



## Minutes

### COUNCIL

18:30 to 21:30

16 March 2021

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

Apologies: Councillor Davis

#### 1. Lord Mayor's Announcements

The Lord Mayor introduced the meeting.

As it was anticipated that the meeting would last for more than 2 hours, Councillor Waters proposed and Councillor Bogelein seconded a motion to suspend paragraph 16 of appendix one of the council's constitution, which would allow discussion on the business of the meeting to continue for more than two hours.

**RESOLVED** unanimously, to suspend paragraph 16 of appendix one of the constitution.

The Lord Mayor gave his announcements. He had attended the Strong Roots AGM and had met with the John Lewis Partnership.

He invited Councillor Patrick Manning to say a few words in remembrance of former councillor and Lord Mayor of Norwich, Keith Ratcliffe and invited Councillor Alan Waters to say a few words in remembrance of councillor Harriet Panting both of whom had sadly passed away. Following this, a minute's silence was held.

#### 2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

#### 3. Public Questions/Petitions

Two public questions had been received. The first was from Mr Stephen O'Connor:

"I am a leaseholder and resident of Goodman Square in Mancroft ward, we have had numerous issues with antisocial behaviour in the access stairwell to the block. This includes people using drugs and defecating in and under the stairwell, leaving behind

used needles, sharp objects and excrement. On occasions myself, my partner and other members of the block have to pass drug users with needles hanging out of their arms to get to our homes. We call the police but they are gone by the time they arrive and as such the police cannot do anything. Not only is the door not secure but it also will not close automatically making it not an operational fire door, my partner who is a full time firefighter finds this concerning as well.

I and my fellow block residents have petitioned the council and police via letter, phone calls and repair requests and nothing has been done to resolve the situation. I haven't even had an acknowledgement that the council have received any letters!

I understand that the council will be looking at drawing up a new programme of secure entry systems for blocks of flats soon. Can the deputy leader of the council give me her promise that Goodman Square will be included on this list, and a safe environment will be created for my family and other residents of the block.”

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

“We are very aware of the high importance of the safety and security of our residents and we do receive enquiries and representations regarding door access installations in flats and neighbourhoods that currently do not have these systems. We advise all residents to continue 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, prioritise actions and give appropriate advice and support. When reviewing and prioritising the need for the installation of door entry systems these reports are also looked at and taken into consideration.

I can confirm that in addition to competing our upgrade programme on flats with existing systems we are planning on an installation programme for new door entry systems across the city from 1 April 2022 onwards. This is a complex and lengthy project that involves many processes such as consultations with residents and leaseholders, obtaining planning consent, contract tendering and award before manufacture and installation.

I can confirm that Goodman Square is included as a high priority in that programme.

Unfortunately without your exact address I am unable to investigate the repair that you mention, but would be happy to do so if you could provide me with this outside of this meeting. However I would ask that Mr O'Connor and any other residents continue to use either the website or contact the council's Contact Centre Team to report any repairs that are required to the block front door in the future.”

There was no supplementary question.

The second question was from Ms Ash Haynes:

“At a cabinet meeting on 10 February, contracts were awarded for the domestic gas heating upgrading of council dwellings. As gas boilers will not be installed in any newly-built homes from 2025, and instead, use the low-carbon energy sources that will save some residents money and help in the necessary shift away from fossil fuels in this climate emergency, would now not be a good time for the council to replace at least some gas boilers with alternatives, including air source heat pumps, electric heaters and solar-powered heating systems?”

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

“The council has set an ambitious programme of measures to tackle and mitigate climate change and move toward carbon neutrality. We are investing considerable resources into low carbon resources.

Our strategy with our council properties is two pronged to ensure not only that we minimise fossil fuel use but also that our homes are affordable to rent and to run. We have a significant programme of capital and revenue work to help thermal efficiency such as loft and wall insulation and window replacements. Our existing gas boilers are up to 95% fuel efficient and have significant life left in most of them so our focus will be on future installations, learning from other councils and technological advances from around the world. Currently we are investigating and implementing a range of measures including heating sourced from the city’s river, its soil and the air. We have and will continue to invest in PV panels and Thermodynamic heating.

Of course, there is always more to do and we will continue to maximise opportunities to use low-carbon energy sources that will save residents money and help in the necessary shift away from fossil fuels in this climate emergency.”

