

Council
23 July 2019
Questions to cabinet members or chairs of committees

Question 1

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

“In the light of the devastating and rapid loss of biodiversity, including vitally important local bee species, could the cabinet member please explain why Norwich City Council’s Biodiversity Action Plan has not been updated since 2002?”

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

“Thank you for your question, Councillor Bogelein. The Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was produced in 2002 but does not cover a defined period of time. An increase in the area and quality of priority habitats and species presence and abundance, is not something which is achieved over a short period of time.

The council is a member of the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership (NBP) established in 1996. The partnership is made up of more than 20 local authorities, statutory agencies and voluntary groups working together to implement the Norfolk Biodiversity Action Plan.

Through the NBP the council has contributed to the development and revision of habitat and species action plans that are applicable to the city

The objectives identified in the council’s action plan, relating to priority habitats and species are still relevant today; contributing to the delivery of them is embedded in the work of the council and its stewardship of public green space.

Whilst Biodiversity Action Plans are not specifically referenced in either local or national planning guidance, biodiversity is, nevertheless, an important material consideration when making decisions on applications for new development. For example, our tree planting schemes include many species that promote pollinating insects.

The council is guided first of all by the policies in the Development Plan and secondly by the advice in the National Planning Policy Guidance Framework (NPPF).

Policy DM6 of the Local Plan states that “Development will be expected to take all reasonable opportunities to avoid harm to and protect and enhance the natural environment of Norwich and its setting, including both sites and species. Appropriate proposals which deliver significant benefits or enhancements to local biodiversity or geodiversity will be strongly supported and encouraged. Opportunities should be taken to incorporate and integrate biodiversity, green infrastructure and wildlife friendly features in the design of individual schemes.

Chapter 15 of the NPPF supports this approach, advising that planning decisions should (amongst other things) protect and enhance sites of biodiversity value; minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity. It elaborates on this by stating that if ‘significant’ harm to biodiversity resulting from development cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

The council does recognise the importance of ensuring that the Biodiversity Action Plan is updated.

Work to do this will commence in 2020, which will enable actions in the plan to link with; the government’s recently published 25 year Environment Plan and the council’s River Wensum Strategy, Environmental Strategy but also the emerging Parks and Open Space Strategy. It will also incorporate the work being undertaken to by the council seeking to reduce the reliance on chemical pesticides, herbicides and fungicides within a structured, long-term plan.

The revised BAP will identify a framework of new objectives and actions to ensure that the council makes a difference where it can to not only maintain but, increase the abundance of priority species and the area and quality of priority habitats. It will also identify actions where appropriate to benefit biodiversity generally.

The revised BAP also provides an opportunity to update information such as the increase in the number of sites designated as Local Nature Reserves, the fact that Norfolk County Council’s County Wildlife Sites are in positive management, an increase in the area and quality of lowland heathland, a rare and threatened habitat and priority in the UK BAP. These have been achieved through the council working with external partners and also local communities.

Question 2

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

“Bins left permanently on pavements are creating problems for residents in my ward. Apart from looking unsightly, wheeled bins can block safe routes for pedestrians, particularly those with young children or disabilities. Can the cabinet member tell me why no fixed penalty notices have ever been given out by the council since the introduction of the twin-bin system?”

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

“It is recognised that bins left or stored on pavements can cause issues –

- obstructing pedestrians, especially parents with pushchairs and those with impaired vision or mobility
- making the area look untidy
- be vandalised, stolen or attract littering and fly tipping
- be contaminated by others resulting in the non-collection of the bin by our contractor

The council can invoke the Environmental Protection Act 1990 - Section 46(6) to ensure the removal of wheelie bin(s) from the highway. This legislation, alongside the council's clear guidelines on wheelie bin use, requires householders to ensure that their wheelie bins –

- are not placed out for collection earlier than 6 pm the day before their scheduled collection, and
- are returned to within the boundary of their property before 9 am the day after their collection.

The act gives the council powers to take action where householders fail to follow these reasonable instructions.

Whenever the council receives complaints concerning wheelie bins being permanently left out and stored on the pavement these will be addressed by officers from the area management team. The team will also address such issues whenever they come across them as part of their day-to-day work.

It is always the case that the most successful route to promoting positive behavioural change is to engage with residents by providing information and education as required. In this way we can encourage households to “Help us to make your neighbourhood a cleaner and safer place for everyone”.

This approach is particularly important for Norwich, where, with such a high annual turnover of occupants in many properties, it is essential to communicate positive messages and to be constantly aware of the need to repeat and reinforce messages as neighbourhood populations are continually changing.

There is no body of evidence to support enforcement via fixed penalty notices as a successful 'cure' for the issue of bins left on pavements. The root cause is normally a combination of carelessness, forgetfulness and the distractions of modern life. These are issues best dealt with through engagement and communication.

