



## **COUNCIL (EXTRAORDINARY)**

**19:00 to 19:20**

**25 June 2019**

**Present:** Councillor Thomas (Va) (Lord Mayor), Ackroyd, Button, Driver, Fulton-McAlister (M), Giles, Harris, Huntley, Jones, Kendrick, Lubbock, Maguire, Manning, Maxwell, McCartney-Gray, Oliver, Osborn, Packer, Peek, Ryan, Sands (M), Sarmezey, Schmierer, Stonard, Utton and Waters

**Apologies:** Councillors Bogelein , Brociek-Coulton, Carlo, Davis, Fulton-McAlister (E), Grahame, Neale , Price, Sands (S), Stutely, Thomas (Vi), Wright and Youssef

### **1. Lord Mayor's Announcements**

The Lord Mayor introduced the meeting.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **3. Honorary Freedom of the City – Sir Richard Jewson**

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Harris seconded the motion.

**RESOLVED**, unanimously,

“In recognition of the contribution that Sir Richard Jewson, KCVO, JP, has made to the City and the lives of its citizens and the people of Norfolk as Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Norfolk, the City Council Pursuant to Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, resolves to admit Sir Richard Jewson, to the Honorary Freedom of the City of Norwich.”

LORD MAYOR

**COUNCIL****19:30 to 21:45****25 June 2019**

**Present:** Councillor Thomas (Va) (Lord Mayor), Ackroyd, Bogelein, Button, Carlo, Driver, Fulton-McAlister (M), Giles, Grahame, Harris, Huntley, Jones, Kendrick, Lubbock, Maguire, Manning, Maxwell, McCartney-Gray, Neale, Oliver, Osborn, Packer, Peek, Price, Ryan, Sands (M), Sarmezey, Schmierer, Stonard, Utton, Waters and Youssef

**Apologies:** Councillors Brociek-Coulton, Davis, Fulton-McAlister (E), Sands (S), Stutely, Thomas (Vi) and Wright

**1. Lord Mayor's Announcements**

The Lord Mayor announced that the council had received an award in the industry category of the Living Wage Foundation's annual champion awards for 2019.

The Lord Mayor had attended a number of events or visits in the past month, including: Celebrating Dementia Awareness at St John's House Care Home, where children had read to older people; the launch of the Ale of Two Cities festival; the Kicks Cancer Seminar at the Norman Centre; the memorial service for Baroness Patricia Hollis; Norwich School sports event where students assisted children with disabilities to participate; Future Radio; D Day Ceremony 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, which was particularly poignant to the Lord Mayor as his father had served there; Rotary Club dinner; Born 2 Rock 2019 at the Brickmakers' public house, raising money for the neonatal unit; Heritage League of 2<sup>nd</sup> Air Division reception; Earlham Nursery 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; farewell service for the departing Lord Lieutenant, Sir Richard Jewson; Norwich 20 Group 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations; the Welsh National Opera's performance of "Don Pasquale" – the Lord Mayor's first experience of an opera; and the Armed Forces flag raising ceremony.

The Lord Mayor invited Councillor Driver to say a few words about Roy Blower who had passed away recently.

Councillor Driver paid tribute to former Lord Mayor and city councillor, Roy Blower, who had been a life-long member of the Labour Party, a county councillor and a magistrate. Roy Blower had been educated in Norwich and had his own roofing company. He had been a key supporter of Norwich City Football Club and was himself a talented table tennis player. Roy Blower had many interests and had been one of the founders Moveable Feast to raise funds for Parkinsons UK with his friend, the restaurateur and former councillor, Lloyd Addison, and was best known for his many jokes, two of which Councillor Driver shared with the council. A memorial service would be held at St Peter's Mancroft on Thursday, 27 June 2019 at 14:00.

(Members then held a minutes silence to remember Roy Blower.)

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

Councillors McCartney-Gray and Jones declared pecuniary interests in item 8 (below), Managing Assets as they both worked for the National Health Service.

Councillor Grahame declared an other interest in item 8 (below), Managing Assets as she worked for the National Health Service but her work was not directly affected by the proposal.

## **3. Public Questions/Petitions**

The Lord Mayor announced that 1 public question had been received.

### **Car Free Day**

Ms Rosie Bradley asked the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth the following question:

“I welcomed the news that Norwich City Council will be holding its first Car Free Day on 22 September 2019, to coincide with World Car Free Day. However, I am concerned at the lack of ambition in its plans for the day. Norwich City Council has only agreed to ‘discourage driving in the city’, and to ‘support groups to close residential roads’. So far it has no plans to officially close any roads itself. Does Norwich City Council really believe that people will refrain from driving simply because they ask them to?

A successful car free day – one that could have a real measurable impact on air pollution, and that will allow the public to reimagine our city with significantly fewer cars – requires the closure of city centre roads. Without any official road closures, Norwich Car Free Day is likely to be ridiculed as a waste of time and an empty gesture.

The public are increasingly aware of the dangers of air pollution and climate breakdown – both exacerbated by our car dominated system. A proper car-free day is a chance for the city council to show that it is willing to take a bold stand on these issues. Car free days in cities such as London, Paris, and Brussels have been fantastically successful community events, clearly showing the possibilities of a world without cars.

At the very least, I believe that St Peters Street, Gaol Hill, and Exchange Street should be closed for the day – this area being the very heart of the city centre, and therefore highly symbolic.

Will Norwich City Council agree to close some city centre roads on Car Free Day, to ensure that is a success?”

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth, responded as follows:

“The council agrees that climate change and air quality are major issues to address and that everyone from government and big business to individuals need to play a part in tackling them.

For local government, supporting and highlighting events on Car Free Day are a very visible way of raising the profile of these issues and I am very pleased that the council is taking steps to support Car Free Day this year.

At present our confirmed plans are to discourage driving in the city and to support groups to close residential roads. Whilst Ms Bradley may feel this lacks ambition it is vastly different to the situation last year when there was no support for Car Free Day.

I would also add that whilst I acknowledge the symbolism of Car Free Day and the way it allows people to reimagine their environment with fewer cars I am more interested in achieving long term and extensive reduction in use of the motor car. For this reason I am especially pleased that Norwich has been designated as being eligible for Transforming Cities funding. Government has already provided Norfolk County Council with £6.1 million from Transforming Cities and I am very hopeful for substantial additional funding as part of the future phases – by at least an order of magnitude more.

This can be used to further transform Norwich’s transport system. Whilst there have been notable successes with much of the city centre now already car free – most recently with the pedestrianisation of Westlegate – working with Norfolk County Council we can do much more to promote sustainable modes, decarbonise and clean up transport and improve economic wellbeing.

And let’s not forget that Norwich was the first city in the UK to pedestrianize a street, London Street over 50 years ago.

Turning to the specific request to close some city centre streets on this year’s car free day and whilst I have some sympathy with the suggestion we also need to be pragmatic about what can be achieved. Not least I do not agree that it is simply sufficient to close the roads and do nothing else. Whereas introducing such closures might be relatively straightforward and low cost we need to look at if we can do more than that so there is a reason to go to the streets concerned and to draw people to experience the car free environment. With limited time and financial resources it is very difficult to say what we can additionally do therefore.

It is worth noting that In the next few weeks we will also be closing the city centre to traffic for the three major events, the Great British Cycle Festival, The Lord Mayors Celebration and Run Norwich, so there will be more opportunities for people to enjoy parts of the city centre free of cars.

Whilst I am pleased that you compare Norwich to Brussels, London and Paris; I fear that our budgets, even without 10 years of austerity, can't match that of three of Europe's capital cities."

By way of a supplementary question, Ms Bradley referred to the Mayor of London's commitment to the Car Free Day and the message that 20 km of road closures across 18 boroughs would give and reiterated her question about the city council doing more.

Councillor Stonard said that the council had voted unanimously to support Car Free Day on 22 September 2019 as a result of the Green Group's motion. The council was doing what had been asked for in the motion and it was too late in the year to do more but that this could be considered for future years.

### **Petition – Sussex Street**

Ms Amy Brand presented the following petition:

"Sussex Street is mainly permit only parking. Our Children's Centre which accommodates over 100 families a week is on Sussex Street. Many of our families come from deprived areas and have low income. With parking so limited Pay and Display is the only option which many families cannot afford. With Sure Start centres closing our services will be even more heavily used and the parking situation will become even worse.

On average there are 21 empty permit only spaces available during the day. These only fill up after 5pm when the permit holders return home from work. We offer many free and low cost services to enable the community to access us. We also hold special needs sessions so having to walk a long way is not practical for many families. We would like the permit bays to be made into normal parking between 9.30am and 4pm when they always empty because the Permit holders are at work."

Ms Ingrid Ward added that they were asking for the parking bays to be available for children and parents attending the Twinkles children's centre for 2 to 3 hours. They had provided officers with photographs of the street showing that it was empty during the day. The petition had been supported by parents of children attending the centre, which she ran with the support of 8 volunteers. To keep the centre going it was important to address the parking situation which was a real problem.

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

"Sussex Street is primarily residential towards its eastern end and the parking there tends to be allocated for use by those with residential permits, although there is a length of 2-hour parking on the northern side close to St Augustine's Street. Whilst it may be that at some times of day there are some spaces available in the residents' permit parking areas, that does ensure that residents are able to find a parking space when they return home recognising that all of our City Centre permit zones are very heavily subscribed.