Ms Haynes asked by way of supplementary question whether it would not be more cost effect to start the process of replacing the boilers now rather than later. Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing, answered that officers continuously look at options and future technology advancements. This is easier to implement in new builds as opposed to renovations.

#### **4. Minutes**

**RESOLVED** to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2021.

#### **5. Women’s safety in Norwich**

The Lord Mayor said that he had used his discretion as chair of the meeting to add an addition agenda item to the meeting. He invited group spokespersons and then any other councillors to make statements on women’s safety in Norwich, following the extremely sad news about Sarah Everard.

#### **6. Questions to Cabinet Members/Committee Chairs**

The Lord Mayor said that sixteen 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 Bogelein to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing on Ely Street play park.
Question 2	Councillor Schmierer to the leader of the council on Labour’s drug policy.

Question 3	Councillor Osborn to the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment on fly tipping.
Question 4	Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth on zero emission buses.
Question 5	Councillor Price to the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment on flooding due to leaves on the street.
Question 6	Councillor Neale to the leader of the council on treasury management strategy.
Question 7	Councillor Oliver to the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment on funding to achieve net zero carbon emissions.
Question 8	Councillor Stutely to the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods on private sector housing.
Question 9	Councillor Mike Sands to the leader of the council on local track and trace.
Question 10	Councillor Button to the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment on the Norwich City Services Ltd depot.
Question 11	Councillor McCartney-Gray to the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment on 'Carbon Copy' praise.
Question 12	Councillor Erin Fulton-McAlister to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing on vaccinations for homeless people.
Question 13	Councillor Ackroyd to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth on the Brazengate bus gate.
Question 14	Councillor Wright to the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment on food waste collections.
Question 15	Councillor Lubbock to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth on a compulsory purchase order,
Question 16	Councillor Osborn to the cabinet member for resources on the council's Asset Management Strategy. (This second question was taken as less than 30 minutes had been taken for questions.)

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

## 7. Pay policy statement 2021-22

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Mike Sands seconded, the recommendations in the report.

Following debate, it was:

**RESOLVED**, unanimously to approve the Council's pay policy statement for 2021-22.

## 8. Constitution review

Councillor Kendrick moved and Councillor Waters seconded, the recommendation in the report.

Following debate, it was **RESOLVED**, unanimously, to:

- 1) approve the work that has been carried out by the Corporate Leadership Team and the cross-party Constitution Working Party to review and revise the constitution; and
- 2) adopt the revised constitution.

### **9. Appointment of Section 151 officer**

(Annabel Scholes, interim director of resources and section 151 officer left the meeting for the discussion and vote on this item).

Councillor Kendrick moved and Councillor Stutely seconded the recommendations in the report.

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, to appoint Annabel Scholes as the Section 151 officer.

(Annabel Scholes was readmitted to the meeting.)

(As two hours had passed since the start of the meeting, the Lord Mayor asked if any of the remaining business could be taken as unopposed. The item on approval of redundancy costs, motion on retro-fitting (as amended) and motion on stand up for carers were all agreed as unopposed business).

### **10. Approval of redundancy costs**

(This item was taken as unopposed business)

**RESOLVED**, to approve the exit costs relating to a redundancy.

### **11. Motions**

(Notice of the following motions, 11a to 11e as set out on the agenda, had been received in accordance with appendix 1 of the council's constitution.)

#### **11(a) Motion: Promoting pollinators in the city**

Councillor Packer moved and Councillor Huntley seconded the motion.

Following debate, it was **RESOLVED**, unanimously, that:

“It is well documented that bees and other pollinators have been in serious decline for many years. This is a loud and clear message that they need help and quickly otherwise all of us, plants, pollinators and people, face serious problems. Pollinators are central to Norfolk's fruit farms, they serve crops including oilseed rape, clovers and other nitrogen fixing plants. They are important for livestock grazing and wild flowers. Pollinators add to the diversity of plant species, habitats and wildlife in Norwich as well as its natural beauty. This makes Norwich a better place to live, to enjoy and to visit. Losing our pollinators would be a major ecological and economic disaster.

