NORWICH City Council

MINUTES

Council

19:30 to 21:35 **28 September 2021**

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

1. Lord Mayor's Announcement

The Lord Mayor explained the procedures for this informal meeting of the council that was being held remotely on public health grounds. Members would discuss the items on the agenda and then a vote taken. The votes cast would be ratified and used to inform decisions made at an in person meeting of a quorum of members of the council to be held on 29 September 2021.

2. Declarations of interests

Councillor Bogelein declared a pecuniary interest in item 7a – motion on COP26 - below and would withdraw from the meeting for the discussion and vote on the item.

3. Public questions/petitions

The Lord Mayor announced that one public question and two petitions had been received.

The public question was from Mr Hugo Malik.

Mr Hugo Malik asked the cabinet member for health and wellbeing the following question:

> "Norwich Market is a unique asset for the city and it is in the council's and the city's interests to ensure that it can prosper. Recently, a number of rival markets have been started that could pose a threat to trade for Norwich Market. When Norwich Market Traders have raised concerns about this, the council has referred to the need for a rival markets policy. Yet this policy has

not yet been written and seems to have been passed from department to department. Can the cabinet member confirm that a rival markets policy will be written and that Norwich Market Traders and the local community will be consulted, and provide a timescale for the policy?"

Councillor Packer, the cabinet member for health and wellbeing gave the following response:

"The council's rival markets policy is detailed on our website. The policy is currently being reviewed and we anticipate that that consultation with stakeholders – including traders – will begin in the first half of 2022."

The first petition was from Mr Steve Keyworth. Mr Keyworth presented the following petition:

"NR4 7 Residents petition demanding fair limits and legislation be set to reduce the development of student HMOs in this area.
We the undersigned residents of NR4-7 (being Salter Avenue, Jasmine Close, Primula Drive, Penryn Close and Morello Close) believe that the concentration of HMO student housing has reached a level where it is impacting negatively on long term residents, meeting at least 6 of the 8 negative impacts listed by the Planning Department when considering intervention.
Fair limits to HMO development need to be set swiftly to protect the integrity of the neighbourhood and prevent families and long term residents from being driven away. In addition there needs to be better, faster, and more connected reporting processes to handle any anti-social behaviour issues that arise with the existing mix of residences.
The council has a legal responsibility to protect the character of a neighbourhood and we ask:

1. Will the council:
    a. Update and re-publish the evidence prepared in 2014 and published in 2016 in regard to the levels of HMOs across the city, in particular in the University Ward and the specific roads represented by signatorites of this peition and,

    b. On the basis of the evidence, introduce an Article 4 Direction in part or all of the city remove the permitted development right for the change of use from a residential dwelling (C3) to a HMO (C4), and consider and implement any associated policy review/update to introduce the necessary development management policies to assess submitted applications arising from the introduction of the Article 4 Direction?

2. Will the council consider the implementation of either voluntary accreditation or selective licensing for smaller HMOs to enable better control over the standards of housing in this sector?

3. Residents have reported specific anti-social behaviour using the appropriate avenues, and written to the council (as well as the university and the police), can the council explain why it has been so slow to take any significant action in this area?"

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth gave the following response:

"1a. The issue of HMOs is something that was discussed by councillors a few years ago at both Sustainable Development Panel (SDP) and cabinet. At its meeting in June 2016 Sustainable Development Panel resolved to approve the introduction of an article 4 direction based on a minimum threshold of 30% of houses being HMO accommodation (subject to Cabinet approval).

This was considered by cabinet in September 2016 which did not agree to take forward an article 4 direction at that time, but instead resolved to ask SDP to reconsider the approach to HMOs taking into particular account the extent of take up of the voluntary accreditation scheme for HMO properties, analysis of the impact of welfare reform on housing options for different sections of the community and implications for demand for HMOs, published plans for the growth of academic institutions and implications for student numbers and purpose build student accommodation, and any available information on number and quality of HMOs in the city.

Since then, there has been significant growth in development of purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA), reflecting increases in student numbers. To respond to this, the council in 2019 adopted a PBSA best practice advice note to provide guidance for developers of this form of student accommodation to ensure it meets housing needs, relevant policy requirements and is well managed, in order to inform planning decision making. The advice note doesn't specifically cover HMOs but acknowledges the role they play in providing student accommodation to meet the needs of the higher education institutions, and notes that the provision of significant levels of PBSA is likely to take some pressure off the private rented sector in the city. The note also proposes closer cooperation between the council and the universities and students' unions in order to encourage development of well managed PBSA and to reduce potential for conflict arising between students and their neighbours.

Whilst much of the PBSA is being built within the city centre it has and will continue to take away pressure from residential streets closer to the UEA. Much of this PBSA is being occupied by post graduate students who would otherwise need accommodation and whilst in the past students typically lived in hall of residents during their first year and then occupied houses near the university in later years of their courses this trend is changing with some students choosing to live in PBSA for all or several years of their courses. The PBSA schemes

developed to date are well occupied and without these developments these students will have required alternative accommodation.

It would be best to establish the extent of HMOs across the whole city, as a full update to the evidence produced in 2016, rather than specifically focusing on a single area, and this evidence base will prove useful for the development of both planning policy and consideration of licensing options (to be discussed later in this response).

1b. If the evidence produced provided sufficient justification for the introduction of an Article 4 Direction then this could be pursued by the Council. It should be noted however, that recent changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) have made the introduction and use of Article 4 Directions much more difficult, requiring them to ‘be limited to situations where an Article 4 direction is necessary to protect local amenity or the well-being of the area’, and ‘in all cases, be based on robust evidence, and apply to the smallest geographical area possible’ (NPPF para 53).

It cannot be guaranteed at this time that the evidence will support the introduction of an Article 4 Direction. If it does, the petitioner should note that the introduction of an Article 4 Direction is determined by central government.

2. The council introduced a scheme of voluntary accreditation for landlords of HMOs in 2016. This scheme was largely unsuccessful due to poor uptake from the trade and has since been discontinued. The Council will not reconsider the introduction of a voluntary accreditation scheme.

However, the council does have powers to introduce additional or selective licensing.

Additional licensing can be introduced where the local authority believes that a significant proportion of HMOs are poorly managed and giving rise to problems for residents or the general public. The use of additional licensing has to be consistent with the local authority's housing strategy and should be coordinated with the authority's approach on homelessness, empty properties and antisocial behaviour. The local authority must consult those who are likely to be affected. This includes people who live, work or operate businesses in adjoining local authority areas where they will be affected.

Decisions to designate an area as subject to additional licensing must be approved by the Secretary of State, unless they fall under general approval. A general approval was issued in 2010 to enable local authorities to make such designations without the Government's approval, provided there is a minimum 10-week consultation period. The 10-week period does not commence until the local authority produces a draft proposal identifying what is to be designated and its consequences.

Additional licensing can come into force no earlier than three months after the designation has been approved or it falls under the general approval. It lasts for as long as set out in the designation, up to a maximum of five years, and its operation must be reviewed from time to time. The local authority can revoke the designation at any time and must publish notice of this decision.

Further, a Local Authority can introduce Selective Licensing which applies to more than HMOs. In order for a local authority to introduce a selective licensing scheme it is requirement that the area has a high proportion of property in the private rented sector let under assured tenancies, including assured shorthold tenancies, and licences. The private rented sector does not include properties let by Private Registered Providers of Social Housing.