Residents are encouraged to report all such issues and appropriate actions will be taken to address them"

Question 3

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

“In September 2016, Norwich City Council passed a motion to ‘encourage traders on Norwich Market to sell re-usable containers and invite customers to bring their own, with the aim of phasing out SUP (single-use plastic) containers and cutlery on the Market Stalls by the end of 2017’. As we are now halfway through 2019, could the cabinet member tell me what progress has been made as a result of this resolution?”

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

“The phasing out of single use plastics on Norwich market is continuing to progress extremely well with the market manager focussing on the diverse range of food outlets which we now have available to our citizens and the many thousands of visitors to the city each year.

I feel that it is important to be aware that all traders on Norwich Market operate on the basis of five year leases for their market stalls under the 1954 Landlord and Tenant Act. Under this Act the city council can only make minor changes to their terms and conditions, banning SUPs would be considered a substantial change.

The food stalls are traditionally high users of single use plastics and therefore changing their culture was seen as paramount to encouraging the non-food stalls to also move away from single use plastic.

Of the food stalls:

- 52% are fully compliant and have completely phased out single use plastics,
- 35% are partially compliant and working towards full compliance and
- 9% are non- compliant (4 stalls)
- 4% undetermined use of SUP as yet

We are also seeing non-food stalls that are already compliant or are moving away from single use plastics. A wide range of stalls taking part include: florists, clothing stalls and stalls selling paraphernalia for mobile devices.

The market’s manager will continue to progress this successful informal approach as changes to the market leases will require a consultation process. However, we are proposing to add more helpful guidance in the trader’s handbook giving examples of how traders could run their businesses in a more environmentally-friendly manner.

The changes to the traders handbook are being drafted and will build on the work already undertaken by the council’s events team who has put together a

range of 'suggestions' for anyone trading at events to enable them to operate in a sustainable manner.

The aim set in 2016 was an ambitious one. Given that the number of occupied stalls has risen since then by almost 30%, the collaborative, informal approach with market stall holders was believed to be the best option to result in the reduction and phasing out of SUPs. The figures above reflect the positive approach adopted with 87% of food stalls either fully or partially compliant.

The progress made using the informal approach has been effective and we will continue with this strategy. The support from the traders is very strong, we will build on what we have already achieved and keep the traders with us going forwards to deliver the SUP's solution."

Question 4

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

“In its two recent progress reports to Parliament on reducing carbon emissions and preparing for rises in global temperature, the Committee on Climate Change identified a woeful lack of action in nearly all 33 sectors assessed. Concerning the natural environment, the Committee highlighted amongst other topics, the decline in the amount of urban green space and the increase in impermeable surfacing since 2001. The city of Norwich has also seen this trend. Norwich has lost a considerable amount of green space as a result of redevelopment, mostly housing. The losses include school playing fields such as at the former Blackdale School and part of Sewell College and the Hewett School playing fields; open land in the River Yare valley off Bluebell Road; green sports grounds such as Lakenham Cricket Ground and the civil service sports field in Eaton; hard surfacing of public grass tennis courts; the sub-division of gardens for housing and the extensive amounts of hard surfacing in new housing developments. The net increase in green open space has been negligible. All such developments have been approved by Norwich City Council as the planning authority. What action will the city council take to reverse the loss of urban green space and the increase in the amount of hard surfaces, with the ultimate aim of achieving a large net increase in green space and an increase in the amount of vegetation cover?”

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

“Thank you for the question highlighting the issue of green space in the urban environment which I’m sure we will all agree is vitally important for the future of the city.

For full accuracy, I would like to highlight that the statement above relating to ‘All such developments have been approved by Norwich City Council’ is not correct as this has not been the case. For instance, the Lakenham Cricket Ground was approved by the planning inspectorate not the city council.

The city council has comprehensive policies in place to protect and enhance the green infrastructure of the city and over time I believe these are leading to an increase in the public benefits that are derived from this green space.

At the outset it should be recognised that Norwich is relatively well served with green space compared to many other UK cities. Our open space needs assessment concluded the following:

“In general, there is good open space provision within Norwich, particularly of parks, natural spaces and amenity spaces. Indeed, there are no large residential areas of the city without access within the identified thresholds to an informal or formal amenity area or park. This is due to:

- the geographical advantage of Norwich in having extensive areas of heathland, river valleys and wooded ridges within the city;
- large scale investment in parks in the early twentieth century;
- positive strategic planning for open space in the last 30 years;
- successful investment of funds in open space from developer contributions (particularly play facilities) and grant funding in recent years;
- the presence of some readily accessible facilities, such as the country park at Whitlingham, in neighbouring authorities.”

The assessment went onto to conclude that the following should be the priorities for the development of open spaces:

- The quality of some natural spaces;
- Further developing the programme of investment in improving and extending the network of open space corridors;
- New play provision to serve new development;
- New allotments and better access to existing facilities;
- More outdoor sports facilities, mainly on existing parks and through dual use of school and other facilities;
- Retention and improvement of built facilities, particularly sports halls.”

This evidence has been used to inform our policies both with regard to development (particularly policies JCS1 and DM 6-8) and how we approach the management of the open space which we own.