I would add that Blue Badge holders are able to use permit bays for up to three hours if they display their badge with the clock.

Elsewhere, where premises are more commercial in nature, the on-street parking is provided primarily for their use and there are around 40 short stay parking spaces on Sussex Street, Oak Street and Chatham Street to support local businesses. Furthermore none of these bays are subject to charging, unlike those further into the city centre.

There is also a long-stay car park at Chatham Street for 80 cars and space available at Anglia Square. These facilities have all been available for many years and such car parking provision in the area would have been known about when the Twinkles Centre was set up.

There is, therefore, a substantial amount of parking spaces available to non-residents in the vicinity of the Twinkles Children's Centre which is also about 8 minutes from bus stops on Magdalen Street. The council tries to meet as many needs as possible in the parking it administers and the correct balance needs to be struck. I see no justification to take away existing permit spaces which are heavily subscribed to when there is significant non-permit provision in the vicinity of the Twinkles Centre already."

(The petition was received on behalf of the council.)

#### 4. Minutes

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings held on 19 March 2019 and annual council on 21 May 2019.

#### 5. Questions to Cabinet Members/Committee Chairs

The Lord Mayor said that 20 questions had been received from members of the council to cabinet members/committee chairs for which notice had been given in accordance with the provisions of appendix 1 of the council's constitution.

The questions are summarised as follows:

Question 1	Councillor Osborn to the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment for an update on the climate emergency motion.
Question 2	Councillor Bogelein to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing asked about progress to provide locks to flats near Russell Street.
Question 3	Councillor Schmierer to the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment about fly-tipping.
Question 4	Councillor Price to the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment about publishing details of premises licences on the council's website.
Question 5	Councillor Utton to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing regarding protection of mature trees and replacement.
Question 6	Councillor Neale to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth on developers' viability assessments and affordable homes.

Question 7	Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth reduction of carbon emissions from buses.
Question 8	Councillor Grahame to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth requesting that the council objects to the Thickthorn roundabout improvement schemes.
Question 9	Councillor Lubbock to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing regarding support for the residents of Ryrie Court during the development of the adjacent site.
Question 10	Councillor Giles to the leader of the council on the importance of the Living Wage Campaign.
Question 11	Councillor Driver to the cabinet member for safe and sustainable environment on the promotion of the sustainable agenda through the One Planet Day that was held on 8 June 2019 at The Forum.
Question 12	Councillor Button to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing regarding “additional burdens” funding.
Question 13	Councillor Peek to the cabinet member for safe and sustainable environment on the impact of County Lines in the city.
Question 14	Councillor Ryan to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing on the positive derivatives associated with filming in Norwich.
Question 15	Councillor Maxwell to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on the fitting of thermodynamic panels to council houses.
Question 16	Councillor Oliver to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing on occupancy rates of Norwich Market stalls.
Question 17	Councillor Sarmezey to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth on the development and promotion of the River Wensum Strategy.
Question 18	Councillor Huntley to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on the redevelopment of the former housing office site on Bullard Road through Norwich Regeneration Limited.
Question 19	Councillor Brociek-Coulton to the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods on the impact of the Local Housing Allowance rate.
Question 20	Councillor Ackroyd to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth for temporary signage in relation to Church Lane and Greenways traffic calming measures.

(Details of the questions and responses were circulated at the meeting, and are attached to these minutes at Appendix A, together with a minute of any supplementary questions and responses.)

## **6. Appointment of Representatives to Outside Bodies 2019-20**

(A revised Appendix A had been circulated at the meeting incorporating the following changes: David Fullman to be appointed to Theatre Royal (Norwich) Trust Limited, Councillor Davis to the Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board and Councillor Waters to the District Councils Network.)

Councillor Kendrick said that there were also two other amendments to the revised Appendix A in that Councillor Harris would replace Brenda Arthur as the representative on the Lilian Armitage Trust and Councillor Stonard would replace Councillor Harris as the deputy representative on the New Anglia Limited Enterprise

Partnership Limited. He then moved the recommendations as set out in the report and as amended above, seconded by Councillor Waters.

Following debate, it was:

**RESOLVED**, with 23 members voting in favour and 9 members abstaining from voting, to:

- (1) make appointments to outside bodies for 2019-20 as set out in the revised Appendix A, and as amended above;
- (2) delegate to the director of business services, in consultation with the leaders of the political groups, to agree nominations to any vacancies arising during the year.

## **7. Adjustment to the HRA capital programme – Affordable Housing Opportunities Fund**

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

Following debate it was:

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, to endorse the cabinet recommendation (12 June 2019) and approve the establishment of an affordable/social housing opportunities fund budget of £2.5 million within the 2019/20 HRA capital programme to purchase council homes or land to develop new council homes, where this is affordable within the HRA business plan (£750,000 of which will be funded from retained Right to Buy receipts).

## **8. Managing Assets**

(Councillors McCartney-Gray, Jones and Grahame had declared an interest in this item. Councillors McCartney-Gray and Jones left the meeting at this point.)

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

Following debate it was:

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, to approve an increase to the 2019/20 General Fund Capital programme by £150,000 to enable the payment of a Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) grant to NHS Property to pay towards the refurbishment and upgrading of Churchman House.

(Councillors McCartney-Gray and Jones were readmitted to the meeting at this point.)



## 9. Motions to Council

### 9(a) Motion – Support for Community Solar Power

The Lord Mayor announced that he had been advised that in the absence of Councillor Davis, Councillor Giles would be seconding the motion. An amendment to the motion had been received from Councillor Osborn which had been circulated to members at the meeting and proposed that “as soon as practicable” should be inserted after the word “report” in resolution (3). Councillor Maguire had indicated that he was willing to accept the amendment and with no other objections from any other member, it became part of the substantive motion.)

Councillor Maguire moved and Councillor Giles seconded the motion as amended.

Following debate it was:

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, that:

“As a result of government reforms to the feed-in tariff, new solar installations have fallen by 90% since 2016 with an estimated 9000 jobs lost. In March they closed the feed-in tariff without clear plans for its replacement. From October 2019, in many cases VAT on energy saving installations will rise up to 20%. Despite these attacks upon clean energy generation Norwich City Council has pioneered recent positive examples, including the fitting of thermodynamic hot water installations, Solar Together and the imminent launch of Roar Power this autumn. With additional support from central government radical further progress could be achieved.

Council resolves to:

- (1) Note with concern that according to the Solar Trade Association, new installations of solar PV have fallen by 90% since 2016. An estimated 9000 jobs were lost when the government reformed the Feed-in-Tariff in 2016 and a recent survey found that in response to the Government’s latest measures, removing the Feed-in-Tariff in its entirety, 40% of UK solar installers are considering leaving the industry entirely, while 78% of installers are considering reducing staff levels.
- (2) Ask the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment to write to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to support Labour’s plans to fit one and three quarter million homes with electricity-generating solar panels as part of its Green Industrial Revolution to ensure:
  - (a) Direct fitting of solar panels on a million social homes and those of low-income households to tackle fuel poverty, provide them with free energy and save an average of £117 a year on their bills, which could rise to £270 for retired households.
  - (b) Enable the installation of solar panels on an additional 750,000 homes through a programme of interest free loans, grants and changes to regulations.
  - (c) Support Labour’s community solar programme to:

- (i) publicly fund the installation of solar PV on one million homes (2.5GW of capacity, or the equivalent of one million homes with a 2.5KW system). This will target low income and social housing and be delivered as part of a retrofit programme. Any unused electricity generated by the programme will be used by the national grid, which the government would take into public ownership, raising an additional £66m per year for local authorities.
  - (ii) provide interest free loans and grants to enable community groups to install solar PV at zero cost. Support will be made available under this programme for up to 250 thousand homes (625MW of capacity).
  - (iii) provide interest free loans and grants to enable individuals to install solar PV at zero cost. Support will be made available under this programme for up to 250 thousand homes (625MW of capacity).
  - (iv) Landlords renting energy inefficient properties (those within EPC bands G, F or E) will be required to install a 2.5KW solar PV system where appropriate roof space is available. The government will provide a zero-interest loan to landlords to cover the full upfront cost. It is anticipated that this will lead to the installation of 250,000 solar PV systems.
- (3) Ask the cabinet member for sustainable and safe city environment to present a report, as soon as practicable, detailing how Norwich City Council might develop new models of finance to support the local solar industry whilst also helping residents and businesses to benefit from renewable energy via the use of power purchase agreements (PPAs) and innovative behind-the-meter services.”

### **9(b) Motion – Air Quality**

The Lord Mayor announced that an amendment to the motion had been received from Councillor Maguire which had been circulated to members at the meeting and proposed to amend resolution (2) by inserting “to encourage working with relevant partners” after the word “environment” and (3) by inserting “practical” after the word “take” and before “steps”. Councillor Lubbock had indicated that she was willing to accept the amendment and with no other objections from any other member, it became part of the substantive motion.

Councillor Lubbock moved and Councillor Ackroyd seconded the motion as amended.

Following debate it was:

**RESOLVED** that:

“Poor air quality is having a damaging effect on our health, especially young children. Children come into contact with polluted air when they are going to school.