In addition, it also a requirement that one of the following conditions must be met. The local authority's area:

- is an area of low housing demand
- has a significant and persistent problem of antisocial behaviour
- has a significant number of privately-rented properties in a poor condition
- is experiencing an influx of migration. Migration refers to movement within the country or from overseas
- has high levels of deprivation
- suffers from a high level of crime

At this time, it is considered prudent to update the evidence base on HMOs to establish the type of accommodation across the city in order to inform the decision about the right route for any additional controls to be introduced.

(Due to the time limits imposed upon responses to petitions in the council's constitution, the following part of the response was not read aloud and was sent directly to the petitioner instead and published on the council's website).

3. The council has no evidence of the level of complaints it has received that there is a significant level of disturbance in this particular area. I will set out in a letter to you the routes by which all complaints must be raised if instances of disturbance persist to ensure that your complaints can be recorded and investigated."

The second petition was from Mr Stephen Robinson. Mr Robinson presented the following petition:

> "We, the residents of Britannia Road, are in favour of a court injunction (Public Space Protection Order) to address the antisocial behaviour of boy racers on Britannia Road and in the Britannia Road car park."

Councillor Jones, cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods gave the following response:

"Thank you Mr Robinson for attending full council this evening and the excellent work you have achieved, working with fellow residents, to highlight this significant and recurrent problem.
Norwich City Council understands well how anti-social behaviour can blight the lives of people in their local communities, with those affected often feeling powerless to act.
I am particularly aware of the significant disturbance the problem of "boy racers" cause the community on Britannia Road, the noise, fear of damage to vehicles, rubbish left and sometimes intimidation faced by residents to have sought to repeatedly challenge this. It is utterly unacceptable that you should face this problem.
The city council has a key role to play in helping make local areas safe places to live, visit and work and tackling anti-social behaviour continues to be a high priority for the city council and our partners within the district.
The city council is aware of the ongoing allegations of anti-social behaviour related to vehicle use in the Britannia Road area. Officers of the Early intervention and community safety team are currently liaising with other agencies, including Norfolk Constabulary, in order to assess the nature of the issues and find appropriate and effective intervention solutions.

I know that Crome ward councillors have been working with local residents and the Police, including joining a police patrol, discussing the issue at local SNAP meetings, and securing SAM2 speed cameras from Norfolk County Council to deter future activity and collect vital intelligence for the police.
The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduced several new tools and powers for use by councils and their partners to address anti-social behaviour (ASB) in their local areas. These tools were brought in as part of a Government commitment to put victims at the centre of approaches to tackling ASB, focussing on the impact behaviour can have on both communities and individuals, particularly on the most vulnerable.
One of the tools within the 2014 Act is the use of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's). Orders can be introduced in a specific public area where the local authority is satisfied on reasonable grounds that certain conditions have been met. The first test concerns the nature of the anti-social behaviour, requiring that:

- activities that have taken place have had a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality, or it is likely that activities will take place and that they will have a detrimental effect.
- the effect or likely effect of these activities:
    - is, or is likely to be, persistent or continuing in nature
    - is, or is likely to be, unreasonable
    - justifies the restrictions being imposed

I am reminded from the legislation that, PSPO's must be used proportionately and in the right circumstances. PSPOs will not be suitable or effective in all circumstances, and it is important to consider carefully the right approach for identifying and addressing the problem behaviour.
Some issues may be adequately addressed using other tools. For instance, awareness raising campaigns about the impact of certain activities on others,

improved community engagement, or offering support to those exhibiting certain behaviours may be enough to address the ASB identified.
Overall, in the case of Britannia Road, given the evidence provided, it is clear to me and your ward councillors that all these pre-emptive measures have been largely tried repeatedly, with little long-term success.
Norwich City Council, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, will consider all the possible interventions required to tackle this issue. But the consideration of the introduction of a PSPO seems at present to me like a valuable and positive opportunity and one which could be pursued.

In summary, upon completion of the work with officers and the police, and their report, I will be in a final position to decide upon this but would like to also ensure the community is consulted too.
Lastly, I would like to thank you again for the time taken, effort, energy and commitment shown to pursuing this problem and seeking a positive and hopeful longer-term solution for residents living locally.
I will contact you personally again, in due course. ”

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 20 and 21 July 2021.

5. Questions to Cabinet Members/Committee Chairs

The Lord Mayor said that seventeen questions were received from members of the council to cabinet members/committee chairs for which notice had been given in accordance with the provisions of the council’s constitution.

The questions are summarised as follows:

Question 1: Councillor Huntley to the leader of the council on prisoner employment.

Question 2: Councillor Giles to the cabinet member for environmental services on the end of the ‘Everyone In’ scheme funding.

Question 3: Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister to the cabinet member for social inclusion on the Universal Credit cut.

Question 4: Councillor Peek to the cabinet member for resources on the introduction of voter ID.

Question 5: Councillor Everett to the deputy leader of the council and the cabinet member for social housing on building supported accommodation.

Question 6: Councillor Maxwell to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing on the Heigham Park tennis courts.

Question 7: Councillor Sue Sands to the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion on fuel poverty.

Question 8: Councillor Champion to the cabinet member for environmental services on a graffiti strategy.

Question 9: Councillor Galvin to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing on improving the carbon footprint of community centres.

Question 10: Councillor Youssef to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing on the Heigham Park tennis court start date.

Question 11: Councillor Osborn to the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth on the airport expansion.

Question 12: Councillor Haynes to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on grounds maintenance.

Question 13: Councillor Bogelein to the cabinet member for environmental services on the communal bins on Langley Walk.

Question 14: Councillor Price to the cabinet member for environmental services on commercial waste collections.

Question 15: Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing on the use of herbicides and insecticides..

Question 16: Councillor Lubbock to the cabinet member for environmental services on the waste collection withdrawal.

(A second question had been received from Councillor Osborn to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on the use of petrol leaf blowers. As the time taken for question shad exceeded thirty minutes, the question was not taken at the meeting. (Norwich City Council constitution, Part 3, paragraph 53)).

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

6. Treasury management full year review 2021-22

Councillor Kendrick moved and Councillor Stutely seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

Following debate it was,

RESOLVED, unanimously, to note the report and the treasury activity for the year to 31 March 2021

7. Motions

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

7 (a) Motion: COP26

(Councillor Bogelein was removed from the meeting for the debate and vote on this item having declared a pecuniary interest).

The following amendment was received from Councillor Osborn:-

Inserting the words "**and improve upon**" after "**continue to review**" in resolution (2).

Councillor Hampton indicated that she was willing to accept the amendment and as no other member objected, the amendment became part of the substantive motion.

Councillor Hampton moved and Councillor Stutely seconded the motion as amended.

(Councillor Schmierer left the meeting at this point).

Following debate it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

"This summer we have seen more evidence of the immediate impact of climate change, including rampant wildfires in America, hundreds of people killed by extreme floods in Germany and China and the Met Office issuing its first ever extreme heat warning in the UK. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Report, published in August 2021, found that the global surface temperature will continue to rise until at least the middle of this century. Global warming of 1.5C and 2C will be exceeded this century unless deep cuts to carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions are made over the coming decades.