The council already undertakes important actions to help pollinators however, we should always aspire to do more. In addition to the actions within the biodiversity motion passed by Norwich City Council in September 2019:

Council **RESOLVES** to:

- 1) continue to raise the awareness of pollinators' needs in local communities by:
  - a) continuing to promote what action can be undertaken both on an individual basis and by community groups to help pollinators;
  - b) continuing to ensure the wellbeing of pollinators is a principal consideration in land management e.g. through grass-cutting and pollinator-friendly planting regimes;
  - c) using planning powers to protect pollinator habitats where possible;
  - d) continuing work with the Pesticide Action Network (PAN) to lead to an end in use of pesticides in Norwich;
  - e) planting pollinator-friendly plants and trees, such as those identified in the Royal Horticultural Society's Perfect for Pollinators scheme;
- 2) ask cabinet, through its advisory climate and environment emergency executive panel, to develop a pollinator action plan;
- 3) continue to plant pollinator-friendly plants as part of amenity planting in parks, gardens and green spaces;
- 4) ask the county council to encourage schools to help children engage with this agenda;
- 5) seeking to influence other partners, including social housing, public health bodies, district and county councils to support our efforts;
- 6) call on the county council to plant more pollinators when maintaining the city's highways; and
- 7) ask the leader of the council to write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs calling on the Government to:  
reverse its decision in January of 2021 authorising the use of highly damaging neonicotinoid thiamethoxam
  - a) introduce a ban to include other neonics and systemic pesticides based on results from the funding of proper research into the hazards of neonicotinoids and glyphosate on human health and the environment
  - b) focus support for farmers to adopt non-chemical alternatives"

(As three hours had passed since the start of the meeting, the Lord Mayor took a vote on whether the meeting should continue. With a majority of members voting against the continuation of the meeting, agenda items 11b – Motion on advertising and 11c – Motion on Right to Food would be taken at the next ordinary meeting of council).

The following motions were taken as unopposed business.

### **11(d) Motion: Retrofitting**

An amendment from Councillor Harris had been received. The mover of the motion had indicated that he was willing to accept the amendments and as no other member objected, they became part of the substantive motion.

Replacing “develop” with “To ensure that the planned Asset Management strategy of our own stock is completed this year and that the decarbonisation plan for our own stock forms part of that strategy. In developing,” in point 1

Inserting “for our own stock” after “retrofitting strategy” in point 1

Replacing “it” with “we” in point 1

Replacing “become” with “aim to be” in point 1

Inserting “it also has to be recognised that government funding and” before “working with partners” in point 1

Inserting “will be crucial to providing the much needed resource to implement it” after “where appropriate” in point 1

Inserting “continue to” before “identify” in point 2

Inserting “and required resource” after “opportunities” in point 2

Inserting “continue to” before “recognise” in point 3

Inserting “continue to” before “actively identify” in point 4

Inserting “including calling on government to reimburse the city council for the revenue lost through the 1% rent reduction, enhanced right to buy and measures designed since 2010 to deliberately damage social housing in our fine city” after “work forward” in point 4

“Many homes in Norwich were built before the introduction of energy performance or buildings regulations and, sadly, thousands of excess winter deaths are likely to be caused by poorly heated homes each year in the UK. Emissions from residential buildings form the largest share of Norwich's total scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions.

This council **RESOLVES** to ask cabinet to:

- 1) To ensure that the planned Asset Management strategy of our own stock is completed this year and that the decarbonisation plan for our own stock forms part of that strategy. In developing a retrofitting strategy for our own stock, showing how we will aim to be carbon neutral by 2030, it also has to be recognised that government funding and working with partners where appropriate, will be crucial to providing the much needed resource to implement it.
- 2) Continue to identify and work with a wide range of partners to investigate opportunities and required resource for retrofitting to enable projects across the city retrofitting homes in the social housing, privately rented and owner-occupied sectors
- 3) Continue to recognise the need for high value jobs, which would include retrofitting, as part of the city's Covid-19 recovery plan.
- 4) Continue to actively identify appropriate potential sources of funding to take this work forward including calling on government to reimburse the city council for the revenue lost through the 1% rent reduction, enhanced right to buy and measures designed since 2010 to deliberately damage social housing in our fine city.”

### **11(e) Motion: Stand up for carers**

“Carers – paid and unpaid, young and old – do a remarkable and important job. They are an integral part of our community. They deserve our support, but are far too often forgotten and ignored.

Carers in Norwich face big challenges every single day; challenges that have been made even harder by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Over 2,700 full-time unpaid carers in Norwich are entitled to Carer's Allowance.

