

**Council**  
**26 September 2017**

**Questions to cabinet members or chairs of committees**

**Question 1**

**Councillor Carlo to ask the leader of the council the following question:**

“In response to a Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 3 July 2017 about his plans for making local economic partnerships more accountable to local people, the Minister replied that democratic accountability for LEP decisions is provided through local authority leader representation.

In view of this response, I would like to ask the leader of the council about New Anglia LEP’s Green Economy Pathfinder Manifesto for 2012-2015, in which it committed to “immediate action that will drive the reduction of carbon and greenhouse gas emissions ahead of national/European targets by proactively lobbying all relevant bodies in New Anglia to adopt Suffolk’s ‘Creating the Greenest County’ target of a 60% reduction in emissions by 2025 (against a 2004 baseline).” Can the City Council Leader comment on the progress achieved on this stated action by 2015 and specify the target adopted in any roll forward of New Anglia LEP’s Green Economy Pathfinder Manifesto beyond 2015?”

**Councillor Waters, leader of the council’s reply:**

“Thank you Councillor Carlo for your well-researched question.

The government positively received the Green Economy Pathfinder, completed by New Anglia LEP and other partners. In a review of its achievements completed in 2015 the overall feedback from stakeholders was very positive and that the manifesto had set a good framework for the green economy in Norfolk and Suffolk. New Anglia LEP and partners hope to build further on the manifesto’s framework; following the publication of the LEP’s Economic Strategy implementation plans will be developed and will include specific targets which are likely to include: use of European funds to support low carbon investment, further development of a Local Energy East Network, and funding bids with the universities to fully identify the economic value of natural capital.

Norwich City Council is an important local authority partner on the NALEP Board and as the largest urban area takes carbon reduction very seriously. So I think it is helpful to describe in some detail the Norwich Carbon reduction journey to provide a local context to Cllr Carlo’s question.

Run by the Carbon Trust, Norwich City Council baselined its carbon emissions in 2007, as part of the local authority carbon management programme. Following this exercise the council’s first 5-year carbon management programme was produced and a carbon emissions reduction target of a 30% reduction in city council emissions by 2013 was set. By the end of the five years the city council had achieved 29% emissions reduction against the 30% target.

In 2014 the second phase of the five-year carbon management programme was produced and a carbon emissions reduction target of 40% on the 2007 baseline was set, taking us through to 2019. This target reflected the fact that much of the 'low hanging fruit' had already been harvested during the first carbon management programme, and subsequently it would become increasingly challenging to implement new energy saving technologies across the council's assets as quick wins, such as Nightwatchman software which switches off pcs overnight, had already been implemented.

However, I'm pleased to report that the most recent carbon emissions reduction monitoring exercise, completed in July 2017, shows an impressive reduction of 54.1% against the 2007 baseline, far exceeding the 40% target set for 2019. In part this impressive reduction was achieved through a general 'greening of the grid' occurring at a national level, and therefore positively affecting carbon conversion factors nationwide. In addition, Norwich City Council also adopted an OFGEM accredited green tariff for electricity supplied across all council owned assets in October 2016, which has also had a positive impact on our carbon emissions this year. It is however recognised that this is a 'one-off' carbon saving and will not be repeated year on year. Therefore, we continue to work in partnership with NPS, the council's asset management partners, to look for new carbon reduction opportunities all the time. For example, most recently the poolside lights at Riverside Leisure Centre have been changed to LED lights, which will slash the carbon created by the lighting at this asset. In addition we continue to upgrade both insulation, boilers and pumps at Sheltered Housing schemes to simultaneously maintain comfortable temperatures for vulnerable residents and reduce carbon emissions.

In recognition of exceeding the carbon emissions reduction target set, the Environmental Strategy team are currently working to re-set the target and are looking to align it more closely with the national carbon saving budgets. Given we have achieved a 54.1% reduction to date we would certainly hope to exceed the 60% carbon emissions reduction target ahead of the 2025 ambition set within the LEP document. However, it should be reiterated that this is only for the Norwich city council area, not for the wider LEP area.

Looking more widely across the whole county of Norfolk, Department of Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (DBEIS) data shows that over the period of 2005 to 2015 (this being the most recent dataset) per capita carbon emissions data reduced from 8.4 to 6.1 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> over the decade. The largest drops in emissions being seen across the Domestic and Industrial sectors, whilst in more recent years the Transport sector emissions have increased.

The per capita emissions for Norwich show a steeper drop over the same period of time, with CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in 2005 at 7 tonnes per capita, reducing to 4.3 tonnes per capita in 2015. Again we see steeper drops over time from both the Domestic and Industrial sectors, with carbon emissions related to Transport remaining similar since 2011."

## Question 2

### **Councillor Tim Jones to ask the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods the following question:**

“In addition to the mandatory licensing of large houses in multiple occupation (those with five or more occupants from multiple households, and three or more storeys), many councils around the country have introduced additional licensing for smaller HMOs: for example, Oxford City Council has adopted additional licensing based on a threshold of three people forming more than one household.