This council **RESOLVES** to:-

(1) Note; -

a) The UK Government is the host of COP26, being held in Glasgow in November 2021. This is an opportunity for the UK Government to radically shape global action on climate change, and to use the opportunity to shape how climate change is tackled in the UK.

b) Norwich City Council has declared a Climate Emergency and recognised that this is inextricably linked with social and economic emergencies which affect ordinary people globally and locally.

c) Norwich City Council has already taken a number of actions to tackle climate change locally, including setting up a renewable energy company for Norwich and Norfolk, delivering award-winning Passivhaus developments, being the first

authority to run public auctions for domestic solar panels and the first city in the UK to run a collective switching programme.

d) Local government has the ability, knowledge and tools to make an impact at a local level. However, councils have seen their funding from government cut by over 60p in every £1 since 2010, which has had a crippling effect on services and will severely impact the ability of councils to reach their full potential in tackling the causes of climate change.

e) Ask the Leader to write to Alok Sharma MP, President of COP26, Kwasi Kwarteng MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to:
    i. Make the case for local government having a stronger role in tackling climate change and to share examples of the work already done by Norwich City Council;
    ii. Call for the UK Government to provide councils with the resource and powers necessary to take even more ambitious action to tackle climate change;
    iii. State our support for substantial public investment in a green recovery that tackles the Climate Emergency, creates climate jobs and is underpinned by a fair deal for workers.

(2) continue to review and improve upon the progress made by Norwich City Council in meeting the goals and objectives set out in Norwich City Council's Climate Emergency declaration.

(3) continue to work with employers in the city, including businesses, the third sector, charities and the public sector through the LEP, BID and Good Economy Commission, Norwich 2040 Partnership and Norwich Climate Commission to encourage them to take steps to reduce their carbon emissions and operate in a more sustainable way, and learn from any best practice that they've already put in place."

(Councillor Bogelein was readmitted to the meeting).

7(b) Motion: Climate change adaptation

The following amendment was received from Councillor Hampton:-

Inserting the words "**Continue to**" at the start of resolution (1) and (2)

Councillor Carlo indicated that she was willing to accept the amendment and as no other member objected, the amendment became part of the substantive motion.

Councillor Carlo moved and Councillor Osborn seconded the motion as amended.

Following debate it was:

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

"The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provides a stark warning. The world must drastically cut greenhouse gases this decade if we are to stay within 1.5 degrees C or else face dire consequences. Extreme weather is becoming the norm under 1.1 C and yet we are headed towards 3C. The poorest communities are least responsible for these crises and are invariably the worst affected. The Climate Change Committee has repeatedly warned of the need for adaptation to climate change, saying the risks to all aspects of life in the UK have increased over the last five years. We must now adapt to the effects of future climate change, not merely the current consequences."

Council **RESOLVES** to ask cabinet to:

(1) Continue to work with partners to share and implement climate change adaptation strategies to increase the climate resilience of the city and its citizens.

(2) Continue to develop and implement a climate change adaptation strategy which covers all areas of the City Council's work, including work carried out by wholly-owned companies and contractors.

(3) Continue working with partners such as the LGA to make the case to government for additional resources for local authorities for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

(Two hours having passed the Lord Mayor moved that the following items be taken as unopposed business.)

7(c) Motion: Glasgow food and climate declaration

(Proposer Councillor Davis, seconder Councillor Osborn. Unopposed business)

RESOLVED that:

"Over the last decade food poverty in Norwich has significantly increased, a symptom of the increasing effects of wider climate change on aspects of our food system and society. Earlier this year Norwich City Council signed the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration, joining other local authorities in speaking with a unified voice to renew their commitments to develop sustainable food policies, promote mechanisms for joined-up action and call on national governments to put sustainable food and farming at the heart of the global response to the climate emergency.

Council **RESOLVES** :

1) To note;

a) Its concern that the COVID-19 crisis has exposed the fragility of our food systems, the vulnerabilities of large parts of urban and rural populations and the critical need for preparedness and resilience in the face of shocks;

b) that food systems currently account for 21-37% of total greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), and are at the heart of many of the world's major challenges today including biodiversity loss, enduring hunger and malnutrition, and an escalating public health crisis;

c) that unsustainable dynamics pervade the whole food chain, primarily stemming from industrial food and farming systems which exploit all aspects of agriculture to maximise profits; this should be addressed through the involvement of all food system stakeholders in decision-making for a sustainable and just transition – including food and farm workers, civil society groups, researchers, indigenous communities, women, and especially youth whose future are the most at risk from the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss;

d) systemic inequality is pervasive throughout the food system, and disproportionately affects communities ranging from people living in poverty, people experiencing racism, people displaced due to climate change or conflict, people with precarious legal status, and many others; and many of these same groups are exploited for their labour globally;

e) that only Sustainable Development Goals can identify effective intervention points to accelerate climate action while delivering many complementary benefits, including the promotion of biodiversity, ecosystem regeneration and resilience, circularity, equity, access to healthy and sustainable diets for all, and the creation of resilient livelihoods for farm and food workers;

f) that cities and regions are leading the way in pioneering integrated food policies and strategies at the local level to reduce their environmental footprint, drive sustainable food system development and ensure greater resilience to shocks;

g) the number of commitments on sustainable urban and regional food policies already made by cities, local and regional governments over the last two decades, in particular the 2014 World Urban Forum Medellin, the 2015 Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), the 2015 Seoul Declaration, the 2016 New Urban Agenda, and the 2019 C40 Good Food Cities Declaration;

h) that actions must be aligned horizontally (across policy areas) and vertically (between different levels of governance) to accelerate the transition to sustainable food systems;

i) that cross-sectoral, multi-level, and multi-actor governance of food systems is required in order for sustainable and just food systems to take root, and that this requires national governments to take a

proactive and enabling role;

j) that without accompanying regulatory and legislative reforms at the national level, the impact of such partnerships and policies will be limited;

2) That we, the undersigned elected leaders of subnational governments, in anticipation of the 26th Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC in Glasgow, commit to accelerate climate action by building and facilitating sustainable food systems transformation, by:

a) Continuing the work with appropriate partners within existing budgets to develop and implement, where relevant, integrated food policies and strategies as key tools in the fight against climate change; and ensuring that these instruments adopt a food systems approach that involves actors across all parts of the food chain; continue to support local food producers especially community gardens and allotments; include metrics to assess GHG emissions reduction targets from food systems, as well as opportunities for cooperation and best practice sharing between subnational governments.

b) Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from urban and regional food systems in accordance with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals and building sustainable food systems that are able to rebuild ecosystems and deliver safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, and sustainable diets for all.

c) Calling on government to establish supportive and enabling policy frameworks and multi-level and multi-actor governance mechanisms, allowing coordinated decision-making on food systems. These mechanisms will support the drafting of inclusive national food policies to be included into the revisions of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)."

7(d) Motion: Lift the ban coalition

(Proposer Councillor Ackroyd, seconder Councillor Wright. Unopposed business)

RESOLVED that:

"As of the end of June 2021, in Norwich, there are 117 people seeking asylum in receipt of Section 95 support, and global events over the summer may well see this figure increase.