These policies don't seek to protect green space from development in all circumstances but rather seek to provide a framework so that it can evolve to better meet the needs of a growing city.

The policies do generally allow for the more intensive use of green space for sports activity, so hard surfacing of parts of Heigham and Eaton Parks and Hewitt school playing fields have been allowed to facilitate more intensive use. This not only better meets needs for recreation but is delivered in a way that avoids harm to some of the issues you raise. So the surface used for the tennis courts in the parks is permeable meaning that they will not affect levels of water run-off. Indeed in certain places, such as Eagle Park new play areas have seen sustainable urban drainage features included within them increasing rates of permeability.

Where policies do allow for the loss of green space, measures are taken to improve the quality of remaining open spaces and safeguard access to it. So in the case of Lakenham Cricket Ground (which was approved by the planning inspectorate not the city council) allotments and public open space and play areas have been provided on what was previously private open space. This has enabled improvements in the quality and accessibility of provision all year round and for more hours a day.

Most of our development takes place on previously developed land, in many instances policies result in the provision of new publically accessible greenspace and improved rates of surface permeability. A particularly good example of this is the sizeable area of open space and new school playing field provided as part of the development of the former Norfolk and Norwich Hospital site in the city, but there are many other smaller scale examples of this I could also point to. As part of our own Sterling prize nominated residential scheme at Goldsmith Street significant enhancements have been made to the adjoining open space.

Furthermore, where development does take place it contributes to improvements to infrastructure through the community infrastructure levy or section 106 payments. Such monies have been used to deliver considerable improvements to our open spaces in recent years including particularly significantly improved access to parts of the Yare Valley at Marston Marshes, Earlham Millennium Green and through the new bridge connection to Bowthorpe Southern Park. In taking forward our River Wensum Strategy we hope to see further improvements to the Wensum corridor in the coming years.

So to conclude the city council takes open spaces very serious and is very active in maximising the public benefits that they bring to the city. This does not involve an absolutist approach of seeking to protect every open space at all costs but is a more pragmatic balanced approach that over time is delivering significant improvements to the city. Alongside this approach we have also invested in our walking and cycle route networks to enhance our links to our green spaces and play areas.

Question 5

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

“Analysis of information accompanying the recommended Norwich Western Link Route C Option indicates that carbon emissions would increase by 19.5% between 2025 and 2040 due to an increase in traffic if a new road were created along this route. Route C would also seriously damage the ecological value of the River Wensum corridor, for example, by disturbing two maternity roosts of Barbastelle bats, the UK's rarest mammal, close to Route C. These impacts are incompatible with the climate and biodiversity emergencies facing us. Clive Lewis, the MP for Norwich South, has stated publicly that he is vehemently against the proposed Link Road. He was quoted in the Norwich Evening News on 8 July as saying, ‘This road will be a monument to the folly of politicians who never got the memo about climate change and ecological destruction and future generations will mock the names that are attached to it’. Will the names of cabinet members be among those that future generations mock or will they re-consider their support for the road?”

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

“I am aware that the MP for the south of the city is opposed to the Western Link. However, the south of the city has for many years benefited from the southern bypass, which has removed through traffic (including slow moving HGV's and other vehicles) from his constituency. This traffic now flows freely along the A47 and mostly does not enter the city. This has been a welcome development. The city council has a duty on behalf of the whole city – north as well as south. The Western Link will deliver benefits for everyone, but especially those who live in the north and west of the city. An area which still experiences traffic similar to that in the south before the southern bypass was built. These citizens deserve the same benefits.

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

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

Question 6

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

“The waste disposal company, Biffa, which collects Norwich's waste was convicted in June of breaking the law by sending 10,000 tonnes of unsorted household recycling, labelled as waste paper, to China. What reassurance can the cabinet member give that household recycling waste from Norwich is not simply being sent abroad instead of being properly recycled?”

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

“This is not a situation that can arise in Norwich. Biffa are only responsible for the collection of waste and materials for recycling. They have no responsibility for the recovery or reprocessing of the material collected and play no part in the decision making process for determining end-markets for recycling.

All mixed dry recycling collected in Norwich – that is all recycling except food and garden waste – is delivered to the materials recovery facility (MRF) at Costessey. The MRF is a joint venture owned and operated by a consortium of Norse Environmental Waste Services (NEWS), the county council and the seven Norfolk district councils. NEWS directors establish the best-value end markets for recycled material with full input from and monitoring by the council's representatives.

All recovered material, regardless of destination has a verifiable recycling audit trail and all recovered material is effectively reprocessed to be used again. Even the waste material – the contaminants that cannot be recycled – is re-used to create energy from waste.

It should be noted that there is nothing intrinsically wrong with the movement of recyclable materials to overseas destinations if the end-market is effectively recycling the delivered material for re-use. This is a pre-requisite for all materials leaving the NEWS MRF, which in 2018 reached a milestone of one million tonnes of material successfully recycled.”