The government is proposing to extend mandatory licensing by scrapping the ‘three-storey’ rule. It is consulting on changes to the regulations before bringing the proposal into law, following an earlier technical consultation. The new criteria will retain the five-person threshold, which means most of the large number of small terraced HMOs in Norwich will still not be licensable. Under the Housing Act 2004 (Selective Licensing (Additional Conditions) Statutory Instrument 977, March 2015), Councils may adopt additional licensing in areas that contain a high proportion of properties in the private rented sector, where a significant proportion are “being managed sufficiently ineffectively”, for example, if they are suffering from Category 1 or 2 Hazards. Norwich’s Condition of the Private Rented Sector survey estimates that there are 3,000-plus HMOs in Norwich, approximately 25% of which are likely to have a Category 1 Hazard. In a recent sample survey of 80 HMO occupants in Nelson ward, a significant number commented on their cold living conditions.

Norwich City Council says that it is waiting to see what size of HMO will be affected by the new regulations. However, other councils including Brighton, Redbridge, Newham and Hammersmith & Fulham have proceeded with new licensing schemes since the government announcement, which suggests there is no absolute reason to wait. Does the cabinet member support the introduction of an additional licensing scheme for areas in Norwich where a high percentage of properties suffer from Category 1 and 2 Hazards such as excess cold?”

### **Councillor Herries, cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhood’s response:**

“There is certainly a case for extending HMO licensing beyond the current statutory scheme based on the numbers that are estimated to be below standard and poor conditions identified during actual inspections by the private sector housing team.

The Government announced in October 2016 that it intends to extend mandatory licensing to include HMOs with five or more occupants regardless of the number of storeys. This was to have taken place in 2017 but, to date, no announcement has been made and the department for communities and local government has indicated that its implementation has been delayed as a consequence of Brexit and the 2017 general election.

When the proposal is implemented it is not clear exactly how many HMOs it will apply to in the city since we do not have sufficiently detailed information. However, the Government estimates that each district would, on average, need to issue a further 533 licences. In Norwich, which has a higher than average proportion of younger adults who are more likely to need to live in a HMO, it is reasonable to conclude that the number of extra licences would be above average. It is anticipated, therefore, that the government proposals alone

would increase the numbers of licenced HMOs to between 800 and 1,000 from the current 200.

In principle there is no reason why the council could not introduce an additional licensing scheme, following a statutory 12-week consultation, that either mirrors the government proposals or extends licensing to all HMOs in the city. Consideration would, however, need to be given to the additional staff resource required to implement a much larger scheme, notwithstanding the ability to recover such costs through a licence fee.

A further consideration is that, whilst many HMOs represent the highest risk accommodation, a significant proportion of the council's housing enforcement resource is focussed on tackling hazards in privately rented family homes. Care would need to be taken to ensure that any HMO licensing scheme did not detract from that work.

Officers have been awaiting the outcome of the current consultation on the government's proposals and the subsequent change to the law but are now considering other options, including additional licensing.

I will certainly support any proposal that brings about an improvement in living conditions within HMOs in Norwich provided that it can be delivered in a cost-effective way and without an adverse impact on the council's ability to tackle hazards across the board."

### **Question 3**

**Councillor Haynes to ask the cabinet member for resources the following question:**

"Over the years, the council has voted to refer a large number of motions to the cabinet for its consideration. However, there is no formal process for following this up, and some motions remain yet to be discussed months or even years after the council voted to refer them to cabinet. To remedy this gap, the council has developed a motions tracker. However, it remains difficult for the public and indeed elected members to find out about progress. Will the cabinet member agree to bring a regular (for example quarterly) report to full meetings of the council about progress on approved motions?"

**Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources' response:**

"We are currently working on updating the motions tracker and will be making this available to members shortly. Due to staff levels in democratic services earlier in the year, we had fallen behind in keeping the tracker updated. As of August 2017 democratic services has a fully staffed team

The motions to council tracker is being reviewed by cabinet members and updated by the democratic services team. Where letters have been sent and responses received, these will be published retrospectively wherever possible. The week following council, the motions tracker and any updates will be reviewed. If cabinet are asked to do something, this may be captured in some commentary on the tracker rather than as a report.

We must remember that motions passed at council contain different elements. Some elements relate to business that the council meeting can decide on there and then. However, many motions to council request that the leader, group leaders or portfolio holders take some sort of action such as writing a letter to a minister. Once the motion is passed, it is still just a request and it is up to the leader, group leaders or portfolio holders whether or not they take the action requested. Other motions request that cabinet consider items and again, it is up to cabinet whether or not they consider the matter and what action or not they take on that matter.

As the tracker will be circulated to all members and will show progress on each of the motions there is no benefit in repeating this with a quarterly report to meetings of the council.”

#### **Question 4**

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

“In September 2016, the council approved a motion on the issue of phasing out single-use plastics in Norwich.

Interest in this issue continues to grow, with local businesses starting their own campaigns to get rid of plastic straws, and a Parliamentary select committee due to report on the possibility of a bottle deposit scheme. However, the council’s cabinet is yet to discuss the issue or agree any action, despite the council asking it to do so a year ago. Does the cabinet member agree that further delay would risk the council being left behind on this issue, as well as allowing the plastic pollution crisis to go on worsening in spite of widespread agreement that urgent action is necessary?”