Since 2002, people seeking asylum have only able to apply for the right to work after they have been waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for over a year, and only if they can be employed into one of the narrow, highly-skilled professions included on the Government's Shortage Occupation List but currently people seeking asylum are left to live on £5.66 per day, struggling to support themselves and their families, and left vulnerable to destitution, isolation, and exploitation.

71% of people polled agreed with the statement: “when people come to the UK seeking asylum it is important they integrate, learn English and get to know people. It would help integration if asylum-seekers were allowed to work if their claim takes more than six months to process”.

The potential foregone economic gain for the UK economy of allowing people to work is estimated to be £42.4million via increased taxable income and reduced payments of accommodation/subsistence support.

Council **RESOLVES** to

1) Recognise that:

    a. people seeking asylum want to be able to work so that they can use their skills and make the most of their potential, integrate into their communities, and provide for themselves and their families.
    b. restrictions on right to work can lead to extremely poor mental health outcomes, and a waste of potentially invaluable talents and skills both for the economy of Norwich and the UK.
    c. allowing people seeking asylum the right to work would therefore lead to positive outcomes for those seeking asylum in Norwich and for the local and national economy.

2) Applaud the efforts of several MPs (Christine Jardine – Lib Dem, Carol Monaghan – SNP and Chris Stephens – SNP) who have introduced Private Members’ Bills to grant asylum seekers the right to work.
3) Join the Lift the Ban Coalition, which is campaigning to restore the right to work for everyone waiting for more than 6 months for a decision on their asylum claim; and

4) Ask group leaders to write to the appropriate minister calling on the UK Government to give people seeking asylum the right to work unconstrained by the shortage occupation list after they have waited six months for a decision on their initial asylum claim or further submission.”

As there was no objection, the meeting was closed.

LORD MAYOR

NORWICH
City Council

Council
28 September 2021
Questions to cabinet members or chairs of committees

Question 1

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

> "Having experience of teaching within prison and seeing the limited opportunities for education and employment, I read with interest that food manufacturers have called on ministers to alleviate labour shortages by allowing them to employ prisoners. This comes as other firms, from hauliers to supermarkets, are also finding themselves short of workers for reasons relating to the governments bungled Brexit, the pandemic, and the failure to increase wages. I believe, in certain circumstances, that prisoners could indeed help, if they are given the opportunity to do real work for a real wage. However, they must not be exploited as cheap labour to take on the roles for which companies do not want to raise wages. Prisoners must not be used to undercut or undermine working conditions. If this sticking plaster current idea develops any further, will the leader contact the prison governor to make him aware of such concerns?"

Councillor Waters, the leader's response:

> "A timely question. Labour shortages, resulting from the pandemic and Brexit, are a growing problem for the U.K. I share you concerns. The Howard League for Penal Reform have put it very well:
>
> > 'If prisoners are to be employed to work for private companies, then they should have workers' rights, be paid the same rate for the job as anyone else and pay tax and national insurance. They must not be exploited as cheap labour to take on the roles for which companies do not want to raise wages. Public acceptance of such endeavours will depend on prisoners competing fairly with people in the community and not being used to undercut or undermine working conditions.'
>
> I know the prison work hard to prepare prisoners with employable skills for when they finish their sentences. I will write to the governor to make the views of the council known."
>
> (Councillor Huntley did not have a supplementary question).

Question 2
Councillor Giles to ask the cabinet member for environmental services the following question:

"I read with interest that according to homelessness charity Shelter fewer than one in four homeless people housed by the government's 'Everyone In' scheme have moved into permanent accommodation. Shelter's chief executive, Polly Neate, said "We're gravely concerned that with funding for Everyone In running out, and councils returning to 'business as usual', we will see people forced out onto the streets. It would be a travesty if we allowed rough sleeping to slide back to pre-pandemic levels". The charity has called on the government to provide ongoing, dedicated funding to local authorities to ensure its commitment to end rough sleeping can be met, along with more rough sleeping support and a "new generation" of social homes. Will the cabinet member for environmental services agree with this and comment on the successes of our Norwich scheme which has achieved so much in tackling rough sleeping?"

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

"I wholeheartedly agree with the comments by the chief executive of Shelter. Our work during the early days of the pandemic on the Everyone In initiative was hugely successful. We not only managed to succeed in providing self-contained accommodation for everyone sleeping on the streets of Norwich but in many cases successfully found new homes for them. Our housing first work coupled with the excellent work of our Pathways initiative continues to ensure that accommodation with support is available for people who have nowhere to stay both in the immediate and longer term. We are proud of our work in this area and will continue to work with our partners to achieve sustained success. The council has already committed to building a new generation of council housing. Continued and sustained government funding and support will be critical to ensure that people have somewhere secure to live."

Supplementary question

(By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Giles asked whether the cabinet member for environmental services would join him in condemning the government for 'kicking the abolition of Section 21 eviction notices into the long grass'. Councillor Oliver said that one of the most basic needs in life was for safe and secure accommodation so she would support Councillor Giles in his statement.)

Question 3

Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:

"Representing a ward badly affected by poverty with many constituents, both in work and unemployed in receipt of Universal Credit, the prospect of losing the £20 weekly uplift has been met with horror. It will not only affect the 15,048 people in the Norwich City Council area but will push an estimated 500,000 people into poverty. This will be imposing the biggest overnight cut to the basic rate of social security since World War II and pile unnecessary financial pressure on around 5.5 million families, both in and out of work. Will the cabinet member for social inclusion comment on the impact of this cut upon our city and ongoing work our city council will provide to deliver social inclusion, as part of our wider anti-poverty strategy?"

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

"The council is strongly opposed to the proposed cut in income for many of our residents and is lobbying government on this.

A recent council needs analysis highlighted the financial hardship many residents are already experiencing, which has been exacerbated by Covid and would be made worse by the proposed UC cut.

The council has a longstanding approach to reducing inequality, which seeks to mitigate wherever possible the negative impacts of welfare changes:

- Commissioning and directly providing financial inclusion advice and support
- Supporting those on the lowest incomes through our Council Tax Reduction Scheme
- Ongoing commitment to provision of social housing, including by building new properties for social rent
- Supporting individuals with complex needs and those at risk of homelessness through our specialist support team, Early Help Hub and commissioned Pathways programme
- Digital inclusion support to help residents get online
- Developing a preventative approach to reducing inequalities in targeted neighbourhoods."

(In response to Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister's supplementary question, Councillor Davis said that the government should be taxing wealth and not low paid workers who would be dealing with rising energy and food costs. If all full-time workers earned a real living wage, there would be no need to for government to top up wages.)

Question 4

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

> "The cabinet office has stated "'Any voter who does not have an approved form of identification will be able to apply for a free, local Voter Card from their local authority'. However, there is no detail or clarity about how these free ID cards can be applied for or collected. The Association of Electoral Administrators (AEA) raised serious concerns about the huge administrative burden that will be placed on already overstretched local authorities to deliver on such a technical administrative task. LAs will be expected to deliver photo ID cards alongside the added burden of registering millions of new overseas electors on top of the boundary changes. Given the repressive nature of this bill, which has been discussed before in this chamber, will the cabinet member for resources condemn it once again and write to local MPs to seek clarification on the above confusion?"