At just £67.25, rising 35p in April, Carer's Allowance is the lowest benefit of its kind.

Many carers are unaware of their entitlement to financial support, a carer's assessment or break, and the support services available.

### Council **RESOLVES**

- 1) To affirm that we must continue to stand up for carers, do more to support them, and build a more caring society as we emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 2) To ask the scrutiny committee to consider adding an item to its work programme on the availability of support for carers, including a review of existing work undertaken by this council



- 3) To promote Young Carers Action Day as widely as possible on an annual basis, particularly to young carers and their families;
- 4) To ask group leaders to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, urging them to raise Carer's Allowance by £20 a week immediately, in line with the increase in Universal Credit, and copy in our local MP(s), asking for their support."

(The Lord Mayor closed the meeting.)

LORD MAYOR





**Council**  
**16 March 2021**

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

**Question 1**

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

“We have had many discussions recently about the importance of access to outdoor facilities, which now is more important than ever. Residents of Ely Street and the surrounding streets have asked for years now what is happening with the play park the council has closed off. This is an area with limited access to green spaces and outdoor facilities and it is a real shame that the only place where children and adults could exercise has been closed off for years. The community has made a number of suggestions about how this space could be used, including as a play area or a community garden. I requested an answer regarding what the council's plans were for this area in 2019, several times in 2020 and again at the beginning of this year. Could you please, after two years, give me an answer to my question?”

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

“The decision to close the Ely Street basketball play area, was made some time ago due to the dilapidation of the surface and concern for safety.

We are committed to bringing this area back into full sustainable use by local residents. Ely Street has been included within our estate programme. We have been seeking suggestions from the surrounding community with regard to how this space could be used and we will now seek to pursue these with the support of our community enabling colleagues.”

**Supplementary question**

Councillor Bogelein asked when and how the views of the community had been sought and why as a ward councillor she was not informed of this. Councillor Packer answered that Covid-19 has slowed down the projects of the parks and open spaces team and that the information about Ely Street Park would be sharing these

## **Question 2**

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

“I was surprised when watching a recent interview with the Labour leader Keir Starmer. When asked about the current approach to drug policies he answered that he thinks this is 'roughly right'. I find this very concerning because we can all see that current drug policies are discriminatory, do not prevent harm and deaths from drug abuse and do not support rehabilitation. In addition, current drug policies fuel violence related to the illegal drug market and drug gangs and mean that our communities suffer the consequences of related crime and anti-social behaviour. In this council we only recently passed a motion which acknowledged these problematic aspects of the current approach to drug policies and asked for a radical change in UK drug policies. Can the leader of the council reassure me that the Labour group remains committed to the resolutions of the drug reform motion passed by this council in January 2020 and that the current approach is anything but 'roughly right'?”

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

“Thank you for your question. There is a far-reaching debate within the Labour Party regarding our future policy on drug sentencing reform, in the context of the devastating impact of addiction, organised crime; in particular, ‘County Lines’ and abuse. It is a complex landscape. At present our position remains that which was pledged in the 2019 general election manifesto which argued for “establish a royal commission to develop a public health approach to substance misuse, focusing on harm reduction rather than criminalisation”. A position consistent with the motion unanimously passed by the council at the beginning of last year”

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Schmierer asked the leader whether he would consider writing a letter to the Prime Minister and the leader of the opposition to draft a letter offering Norwich as a pilot city for the programme. Councillor Waters answered that he would be happy to discuss the contents of the letter and who it should be sent to.

### Question 3

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

“In September 2020, this council resolved to ask cabinet to take a number of actions to discourage fly-tipping. These included:

- investigating the cost, environmental impact and logistics of both introducing “community skips” in key locations across the city or regular fly-tipping “amnesties” as well as kerbside collections and call on government to provide effective local government funding to reduce the cost of waste disposal and subsequent cost of responding to fly-tipping.
- evaluating the current kerbside collection system, especially whether the costs and the service are suitable to the needs of residents, taking into account the impact of the planned creation of a new recycling centre in the north of Norwich to replace the existing one at the Mile Cross depot
- investigating working with partners and other councils to ensure greater enforcement action is taken against those who fly-tip in Norwich and call on Norfolk County Council to remove charges for the disposal of DIY waste at recycling centres.
- working with the Norwich Car Club to ensure that larger vehicles are available to residents who need to take bulky items to a recycling centre.