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

“Thank you for the question: it is good to review Council motions and demonstrate progress on their implementation. In reviewing action on this motion, it is important to remember that the motion passed was “to ask cabinet to...”. It is still within the remit of cabinet to decide what steps are taken. Having made that clear, I can say that our officers are gathering information so that an informed decision can be made. Such a decision will be based on sound financial reasoning which takes into account–available resources and the actions already in place.

A review of the council’s policies showed that SUPs are **not** encouraged at events on council land. This has been the council’s position for a number of years. Looking at the suggestions within the motion you will be pleased to know that our events team already ask traders to use biodegradable plates, cups and cutlery. In addition bars need to take a deposit to encourage re-use and return. This is something that we will be enforcing on open spaces and the events team will be building this into contracts for 2018.

The annual beer festival at the Halls each October, is a great example of glass reuse. At the comedy festival in Chapelfield park, biodegradable containers are used due to safety. The

result has been the prevention of tonnes of SUPs items going to landfill directly from council events

In City Hall we only have one vending machine for staff which does contain SUPs. However, throughout the council we have drinking water fountains and plastic bottle recycling and since the motion we have found a suitable alternative for our committee room cups which will be introduced soon.

We also hope to encourage the city's institutions, businesses and citizens to use less SUPs via a range of ongoing public engagement activities in the future. This will likely be part of the council's next One Planet Norwich festival, working in partnership with both Anglian Water and Refill Norwich.

You will be pleased to know that a number of market stalls already use cutlery or packaging which has high environmental standards. Some stalls continue to re-use and wash traditional cutlery and mugs which is excellent to see. The council will continue to work with our traders to increase environmental standards and decrease waste to landfill. In the new strategy for the markets an objective "To provide a good and safe environment for visitors and increase opportunities for reducing waste and increasing recycling" will be achieved by "Actively working with traders to create a 'green market' where waste is minimal and recycling is the norm" Therefore, it may be possible to encourage tenants to phase out SUP – in the same way we might regarding residents – by say providing 'promotional' material alongside our correspondence with tenants.

So to conclude I disagree that we are being left behind on this issue. Our review has concluded that we are ahead of the game in regards to our events and we can quickly reduce SUP use within City Hall. In the wider community we will continue to build on the ongoing messages of reuse and recycling supporting any specific campaigns via our One Planet work.

Finally it would be likely that in the next edition of the Environmental Strategy the existing best practice and emerging policies identified will be reshaped to form a robust objective around the issue."

## **Question 5**

**Councillor Price to ask the deputy leader the following question:**

"The independent review into building regulations and fire safety, launched in the wake of the Grenfell Tower disaster, has issued a call for evidence on a range of issues including clarity of responsibilities, adequacy of legal requirements and accountability. The call includes a question on what changes might be required to ensure tenants'/residents' voices on fire safety can be heard in the future. Will the cabinet member comment on the council's response to the call for evidence, and whether it will also seek to inform residents of tower blocks in Norwich so they can submit their own responses?"

**Councillor Harris, deputy leader's response:**

"As Councillor Price will be aware, the council has been undertaking an inspection of every flat in each tower block owned by the city council which has been carried out in conjunction with the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service. Good progress has been made and access has been gained to the majority of flats with follow up reminders to arrange access with the remaining tenants and leaseholders now in progress. As well as identifying any physical works required, this has also provided the opportunity to talk to all the residents to provide reassurance if required as well as to gather feedback on their flat and tower block. The findings from the surveys will now be evaluated to identify what works or changes to our fire safety procedures may be required to ensure the our tenants and leaseholders remain safe.

With the thoroughness of the surveys such as this, it is anticipated and indeed expected that some works will be required to make sure that every flat is safe though it is important to add that the initial findings are no cause for concern. I anticipate that a full programme of works will be made available to members, tenants and leaseholders within the next month or so.

Notwithstanding the significant amount of work we are currently undertaking to speak to every tenant and leaseholder in our high rise blocks, the council is committed to making sure that tenants have the maximum opportunity to influence any changes that may be required to the council's fire safety policy and procedures as well as changes in the legislation that may result from the independent review following the Grenfell Tower disaster to make sure that high rising living is safe and secure.

Nationally the council will be submitting information to ARCH, the organisation for Councils with retained Council Housing, which the council is a member of and who will play an important role in coordinating a response on behalf of stockholding authorities to the review and any subsequent and parallel inquiries. I have also commissioned a special tenants' survey to capture issues and concerns and ideas whilst our tenants involvement panel will also debate and discuss the issues. A telephone survey will be undertaken of a representative sample of tower block residents who are currently members of our talkback panel. Of course, any resident individually or who is a member of a tenants group or the Norwich Leaseholders Association may make their voice heard on this critical matter and any questions or concerns can be discussed on a day to day basis with their caretakers in each block and officers will ensure these form a key part of the council's response to safety in tower blocks. This will be a comprehensive submission on all aspects of evidence required by the independent review.

As always if tenants have any questions they can contact their councillors or submit these directly to the council at any time and not just as part of this work."