Councils have a role in helping to reduce unnecessary school car journeys, improve road safety, and encourage more walking and cycling which in turn brings huge benefits to children’s physical and mental wellbeing.

Councils also have a role in redesigning our streets and neighbourhoods to make walking and cycling easier choices for journeys to schools. This includes safer pedestrian crossings, stopping parking outside schools and extending 20 mph speed limits from home to school.

This council resolves to:

(1) note that this council has already:

- (a) adopted the Norwich 2040 vision which seeks to ‘make the city a liveable city which has excellent air quality’ which will be incorporated into the city’s Corporate Plan;
- (b) removed petrol and diesel vehicles from the Lord Mayor’s Procession and agreed to a Car-free Day on 22 September;
- (c) has implemented 20 mph zones in the city centre and many of its residential streets resulting in more than 50% of homes being on a 20 mph street;
- (d) has promoted cycling through the ‘Push the Pedalways’ scheme resulting in a big increase in cycling;
- (e) has implemented an Engine Switch- off scheme with penalty charges;

(2) ask the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment, to encourage working with relevant partners to put together an information sheet on the threat to children’s’ health from polluted air outside schools and send it to head teachers of the city’s schools.

(3) work together with our partners especially Norfolk County Council to take practical steps towards making areas close to schools a ‘no car zone’ to keep children safe. This will be done by engaging with schools:

- (a) on personalised travel plans with parents
- (b) on providing scooter and cycling lessons
- (c) on establishing a walking bus
- (d) on improving the roads around schools
- (e) on implementing a no waiting zone in the immediate vicinity of schools
- (f) on monitoring the quality of the air outside schools.”

LORD MAYOR

## Appendix A

**Council  
25 June 2019**

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

#### **Question 1**

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

“In January 2019, council resolved to call on Westminster to provide the powers and resources to make the city of Norwich carbon neutral as soon as possible and to work with other local authorities to determine and implement best practice methods to limit global warming to less than 1.5 degrees Celsius. Can the cabinet member tell me what has been done to act on these resolutions?”

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

“As you can imagine this requires a considerable amount of work and discussion. Work began on our new environmental strategy with an informative session with elected members, key officers and the Tyndall Centre in December 2018 and we are also working on making this a key part of our Norwich 2040 Vision under the Liveable City.

We have already delivered many positive outcomes in reducing carbon dioxide emissions and increasing the energy efficiency of the housing stock in the city. The new environmental strategy aims to build on these successes by looking at those interventions that are likely to make the most impact,? (Travel, energy, waste, or leadership?). We will examine key questions such as - where do resources already go and is this the best use? What do we do well and how can we inspire /influence residents, businesses and stakeholders to play their part? What is already happening locally? Or who could we partner with or what groups could deliver by themselves?

Once this work has been completed we will be better informed and therefore better prepared to call on Westminster to provide the power and resources needed to make Norwich carbon neutral as soon as possible. Also we will have the information to point out where we think resources are lacking or where they would make the most difference. Which I’m sure you would agree is better than a general call for resources.

With reference to working with other local authorities we are awaiting with interest to see how they respond to the challenge. Our environmental strategy team will review any published action programmes which have merit and will seek any opportunities to work collaboratively or enquire about implementing projects locally if they are not already being delivered in similar cities.”

## **Supplementary question**

Councillor Osborn referred to the commitment of other local authorities and asked as a supplementary question for a timeframe for the council's actions to become carbon neutral. Councillor Maguire referred Councillor Osborn's to the prepared response to his original question. The council had to rely on other local authorities in order to deliver some of the measures. The environmental strategy team would review any published action programmes. The city council was committed to become carbon neutral as soon as possible.

## **Question 2**

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

"Residents in blocks of flats near Russell Street and Old Palace Road frequently come home to the unacceptable situation that a drug user has either defecated, urinated or thrown up on the staircase that leads to their flats. Drug paraphernalia is also often found in these communal areas. Residents who live here have frequently reported this problem to the council. It is a situation that no one should have to put up with, especially not our own council tenants. Residents have therefore requested for years that the council installs security locks in these blocks of flats. However, the forward program for the next year does not include adequate additional installation of locked blocks. This seems to be for two reasons: insufficient funding is dedicated to the installation of new locks and the limited funds seem to be allocated to updating old locked systems rather than installing new ones. I would just like to reiterate how dire the situation is: care staff from a nearby school have reported that children talk frequently about the sight of drug users passing out and defecating. This sight clearly causes the children a great amount of distress. Can the cabinet member please explain how the council is planning to help these residents and their children?"

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

"Officers are very aware of the high importance of the safety and security of our residents.

The council receives many requests and enquiries from across the city regarding door access installations in areas that currently do not have this system.

At present the council is in year 3 of a 5 year programme that includes two new door access installations that were identified as a priority when this project was initialised. However, we are aware that circumstances change and the environment we are working within now is very different to when the contract was awarded particularly with the issues relating to county lines.

Therefore, we are changing the approach to how we help make residents safe and properties secure and any future work will use a wide range of data

including reports of anti-social behaviour, cleansing held by the council and crime data provided to the police to prioritise and re-prioritise areas of work including door entry systems.

This is why it is so important for residents to report all issues and incidents following the steps listed below so that this information can be brought together with what is known within the housing service to guide future or additional investment.

When reviewing and prioritising the need for the installation of entry systems, including any additional systems that may be considered, this information will be taken into consideration.

Upgrading of existing door access is also vital due to the age of the systems, ongoing maintenance and enables a more secure fob management system for the future.

We advise all residents to report any anti-social behaviour or criminal activity as these reports help Norwich City Council and Norfolk Police identify any “hot spot areas” and make any necessary recommendations or give appropriate advice.

Although secure door entry systems can help to reduce occurrence of many anti-social behaviours, it is not guaranteed to eradicate it as entry can still be gained for several hours a day using the trade button and it will not stop other residents letting persons into the block.

Of course any work on door entry systems, including any new or additional systems in blocks of flats will require consultation with leaseholders.

I would encourage all residents and ward councillors where problems are occurring or highlighted to follow the following advice:

- To report any anti-social behaviour such as domestic noise or neighbour nuisance to Norwich City Council – using the web forms on line or via 0345 980 3333;
- To report any drug litter such as discarded needles and syringes, bodily fluids or general accumulations of litter - to Norwich City Council – using the web forms on line or via 0345 980 3333;
- To report any criminal activity (especially regarding drug use or dealing; criminal damage or violence) to Norfolk Constabulary using the web forms on line; by calling 101, if a crime has occurred; or 999 if a crime is occurring and residents are at risk or in danger.

Many of the issues being reported to Councillor Bogelein and I am sure all elected members will have concerned residents raising concerns, is a result of the impact of the government’s austerity programme on all public services be it the police, local council’s and the health service.

It is rather simplistic to think that fitting door entry systems to council flats will quickly resolve the issues that residents are facing in our city as a result of these cuts when the issues are often complex.

However, I can reassure council that where solutions can be delivered by this authority and shown to be effective, on their own or in conjunction with other measures, I will be seeking that they are delivered within the budget constraints the council faces.”

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Bogelein as a supplementary question referred to the council's underspend in the HRA budget for 2019-20 and asked why the situation in the stairwells was not being addressed. Councillor Harris said that the under-spend was the result of using the money wisely. She referred to her written response to the original question and said that the council was changing its approach to help make residents safe and properties secure as considered at the cabinet meeting on 13 March 2019 (Safer Neighbourhoods Initiative) and as set out in the response to Question 13 (below). All councillors needed to ensure that anti-social behaviour or criminal activity was reported so that it could be addressed.

### **Question 3**

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

“Earlier this year a new Norfolk-wide anti fly-tipping campaign which encourages people to take responsibility for their own waste had its official launch in Chapelfield Gardens. Initiatives to tackle fly-tipping are very welcome, given that figures from Defra seem to show that there were more incidents of fly-tipping in Norwich in 2017-2018 than across the whole of Cornwall. In that time, Norwich City Council took action 518 times to investigate such incidents, which included a total of 5 fixed penalty notices. In contrast, County Durham, whose approach to tackling fly-tipping has been widely praised by organisations such as Keep Britain Tidy, took action on fly-tipping 8000 times in the same period, which included 502 fixed penalty notices. Does the cabinet member agree that this council needs to follow the lead set by councils such as County Durham and take more serious action to deter those who fly-tip and make our streets look unsightly?

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

“Thank you for your question.

Durham council which Councillor Schmierer is referring to is a county level authority; one of the largest local authorities in England, covering around 860 square miles and over forty times larger than Norwich.

It is also a unitary council so has the resources and responsibilities of a unitary authority, unlike Norwich.

It is a rural council with a population of over 520,000 and 21 settlements of over 5,000. The council has 16,500 employees and an annual budget of around £1.4 billion.

It is difficult to envisage a local authority that is less comparable to Norwich.

In predominantly rural counties like Durham, there will be many more large-scale fly-tips of commercial and industrial waste, often as a result of premeditated criminal activity. Local authorities are not responsible for clearing fly-tipping from private land, therefore there will always be considerable pressure on rural councils to take all possible measures to investigate and prosecute such offences given that the often high costs of clearance will fall to landowners, usually local farmers.