Question 7

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

“In 2018, the council agreed to look at re-instating water fountains, to improve public health and make water readily available to people in the city without creating extra plastic waste. Can the cabinet member comment on the progress that has been made?”

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

“The council decided to focus on the Refill Norwich campaign as the simplest and most cost effective use of its resources to provide the public with a safe and convenient way of replenishing their water bottles.

The provision of public drinking water fountains raises issues in relation to installation and maintenance costs (ownership, drainage, water and cleaning the unit and the area) and the need to manage and address complaints about the unit.

Additionally, water fountains can lead to public health risks through contamination for example from animals and birds and also misuse by the public such as drinking straight from the filling spout or contaminating the spout with bacterially unclean hands

The excellent work that has already been undertaken by Refill Norwich has been well publicised and the recent release of their app for smart devices allows the citizens of Norwich and the many thousands of visitors who come to enjoy our city to readily access free refills for their reusable drinking water bottles where and when they need them.

Recently, the media covered the launch by the Forum of its water bottle refilling station on 19 June which is well positioned in the centre of the city.

Members will be mindful of the Government cuts made to council budgets and the remaining budget gap which needs to be closed with some £2.5m of gross savings having to be found for each of the next four years.

Promoting Refill Norwich provides a cost effective approach to the provision of water as well as promoting the option to refill containers and help to reduce the use of single use plastics.”

Question 8

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

“Fighting climate breakdown is about much more than emissions and scientific metrics- it's about fighting for a just and sustainable world that works for us all. With this in mind, school strikers are calling on everyone: young people, parents, workers, and all concerned citizens to join climate strikes and a week of actions starting on September 20. How will the council support this upcoming week of climate strikes and action?”

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

“Thank you for your question. Norwich City Council leads by example. I have spoken many times about all that we do to address the climate change issue and how we do this in a meaningful, practical, and sustainable manner. There is a climate change emergency and we wish to promote action that resists and reverses the crisis. We show time and again that gestures waste precious energy and consume time that should actually be devoted to achieving change.

For someone to adopt a sustainable lifestyle, a supportive environment is one of the best things that the city council can do. Thus by fitting thermodynamic hot water systems to hundreds of our houses; by fitting solar panels to many of our buildings; by grant aiding insulation works in private sector housing, by starting a white label energy company which offers renewable gas as well as electricity with a pricing model based on social and climate justice; by building houses to high environmental standards including our award winning passivhaus developments; by tree planting; by management of open spaces (and so many other activities), we make a city where sustainability is part of its ethos. A culture of sustainability in environmental, social, and economic terms is perhaps the greatest support that the city can give.

Education has not been the city of Norwich's responsibility since the early 1970s: that is the responsibility of Norfolk County Council. We do, however, promote many environmental issues which can be used in education and involve schools. For example our Eco Awards have been celebrating and promoting the grass roots environmental projects carried out by primary and secondary schools since 2008. Through our work with citizen groups, we promote activities involving children with such things as building bug-houses, wildflower seed planting with Friends of Norwich in Bloom and inter-generational 'grow your own projects' such as the Tuckswold 'Mindful Mondays' group in conjunction with The Conservation Volunteers. Our One Planet Norwich and Pumpkin Rescue festivals again have great childhood participation.

If we are to judge by what actually happened at the last climate strike, schools were generally supportive, some in creative and positive ways such as suspending the curriculum and turning the day over to project work on citizen action and learning more about the environment. Some schools permitted the head teacher to attend a national rally on the day.

Will we support the upcoming week? We definitely support the principles for which it is called and continue all the practical work that we do.”

Question 9

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

“Please could the cabinet for social housing assure members that in the process of assessing housing needs that housing officers treat elderly tenants diagnosed with dementia in the correct manner, ensuring that they have 'capacity' to answer questions correctly being the key consideration.”

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

“I would like to thank Councillor Lubbock for her question and to reassure council that housing officers do treat elderly tenants diagnosed with dementia in the correct manner.

As a member of the Norwich City Dementia Action Alliance we show our commitment to becoming a dementia friendly city and have pledged to provide training and awareness to all our employees.

Just last month we hosted a Dementia Awareness week which provided information and resources to all officers. The council also holds regular dementia information sessions for staff and runs a dementia e-learning course.

Other dementia focussed training will be arranged throughout the year to continue and embed this learning. This will include supporting people with dementia on the phone and understanding customers with dementia.

This training provides front officers with the skills and knowledge to understand and recognise dementia so they can respond in the most appropriate way.

In terms of housing needs, where an elderly tenant has dementia and their needs are not being met by their current accommodation we will discuss the situation with them, their support worker or a family member and seek the best solution. Where there is no existing support for the tenant, we are able to make the necessary referrals to ensure that the right help is put in place. In this way, we are able to ensure that the tenant's best interests are looked after and any housing needs that they have are appropriately addressed.”