## Question 6

### **Councillor Button to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:**

“With Universal Credit looming on the horizon and food bank use increasing across the city; could the cabinet member comment on the food poverty report which came to cabinet on 13 September and what practical steps the council are taking to tackling inequalities?”

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

“As set out in the cabinet report to which Councillor Button refers, we are in the third year of our Reducing Inequalities action plan, which seeks to develop innovative approaches to tackling deprivation and reducing the pronounced social, economic and health inequalities that exist in Norwich.

We seek to do this by ensuring that council assets and services address the drivers of inequality, such as through our new social value framework. But we are also collaborating closely with partners in specific localities to address local needs, such as through the social prescribing pilot with health and voluntary sector colleagues in Lakenham.

The report highlighted that there are a large number of activities in progress which set out to tackle the underlying causes of food poverty. Given this, the approach the council should take is to support the joining up of projects and services both outside of and inside of the council, and to raise awareness about the existing support available to residents.

This is the approach which has been taken with the wider reducing inequalities strategy where there has been successes in facilitating the linking up of existing services, brokering and testing of new approaches and projects and engaging council services, partners and residents around the agenda.

There is a close relationship between the council’s wider reducing inequalities agenda and the proposals on food poverty both in terms of related issues and a likely shared approach.

Therefore it is recommended that the actions are integrated within the wider reducing inequalities action plan for 2017-18.

In addition to these actions, the council also provides additional support to maximise income to those most financial excluded. The council has maintained the Council Tax Reduction Scheme that ensures that the most vulnerable residents continue to receive 100% relief on their council tax, which alleviates some of the pressure on household budgets wrought by the welfare reform agenda.

Of course the most important thing we can do is help residents into good jobs, and we are continuing to advocate for a truly inclusive model of Norwich in its role as a key driver of regional growth, to provide leadership around the Real Living Wage campaign and continuing to deliver practical support for residents through our annual jobs fairs and through the development of digital hubs across the city.”



## Question 7

**Councillor Woollard to ask the cabinet member for resources the following question:**

“Can the cabinet member for resources comment on how the new city council procurement policy for the awarding of contracts will help to increase the benefit to the local community?”

**Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resource’s response:**

“The new Social Value in Procurement Framework will seek to further increase the benefit to the local community. We have already built into contracts clauses such as paying the Living Wage Foundation’s living wage. Social value is about getting more value out of the money we spend. It allows us to maximise value for money by influencing contractors to tailor the way they deliver a contract to maximise their positive impact on wider corporate priorities, such as supporting the local economy or reducing inequality

The cabinet report on 18 September 2017 gave an example of what Norwich Norse Environmental are delivering.

Other local examples are:-

- Gasway Services Ltd attending local community functions such as Summer Fayres held in our parks.
- Norwich Norse Building Ltd providing work placements and work experience for local school children. Also working with long term unemployed to get back into work. Sponsoring local sports teams and rising stars.
- The tenant’s contents insurance contract providing social value by offering a financial product in a form which allows tenants on low income to gain access to contents insurance. This also promotes financial inclusion.
- Stannah Lift Services Ltd providing subject-matter-experts from within their organisation to provide guidance on the skills required for a variety of roles, such as engineering, logistics, marketing, and project management, and administration
- Nplaw undertakes work for the 3rd sector and this is to be further widened with potential to undertake work for Norfolk Community Law in the future

We shall be looking at how we actually contract for services and also what can be built into existing contracts.

An example of a difference we can make is by looking to see if it is appropriate to break our contracts down into small lots when we go out to tender. This should give a greater opportunity and encourage tenders from a wider range of organisations, including small, local businesses and social enterprises, increasing competition.

This has recently been successful with the re-let of the private sector leasing maintenance and small repairs contract. The trades required were split down into four lots; previously

these were let as one. Five suppliers returned a submission and the contract will now have three suppliers whereas the previous contract had just one.

This framework will enable the council to have an open 'social value' dialogue with our suppliers, encouraging them to work with us to identify what actions can be taken to benefit their employees and / or the local community. There is already a lot of good practice being undertaken by our contractors and the first steps will be to share this.

This is another proud achievement for a progressive council such as Norwich City Council in promoting the interests of our local community."

## **Question 8**

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

"Will the Cabinet member for health and wellbeing comment on the prizes achieved by Norwich Market in the Best Independent Food and Drink category at the Norfolk Food and Drink Awards 2017 earlier this month? Coupled to the Norwich City Council 10-year strategy to turn the market around and the much welcome revival of the market traders association, can he comment on whether this is this further evidence of the improvements achieved by this administration?"

**Councillor Ryan, cabinet member for health and wellbeing's response:**

"The fantastic achievement of the award in the category of Best Independent Food and Drink Retailer is the result of the hard work of the council's market management team working with the market traders association and others to modernise and drive the market forward. Our action has been influenced by gaining an understanding of the needs of the market, a wide ranging survey of the public indicating a desire for an increased range of foods to be provided and listening closely to the concerns of the traders. All of this led to the formulation of the 10 year strategy adopted by both the council and the traders. Initial action has led to the introduction of a formal balance of goods policy with a directive to provide an increased variety of world foods, whilst maintaining a balance across the market to protect the businesses from undue internal competition. The attraction of new and varied stalls has led to increased footfall in the market place benefitting new and longstanding stall holders alike. These improvements have enabled the occupancy rate of the market to be increased from approximately 75% to currently just over 90%. This in turn has increased the rental income revenue whilst driving down the costs to the council in supporting the unoccupied spaces.