Councillor Kendrick, the cabinet member for resources' response:

> "We await the exact details of how local councils are to provide photographic ID and how this would be paid for. Despite the extremely tight timescales for implementation, government in typical fashion, has so far failed to provide any of the clarity or re-assurance around what will be yet another burden upon local government. Overall, the message on these reforms remains very clear. Firstly, the Government's Voter ID plans will lock millions of people out of democracy - in particular the elderly, low income, and Black, Asian, and ethnic minority voters. The Conservatives are reversing decades of democratic progress and urgently need to rethink this pointless policy. Second, Voter ID is a total waste of taxpayers' money. The policy is set to cost millions of pounds at every election. Lastly voting is safe and secure in Britain. I will make these points again to our local MPs."
>
> (Councillor Peek asked whether the cabinet member would push this issue on behalf of the local authority. Councillor Kendrick replied that there would be strong campaigns against those proposals which aimed to reduce voting rights of ordinary people.)

Question 5

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

> "I have long been proud of the very positive work this council has undertaken to provide accommodation and support to homeless people in our city. The partnership approach, over many years, has enhanced our capacity to deliver this vital service. I was particularly impressed by the recent work of the housing development team, working with Broadland Housing to build new supported accommodation for people who have experienced homelessness or rough sleeping at Webster Court on Lakenfields. With building work underway, can the cabinet member for social housing comment on the positive difference this scheme can provide?"

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

> "Thank you for your comments. You should indeed be proud of the work this council does to help people and families who are in housing need. The work we do in this area has been recognised nationally and includes our Pathways initiative, and our day-to-day work in preventing, and reducing homelessness and meeting housing need. The project at Webster Court is a follow-on from the initial work at the beginning of the pandemic and is part of the ground-breaking housing first initiative which seeks to provide secure accommodation for those previously living on our streets. The best way to end homelessness is to provide homes for people. That's why we are building new homes and why we are supporting people to live in existing council homes and new homes that we can enable with our partners at Broadland Housing and other organisations."

(Councillor Everett did not have a supplementary question).

Question 6

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

"Earlier this month the Evening News reported a rocketing interest in tennis following the sensational win by the U.K.'s Emma Raducanu earlier this month. For avoidance of doubt, can the cabinet member for health and wellbeing explain once again how the new all-weather tennis courts at Heigham Park will assist the city in further developing the tennis stars of tomorrow?"

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

"Alas, I cannot give any assurances that the all-weather tennis courts at Heigham Park will assist in developing a future US open winner. However, the council's capital investment in three new all-weather courts at Heigham Park and two at Lakenham Recreation Ground, will ensure more residents from across the city can enjoy the benefits of Norwich Parks Tennis. The original objectives behind parks tennis, which started at Eaton Park, are still based upon wanting people, of all ages and ability, to get into tennis and be active through the provision of good value, high quality, accessible, all-weather courts for all year round. A household membership fee of £35 enables all members of a household to play for free if floodlights are not required. The model has been developed on a financially sustainable basis with all maintenance costs being funded by parks tennis income."

(Councillor Maxwell asked as a supplementary question, if the cabinet member could provide details of how the courts would be accessible for the city's residents.

Councillor Packer replied that making facilities accessible to all is something all councils should strive for. The price of £35 per household for a years membership meant that the courts were affordable and would be part of a network of courts across the city which fed into a citywide approach to accessibility to sports facilities.

There had been misinformation about the courts and it was clarified that they would take up 35% of the space of the grass courts. The money for the courts was coming from Community Infrastructure Levy funds which cannot be used for general fund services such as staff, council tax reduction policy or the Pathways homelessness project.

The project made the courts affordable and financially stable without requiring additional funding from the council.)

Question 7

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

"Representing a ward where many of my constituent's experience fuel poverty, I am concerned that the toxic mix of social security cuts, the end of furlough and rapidly rising energy prices will lead to ever increased hardship for many residents. It should be remembered that in the U.K., 4m households were unable to afford to adequately heat their homes even before the latest energy price crisis. Some 10,000 deaths a year are linked to living in a cold home, according to the charity National Energy Action. Can the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion comment on the positive difference our council run energy provider Roar Power has offered and the savings achieved by our ground beating Big Switch and Save initiatives?"

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

"Sadly, many homes in Norwich will likely struggle to keep warm this winter with wholesale energy prices currently at a ten year high. Already several smaller suppliers have sadly failed.
The developing energy crisis is concerning. We are keeping track of developments but are reassured that Octopus Energy is a responsible, well-backed company, and are proud to work with them to deliver renewable and reliable energy through Roar Power.
As a council we are committed to reducing fuel poverty in the city, and helping our residents access the best energy deals, while providing advice to help them maximise their incomes. Our switching service has, over its lifetime, saved residents of Norwich over £650,000, and, like Roar Power, only offers 100% renewable electricity.
As we move into the winter, we hope those in need will take advantage of these services and be assured they are at no risk of losing supply."

(Councillor Sue Sands did not have a supplementary question).

Question 8

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

"Several councils, such as Brighton and Hove and various London boroughs, have comprehensive written graffiti strategies. Despite a rise in graffiti in Norwich, especially affecting historic buildings, Norwich has no such strategy. It is good to know that Norwich City Council will explore and include best practice within its approach to graffiti, but can the cabinet member confirm whether a graffiti strategy will be produced in writing in order to allow residents, councillors and other stakeholders to examine this best practice and input into it?"

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

"The council provides a graffiti removal service on council property, removing offensive graffiti within 24 hours and all other graffiti within two weeks. There has been an increase in graffiti since the first lockdown. To address this we have worked with the Norwich BID team to identify hot-spots and allocated some of the Government's 'Opening-up' fund to target graffiti in the city centre. To date there have been an additional twenty days of graffiti cleaning this Summer.

We do recognise the requirement for a joined-up approach and are examining the options for prevention, cleaning and enforcement in order to develop an effective long-term response to graffiti. Officers will be benchmarking performance at other councils, researching best-practice and working with NCSL to find the most efficient application of our resources in order to manage and reduce graffiti city-wide."

(As a supplementary question, Councillor Champion asked whether given that tagging was costing residents and businesses, would the cabinet member commit to putting the necessary resources into the issue, including fast tracking implementation within 6 months. Councillor Oliver replied that there was a need for a joined up approach and benchmarking work would continue. Work was being undertaken with NCSL to enhance the service even further. She would consult with officers on timescales for the work)

Question 9

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

"The Marlpit Community Centre has Silver Carbon Charter status. This is partly thanks to its solar panels, paid for and installed by its community association, which give a 700%+ financial saving as well as cutting carbon. At cabinet this month, a report stated that the council had no current intentions to upgrade the EPC E rating of a number of community centres. The Marlpit Community Centre has demonstrated that there is a way to reduce emissions with no cost to the council. This is an opportunity that the council could take advantage of for every centre and generate significant savings as well as cutting carbon. Will the council work with other community centres to insulate them, and install panels or other renewable generation measures?"

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

"Legislation requires a minimum E EPC rating to enable a move to lease agreements for community centres. Moving centres onto leases will help VCSE tenants take advantage of funding which is unavailable to the council for improvements that benefit them financially and improve environmental impact. As such, the plans set out in the report referenced are a first step, but not the final step in encouraging centres to be environmentally and financially sustainable. While Marlpit Community Association were in the fortunate position of having savings to fund their panels, not all charities are in the same position

The council remains committed to supporting community centres, and other groups within the city, to improve their positive impact on climate change. However, currently it is beyond the scope of the capital programme to be able to fund large scale improvements with the financial challenges faced by Norwich City Council and local government."