The resources and measures directed against fly-tipping in Durham will be different to those of an entirely urban authority, like Norwich, as will the common type, frequency and location of fly-tips. All of which makes Durham a poor example to compare the work undertaken by this council.

The major component of fly-tipping in Norwich is bagged waste, either from residents or businesses. Whilst the unsafe disposal of such waste is an offence it is often the result of a lack of understanding of waste collection services or a failure to engage a collection contractor for business waste.

When dealing with fly-tipping (and other environmental crimes) this council applies the principle of ACE – advise, confirm, enforce.

By using this approach, those who have made mistakes are given advice and information to ensure that they can dispose of their waste safely and legally in future.

The consequences of further transgressions are also explained fully.

Enforcement is a last resort, principally because the costs and resources required for education and encouragement are significantly less than those required for legal action and significantly more effective for the majority of the issues that arise in Norwich.

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

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

- Providing information about the safe and responsible disposal of waste



- Encouraging residents to report fly-tipping and provide as much evidence as possible
- Quick and effective clearances of waste accumulations so as not to encourage further deposits

The latter proves particularly effective and results in numerous compliments to the council from those who report fly-tipping on-line and are pleased to see it removed within 24 hours, often on the same day as it's reported.

The online reporting service, which I encourage residents to use and elected members to encourage residents to use, links directly to the removal crews, who not only clear the waste but are also trained in the formal gathering of evidence should it be present, so as to enable further investigation and action as necessary.

The council also works with our neighbours to share intelligence and best-practice advice through both the Norfolk waste Partnership and the Norfolk Waste Enforcement Group.

Fly-tipping is not taken any less seriously in Norwich than in County Durham, it is simply a different issue, often with different motivations, different outcomes and different appropriate responses.”

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Schmierer by way of a supplementary question referred to the number of fixed penalties for fly-tipping issued by Cambridge, Oxford and Lancaster, and suggested that these be used for comparison purposes if Councillor Maguire considered County Durham inappropriate, and that as evidenced by these councils, the council could take more action. Councillor Maguire said that the city council's approach was to look at a strategic response rather than to “wield a stick” or count the number of times further action has been taken. Most people took the hint without the need for further or long drawn out action. Some local authorities achieved higher hit rates because the service was delivered by agencies reliant on penalty notices to achieve its income, resulting in more complaints, appeals and upset residents. The council would rather avoid Draconian measures if it could.

### **Question 4**

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

“A number of residents have contacted me in recent weeks to raise concerns about issues caused by pubs and bars, wanting to check the licensing conditions on premises near their homes. At present, it seems the only way to find this information is by councillors or residents contacting licensing officers directly. This seems unnecessarily difficult for both councillors and members of the public finding out the specifics of a particular venue's license. Could the cabinet member comment on what he will do to make this information easier to access in the interests of openness and transparency?”

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

"The council as the licensing authority is required to keep a public register under the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003, which also details the information to be kept.

The information is currently held on the council's licensing database and administration system, and the data is already made available to members of the public upon direct request.

As part of developing the licensing service to the public, officers are considering how public access to this type of information can be improved across the licensing functions.

However, 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.

Improvements such as these are prioritised based on other IT and service requirements and budget availability."

**Supplementary question**

Councillor Price said that he was disappointed as the publication of licensing information on the website would comply with the council's PACE values and asked whether the delay was due to a reduction in the resources of the licensing team. Councillor Maguire referred to the response to Councillor Price's original question. He said that he was not aware of any reductions in resources in the council's licensing team. He reiterated that information on licensing applications and subcommittees were available on the council's website. The licensing team could also provide information on who held a licence on request.

**Question 5**

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

"I have noticed, over the last few months, the loss of a number of mature trees around the city, for example, in Chapelfield Park and in private gardens within the Thorpe Ridge conservation area. In light of this, can I ask whether the cabinet member has also noticed a loss of mature trees and whether there are any plans to protect or replace these trees, both in terms of numbers and of biomass and habitat lost?"

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

"I would like to thank Councillor Utton for his question and say yes, I am aware of the loss of mature trees during the year.

Trees, like all living things have a natural life cycle, and become more susceptible to pests, diseases and adverse weather conditions with increased age.

The council has a tree safety inspection programme in place where inspections of the council's tree stock are undertaken by qualified arborists. The inspections are risk based and take into account a number of factors comprising some specific to the tree as well as the location and the area which would be affected by a tree failing or dropping limbs and the likelihood of a target being hit. The council undertakes some 8,000 to 10,000 scheduled inspections each year plus unscheduled inspections as a result of customer concerns or following adverse weather

In woodlands, except where a tree poses an unacceptable level of risk to a major path, bench, or car park they are left to complete their lifecycle. In woodlands, a tree may when fallen will provide a new habitat for many and often specialist species and the trees are replaced through natural regeneration.

In sites such as Chapelfield Gardens, which would be classified as a high risk location, trees cannot be left to follow their natural life cycle. The majority of trees in Chapelfield Gardens are classified as mature trees. Work is undertaken to manage the risk without the removal of a tree whenever possible with felling only used as a last resort.

The mature elm tree which came down recently was the last mature elm in the city and I was saddened to see its loss. Rather than removing the stump which would have been a normal approach, the stump was not removed and the arboricultural team contacted the Elm preservation society as a result of the tree being resistant to Dutch Elm disease, for guidance on how propagate hardwood cuttings.

The team is looking at project to be delivered by volunteers from the community to help deliver this project which would allow the elm to be replaced but on a much wider scale. Five lime trees have been planted as replacements in the park to ensure the avenues are maintained for future generations to enjoy. I hope that although the mature elm has been lost, our work along with the community will enable the city to have mature elms again in the future. Two lime trees have also been felled in the gardens due to the risk posed through decay. With one particularly prominent tree, that it was hoped to avoid having to remove, external advice was sought to establish more accurately the extent of internal decay. Unfortunately the level of decay meant that the tree posed too high a risk to users of the park to retain.

More generally, the council has planted 250 trees this year; natural regeneration takes place across all the council's woodland sites and natural areas and as council will know, the public can support tree planting through the *Trees for Norwich* sponsorship scheme.

This valuable work to the city's tree stock is with the backdrop of government cuts to council budgets and the need to find some £2.5m of gross savings for each of the next four years. I believe much good work is taking place.

With regard to mature trees in private gardens lost through natural processes, this cannot be prevented, protected against or replacement enforced.

This is very different to where the owner of a privately owned tree in a designated conservation area is required to notify the council of any intention to do works to a tree and what they are. Upon investigation, any works deemed as being unreasonable to the tree will then be considered for protection using a tree preservation order (TPO).

If an applicant is notifying the council of works and the tree does not meet the defined criteria to support a TPO being put in place, the owner of the tree can do the work and no conditions can be attached.

However, the arboricultural officer does discuss possible alternatives to the work or, the benefits of them planting a replacement tree if one is being lost, when appropriate.

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Utton by way of a supplementary question asked whether the biomass lost from the felling of mature trees was equal to, in excess of or less than that being replaced by the new trees planted? Councillor Packer said that he did not have the information available but would provide Councillor Utton with a response outside the meeting. He said that given the financial situation, as outlined in his response, there were a number of different tree replacement programmes, included in the sponsorship scheme to supply a tree for £250.

### **Question 6**

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

“In the past few years, the city council has, sadly, missed out on vast amounts of potential affordable housing contributions from developers who are building in the city. This has mainly been due to developers' viability assessment presentations which have claimed that their developments would not be viable if the full contribution was paid. The Council checks these by commissioning guidance from the Government's District Valuers. Alternative options could drill down deeper into the developers' claims. Green councillors suggest that councils in this area, such as Norwich City Council, South Norfolk Council and Broadland District Council join together to create a body which could carry out viability assessments in a fairer way, either by directly employing valuers or using disinterested expert valuers. The outcome could be the creation of millions of pounds' worth of extra affordable homes. Would the cabinet consider exploring these suggestions?”

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

"Thank you for the question. I'm aware Councillor Neale hasn't had the pleasure of sitting through the various debates we have had in this chamber on affordable housing over the past couple of years but I'm happy to recap by pointing out that a) our planning policy framework is only one of the tools we use to deliver genuinely affordable housing meeting the growing needs of population of Norwich; and b) I provided information to previous council debates that our overall approach is successful with 29% of all housing provision taking place over the preceding 5 years being affordable homes.

I don't accept the premise that our approach to securing affordable housing from developers is resulting in us missing out on affordable housing contributions. The whole point of the approach is it is only used where evidence demonstrates that the policy requirement would render the development undeliverable and therefore it results in some level of provision or contribution where otherwise none would occur.

That said, the council is always looking for further ways of increasing the level of provision of affordable housing in Norwich and cabinet has recently approved an updated version of our affordable housing supplementary planning document (SPD) in order to do this.

Neither the SPD nor any contractual obligation require the council to use the services of the district valuer to assess any submitted viability assessment and previously the council has used in-house officers and have brought in other external experts to do this task, and in discussions around the draft SPD I have previously asked officers' to review the costs and benefits of taking different approaches to the commissioning expert valuation advice. This work is ongoing and I would expect for the matter to be considered further later in the year."