The team have not just concentrated on attracting new stall holders but have also worked with the traders association undertaking many projects to increase the well-being and general feel of the market place including provision of better signage, a dedicated seating area and the pop-up stalls project enabling potential new businesses to 'try the market out' for a short period. This is just the start of the 10 year strategy and is an indicator of this administration's commitment to plan for the long term and take effective action making real changes to our city enabling business to thrive and enriching the city as a whole."

## Question 9

### **Councillor Maxwell to ask the leader of the council the following question:**

“As a UNISON member and lifelong trade unionist I want to congratulate Unison on their work undertaken in pursuing the employment tribunal fees case all the way to the Supreme Court in order to bring about an end to the injustice of employment tribunal fees as part of the general assault on employees’ rights since 2010. Will the leader again offer his support to the Norwich City Council UNISON branch in supporting the annual Love your Union week and for all employees to join a trade union?”

### **Councillor Waters, leader of the council’s response:**

“Can I thank Councillor Maxwell for her timely question.

Norwich City Council has for many years enjoyed a positive and collaborative working relationship with UNISON and its officers and representatives. The opportunity for employees to become members of the union is promoted by the council in many ways including a presentation on behalf of the Norwich City Branch at the Corporate Induction course that is delivered by the branch secretary. As an employer we recognise and celebrate the right of any individual employee to join the trade union, hold office within the trade union and benefit from representation. I will of course be delighted to add my support to the annual Love your Union week and I encourage all other members of council to do the same. Councillor Maxwell, set an example in this regard at last year’s Love your Union week during her year of office as Lord Mayor. It is my certain belief that one of the pillars in the creation of a more equal society is a strong trade union movement.

The example cited by Councillor Maxwell of UNISON’s four-year campaign to overturn the coalition government’s infamous imposition of employment tribunal fees is just one example of the value of union membership. It is worth reminding ourselves of the basis of the Supreme Court’s decision.

The Supreme Court unanimously ruled the iniquity of employment tribunal fees unlawful and unconstitutional and the government have had to refund more than £27million to the thousands of people charged for taking claims to tribunals since July 2013, when fees were introduced by then Lord Chancellor Chris Grayling.

The seven Supreme Court judges ridiculed the government’s misunderstanding of “elementary economics, and plain common sense”, when it claimed higher fees would mean increased demand.

The judges also said fees were set so high, it “has had a deterrent effect upon discrimination claims, among others”, and also put off more genuine cases, than the so-called vexatious claims the government claimed fees were meant to deter.

The Court said UNISON's evidence showed the fall in claims when fees came in was "so sharp, so substantial and so sustained" that they could not reasonably be afforded by those on low to middle incomes."

## **Question 10**

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

"I was pleased to see the Big Switch and Save energy collective switching scheme rolled out once again. This path breaking initiative has saved constituents in my ward thousands of pounds on their energy bills. Can the cabinet member for social inclusion comment on the latest promotion of the scheme and the savings for residents in Norwich already achieved?"

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

"Thank you for highlighting this practical and popular scheme that has helped thousands of Norwich citizens to save money. Through the power of collective purchasing we work to secure the lowest energy prices for our registrants each winter, therefore helping to reduce the cost of energy and offset rising energy prices.

The 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the Norwich Switch and Save will run until the 28 November. We hope to save on average £220 a year per household. Over the last 14 tranches 21,000 people have registered for the Switch and Save. If all homes took up the offered savings a total of at least £4.5 million would be saved on energy bills.

I would urge residents to take advantage of the council's energy savings service. They can register either online by visiting [www.bigswitchandsave.co.uk](http://www.bigswitchandsave.co.uk) or offline by calling the council's contact centre.

Norwich City Council endeavours to engage with fuel poor households regularly to ensure that they are aware of the Switch and Save and other available help. We will continue to work hard to help our residents out of the fuel poverty trap.

So while fuel poverty levels are increasing nationally, we have bucked the trend in Norwich for the fourth consecutive year. So we have 1,126 better off families not having to make the decision to heat or eat over the winter in Norwich"

## **Question 11**

**Councillor Beth Jones to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:**

"It has been nearly 10 years since the Norwich and Norfolk Eco Awards have been in operation and during this time I have seen many fantastic entries, showing the innovation and skill at improving environmental sustainability in our city. Can the cabinet member for

safe city environment comment on the steps the city council is taking to promote and support this excellent award scheme?”

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

“Thank you for your timely question regarding the excellent Norwich and Norfolk Eco Awards. This year the awards are celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary and are going from strength to strength.

Norwich City Council successfully ran the eco awards from 2008 to 2015 for entrants within Norwich only. In 2015 we were approached by county council colleagues to work together to widen the reach of the awards to the whole of the county of Norfolk. We also took the opportunity to add two new categories: Eco Home and Eco Food Producer. This is the third year of our collaboration with county council colleagues and the awards are going from strength to strength as we attract more diverse eco entries year on year from across Norfolk.