(As a supplementary question, Councillor Galvin asked whether Councillor Packer would work with the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion to see how the council could work with other community centres in the same way. Councillor Packer said that he would work with cabinet colleague to support community centres wherever possible.)

Question 10

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

> "Work started on hard surfacing, fencing and floodlighting Heigham Park tennis courts on 6 September, the first day of the new school year. No local residents were forewarned, even those neighbouring the site. Ward councillors were promised, and in line with protocols, expected, advance warning of work starting which we did not get. We were subsequently told this was because officers themselves were not aware of when contractors would start until the day before. If this is true, can you explain how this is adequate and safe contractor management?"

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

> "It is a positive thing that work has now started on the delivery of Heigham Park tennis courts which will provide a new and valuable facility for residents. Council officers and staff at NPSN were in regular contact with the contractor in the run up to the start of the works and confirmed that all regulatory consents and risks assessments were in place. The start date was confirmed with the contractor sometime prior to the commencement of works but there remained a risk of disruption and delay. The council had concerns of disruption to work after vandalism was caused to the Heras fencing, locks and metal sheeting protecting the site. Local members were informed once there was certainty there would be no further risks to the commencement."

(Councillor Youssef had sent apologies so there was no supplementary question.)

Question 11

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

> "In 2019, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth recommended that the city council approve Norwich Airport's plan for expansion, with the objective of tripling its capacity. In the wake of the IPCC report that warned of a "code red" for humanity, many councils came in for criticism for supporting policies that would increase carbon emissions, including airport expansion. Can the cabinet member confirm whether he still supports the airport's plan for expansion?"

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

> "The Airport's masterplan was endorsed by cabinet in October 2019 following a lengthy process of preparation which included the council seeking and getting amendments to greater recognise the challenge of climate change, a commitment to preparing a surface access strategy, and ensure that land at the airport is safeguarded for associated high value employment activity. The masterplan contained a projection of future passenger numbers although there was no physical expansion of the airport required to deliver it.
>
> Clearly since the masterplan was endorsed covid has hit and passenger numbers have significant reduced and may take a long time to recover. However, the airport is still pushing forward with the development of employment land and with bringing forward its surface access strategy. This is not the appropriate time to consider the council's stance on the airport's masterplan. This would create unnecessary uncertainty for an important local business."

(By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Osborn said that the council had acknowledged the climate emergency and asked when the appropriate time would be to oppose expansion of the airport. Councillor Stonard replied that the post-Covid landscape had changed significantly with reduced airport use. The airport had been asked to build in measures to reduce its carbon footprint and the needed to be encouraged whilst acknowledging the importance of the airport to the local economy. There was a need to take a balanced approach.)

Question 12

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

"Other councillors and I have recently received a standard message in response to complaints about grounds maintenance not being carried out. The message states that the programme is being reprioritised and that there will be disruption for up to 12 months. I understand that changes have to be made, but this is not the non-disruptive change that was promised when the council took services back in house. A standard message also does not clarify how residents' concerns will be addressed and I am not comfortable with fobbing them off with a generic apology. Can you please ensure that residents receive specific responses to queries that they send in as a result of the disruption to services caused by reprioritisation of the grounds maintenance programme?"

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

"Following the creation of NCSL there's an ongoing, wholesale review of resources, practices and schedules. This review is exactly the reason why NCC took control of these services in April – so that the council can better organise and allocate the company resources to effectively meet the needs and demands of the city and our residents. This has impacted on the timing of responses to non-Health and Safety issues.

It is necessary to inform people that this review is happening so that they're aware we are developing and improving the NCSL services long-term. However, I agree that the standard message being used is not as helpful as it should be. I have asked it to be reworded to make it clear that the council does deal with all requests and complaints as they arise. We will engage with individuals, letting them know when grounds maintenance issues will be dealt with.

(Councillor Haynes asked as a supplementary question whether Councillor Harris thought that the revised answer was addressing resident's concerns about when issues would be resolved. Councillor Harris said that she would always want residents to have an answer which took their issues seriously. She would discuss this with the relevant executive director and fellow cabinet members.

Question 13

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

"Some months ago, residents of Langley Walk endured weeks of communal black bins not being collected. The debris spilled everywhere, and rats were attracted. It was not clear why the bins had not been collected and Biffa did not seem to have informed anyone. After contact with several officers and weeks passing, the bin problem was finally solved, only for the same problem to appear again with the same bins in the same location. This is just one of the ongoing issues with communal bins on Langley Walk as a result of fly-tipping, problems with bin collection and under provision of black bins, Langley Walk residents constantly have to live with an area littered with waste. These problems are regularly reported to the council, but a comprehensive approach, not simply reactive measures, is needed for the area. Will the council review the situation at Langley Walk and address these problems?"

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

"Unfortunately, there are times when Biffa are unable to safely make collections due to fly-tipping at communal sites such as Langley Walk. On such occasions NCSL are contacted to remove the fly-tipped waste and Biffa will then re-schedule the collection. Communications and notification systems between Biffa and NCSL have now been reviewed and improved.

You are correct that such reactive measures are not always the solution here. Environment services, housing and communications teams work together to provide effective advice and support to residents so that they can safely and properly dispose of their waste and thereby help reduce fly-tipping in communal areas."

(As a supplementary question, Councillor Bogelein asked that the cabinet member personally saw that Langley Walk residents had a solution to their communal waste bins not being collected. Councillor Oliver said that she would visit Langley Walk to look at the situation).

Question 14

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

"Over the past year, I've been contacted by residents concerned by a large increase in the rat population around Prince of Wales Road, Tombland, and surrounding areas. I've been informed that city centre restaurants place waste out for collection on the public highway at the end of the day for collection first thing the following day. Clearly this is not an adequate solution. Apart from being unsightly, it is highly likely that leaving food waste out overnight has contributed to an increase in the rat population in the city centre. This is not the image of Norwich we want early morning visitors to see. Can the cabinet member tell me what long-term solutions will be developed to address the problem of waste left out overnight in the city centre to help reduce the ever-increasing rat population?"

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

"The majority of businesses in the Prince of Wales Road area are in historic premises many of which lack the facilities or space to store waste bins. In such circumstances they will be reliant on daily bagged collections and dependent on the punctuality and reliability of their collection contractor.

We proactively engage with business throughout the city to advise and support them and to ensure that they dispose of their waste safely and in compliance with all legislation. This engagement will be increased in the coming months.

Enforcement against commercial waste breaches is possible using Section 34 of the Environmental Protection Act if businesses are failing in their "duty of care" and their waste is escaping their control. However, we are acutely aware of the challenges facing businesses at this time and will always seek a managed solution before considering any enforcement action."

(By way of a supplementary question, Councillor Price asked whether the cabinet member would sit down with ward councillors and the relevant director to discuss options for commercial businesses to improve the issues. Councillor Oliver said that she would be happy to discuss the issue. The council could take enforcement action against commercial waste breaches but preferred to take an education approach which recognised the pressure that businesses had been put under during the pandemic.)