**Supplementary question**

Councillor Neale by way of a supplementary question said that the council had only received 10 per cent of affordable housing and was therefore missing out on £millions; it should therefore be like Birmingham or London, where 50 per cent affordable housing was required, and stand up to developers. Councillor Stonard said that he did not accept Councillor Neale's premise. This was the job of the district auditor to provide an independent assessment. If a site was not viable it would not proceed. The council tried to secure as much affordable housing as possible. If a site was viable at 29 per cent affordable housing it was no good requiring 30 or 40 per cent. He pointed out that the economic situation in London was very different to Norwich. Developers who had purchased land at peak prices in Norwich were waiting to bring development forward when land prices increased and it became more viable. The draft affordable housing SPD was looking at different approaches to valuation. In addition there was the public provision of affordable housing on sites like Goldsmith Street.

## Question 7

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

“The Norwich Air Quality Action Plan (2015) resolved to ‘work with transport partners and bus operators to achieve Euro 5 emissions compliance for all buses within the next 3 years; (and) use best practical means to achieve as close as possible Euro 6 compliance’.

Following a successful bid to Government in 2015, 24 bus vehicles (15 for First and 9 for Go-Ahead) were retro-fitted with emissions reducing exhaust equipment to bring them up to Euro 6 standard.

Since then, progress has stalled. Indeed, Norwich has gone backwards on cleaning up its polluting diesel buses. Investigations by the EDP (5 May) revealed that two of the city’s largest bus operators have been bringing old diesel buses to Norwich from other parts of the country when those areas receive new vehicles. One of the operators cited commercial reasons – i.e. profit before people’s health.

At the same time, since 2015, there has been considerable new research concerning the impact of air pollution from diesel on public health and also the frightening pace of climate breakdown as a result of burning fossil fuels.

It is not sufficient to ‘clean up’ toxic emissions from diesel buses. Rather than progress in stages from diesel standard Euro 5 and Euro 6, we need to stop running public transport powered by diesel altogether and to move directly to zero carbon power (such as electric and hydrogen powered vehicles).

The Greater Norwich Councils have been shortlisted as one of 12 city areas to be eligible for a share of the £1.2 billion Transforming Cities Fund which is designed to deliver improved local public transport. The Fund’s objectives include carbon reduction and air quality. Will the cabinet member attending the new Transforming Cities Committee (first meeting on 1 July) ensure that the Greater Norwich bid (deadline 28 November) seeks a wholesale shift to zero carbon powered public transport on the proposed cross-city bus corridors?”

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

“I agree that it is disappointing that the bus operators have not met the target for Euro V minimum standard for emissions. For many of them this comes down to a simple case of economics rather than a fundamental resistance to comply.

As a council working, with Norfolk County Council who is the highway authority, we have to strike a fine balance between promoting measures to enforce vehicle standards and understanding the practicality of what that means for operators. While large, national bus companies may be able to meet the demands smaller local operators cannot afford to do so and would

then be unable to serve the city leaving many deprived neighbourhoods and rural communities without a bus service.

This whole situation has not been helped by the privatisation and deregulation of bus services, which affects the economics of investment in new buses and new technology and makes working with the many bus companies more complex and challenging.

It should also be remembered that you cannot tell the emission standard of a bus by its age. Many buses in Norwich have been retrofitted with technology to make their engines cleaner than they were when they were first manufactured.

I would also remind you that, in the Green party motion, passed by this council earlier this year, on the subject of climate emergency, it was acknowledged that central government has a key role to play in the process. Our powers to act locally are restricted unlike, for example, in London and therefore we believe that the local authority powers and investment that public transport enjoys in London should be rolled out across the England

Saying all that, the inclusion of Greater Norwich in the Transforming Cities initiative gives the opportunity of creating a springboard into a future where cleaner, low and zero carbon vehicles become the norm. The bus operators have always said that if the councils invest in bus priority measures to ensure competitive, reliable journey times that will enable them to invest in their vehicle fleet. I very much hope this materialises.

I understand the Transforming Cities bid will set out a vision “To invest in clean and shared transport creating a healthy environment, increasing social mobility and boosting productivity through enhanced access to employment and learning. I will certainly be pushing for low and zero carbon transport options to be at the forefront of that bid.”

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Carlo said that she considered that the council should have gone further to reduce carbon emissions as set out in her group’s council motion on Air Quality in 2015. Councillor Stonard explained that the bid for Transforming Cities provided an opportunity to make step changes to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport. City council officers had submitted the successful bid. The county council would be the decision making body for this project and the city council was the only district council that had two seats on the Transforming Cities committee, but politically, was in a minority. The city council was committed to reducing carbon emissions in public transport but he pointed out that privatisation and deregulation of bus services made it more difficult to work with the bus companies.

## Question 8

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

“Highways England is currently consulting on the Proposed A47/A11 Thickthorn Junction Improvement. The deadline for responses is 11 July.

The scheme involving 3 new underpasses and 2 new link roads (costing £66 million at 2010 prices) is intended to re-route strategic (long distance) traffic away from the existing junction in order to release capacity for local traffic, relieve congestion and provide new traffic capacity for future traffic growth. In other words, the junction is being upgraded to accommodate local traffic at peak commuting times, with much of the traffic destined for Norwich. The A47 Southern Bypass was built as a bypass for carrying long distance traffic between the Midlands and Great Yarmouth but it has been used as a local distributor road and local traffic movements have been allowed to grow,

The accompanying Preliminary Environmental Information Report states that ‘the Proposed Scheme is anticipated to generate an increase in carbon emissions during both construction and operation’. This scheme would take Norfolk further in the wrong direction on climate change. In addition, there would be a further cumulative increase in carbon emissions if the A47 Tuddenham to Easton dualling and the Western Link proceed also. This increase in carbon emissions would drive a coach and horses through the Norwich Council resolution passed on 29 January to make the city of Norwich carbon neutral as soon as possible.

Will the cabinet member on behalf of the council object to the A47/A11 Thickthorn scheme and propose instead a package of improvements aimed at reducing traffic flows at the junction such as bus priority measures for public transport along the A11 corridor, safety improvements for vulnerable users crossing the A47 to Hethersett and Wymondham and travel planning measures such as improvements to bus park and ride at Thickthorn, for cutting the number of single occupancy car drivers commuting along the A11 from Thetford, Attleborough and Wymondham into Norwich?”

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

“I personally believe it would be very wrong for the city council to lodge an objection to the long overdue improvements to the Thickthorn Roundabout where the 2 main trunk roads in Norfolk, the A11 and A47 intersect.

The need for improvements at this junction was established in the greater Norwich City Deal that identified a programme of infrastructure improvements that are required to support the growth plans of the area. The junction is one of the most congested in greater Norwich and on a daily basis long queues form on the approaches to the roundabout, with significant detriment to the air quality in the area. It is the main route into Norwich from London, Cambridge and beyond, and the lengthy delays experienced give a negative impression of our fine city to visitors and those wishing to support our businesses and



industry. The funding has been secured by Highways England to improve capacity at the roundabout; it cannot be used on alternative schemes.

By providing dedicated slip roads directly between the A47 East and the A11 south, significant amounts of traffic are removed from the existing roundabout. Improving capacity here will allow for a sizeable expansion of the existing Thickthorn Park and Ride site, alongside the housing growth in the area. It will also afford the opportunity to improve the pedestrian and cycle experience at the roundabout, something that I can support Cllr Grahame on.

I fully support the point about reducing the number of single occupancy vehicles but we have to be realistic; the A11 and A47 are part of the national strategic road network. As a city council, while we have influence over local roads and can promote sustainable travel modes within our area, our ability to shape national policy is somewhat limited. I believe that we should be encouraging as many people and businesses as possible to come to Norwich and, once here, sustainable travel options should be top of their agenda.

I stand by the commitment for the council to become carbon neutral, however it would be naïve to think that not improving the Thickthorn junction would help the situation. Furthermore proposing bus priority measures at the existing roundabout without the improvements would drastically adversely affect both air quality and carbon emissions.

As you know, through the Transforming Cities fund, Norwich is on track to make a huge leap forward in terms of public transport investment. However at the same time we do need the investment in the strategic road network."

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Grahame said that she agreed with the public questioner that the city should be car free and that rather than carry out works to Thickthorn junction the overall volume of every day car journeys on the road network should be reduced. Councillor Stonard said that the Transforming Cities process would improve bus services coming into the city and make park and ride a more attractive alternative for people travelling into the city. The promotion of car sharing addressed single occupancy car drivers. He said that a lot was being done to promote a reduction in car journeys into the city and that at the city council all members were in agreement with this policy.

### **Question 9**

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

"An outline planning application was approved by the planning applications committee on 13 June. The application was for 4 dwellings with an access through the car park of Ryrie Court Sheltered Housing Scheme. The scheme has 36 bungalows and is in a quiet location off Pettus Road in Eaton close to a current bus stop.