Question 10

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

“At our March 2019 meeting, this council agreed to ask the leader, in his capacity as vice chair of the Pensions Committee of the Norfolk Pension Fund, to ask the committee to work up a business case for using its investments to benefit the local community through house building. It was agreed that this policy could be of significant benefit to the fund as well as the community.

As this item was on the agenda of the recent meeting of the Pensions Committee, I would be grateful if Councillor Waters could update me with the detail of the committee’s discussion”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“The motion was considered by the Norfolk County Council Pensions Committee on Tuesday 9 July 2019. This was an ‘above the line’ public item, the recommendation on this item can be found in the agenda can be found [here](#) or on the Norfolk County Council website. The Pensions Committee noted the motion and rejected the call to draw up a business case on using its investments to fund the building houses in the local area. Key reasons for this were that the Investment Strategy seeks to balance risk and return, creating a need for diversified investment. By supporting this strategy the Pension Fund also does not develop business cases for specific investment opportunities and therefore the recommendation was to refuse the request.

Following discussion the committee decided that when the statutory guidance on asset pooling is available the committee may be able to review their position on local investment.

The full minutes of the meeting will be available on the Norfolk County Council [website](#) in due course.”

Question 11

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

“Like many councillors I thoroughly enjoyed the Lord Mayor’s procession earlier this month, despite the slight rain which is certainly beyond anyone’s control! Many of my constituents have also commented that the event was different but enhanced through not having diesel lorries belching out fumes along the route, particularly as this council is committed to reducing its carbon footprint. Can the leader comment on the success of the event and how it might be enhanced still further in future years?”

Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:

“The Lord Mayors Celebration is a free three day event. It is organised by our events team who run, support and attract many major events to the city each year. In July alone they will have supported the British Cycling Event, Norwich Pride, the 10k run, a number of big events in Earlham and Eaton Park and delivered the Lord Mayors weekend.

This year’s celebration kicked off on Friday night with lots of activity in Chapelfield Gardens including a paint party, music and a funfair. The weather was great and the crowds were large.

It continued on Saturday with street entertainment, a main stage outside the Fourm, other stages throughout the city, a children’s area on Chantry car park and lots more activity in Chapelfield Gardens, then the procession, a silent disco, all culminating in the much loved firework display from the Castle.

The procession was more or less the same length as last years, with exactly the same mix of groups taking part, minus just 12 lorries – many of which were historically commercial entries. But, as we know, it rained all day on Saturday and this always affects how people view events and the numbers that come out to see them. Some people loved it and some people didn’t.

On Sunday we had more activity around the city including the Lanes Fair and the duck race. Both of which we support and made happen. The sun shone and the city was full.

This year we brought in external Arts Council funding so we could work with more groups on the theme and the Tesla owners of Great Britain came from all over the country and offered their time free and carried members of the civic association in the procession.

A big thank you must go to all the participants who were absolutely amazing and performed and paraded over the weekend despite Saturdays downpour.

This council is proud to maintain, despite suffering the effects of 10 years of austerity, the long held tradition of supporting free events. These event encourage community participation, get people to people to visit our city and, by the very nature of being free, mean that everyone can take part. We are also fortunate that Norwich is ambitious and so it is that we made history this year with no petrol or diesel vehicles.

This council is taking many steps to help tackle climate change, whether that be building the first ever social housing scheme to be nominated for the Stirling Prize, the creation of Roar Power, or making history by removing petrol and diesel from the Lord Mayors procession.

Norwich has always been good at doing things first, but sometimes doing things first is hard.

Can I reassure Councillor Manning that we are planning next year's event and we already have 4 entries and a potential sponsor who wants to work with us. This is unheard of so early before the event takes place."

Question 12

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

“I was pleased to sign up and register for the new City Council Roar Power energy company which will promote our eco-friendly and sustainable agenda whilst supporting the most vulnerable in our community. I realise this is an enormous and unique undertaking given what we are entering. Can the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment comment on the progress with the new initiative and the potential benefits it will provide to both users and our precious environment?”

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

“Thank you for your timely question and support by signing up to register with Roar Power.

By way of an update, I'm happy to let you know that our new sustainable energy provider is set to launch in full later this year.

A collaboration between Norwich City Council and energy provider Engie, Roar Power will provide Norwich and Norfolk with sustainable energy at competitive prices.

Our environmental responsibility is incredibly important to us so it's no accident that Roar Power provides 100% renewable electricity to all customers and is only one of a few UK power companies to offer renewable gas.

The typical home produces 3.4 tonnes of CO₂ per year from fuel use alone. By encouraging the use of renewable energy we are really taking strides towards achieving one of our 2040 Norwich City Vision aims of being a carbon neutral by 2050 and using 100% renewable energy by 2040.

In addition to this, helping our local community is a fundamental foundation of Roar Power's key values.

We've worked hard to ensure that fuel poverty has not increased in Norwich since 2011, despite national pressures; but we need to find new ways of combatting this vital issue.

This is why one of Roar Power's available tariffs, called the 'community tariff', will see a portion of any surplus made get redirected to supporting those experiencing or at risk of fuel poverty – something of huge importance to this city and its people when it's a sad fact that we have almost 8,000 fuel poor homes in Norwich.