Question 15

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

"In March, the cabinet member for health and wellbeing tabled a motion on a strategy for promoting pollinating insects. Subsequently, a resident reported seeing city council contractors spraying wildflowers on council land which killed them off. Use of herbicides was confirmed by the council. I asked the cabinet member what action the council was taking to stop herbicides use and the reply came that he would speak to officers, but I have heard nothing further. In Spring, a former Sewell ward city councillor started a petition asking Norfolk County Council to ban the use of glyphosate herbicides and pesticides on our streets and council owned farms and other facilities. I would like to see a strategy produced by the council for promoting pollinating insects. Will the cabinet member commit Norwich City Council to stop using all herbicides and pesticides on council land?"

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

"In June's council meeting I confirmed that the council will continue working with the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) to ultimately lead Norwich to becoming pesticide and herbicide free. This requires a cautious approach while we evaluate the costs and effectiveness of alternatives. PAN recommends that councils should expect an effective pesticide-free strategy to take three years to full implementation.

The council is working alongside NCSL to consider the non-chemical alternatives available and designing a programme for trials to be held during the next growing season. Assuming that 2022 is not excessively wet, and the trials can therefore be effectively managed and assessed, reports will be prepared next Autumn evaluating the effectiveness and cost of these options.

At present many non-chemical processes are less effective, therefore introduction of such processes needs to be carefully considered."

(Councillor Carlo asked as a supplementary question what confidence there could be in the next year's trials. Councillor Packer said that there could be full confidence as work was being undertaken with the PAN network.)

Question 16

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

> "A letter was sent to the Clare School dated 18 August, during the summer break, informing them of the decision of this council to withdraw the subsidised clinical waste collection which had been under review for some time (stated in the letter). The start of the term was 01 September.
>
> Why was there not sufficient notice given to the withdrawal of clinical waste services from the Clare School for them to make an alternative collection possible following the last collection on 9 September?"

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

> "We recognise that in this instance we got things wrong and the notice we gave the school was insufficient to arrange an alternative supplier. The issue should have been discussed with the school much earlier.
> We have apologised to the school for our error and reinstated their collection for the time being. Officers are due to meet the school in October to discuss how we can assist them in identifying appropriate alternate collection arrangement in due course."

(As a supplementary question, Councillor Lubbock said that the head of the Clare School had asked what consideration was made prior to the decision around the specific needs and vulnerabilities of pupils of the Claire School. Councillor Oliver said that she would look into the decision and reiterated apologies for and inconvenience and upset caused. The council was working with the school to achieve a suitable outcome.)

Please note that the following questions are second questions from members and will only be taken if the time taken by questions has not exceeded thirty minutes. This is in line with paragraph 53 of Part 3 of the council's constitution.

Question 17

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

> "The city council's estates team use petrol leaf blowers, including in areas that are semi-enclosed such as Barnards Yard. As a result, fumes from the leaf blowers hang around in the estate and may enter residents' flats. Research suggests that petrol leaf blowers create more air pollution than an average car, and this is exacerbated by the fact that they are used in close proximity to residents' flats. Of course, this may also put the health of staff using the equipment at risk. This is in addition to the noise pollution caused by leaf blowers, especially when they are used in very close proximity to people's flats. Can the cabinet member confirm whether the council will end the use of petrol leaf blowers and invest in safer, cleaner alternatives?"

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

> "We are aware of the issues that can be created by the use of petrol leaf blowers they are not used in enclosed areas. In semi-enclosed areas like Barnards Yard, due to the number of trees in the area, petrol leaf blowers have continued to be used.
>
> The housing service are engaged with residents to mitigate any issues arising for their use and are also engaged with NCSL to learn from them and investigate whether electric hand tools may be a suitable alternative. NCSL have recently updated their risk assessments concerning the use of petrol leaf blowers, are using two electric leaf blowers and will continue to increase their use where appropriate."

NORWICH City Council

MINUTES

Council

14:00 to 14:10 **29 September 2021**

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

1. Lord Mayor's Announcement

The Lord Mayor explained the procedures for this formal meeting of the council, convened to confirm the votes cast at the informal meeting of the council on 28 September 2021; and confirmed that the meeting was quorate.

2. Public questions / petitions

Public questions and petitions had been heard at the informal meeting on 29 September 2021.

3. Declarations of interests

Councillor Bogelein declared a pecuniary interest in item 6a (below) – Motion – COP26 – and would leave the meeting for the discussion and vote on the item.

4. Minutes

RESOLVED to approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 20 and 21 July 2021.

5. Treasury management full year review 2021-22

RESOLVED, unanimously, to note the report and the treasury activity for the year to 31 March 2021

6. Motions

(Notice of the following motions, 6(a) to 6(d), below, as set out on the agenda, had been received in accordance with the council's constitution.)

6 (a) Motion: COP26

(Councillor Bogelein left the meeting for the duration of this item having declared a pecuniary interest).

The following amendment was received from Councillor Osborn:-

Inserting the words "**and improve upon**" after "**continue to review**" in resolution (2).

Councillor Hampton had indicated that she was willing to accept the amendment and as no other member objected, the amendment became part of the substantive motion.

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

"This summer we have seen more evidence of the immediate impact of climate change, including rampant wildfires in America, hundreds of people killed by extreme floods in Germany and China and the Met Office issuing its first ever extreme heat warning in the UK. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's Sixth Report, published in August 2021, found that the global surface temperature will continue to rise until at least the middle of this century. Global warming of 1.5C and 2C will be exceeded this century unless deep cuts to carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions are made over the coming decades.

This council **RESOLVES** to:-

(1) Note; -

a) The UK Government is the host of COP26, being held in Glasgow in November 2021. This is an opportunity for the UK Government to radically shape global action on climate change, and to use the opportunity to shape how climate change is tackled in the UK.

b) Norwich City Council has declared a Climate Emergency and recognised that this is inextricably linked with social and economic emergencies which affect ordinary people globally and locally.

c) Norwich City Council has already taken a number of actions to tackle climate change locally, including setting up a renewable energy company for Norwich and Norfolk, delivering award-winning Passivhaus developments, being the first authority to run public auctions for domestic solar panels and the first city in the UK to run a collective switching programme.

d) Local government has the ability, knowledge and tools to make an impact at a local level. However, councils have seen their funding from government cut by over 60p in every £1 since 2010, which has had a crippling effect on services and will severely impact the ability of councils to reach their full potential in tackling the causes of climate change.

e) Ask the Leader to write to Alok Sharma MP, President of COP26, Kwasi Kwarteng MP, Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and Robert Jenrick MP, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, to:

   i. Make the case for local government having a stronger role in tackling climate change and to share examples of the work already done by Norwich City Council;
   ii. Call for the UK Government to provide councils with the resource and powers necessary to take even more ambitious action to tackle climate change;
   iii. State our support for substantial public investment in a green recovery that tackles the Climate Emergency, creates climate jobs and is underpinned by a fair deal for workers.

(2) continue to review and improve upon the progress made by Norwich City Council in meeting the goals and objectives set out in Norwich City Council's Climate Emergency declaration.

(3) continue to work with employers in the city, including businesses, the third sector, charities and the public sector through the LEP, BID and Good Economy Commission, Norwich 2040 Partnership and Norwich Climate Commission to encourage them to take steps to reduce their carbon emissions and operate in a more sustainable way, and learn from any best practice that they've already put in place."