Tenants objected on the grounds that their car park is small, only 9 parking places for 42 residents, these spaces are often needed by disabled tenants, carers, visitors and numerous deliveries. The car park is inappropriate for through traffic: especially, as there is no turning place for large vehicles and refuse lorries back into the car park. They felt that their safety was being compromised and the prospect of overspill parking was also a factor in their objections. Overspill parking in their 9 spaces meaning they would not be able to park close to their properties essential if a wheelchair user, physically disabled or suffering from breathing difficulties, and overspill parking on Pettus Road leading to the bus not being able to get through and consequently the bus being rerouted. Increases in noise, pollution (not just from the traffic but from the demolition and construction on site) and traffic as a consequence of this new access would adversely affect their amenity.

The application has caused a great deal of anxiety and continues to do so, to the elderly and vulnerable tenants. Councillor Ackroyd and I have done our best to support them through the months of the planning process.

One would have thought that the city council who owns the car park land would have a duty of care to protect their tenants and prevent the development from taking place by not allowing access over its land. This was not the case and at the committee meeting on 13 June the committee heard from the Developer that NPS on behalf of the council had negotiated access to the development over a year ago.

In addition one would also have thought that the landlord of these elderly tenants, Norwich City Council, would have sought to meet with them to explain why they were allowing the access and what they would be doing to mitigate the possible effects of that through traffic on their use of the car park, on the use of their parking spaces, on the health and safety of the tenants. Despite requests from the tenants and the councillors the head of housing has not responded to emails requesting information and in the reports to the planning applications committee it was noted that there was 'no comment' from housing.

I have been shocked by the events over the last 9 months and the lack of communication between the council as landowner and the council as landlord with the tenants of Ryrie Court and the Councillors who are representing their interests.

I do wonder how this decision was made; the person who made the decision, whether a cabinet member was involved and about the sums of money exchanged.

Does the cabinet member for housing accept that this record of events shows a lack of support and seemingly uncaring attitude to its most elderly and vulnerable of tenants and that it looks as though the council are putting financial gain before the wellbeing of its frail tenants?"

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

"Thank you for your question and you make a number of very salient and reasonable points and observations.

As you know the main points you raise about the development itself were the subject of a planning application and due process with regard to that application so, whilst I understand that you and the residents have concerns about the development itself and its construction, I am confident and satisfied that they have been given a proper airing and consideration through the planning process. This indeed is the response that you and the residents were given in a previous question to the council on this matter in November last year.

I also note that many of the points you raised will be subject to the conditions attached to the granting of the outline permission approval for the development of five houses. I do not presume to revisit that process nor indeed the decision that was made with regard to it although I would reiterate the conclusion reached by planning committee that:

*The proposals for a low density form of urban development have been carefully developed and the scheme in terms of layout; delivery of housing in a highly sustainable location; and the effective re-use of land provides a suitable form of development in this edge of City location close to local facilities and transport connections. The scheme also provides for other benefits in enhancing this long standing underused site and potential for revision to and the re-establishment of tree planting, habitat and site management. Amenity and highway impacts have been largely reduced in the revised scheme and subject to conditions should be adequately addressed. The development is in accordance with the requirements of the National Planning Policy Framework and the Development Plan, and it has been concluded that there are no material considerations that indicate it should be determined otherwise.*

The recommendation to planning applications committee was agreed subject to a number of points (conditions) including which are relevant to you question:

8. Details of car parking, electric vehicle charging points, cycle storage, bin stores, access / mews road surface;
9. Details of parking control, alterations and management scheme for Ryrle Court;
10. Details of Construction Management Scheme including road condition survey;
17. Garages to be retained for parking purposes only and not converted;

On other points, I am satisfied that council officers in a number of teams including the housing service have been responsive to the engagement with residents; attending meetings on a number of occasions; inviting and

accepting representations including a petition and personal questions at planning committee and of course the representations by you as their ward councillor.

That housing officers made no comments about the development was, as pointed out in the planning report, 'not unusual' and indeed, as I have said previously, it is simply not possible or desirable for housing officers to make comments on planning applications that relate to land held within the housing revenue account given the significant amount of council housing land in the city. Should concerns arise, they are usually discussed between officers during the process itself which is why safeguards have been put in place to protect the council, and the residents' interests.

Turning to your specific questions:

- The decision to agree easements for rights of way over council land is delegated to officers, in this instance the head of neighbourhood housing. Neither I nor any other cabinet member has been involved in the decision and it is not linked to the planning applications or considerations nor is it dependent on them.
- The fee received for the easement is commercially confidential and I am not a liberty to disclose what this figure is, but it was negotiated in accordance with a tried and tested formula for such developments.
- Although I fully understand why people may have concerns about any changes in the area they live this is small development of five properties. The planning application and process has been open, transparent and has taken due regard for all of the objections and concerns expressed by residents not just in Ryrie Court. Councillors on planning committee delayed considering the application so they could visit the site so they had access to all relevant information to help them come to a decision.

On balance it has decided that there is no reason not to allow the development to proceed with all the conditions attached to it which protects the interest of the residents and the council's assets. "

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Lubbock said that she was not challenging the planning process but the council's lack of support and uncaring attitude to the elderly and vulnerable tenants had been her concern. She considered that it was inevitable that the 9 parking spaces would be used by visitors to the new housing development. She asked that in the interests of the residents the spaces were managed when the development took place. Councillor Harris said that the scheme had gone through the planning process and that the residents had lobbied members of the planning applications committee, attended the committee meeting and the site visit. The committee had made its decision with all the facts before it. It was not true to say that the council had not talked to residents or that they had not had an opportunity to comment.

## Question 10

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

“Poverty pay and its caustic consequences are keenly felt by many of my constituents in Crome. Redistributing wealth through work and particularly through work which at least pays a real living wage is a key priority to me and one of the reasons why I support the Living Wage Norwich campaign. I was particularly pleased to see our city council receive another award in recognition of our work – this time “given to individuals or teams working for Living Wage Employers or Recognised Service Providers that have shown exceptional leadership over the last year by promoting the Living Wage in their industry and supply chain, leading more employers to pay the real Living Wage”. Can the leader comment on the importance of the real Living Wage campaign in our city, our latest award achieved and the continued support this council will give to it in the future?”

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

“As Councillor Giles knows, many residents of Norwich are trapped in a cycle of insecure work and low pay which results in low wellbeing and a poorer, less happy city for us all. Research from the Resolution foundation shows that one in three employees in Norwich see an increase in their wages when the living wage goes up. So we are delighted to be recognised for our work as a key partner in the Living Wage Norwich campaign for many years, as well as a Real Living Wage employer. We are also proud of our continued work to encourage our contractors, partners and other local businesses to adopt the Real Living Wage, many of whom report that they see huge benefits in terms of productivity, retention and staff wellbeing as a result. So we will continue to work with key local partners, such as Aviva and Future to act as ambassadors for this, and are delighted that other large employers such as the University of East Anglia have signed up to the Living Wage . We know that the additional income that the Real Living Wage represents for some of our poorest working households is not just beneficial for them, but as much of it stays in the local economy, it also ensures that the Norwich economy is not only vibrant, but inclusive.

There is more to do and we strongly endorse the Living Wage Foundation’s ‘Living Hours’ campaign, a major new programme to tackle widespread insecurity over hours and provide workers with real control over their lives. The Living Wage Foundation explains: “The scheme will require organisations to pay the real Living Wage and commit to provide workers with at least four weeks’ notice of shifts, a contract that accurately reflects hours worked, and a contract with a guaranteed minimum of 16 hours a week. Organisations that agree to these measures will be accredited as Living Hours employers alongside their Living Wage accreditation.

The vital importance of this initiative comes as research commissioned by the Living Wage Foundation has revealed that one in six or around 5 million workers are experiencing insecure employment.

Research commissioned by the city council last year: 'Insecure Jobs and Low Pay in Norwich'- mirrors many of the trends revealed by national research findings. A real Living Wage with Living Hours will broaden the campaign to help tackle the blight of low pay and job insecurity in Norwich."

(Councillor Giles confirmed that he did not have a supplementary question.)

## **Question 11**

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

"Despite the blustery weather I was pleased to attend and support the brilliant One Planet Day at the Forum on Saturday 8th June and see the different stalls, charities and organisations involved. Can the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment comment on the importance of the event in promoting our sustainable agenda throughout the city?

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

"I am glad to hear you enjoyed our One Planet Norwich festival. The blustery weather didn't stop the event being a great success thanks to the large range of different organisations who took part and made it such a fantastic day. The Forum was full of information and activities with over 30 different stalls ranging from a solar charity to a vegan bakery to a fashion show full of upcycled clothes that otherwise would have gone to landfill.

It was great to see so many different community groups collaborating and learning from each other – sharing their expertise and knowledge. Events like One Planet Norwich are so important for bridging what can often be a challenging and difficult subject to the general public with positivity and encouraging actions which can make a difference both locally and globally. You could see the joy in children's faces as they took part in our hands-on activities, like our cycle cinema entertaining families throughout the day.

We even had a mermaid come along to spread the message about reducing plastic use which causes marine pollution! There really was something for everyone – including a miniature version of Extinction Rebellions pink boat, whose sister ship was taken away from London's Oxford Circus on the 19th of April after being there for 5 days highlighting the issues of climate change.

Overall we had an amazing 5,300 visitors come to the One Planet Norwich festival and a social media reach of over 31,000. To know that this many people have engaged with the council's sustainable agenda is really incredible. "

(Councillor Driver confirmed that he did not have a supplementary question.)