Since the inception of the awards we have received hundreds of entries from a plethora of schools, businesses, community groups, food producers and homeowners. To date we have been pleased to crown 9 Eco Heroes and we're looking forward to crowning our tenth in March next year!

New for the decennial celebrations we are introducing an online 'People's Vote' option for the Eco Hero category, so the public can really get behind their chosen Eco Hero and raise their profile and share their achievements as widely as possible.

The entries are judged by a panel of judges with specialist knowledge in a range of sustainability areas. Winners and highly commended entrants are then invited to attend an awards evening which is a celebration of all their achievements and a great opportunity to make more contacts with like-minded environmentalists.

This year officers are seeking to attract sponsors for the awards in order to make them self-sustaining and increase the reach of the awards. Vatenfall, the renewable energy specialists are confirmed as the overall event sponsor. In addition primary school category winners will win tablet devices for their school and officers are seeking to offer in-kind prizes for other categories where possible.

As you may have noticed in the recent edition of the Citizen magazine, the eco awards are currently open for applications until Friday 1 December. Entries are welcomed for the following categories: eco primary and secondary schools, eco small/medium businesses (under 50 employees), eco community groups, eco food producers and eco homeowners, as well as the coveted Eco Hero.

If my fellow councillors are able to promote the awards in their own wards that would be very helpful, or if you know of any deserving groups who deserve to have a light shone on their environmental achievements, please encourage them to enter. If you have any queries please contact either Richard Willson or Claire Tullett in the environmental strategy team. They can provide you with posters to put up in your local community space.

More information and an application form on the Eco Awards can be found at [www.eco-awards.co.uk](http://www.eco-awards.co.uk)

## Question 12

**Councillor Vaughan Thomas to ask the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods the following question:**

“This council has an enviable record of working with residents to find new ways of empowering individuals and communities to realise their full potential. I was pleased to see a recent update in Citizen exploring the different initiatives taking place within the ‘Get Involved’ umbrella. Can the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods comment on the range of activities and groups which have been helped to successfully set up in recent months through this scheme?”

**Councillor Herries, cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods’ response:**

“Councillor Thomas is quite correct that the council has a long history of supporting resident led activity and *Get involved* is the current programme of support for those living and working in Norwich to participate in community activity easily in a way that suits them.

Residents are being invited to identify things they’d like to do in their local neighbourhood and communities and *Get Involved* provides support and guidance to help make those activities happen.

Since the roll out of *Get involved*, enquiries from residents and local groups into local green and neglected spaces in neighbourhoods has shown an increasing willingness and interest from those residents to have a role in the improvement and management of these spaces.

The programme of support covers a number of different areas of work and includes:

The development of a Crowdfunder platform which allows an initial £50k pot of neighbourhood community infrastructure levy (CIL) funds to be distributed within a framework which identifies suitable and sustainable projects; gives community ownership to neighbourhood CIL funding; the opportunity for community to deliver their own projects plus the prospect to generate further funds from residents and businesses.

The platform went live during the summer and will be formally launched in November.

The development of an online digital sharing platform to allow groups to advertise their available space, equipment and skills for others to borrow with a mechanism to contact and arrange borrowing and upload community events, activities and services using these assets.

Search functionality will allow users to search for specific assets and participatory activities by theme and geography. It will also include a range of resources and tools to support people to use the assets to create successful, safe activities.

Over 70 groups have been involved in the design of the platform and external funds have been secured for its development which will be tested during October for launch after this.

Linked to this is the development of hubs around the city which will act as repositories for equipment and resources hosted by existing VCSE organisations and groups.

To maximise best use and the sharing of the skills in our communities, the council is encouraging the development of thematic support networks based on green spaces and community buildings.

The council is already seeing some exciting community led projects. The following are a few examples of how a change in the council's approach to one which is more enabling and collaborative is inspiring resident's passion for green spaces in the city.

### **Old Library Wood**

The area of the city which includes Old Library Wood, has often been a focus for anti-social behaviour with the council and police regularly engaged.

The council has supported residents into how they might focus their interests on improvements in Old Library Wood, as a way to create a community project whilst also making visible changes which have been shown elsewhere to deter negative behaviour.

The Old Library Wood Collective have since become a formal group, who are working with officers to build their capacity; contribute to the development on a management plan for the site which the group and officers are very positive about. Looking longer term ideas include planning for activities and community projects and securing external funding to support the management of the woodland.

### **Tuckswood**

Tuckswood had been allocated S106 funding for the green space in the centre, largely to reduce parking on the space and make it more useable.

Rather than taking a traditional approach of the council designing and implementing a scheme with bollards it was suggested that planters could be installed in key locations to promote food growing which would also link to the reducing inequalities action plan as well as resolving the anti-social behaviour issues locally.

Funding to build the raised beds was allocated to a local voluntary group, TCV, with the requirement that they engaged local residents in long term use of the planting. TCV, helped raise additional funds to explore use of the beds for food growing and then a cooking programmes to support residents use of the food.

This approach has demonstrated how community ownership and more innovative use of these funds and investment can deliver against multiple corporate priorities that will involve and benefit local residents.