I hope this addresses your question Councillor Button and I also hope everyone here this evening shares my enthusiasm for this great piece of collaborative work which will see Roar Power provide sustainable energy at competitive rates and also offer the chance for people to help some of the most vulnerable in our city.”

Question 13

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

“With a worrying rise in attacks against the LGBT+ community in our country since 2016 the importance of restating, championing and promoting the equality agenda within our city has never been more crucial. One such practical opportunity will be the support this city council gives to Norwich Pride and the fantastic work they do to promote and protect LGBT+ people and rights within this city. Can the cabinet member for social inclusion comment on the importance of pride in Norwich and how tackling homophobia, working with partners, remains a key priority for this city council?”

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

“In the year that marks the 50th anniversary of Stonewall, events like Norwich Pride take on huge importance and extra significance. We are immensely fortunate to have this well-loved and well supported event in our city. In the last 11 years Norwich Pride has grown to become an iconic event in the city’s calendar. It is a statement about what this city is and what it stands for and a credit to those who organise and deliver it.

This city council has long been a supporter of this Pride, and over the years, more and more organisations and businesses have also given it their backing.

But there is no getting away from the fact that since 2016 attacks on the LGBT+ and other communities have increased nationally, as the division and unrest in our country has risen. And this council absolutely and unequivocally condemns that.

We must not forget that it is only 50 years since Stonewall and the world has come a long way, but as recent trends have shown us we must always be vigilant. We must continue to work together to make sure that Norwich is remains a truly welcoming City.

I very much look forward to Norwich Pride 2019 and hope the sun shines down on all the participants and spectators”

Question 14

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

“I see from the local media that the gift of Goldsmith Street continues to ‘keep on giving’ in terms of yet another batch of awards for the city council in recognising the success of the scheme. Can the cabinet member for social housing comment on these awards and the importance of promoting our record of building outstanding, modern and environmentally friendly council housing?”

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

“Thank you for your question.

I was delighted to recently attend the Housing Design Awards where Goldsmith Street was showcased at a seminar before being awarded both the Good Neighbour and Overall Winner awards by the housing minister.

This builds upon the recent success at the national Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) awards, and only last week it was announced that the scheme has been shortlisted as one of six projects for the Stirling Prize. The Stirling Prize organised and awarded annually by the RIBA is presented for buildings that have made the greatest contribution to the evolution of architecture in the past year. The new housing at Goldsmiths Street is the first ever such nomination for a council housing scheme and one which I am immensely proud.

Previously the scheme has won a number of local awards including CPRE Norfolk’s green build award, Norfolk Construction Excellence award for sustainability, RICS East award for residential development and finally RIBA East project award and their special awards for sustainability and client of the year.

Development of the initial 93 dwellings on the site is now complete and all properties are let and occupied by new tenants, already a sense of community is developing. It was particularly fantastic to hear some of the stories from the new tenants on a film that was made for the Housing Design Awards and how happy they were having moved in. The new homes provide spacious accommodation, let at truly social rents whilst performing to a very high environmental standard that will help our tenants address fuel poverty.

Last week The Guardian ran an article entitled ‘I’ve seen the future and it’s Norwich’. This article highlighted how ground breaking the council has been in providing the highest quality housing for social rents and how this could be a template for other local authorities to follow.

I have been keen to promote our development work not only on this site but previously on Hansard Close, Rayne Park and more recently Bullard Road to other local authorities and following our awards success and the Guardian

article we are receiving a number of requests to learn from what we have done.

Where possible we will arrange to showcase our work by inviting interested parties to visit and have already done this with a number of local authorities, registered providers and architects during the build of Goldsmith Street.

I am incredibly proud that we are leading the way in development of homes that are 'fit for the future'.

Ultimately, the biggest prize is a lifetime home of the highest quality in the finest city.

Question 15

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

“Last year I assisted a constituent with a food caddy issue and was pleased to learn that they had subsequently and meticulously kept it “fed” throughout the year, generating a significant amount of recyclable waste which would have otherwise gone to landfill. With growing support for food waste recycling and active steps this council is taking to promote it, can the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment comment on success of the recent ‘Feed your caddy’ campaign?”

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

“In 2018 the council was successful in receiving £60,000 funding from the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to deliver food waste interventions. The aim of the interventions was to review and identify the practical actions needed, in the form of targeted intervention measures, to increase the capture rate of food waste from the existing kerbside food waste collection service and reduce the amount of food waste presented for collection within the residual waste stream.

Norwich City Council launched a twitter campaign (Feed your Caddy) during the interventions and also had articles in Citizen magazine and local press. Around 56,000 properties on Alternate Weekly Collections received a ‘package’ of interventions during a two week delivery period - 14th-25th May 2018:

- A roll of 52 food waste liners
- A food waste information leaflet
- ‘No food waste please’ stickers to be placed on the lid of the refuse bin

Following delivery of the interventions around 11,000 food waste caddy requests were received, which significantly exceeded all predictions and represented a greater impact than in any other area where similar WRAP interventions had been carried-out. But even more impressive was the dramatic increase in the amount of food waste collected for recycling and the reduction in residual waste (waste in black bins).