(Councillor Bogelein was readmitted to the meeting).

6(b) Motion: Climate change adaptation

The following amendment was received from Councillor Hampton:-

Inserting the words "**Continue to**" at the start of resolution (1) and (2)

Councillor Carlo indicated that she was willing to accept the amendment and as no other member objected, the amendment became part of the substantive motion.

RESOLVED, unanimously, that:

"The latest report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change provides a stark warning. The world must drastically cut greenhouse gases this decade if we are to stay within 1.5 degrees C or else face dire consequences. Extreme weather is becoming the norm under 1.1 C and yet we are headed towards 3C. The poorest communities are least responsible for these crises and are invariably the worst affected. The Climate Change Committee has repeatedly warned of the need for adaptation to climate change, saying the risks to all aspects of life in the UK have

increased over the last five years. We must now adapt to the effects of future climate change, not merely the current consequences."

Council **RESOLVES** to ask cabinet to:

(1) Continue to work with partners to share and implement climate change adaptation strategies to increase the climate resilience of the city and its citizens.

(2) Continue to develop and implement a climate change adaptation strategy which covers all areas of the City Council's work, including work carried out by wholly-owned companies and contractors.

(3) Continue working with partners such as the LGA to make the case to government for additional resources for local authorities for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

(The following items had been taken as unopposed business.)

6(c) Motion: Glasgow food and climate declaration

(Proposer Councillor Davis, seconder Councillor Osborn. Unopposed business)

RESOLVED that:

"Over the last decade food poverty in Norwich has significantly increased, a symptom of the increasing effects of wider climate change on aspects of our food system and society. Earlier this year Norwich City Council signed the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration, joining other local authorities in speaking with a unified voice to renew their commitments to develop sustainable food policies, promote mechanisms for joined-up action and call on national governments to put sustainable food and farming at the heart of the global response to the climate emergency.

Council **RESOLVES** :

1) To note;

a) Its concern that the COVID-19 crisis has exposed the fragility of our food systems, the vulnerabilities of large parts of urban and rural populations and the critical need for preparedness and resilience in the face of shocks;

b) that food systems currently account for 21-37% of total greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs), and are at the heart of many of the world's major challenges today including biodiversity loss, enduring hunger and malnutrition, and an escalating public health crisis;

c) that unsustainable dynamics pervade the whole food chain, primarily stemming from industrial food and farming systems which exploit all

aspects of agriculture to maximise profits; this should be addressed through the involvement of all food system stakeholders in decision-making for a sustainable and just transition – including food and farm workers, civil society groups, researchers, indigenous communities, women, and especially youth whose future are the most at risk from the effects of climate change and biodiversity loss;

d) systemic inequality is pervasive throughout the food system, and disproportionately affects communities ranging from people living in poverty, people experiencing racism, people displaced due to climate change or conflict, people with precarious legal status, and many others; and many of these same groups are exploited for their labour globally;

e) that only Sustainable Development Goals can identify effective intervention points to accelerate climate action while delivering many complementary benefits, including the promotion of biodiversity, ecosystem regeneration and resilience, circularity, equity, access to healthy and sustainable diets for all, and the creation of resilient livelihoods for farm and food workers;

f) that cities and regions are leading the way in pioneering integrated food policies and strategies at the local level to reduce their environmental footprint, drive sustainable food system development and ensure greater resilience to shocks;

g) the number of commitments on sustainable urban and regional food policies already made by cities, local and regional governments over the last two decades, in particular the 2014 World Urban Forum Medellin, the 2015 Milan Urban Food Policy Pact (MUFPP), the 2015 Seoul Declaration, the 2016 New Urban Agenda, and the 2019 C40 Good Food Cities Declaration;

h) that actions must be aligned horizontally (across policy areas) and vertically (between different levels of governance) to accelerate the transition to sustainable food systems;

i) that cross-sectoral, multi-level, and multi-actor governance of food systems is required in order for sustainable and just food systems to take root, and that this requires national governments to take a proactive and enabling role;

j) that without accompanying regulatory and legislative reforms at the national level, the impact of such partnerships and policies will be limited;

2) That we, the undersigned elected leaders of subnational governments, in anticipation of the 26th Conference of Parties of the UNFCCC in Glasgow, commit to accelerate climate action by building and facilitating sustainable food systems transformation, by:

a) Continuing the work with appropriate partners within existing budgets to develop and implement, where relevant, integrated food policies and strategies as key tools in the fight against climate change; and ensuring that these instruments adopt a food systems approach that involves actors across all parts of the food chain; continue to support local food producers especially community gardens and allotments; include metrics to assess GHG emissions reduction targets from food systems, as well as opportunities for cooperation and best practice sharing between subnational governments.

b) Reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from urban and regional food systems in accordance with the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals and building sustainable food systems that are able to rebuild ecosystems and deliver safe, healthy, accessible, affordable, and sustainable diets for all.

c) Calling on government to establish supportive and enabling policy frameworks and multi-level and multi-actor governance mechanisms, allowing coordinated decision-making on food systems. These mechanisms will support the drafting of inclusive national food policies to be included into the revisions of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)."

6(d) Motion: Lift the ban coalition

(Proposer Councillor Ackroyd, seconder Councillor Wright. Unopposed business)

RESOLVED that:

"As of the end of June 2021, in Norwich, there are 117 people seeking asylum in receipt of Section 95 support, and global events over the summer may well see this figure increase.

Since 2002, people seeking asylum have only able to apply for the right to work after they have been waiting for a decision on their asylum claim for over a year, and only if they can be employed into one of the narrow, highly-skilled professions included on the Government's Shortage Occupation List but currently people seeking asylum are left to live on £5.66 per day, struggling to support themselves and their families, and left vulnerable to destitution, isolation, and exploitation.

71% of people polled agreed with the statement: "when people come to the UK seeking asylum it is important they integrate, learn English and get to know people. It would help integration if asylum-seekers were allowed to work if their claim takes more than six months to process".

The potential foregone economic gain for the UK economy of allowing people to work is estimated to be £42.4million via increased taxable income and reduced payments of accommodation/subsistence support.

Council **RESOLVES** to

1) Recognise that:

a. people seeking asylum want to be able to work so that they can use their skills and make the most of their potential, integrate into their communities, and provide for themselves and their families.
b. restrictions on right to work can lead to extremely poor mental health outcomes, and a waste of potentially invaluable talents and skills both for the economy of Norwich and the UK.
c. allowing people seeking asylum the right to work would therefore lead to positive outcomes for those seeking asylum in Norwich and for the local and national economy.

2) Applaud the efforts of several MPs (Christine Jardine – Lib Dem, Carol Monaghan – SNP and Chris Stephens – SNP) who have introduced Private Members' Bills to grant asylum seekers the right to work.
3) Join the Lift the Ban Coalition, which is campaigning to restore the right to work for everyone waiting for more than 6 months for a decision on their asylum claim; and

4) Ask group leaders to write to the appropriate minister calling on the UK Government to give people seeking asylum the right to work unconstrained by the shortage occupation list after they have waited six months for a decision on their initial asylum claim or further submission."

LORD MAYOR