## Question 12

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

“As someone who is routinely horrified at the growing consequences of homelessness in our city I was pleased that our persistent lobbying of government helped to result in the Homelessness Reduction Act and some associated “additional burdens” funding. However I am also acutely aware that the Additional Burdens funding for this council is extremely limited as it is, only carries us into 2021, and without any financial guarantees as to further government funding, sustaining the support provided will be ever more difficult. In view of this will the cabinet member for Social Housing write to the minister and request this funding is guaranteed for the future?”

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

“I would like to thank Councillor Button for her question I welcomed the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act and still do. This council knows and indeed prioritises having a home as a fundamental human right and the numbers of people homeless, at risk of being homeless or being forced to sleep rough, is a tragic but preventable consequence of the Government’s austerity programme.

So whilst welcome, it is fair to say that the Homelessness Reduction Act has brought with it many challenges to this council.

The impact of the Act has been to increase the number of people eligible for housing assistance and for a longer period of time. This has resulted in an increased level of work in the council’s housing options team, with a doubling in officer’s caseloads, extended timeframes for the provision of temporary accommodation and an increased administrative and reporting burden.

The council has anticipated from the early roll out of the approach implemented in Wales that this would be the result so were able to prepare. To support the implementation, the council have been awarded ‘additional burdens’ funding with which we have sought to increase capacity within the housing options team and bolster our homelessness prevention fund, in order to try to meet the requirement to provide a wide range of options for what is effectively a new client base.

The results that have been achieved since implementation of the Act have been exceptionally good. The council are preventing homelessness in 85% of cases currently, far exceeding our target.

Nevertheless, it is clear that the additional burdens funding, whilst welcome, is insufficient to resource effectively the changes introduced by the Act. My concern is that the additional burdens funding is only confirmed to 2021, and without any commitment from Government that the funds will continue, or ideally increase, I am concerned as to how we could sustain even current

workloads without a continuation of the additional resource provided by the additional burdens funds.

The issue, therefore, is not just about the level of funding but also about the lack of certainty around what happens after the funding ends in 2021. As such, I am in full agreement that the government needs to confirm that we will continue to be funded for the additional work arising from the Homelessness Reduction Act as quickly as possible in order to enable us to resource and plan effectively for the future.”

(Councillor Button confirmed that she did not have a supplementary question.)

### **Question 13**

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

“I was shocked to hear of the murder in my ward of a tenant living at Dolphin Grove earlier this month. This follows the significant increase in crime associated with County Lines and the appalling consequences for both victims and the established community which endure such issues on a daily basis. Given the continued threats posed by this activity can the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment comment on action this council will take, working with key statutory partners, to respond?”

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

“I would like to thank Councillor Peek for his timely question relating to the recent shocking incident in Dolphin Grove. It is hard to understand the impact that this has had on the friends and family of the victim or what lead to the perpetrator deciding to take a life.

From the work undertaken so far, we know County Lines is complex, is being exacerbated by austerity and reductions in public services and there is no single or simple solution. We do know that it requires a joined up approach across partners and communities.

This council is taking very seriously the issue of County Lines and the impact it is having on individuals and communities across Norwich, often targeting and exploiting the most vulnerable children, young people and adults.

Following the incident, the initial response will have been taken by the police. Now that phase is completed, council officers and the police will now be starting to talk to residents jointly to listen to their concerns and to start to get an understanding of the issues in the area. Through this we will get a picture of those residents who wish to get more involved in the future of the estate.

It will be important for ward councillors to be part of this work as it progresses and I would like to meet with the ward councillors for this area and the



adjacent streets to discuss what is planned and gather a picture of issues that are being reported to elected members.

The overall approach to County Lines was agreed by cabinet in March of this year. The approach is:

- To intervene as early as possible in areas where county lines drug related activity is starting to occur and to stop it occurring
- To share data with the police and other partners so that we can better understand areas being targeted by county lines and who the residents are at risk
- To support enforcement activity either by the police or directly by the council where the council is the landlord and eviction is the right course of action and would be successful in the courts
- To ensure the most vulnerable young people and adults are supported and signposted to services
- To ensure that the council's estate management services are effective and issues such as fly-tipping and graffiti for example are removed as quickly as possible
- To engage and involve local residents in the issues that impact them and to involve them in the planning and delivery of measures which will support the community taking control of where they live.
- Targeting investment for measures through a new safer neighbourhoods fund and use of existing budgets to estate improvements which will make the estates safer e.g. lighting; gating; use of mobile CCTV for periods to gather intelligence

A recent report compiled for the council by the University of East Anglia on a review of national research on residents fear of crime, supports this approach.

How the council and other partners respond will differ in each area as each area impacted by county lines criminal activity will be different and require a different set of interventions. There will also be more than one area of the city at risk from county lines, so we will need to prioritise and target these areas carefully.

County Lines is also a top priority for the county community safety partnership (CCSP) which brings together all the local authorities, Norfolk Constabulary, Fire Service, Public health, probation, social housing providers and NHS to agree how crime and disorder issues are responded to.

Through the leadership of the CCSP public, voluntary and private sector organisations will be coming together in July to consider and agree how collectively partners can work together to have an impact on the causes of and impacts of County Lines. By adopting this approach I believe we can

add to the effective partnership working that the council already has in place; help people living in our neighbourhoods feel safer as well as being able to take control of where they live and be able to say collectively, county lines is not wanted here.”

(Councillor Peek confirmed that he did not have a supplementary question.)

#### **Question 14**

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

“I am sure most councillors in this chamber will agree that this is a beautiful city and I was therefore not surprised to see yet another international film making company chose to feature Elm Hill, this time as part of the Netflix musical ‘Jingle Jangle’. Can the cabinet member for Sustainable and Inclusive Growth comment on the positive derivatives associated with such film opportunities for our city?

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

“This has been a fantastic opportunity which will showcase Norwich to a global audience. Local businesses provided services to the film company, for example hotels, pubs and restaurants will all have seen a direct economic boost during the filming period. With 1800 hotels room nights as well as 80 extras and local stewards being directly employed. We expect a wider economic effect after the film is shown at Christmas in 2020, when it will hopefully inspire viewers to experience the location themselves.

There is an increasing trend for visitors to choose destinations based on favourite film and TV shows and the build-up and launch of ‘Jingle Jangle’ will provide an excellent opportunity for our destination marketing partners, VisitNorwich, to focus marketing efforts on promoting Norwich as the filming location; to encourage domestic and international visitors to come and explore this new destination themselves.

It is difficult to quantify the effect as it depends on how the film is received and how much the location features in the film, but it all adds to the increasing public awareness of Norwich as a beautiful destination.

A big thank you to must also go to the teams in City Hall who worked hard to help win this film for Norwich, then worked with the production crew while it was here. Events, transport, environmental protection, communications and the Halls and others all played their part.”

(Councillor Ryan confirmed that he did not have a supplementary question.)

#### **Question 15**

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

“Representing a ward where our tenants have significantly benefitted from the installation of thermodynamic hot water panels I keenly support the expansion of this very positive scheme. In addition to reducing fuel poverty and helping the environment, the savings achieved on energy bills are more likely to be spent in the local economy too. Building on the 600 panels already delivered can the cabinet member for social housing comment on the positives which will be hopefully achieved through the recent cabinet report which was passed earlier this month which should see another 130 panels installed? “

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

“Our work, installing another 130 systems, continues our programme which has already seen 600 thermodynamic hot water systems to our council properties. The hot water systems include a panel which sits on the roof of a property the panels use thermal energy to provide some free hot water all through the year. In addition to any reduction in the city’s carbon footprint they also help in our work fuel tackling fuel poverty and reduces the risk of tenants falling into arrears due to rising energy costs. This may also release money into the local economy that would have otherwise gone towards fuel bills.

Other work includes our programme to insulate properties, replace windows, Passivhaus development at Goldsmith Street, Hansard Close and Rayne Park, and our new development at Bullard Road, have set the bar with regard to fuel efficiency. Despite the vintage age of our council housing the mean SAP rating of council houses is 70.37 up from 67 last year, compared to the private sector rating of 52 and the national average of 62.

This work forms a key part of our overall strategy to tackle and mitigate climate change and ensure our homes are affordable to rent and affordable to run – bring huge benefits to tenants and the local economy and environment!”

(Councillor Maxwell confirmed that she did not have a supplementary question.)

**Question 16**

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

“I was very pleased to see our local market continue to grow in strength and win yet further awards and accolades. I hear that occupancy rates stand at nearly 99% and a much greater income is now being generated thanks to the investment and strategy implemented. Will the cabinet member for Health and Wellbeing comment on this news and congratulate again the market traders, officers and public who have helped regenerate this much loved and important city asset?”

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

“The occupancy of Norwich Market now stands at an amazing 97%.

Since 2016, occupancy has increased from just over 75% to 97% today which is a massive increase.

We have further applications currently under consideration and a large number of street food applicants registered on our waiting list.

A total of 14 new businesses have started over the last 12 months and nine expansions of existing market businesses have been facilitated. It's fantastic to see not only lots of new people having the chance to start-up a new business but also to support the continued success of the traders already on the market. We now estimate that more than 200 local people are being employed either full or part-time in Norwich Market.