Within six weeks of the interventions food waste tonnage had increased by an average of 40% across the city and the amount of black bin waste had reduced by around 10%. What is most encouraging is the fact that these positive changes have been maintained throughout the twelve months since the interventions and we are still seeing collected food waste tonnages far in excess of the pre-May 2018 levels whilst residual waste remains at the ‘new’ low average.

This has made a significant contribution to a total recycling rate of around 44%, which is very impressive for an entirely urban authority such as Norwich, which doesn't have the benefit of the substantial levels of garden waste that are collected by more rural authorities such as our nearest neighbours.

Following the success of the food waste interventions to street level properties a similar exercise has recently been completed for communal areas, which have historically had little provision for food waste recycling services.

Participation in the food waste service from flats is also very low, making it a genuine challenge to encourage positive change and to maintain it. But with further support from WRAP and drawing on the knowledge and experience of council staff and Biffa we have been able to implement service improvements for thousands of flats, the impact of which will be assessed over the coming months. The expectation is that, whilst the number of properties is much lower, the percentage changes will be similar, with an increase in food waste recycling and a further decrease in residual waste."

Question 16

Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister to ask the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods the following question:

“Improving and enhancing the many communal spaces and areas which accompany our council properties is an issue which has been raised by my constituents in University ward, particularly around Northfields. Can the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods comment upon how residents and community groups can apply for the new ‘Get Started’ grants to enhance their community?”

Councillor Jones, cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods’ response:

“Tiered grants of £50, £300 and £500 are available to community groups or groups of residents wishing to undertake small projects or activities that support people getting involved in their neighbourhood and can be used to improve both the social and physical aspects of their neighbourhood.

Groups of residents looking to have a neighbourhood meet up around an issue, canvas neighbours on joining a new community group or simply hold a street party to bring people together, can request that officers from the community enabling team purchase items on their behalf. This is usually used to cover road closure costs, flyers, hall hire or refreshments. In addition, officers will help groups access free equipment to borrow via the council’s LUMi platform (www.lumi.org.uk)

To access this fund, residents do not need to be a formal community group, simply three or more residents wishing to make a difference. Residents can simply email community@norwich.gov.uk for a discussion on their plans; there is no formal application form to keep it simple.

This funding is to support the growth of new groups who have identified an issue they would like to tackle in their local area. This might be setting up a youth group, a friends group for a park, or any sort of group which brings a positive benefit to Norwich and its neighbourhoods.

If residents would like to create a more formal group such as a residents group or come together around a community garden or green space, they can apply for a Get Started grant of £300 to cover any start-up costs.

They will need to show that:

- there are at least three residents who want to set the group up
- they have considered what they want to achieve and why it’s needed (for example to create a more relaxing and inviting communal space in a neighbourhood because it’s become run-down or run social events for neighbours to help people meet)

- they have thought about how to keep their activities safe, legal and well managed.

At application stage, we do not expect residents will have every policy and document they need. The officer who assesses the application will give support to develop these. The group will also need a bank account in the name of the new group for the funding to be paid into, but they do not need to have this in place before applying.

If successful the £300 start-up grant is there to help develop the group and can cover costs such as:

- insurance
- room hire
- equipment
- transport
- marketing
- training

Residents do not need to specify exactly what they plan to spend the grant on in this form. They can apply via the council's website (search Get Involved Grants) but they are also welcome to talk ideas over with an officer first to make that process easier.

For those groups who enjoy their first year and are going into year two with a clear project idea in mind for their neighbourhood, they can be invited by an officer to apply for a further £500 to complete a project, for example installing a new raised bed, a mural or any other project they have identified that would help to improve their area.

The council doesn't simply offer cash – officers from many services also have expertise they can use to support the groups forming and identify elements which the council can work on in partnership with them to make resident involvement easier. The LUMi platform is available for resources on setting up groups, how to borrow equipment and to help them link to other residents groups.

The best first step for any new resident activity is to contact the community enabling team who can help residents plan for what they want to achieve and what they need to do to progress this

We would be very happy to receive more applications into this fund from residents who would like to see their neighbourhoods thrive. Those who have received them have made really positive impacts in their local areas and we would love to see this extended across the city."

Question 17**Councillor Ryan to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:**

“As a councillor representing a ward which proudly contains some of the finest council housing build by this city council I am aware of the significance and huge benefits secured for fellow tenants in my community and my ward by the delivery of the ‘Norwich Standard’. New boilers, windows, roofs, kitchens, bathrooms and energy efficiency measures, to name just a few, have seen our properties in many cases radically improved across the city. I was therefore pleased to read that 99% of the improvements have now been successfully implemented. With the Norwich Standard so close to completion can the cabinet member for social housing reflect and comment on what has been delivered so far and the differences so many of these changes have delivered?”

