development on protected sites by reducing flows through Whitlingham Water Recycling Centre."

(In response to Councillor Carlo's supplementary question Councillor Giles said that information on the changes in land use, and the way this had changed, would feed into the biodiversity action plan that would follow from the biodiversity strategy.

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 53 of Part 3 of the council's constitution.

Question 22

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

> "Over the last three years, I have repeatedly been promised a priority plan for installing security doors, but also told that we could not tell any residents about it. Despite this, residents in blocks such as Ebenezer Place and Leopard Court received letters from the council telling them that they were prioritised for security doors. Furthermore, under the current contract, I have personally seen elderly and disabled residents who are unable to open the doors because they are too heavy. These doors cost around £16,000 each, costing the HRA account millions and leaseholders as much as £4,000, when cheaper systems were available. It is now June 2022, and we still have not seen a confirmed plan for prioritisation and the details of the programme specification are still unclear. Please can the Cabinet Member provide an answer for residents who want to know what is happening with their doors?"

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

> "Procurement of the door entry is progressing with a start date of December 2022 targeted. This start date is later than was originally anticipated and as the procurement process has taken longer than expected.
>
> We are looking at the possibility of accelerating the programme through Q4 to enable us to meet the overall original programme targets.
>
> Consultation on the type of door and configuration is planned for from September onwards to ensure that the doors fitted are "fit for purpose" and meet the requirements of the residents living within the receiving properties.
>
> Once a contractor has been successfully appointed a detailed programme of works will be agreed and shared with residents and affected Councillors."

Question 23

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

"Heigham Park tennis courts, although still closed, were furnished with nets and white line markings several months ago, on a surface that was apparently not finished as it was black rather than green. After multiple enquiries, officers informed me that the surface is due to be recoloured green (as per the planning permission). Can you explain why nets and lines went up before the finished surface was down?"

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

"The redevelopment work at Heigham Park will further extend the highly successful Norwich Parks Tennis Scheme by providing high quality, accessible, affordable sports facilities that will be available 52 weeks of the year.
The project is nearing completion, and the lining and nets that were provided in March were in the anticipation that the courts could be used before the final surface coating was applied. Unfortunately, some minor planning conditions had not been fulfilled at the time, which prevented use of the courts. These have now been addressed, and we are looking forward to the courts opening in July.

As set out in the draft Greater Norwich Playing Pitches Strategy, Norwich has been identified by the Lawn Tennis Association as having the highest number of people in the country wanting to play tennis, and these excellent new facilities will seek to meet this demand.

This Labour-led city council will always prioritise affordable sports facilities, and the health and wellbeing benefits that they bring"

Question 24

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

> "I was delighted to learn that the council has agreed to implement a No Mow May policy. However, there have been numerous instances where grass and plants were mowed during May, including off St Leonards Road and at Bull Close. Please can the Cabinet Member explain what steps will be taken to ensure that the policy is maintained and implemented?"

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

> "No formal policy had been agreed by the Council to support "No Mow May", although grass cutting has been reduced during May and June due to the lack of rainfall in the city. We are looking to ensure that the NCSL grass cutting programme is aligned with aligned with our emerging Biodiversity Strategy."