### **Mile Cross Gardens**

There was an opportunity to change the way the council engaged the community as part of S106/CIL funded projects to see the impact. A small budget allocated from S106 funding allocated to the gardens was used to commission a local group to run some local events to engage residents in how they wanted to use the park in order to influence the design. This was tendered and won by the Mile Cross Festival committee.

The committee worked with other local groups including youth groups to run a family fun day in the park to get views from residents to present initial ideas to the design team. A further Christmas market event was used to present the first draft of plans for residents to comment on. Some residents as part of the engagement days, expressed an interest in forming a Friends of Mile Cross gardens group which is being considered

The approach has been used to widen the approach for allocating the Crowdfunding monies so that it can be used to address training and kick-starting of activities alongside traditional infrastructure which can then be designed with future use in mind

### **Sloughbottom Pavilion**

During the Mile Cross Gardens project, a local youth group was interested in using the two small pavilions in the park. Although not found to be suitable, the group have been working on building a partnership with other interested organisations to take on a more ambitious project about how they use the building to increase use of the park itself, with sports activities and a community café.

The group have raised funds locally to allow the groups to access training and support from Community Action Norfolk to look at establishing a formal group to allow them to take on a lease as a partnership of groups.

### **Heartsease**

The local church group approach the council to support them in looking at the existing assets in the area to identify gaps in provision which they could fill.

A workshop was run to bring local organisations together to look at existing activities and assets, and encourage partnership working. The event was very well received and was able to allow groups who hadn't previously met to see the breadth of available assets in the local area for them to share use of.



A further progress meeting is scheduled and the groups are aiming to replicate the session with local residents, to see what skills they have which they might want to use in the improvement of local spaces and buildings.

### **Developing small scale projects to improve open spaces**

Residents in Tuckswood are litter picking regularly and approaching local businesses to sponsor additional bins in the areas most affected by rubbish.

A local resident is leading litter picks at Kett's Cave to improve the local park.

Residents in Barrack Street are using planters on their estate to teach young children to grow plants. Even those residents unable to participate in the planting have been donating equipment and supporting their neighbours in other ways.

Permission has been granted for Gardens for Wildlife to take a lease for some previously gated land on Trafford Road. The group have also received a Small Community Grant for their set up equipment and materials to enable them to start work in the space. They are being supported by existing group, LTC Green Spaces, to upskill and work under their insurance.

Newly established Friends of Jubilee Park were awarded a small community grant for their set up costs this summer. They worked alongside existing community activities running the park to survey local users as to what they would like for the park before drawing up their aims and constitutions."

### **Question 13**

**Councillor Brociek-Coulton to ask the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods the following question:**

"Earlier this year a question was asked concerning the ongoing support this council offers to people experiencing domestic abuse, following the shocking and brutal murder of one of my constituents, Kerri McAuley, in Sewell Ward. I noted the importance of the tapestry of strong services, from both the public and voluntary sector, working alongside people experiencing abuse, but also how these are being frankly shredded by this government since 2010. I was therefore surprised at the comments from Chloe Smith MP for Norwich North gave, earlier this month, regarding her backing of organisations tackling domestic violence when she has herself voted for all of the measures which have reduced these vital services. Will the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods comment on my concern and illustrate once again how important well-resourced public services are to countering this growing problem within our city and the role this council can take?"

**Councillor Herries, cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods' response:**

"As the response to the question on this topic earlier in the year made clear we were horrified to hear of Kerri McAuley's murder and the details of the violence she and others

had been subjected to by her violent partner and our hearts go out to her family and friends who are still suffering from the knowledge of what she went through. Any form of abuse is deplorable and we continuously work with voluntary and public services to give as much support as possible to anyone who is experiencing physical or mental abuse or is subject to coercive behaviour. However I too was surprised by Chloe Smith MPs' comments when she has continually voted in support of all her governments' cuts to funding and services that have impacted on the ability of many organisations to tackle these problems.

Since 2010 one in six refuges have closed nationally and there are now huge areas of the country with no access to refuges that offer a vital support to women fleeing violent relationships. Ms Smith may consider that such closures have nothing to do with her but they are as a direct result of the Tory government at Westminster cuts to local councils, done in the name of austerity.

According to the Office of National Statistics 7.7% of women experienced domestic violence in the last year and during their lifetimes 1 in 4 women will be affected. On average two women in England and Wales are killed by a violent partner every week and the number of prosecutions relating to violence against women and girls reached a record high in 2015/16 of 117,568.

Cuts to police and local government funding mean that anti-social behaviour teams and social services teams are over stretched, particularly when it comes to providing a rapid response in an emergency situation. Austerity has resulted in women being less able to flee violent relationships and being put at much greater risk..

A lack of affordable housing also impacts on women trying to leave a dangerous situation and for those who do manage to flee legal representation is now much harder to access, the Court of Appeal heard earlier this year of the case of a woman, raped and beaten by her former husband who had been refused legal aid for a hearing at which he was applying for contact with their children. Ms Smith seems to make no link between this and the cut backs her government have made to Legal Aid.