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

“It is with pleasure that reflecting upon the years since the inception of the locally agreed ‘Norwich Standard’, we are proud to have included measures over and above those required of registered providers in England, Wales and Scotland, by ensuring our homes are both fit for purpose now by meeting the government’s own ‘Decent Homes’ standard, but exceed this by meeting our own tougher to achieve standard.

The following table represents the scale and scope of delivery through this particular period of austerity, where funds and resources are continually challenged.

Element	Volume
Kitchen	6,950
Bathroom	6,035
Heating Systems	5,065
Electrical Upgrades and Rewires	3,412
Front and Rear Doors	12,856
Loft and Cavity Wall Insulation	3,093
Thermodynamic Hot Water Systems	729

Our ageing housing portfolio is continually challenged from the ground up, literally in some cases. By working in a cyclical delivery pattern using trusted stock condition survey data, we maintain a c15,000 strong housing portfolio

between general and supported needs, and a c2,500 strong leaseholder based portfolio to the same high standards.

Direct impact of the Norwich Standard can be measured statistically and shows the proportion of portfolio achieving the standard. However, as pointed out, these differences are not merely statistical. One should consider the environmental changes affecting families receiving one or more elements of work. The day-to-day impact on living and using the housing portfolio is difficult to measure, however the current and trend analysis of performance for repairs and general maintenance indicates that capital investments are positively impacting the housing stock as we see diagnosis, fixed first time, and satisfaction increase around this area. Coupled to this is the reduction in repairs budget requirement versus targeted planned capital investments.

Housing portfolio carbon footprint is, as ever, of great focus. By merging humble measures like loft and cavity wall insulation together with more complex measures, like thermodynamic hot water systems, are we able to have a greater impact to not only the carbon footprint of the stock, but realise tangible financial savings to individual homes. These savings can contribute to the removal of fuel poverty and aid financial inclusion across our tenant-base.

Alongside the Norwich Standard programme sits a 'linked' work-stream known as 'Estate Aesthetics'. Whilst exceptionally improved and maintained council houses create decent homes that people want and enjoy living in, they do not themselves create neighbourhoods or communities that thrive. Both capital and revenue budgets are allocated to encourage and improve estate management and to build sustainable, safe clean neighbourhoods.

More broadly but no less important is the contribution that £30 million per annum spent on local firms employing local people in the Norwich economy can make for wider socioeconomic benefits. "

Question 18

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

“I was pleased to read the recent Home Energy Conservation Act report approved by Cabinet earlier in the month which detailed the last two year’s work to improve energy efficiency in the city. For many of my constituents the practical impact of this work has meant in some cases new boilers being provided to their private rented homes through Cosy City, free advice on energy conservation as part of the One Planet or cheaper energy bills through Big Switch and Save. Thinking to the future can the cabinet member for social inclusion comment on how the strategy to continue to enhance energy efficiency and tackle fuel poverty will develop ahead?”

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

“Councillor Huntley, thank you for your question.

Norwich City Council has worked hard to deliver energy efficiency projects across Norwich. I am delighted to hear the positive impact this work has had on your constituents. We are very proud of the valuable work we have done to reduce carbon emissions in Norwich, and tackle fuel poverty. We are committed to continuing this work and we are proud to being a signatory to the “End Fuel Poverty” Coalition.

www.norwich.gov.uk/downloads/file/2326/end_fuel_poverty_commitment

Over the past two years we have seen a further 2,000 residents switch through our Big Switch and Save scheme, with average savings of over £200, installation of over 500 energy efficiency improvements to private sector homes through our Cosy City scheme and two One Planet Norwich festivals engaging over 30,000 physical visitors. In fact, our most recent One Planet event engaged over 35,000 people during the event if we take into account social media. We are thrilled that so many people within Norwich engaged with the council’s sustainability and energy efficiency agenda and we are proud of the work we have done over the past two years which is covered in the councils Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) report.

Looking ahead we intend to continue delivering our broad programme of energy efficiency and affordable warmth work, despite decreasing support from central government and their ongoing austerity programme. Although, on paper, the government is committed to improving energy efficiency in fuel poor homes, there is certainly a disconnect between this ambition and the amount of money being spent on the issue. Nevertheless, we will still continue to deliver this important work, regardless of the level of support from central government.

A great example of this is Roar Power – a collaboration between Norwich City Council and energy provider, Engie, to enable us to provide Norwich and Norfolk with sustainable energy at competitive prices.

This is why one of Roar Power's available tariffs, called the 'community tariff', will see a portion of any surplus made get redirected to supporting those experiencing or at risk of fuel poverty in Norwich.

Roar Power also offers 100% renewable electricity as standard, with an eco-tariff which offers 100% renewable gas as well, giving residents the opportunity to heat their homes with renewable energy at competitive prices. The added value to those who choose Roar Power as their energy provider means they have the chance to support people struggling to pay their energy bills while also supporting the global fight against climate change."