I think anyone who has been to visit over the last three years won't have failed to notice the increase in the range of goods and services on offer, mostly notably the increase in world street food. I feel confident in saying that Norwich Market adds to the vibrancy of our city: it is a great place to shop, a great place to work and a great and thriving community in its own right.

Members will of course know that this has been recognised both locally and nationally with the Britain's Best Large Outdoor Market award won earlier this year and the EDP Norfolk Food and Drinks Award.

I must thank the market's team for their energy and commitment in taking forward the 10-year plan aimed at driving forward and invigorating the market as well as collaborating wherever possible with local organisations and schools.

The people who really make the market work are the traders themselves, they all work incredibly hard to present their stalls well, to offer great products and to give that personal and knowledgeable customer service to create a really unique shopping experience.

And we mustn't forget the general public. I must thank both the people who have been loyal market customers for decades for their patronage as well as the ever increasing numbers of people who have supported the market with their custom in the last three years. So many thanks to everyone who has been part of this success story, we have every reason to think this success will continue."

(Councillor Oliver confirmed that she did not have a supplementary question.)

## **Question 17**

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

"Promoting and improving access to the beautiful green and open spaces which make Norwich so special are a real priority for this administration. I know that the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth has been actively involved in developing and promoting the River Wensum Strategy

which will help breathe new life into the river and enhance access for all users. Can the cabinet member comment on the anticipated benefits of this £150,000 latest investment in the strategy and the physical outcomes it will yield?"

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

"Thank you for your question. I have indeed been involved in the development of the River Wensum Strategy over a number of years, chairing the River Wensum Strategy Partnership which is led by the city council and includes the Broads Authority, Norfolk County Council, the Environment Agency, and Norwich Society.

The overall objective of the strategy is to revitalise the river corridor for the benefit of all users. Key to this will be increasing access to, and greater use of the river which is an important, yet under-used, asset for the city.

Since its adoption in summer 2018, the strategy has entered the delivery phase and I am very pleased that some of the proposals in the adopted strategy are being delivered 'on the ground'.

The latest investment in the river corridor is being funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

The project is based on a detailed audit of the riverside walk and will increase access to the walkway through a two-pronged approach.

- Firstly it will develop coherent signage and wayfinding along the entire length of the riverside walk to establish a clear route and identity. The wayfinding can be easily expanded on in the future.
- Secondly it will implement a series of improvements at key points on the riverside walk to maximise its accessibility to all users. These works include:
  - Widening the riverside walk at a key pinch point between Whitefriars Bridge and Quayside, and improving the existing ramp up to Whitefriars Bridge;
  - Related improvements at Whitefriars including seating and improved access down to the river;
  - Improvements to road crossings in several locations including Whitefriars Bridge and Fye Bridge; and
  - Replacement of steps with ramp on the riverside walk at Friars Quay.

This project is the first stage in encouraging greater activity in the river corridor. It is anticipated that it will be complemented in coming years with other improvements to accessibility, the riverside environment, and leisure and business opportunities arising from the River Wensum Strategy."

(Councillor Sarmezey confirmed that she did not have a supplementary question.)

## Question 18

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

“Knowing how critically important social housing is to the community I represent I have eagerly followed the positive re-development of the former housing office site on Bullard Road, particularly given the involvement of the Housing Regeneration Company and the opportunities it can bring. Can the cabinet member for social housing comment on progress and when it is envisaged that new tenants will move in?”

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

“As cabinet member for social housing I am very proud of the development on Bullard Road and the partnership work that there has been with the council’s wholly owned company, Norwich Regeneration Limited. The council was keen to try something new with this development as we know that to meet rising housing demand we are going to have to be able to build more houses to a high specification in a sustainable way – providing good value for money and more quickly than we have been able to in the past.

The NRL watchwords are ‘people, place, price, pace’ setting a new Norwich standard for our new build properties.

The work was to convert former council offices into new houses. The commissioning of the redevelopment was speeded up, the construction methods were different and for the first time in the new era of the ‘pre fab’ we have trialled some modular build – having an extension delivered on the back of a lorry and installed within a day.

The properties are now being completed to life time homes compliance with new kitchens being fitted and landscaping underway to ensure a good blend with the local environment.

This development will provide 6 new homes, as:

- Three, 2 bed houses
- Two, 3 bed house and
- One, 4 house.

Handover and viewings have a target date of the 8th July and we expect families to be moving into their new homes by the end of July.

The project will be on time, on ‘spec’, and on budget and will be great new addition to council housing in the city.”

(Councillor Huntley confirmed that he did not have a supplementary question.)

## Question 19

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

“As a councillor who represents a ward with a significant number of constituents who privately rent I am conscious of the impact the DCLG’s setting of the Local Housing Allowance rate makes to those who often struggle to pay their rent and meet basic subsistence requirements. In light of the Supreme Court ruling on 12th June in the case of *Samuels Vs Birmingham City Council* and the impact this will have on the Department’s setting of Local Housing Allowance rates going forward, will the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods write to the minister and request that firstly in the 2019 Spending Review, the LHA freeze must come to an end, as planned, by April 2020, second, that the rates restored to at least the 30th percentile (i.e. cheapest third) of local rents, and lastly that there needs to be a robust mechanism going forwards that keeps LHA rates to cover at least the 30th percentile of local rents in the future, regardless of fluctuations in private rents. In the interim, for this final year of the freeze, will she request additional Targeted Affordability Funding (TAF) must be made available, as well as changes to the way it is administered, to ensure those most at risk of homelessness receive adequate amounts?”

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

“The impact of the Local Housing Allowance rate is a critical issue to thousands of local residents. Norwich has a burgeoning private rented sector, with 22% of all accommodation in the city being of this tenure, as compared to an average 15% in other council areas in the Eastern region. Unfortunately, the shortfall between current market rents and the LHA rate in the city means that many of those households in the greatest need are either frozen out of the market completely or face a struggle to make ends meet in order to maintain their accommodation.

This is an issue which is becoming more acute, as demand for accommodation in Norwich increases and rents rise accordingly. Our records show that 25% of approaches to our housing options service from clients facing homelessness in the last year are from households who have been privately renting. While we are working hard to engage with landlords to keep those at risk in their tenancies, we have to acknowledge that the issue of the current LHA rate is a key factor and one which is out of control. As such, without intervention, the situation is likely to deteriorate further.

The Judgment in the case of *Samuels v Birmingham City Council* handed down at the Supreme court on 12th June allowed Ms Samuels’ appeal against the decision of Birmingham City Council that she was intentionally homeless. Birmingham City Council had decided that she was intentionally homeless for deliberately failing to divert sums from her subsistence benefits to meet a substantial shortfall between her contractual rent and the housing benefit she had been awarded and that the accommodation was reasonable for her to continue to occupy.

The Supreme Court allowed the appeal accepting the fundamental point made on Ms Samuels' behalf that those subsistence benefits are designed only to meet a basic minimum standard of living and that as a starting point living expenses are reasonable where they match or are less than the applicable amounts for the family in respect of those subsistence benefits – in Ms Samuels case income support, child tax credit and child benefit. The court held that the question of what were the family's reasonable living expenses required an objective assessment and that affordability has to be judged on the basis that the accommodation is to be available "indefinitely".

This is indeed a landmark case and shows that with rising rents in the private sector, the freeze in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and the continued reduction in benefits means the gap between being able to secure the basics rights of having a roof over your head, food on the table and warmth in the winter are being priced out of reach for many of our citizens. The rise in homelessness and rough sleeping are a direct result of these deliberate policy measures. I agree with my colleague that LHAs and other benefits need to keep pace with the rent levels in different parts of the country and I shall make the necessary representations to the Minister responsible."

(Councillor Brociek-Coulton was absent.)

## **Question 20**

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

"Although Eaton residents were generally appreciative of the introduction of the 20mph speed limit, there was huge opposition to the traffic calming measures proposed for Greenways and Church Lane. The Norwich Highways Agency committee listened to revised officer recommendations and a trial 20mph limit was proposed for the two roads for one year, backed by road signs.

Eaton councillors were told by officers that the traffic calming proposed for Church Lane and Greenways would have cost around £50,000 and that the works now proposed (footpath widening outside the burial ground on Church Lane), the pedestrian crossing assessment and the extra work included in the experimental speed restriction order will cost in the region of £10 to 12,000.

Given the savings made, would the cabinet member agree that funds should be released for a temporary vehicle activated sign to be installed so that car drivers can have an indication of the speed at which they are travelling?"

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

"I am pleased the residents of Eaton generally welcome the introduction of the 20mph limit in their area.



The current 20mph limit is part of a trial to see whether signed only 20mph restrictions are effective in areas where speeds were significantly above 20mph before the restriction was in place. While it is true to say this cost less than the original proposals which included traffic calming, it is not possible at this stage to allocate funds to other measures. The reasons are twofold; a flashing sign will influence driver behaviour and skew the monitoring results, and the money saved needs to be held back in case further work is needed once the results of the experiment are known.”

### **Supplementary question**

In reply to a supplementary question from Councillor Ackroyd, Councillor Stonard said that he was not sure what she had been told, but that it had been agreed to trial the reduced speed without physical measures and if it speeds were not reduced to then bring it back to committee for further consideration.