The 'rape clause' for benefits which came into force in April is reflective of how low this government has sunk and is part of a string of policies that independent bodies warn will cost families thousands. The charity Gingerbread says Universal Credit changes alone will see working single parents, most of whom are women, lose an average of £800 a year by 2020.

Under the Tory government over a third of all local authority funding to domestic and sexual violence services was already cut by 2012, here in Norfolk the Tory led county council cut the budget that provides housing support to vulnerable tenants from £10 million to £4.5 million.

We deplore the government policies that have led directly to cuts in services that protect vulnerable women at risk from abuse and despite Ms Smith's reported words are not borne out by her actions. She and the government she supports have increased the vulnerability and decreased the support to women at risk. Instead of sympathetic words at the increased violence that has occurred as a result of these policies, if she really did have the welfare of vulnerable women at heart she would be campaigning to have those disastrous policies reversed.

As the cabinet member with this as part of my portfolio, I share the concern expressed in your question. I can reassure you that we are doing all in our power to attempt to ameliorate the effects of Government cuts on vulnerable women.

Norwich City Council was successful last year in a partnership bid with Leeway for funding to put in place a new Safe House refuge for Norwich, which also provides a dedicated

space for domestic abuse victims that have no recourse to public funds. The two year project also enables Leeway to provide a support worker across all Norwich refuges, to work with domestic abuse victims that have mental ill health and / or substance misuse issues as a result of the abuse they have experienced.

Norwich is one of a consortium of local public sector partners that are match funding with SafeLives (the national domestic abuse research, training and campaigning organisation) a project that will bring to Norwich five new support services for domestic abuse victims and a new domestic abuse perpetrator programme. This project will launch next year and will run for a further four years.

Our own chief executive, Laura McGillivray, as chair of the county community safety partnership, led on a recent domestic abuse programme, which amongst other things brought the domestic abuse change coordinators to the county. These officers coordinate a network of intensively trained domestic abuse champions, which promotes the increased identification of domestic abuse and confidence in officers to signpost and support people experiencing abuse to receive the help they need. We have around 20 trained domestic abuse champions here at Norwich City Council, across all service areas.

The Norwich Early Help Hub, based here in city hall, enables officers to gain access earlier to domestic abuse support services, to help reduce risk for people experiencing abuse.

Norwich City Council regularly leads the campaigning to raise awareness of domestic abuse and this year, one of our officers has engaged with the business community to raise awareness of the indicators of domestic abuse. The work it has done in this area supported the council's achievement of White Ribbon status in 2015. As a champion of equality issues and safeguarding vulnerable victims, the council plans to continue in its efforts in this area."

#### **Question 14**

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

"Thanks to the active steps this Labour run council has taken since 2006, cycling in Norwich has increased dramatically and by 40% since 2013 alone. Can the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth comment on the ongoing new improvements being delivered through the City Cycle Ambition changes? "

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

"In recent years we have been able to implement significant numbers of cycle improvement schemes across the city as a result of being only one of eight cities in the UK to be awarded city cycle ambition funding from the Department for Transport. I'm sure you are all familiar with the improvements that were made to the pink pedalway; and I am pleased to say that aside from the general 40% increase in cycling in Norwich at specific locations on the pink pedalway the increases are more dramatic. On The Avenues cycling has virtually doubled between 2013 and 2016, in Little Bethel Street it has gone up 70% and Avenue Road has seen an increase of 58%.

Currently we are working on implementing the blue pedalway that runs from Wymondham to North Walsham Road and the yellow pedalway way from the airport to the university technical college at the bottom of Hall Road. Several elements of these routes have already been implemented including:

- A widened shared use pedestrian and cycle facility and a new toucan crossing on the outer section of Newmarket Road
- Cycle and pedestrian improvements at the Catton Grove Road / Woodcock Road and the Fifers Lane / Heyford Road roundabouts
- A link from the Fiddlewood estate to Catton Grove Road including an improved crossing of the outer ring road
- A cycle route across Pointers Field and a traffic free link on Taylors Lane
- A toucan crossing of the outer ring road on Barrett Road and significant cycle improvements in the southern half of Hall Road.

In addition to this there are presently on-going works to provide a stepped cycle track on the inner section of Newmarket Road, new cycle facilities Magdalen Road and improvements to the existing facilities on Bluebell Road.

Yet to come are 3 schemes that will see significant improvements to pedestrian and cycle crossings of the ring roads; at St Crispin's Road, Queens Road and Chartwell Road. This is along with improvements in Eaton centre, a new link to the airport industrial estate from Heyford Road and the further rollout of 20mph speed restrictions in residential areas.

Too often we implement highway improvement schemes without being able to fully promote them or being able to encourage motorists to change their behaviour. This time it is different as Norfolk County Council has secured £1.5M of revenue funding over 3 years to actively promote walking and cycling. Officers working on the cycle ambition project are therefore liaising closely with the county to exploit the potential for yet more growth in cycling that the cycle ambition funding has offered.

Finally you may be interested to hear that consequent on the increased cycling in the city the number of cycle sale and repair shops has grown. It was particularly satisfying to note that within months of the Hall Road cycle scheme being implemented at the southern end of the yellow pedalway, a cycle shop opened up in what was once a car dealership. Evidence, I would suggest, that modal shift is working."