Can the cabinet member provide an update on these resolutions, in particular considering that bringing waste collection services back in house from 1 April provides an opportunity to fulfil many of the actions listed?”

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

“Thank you for your question. Responding to each part of the motion mentioned above:

- Community skips generate substantial quantities of waste and therefore they encourage an irresponsible attitude to the consequences of disposal. These community skips therefore become cost prohibitive as the sorting of waste placed into each skip is expensive and instead the waste would be sent to landfill. Instead our priority is reducing the amount of waste produced per household per year. The majority of our residents manage their waste responsibly and do not fly-tip.
- The current kerbside service in Norwich is the most comprehensive in the county and includes a wide variety of things that are collected and facilities available to residents to properly dispose of their waste. We are still waiting on the outcome of the Environment Bill and subsequent developed legislation. We will provide a comprehensive appraisal on how this new legislation will affect the provision of services to residents. It is, therefore, neither practical nor prudent to carry-out any review of the kerbside services at this time.

- We are continuously working with our partners through the Norfolk Waste Partnership. The SCRAP fly-tipping campaign helps to highlight how to prevent the crime and reporting it. The best way of stopping fly-tipping is preventing it and therefore the joint focus is on providing information to residents on where and how they can legally dispose their waste. We continue to work to reduce this by:
  - 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 online reporting service links directly to the removal crews 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.

We encourage residents to dispose of large items properly. We encourage them to consider re-use opportunities like donating to charity shops or using on-line services such as Freecycle. Alternatively, if the re-use is not an option then they can use the bulky item collection service. The car club already has large cars and vans available to hire by the hour.”

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Osborn asked whether the cabinet member thought that Norwich City Council's response to fly-tipping was enough. Councillor Maguire answered that it has been proven that enforcement should be the final resort and that education was more important.

## **Question 4**

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

“In May 2020 First Bus agreed to invest £15.8 million in 55 Euro VI diesel buses alongside the £32 million of Transforming Cities grant secured by the county and district councils. Whilst Euro VI diesel buses would benefit air quality, they would not deliver reductions in greenhouse gas emissions. I wrote to the new managing director, Janette Bell at First Bus Head Office to enquire whether the company would consider switching the £15.8m to zero emission buses and refuelling facilities and would join any local working party on zero emission buses. Ms Bell replied positively to say that First Bus was open to the possibility of switching the planned investment to zero emissions, although clearly there were a lot of obstacles to overcome. She also replied that First is willing to participate in a local working party. I contacted Norfolk County Council transport team who have agreed to discuss with colleagues the idea of forming a local working party to develop a road map for rolling out zero emission buses in Norwich. Will the portfolio holder contact the county council and add his voice to the need for a working party and plan to set the Norwich bus fleet on the path to zero emissions??”

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

“The agreement by First to upgrade its bus fleet as part of the Transforming Cities Fund programme is a result of the excellent work that we did with the county and First to shape the programme and secure government funding. It will help to clean the air and contribute to meeting our legal obligation to reduce NOx and particulates. Electric buses are best from an air quality and climate point of view, especially if the electricity is obtained from renewable sources. However, they cost much more than upgrading to the cleanest diesel engines so spending the funds on electric buses would leave dirty Euro 3 and 4 in service for longer which could undermine our air quality outcomes.

We will continue to work with the county to see how further improvements to the bus fleet can be made, including through a new working group. The county council has ongoing conversations with the Department for Transport and bus operators on the opportunities to provide a zero emission bus fleet in Norwich and applied to the All-Electric Bus Town Fund for £42m to convert 180 buses. Unfortunately, Norwich was unsuccessful along with 17 of the 19 applications but it showed the aspiration.

While exploring the scope for electrification of buses is important I welcome other moves to electrify transport through the work we are planning with UK Power Networks and the county council to facilitate on-street Electric Vehicle charging for residents’ cars and the electric mobility provided by the Beryl bike share schemes and e-scooter trial.”

## **Supplementary question**

Councillor Carlo asked whether the cabinet member agreed that First should be investing in Zero Emission buses rather than cleaner diesel buses. Councillor Stonard answered that if First have invested in Zero Emission buses they would not have been able to replace the entire fleet. This has been made possible through the Transforming Cities fund and the newly announced fund to progress this further.



## **Question 5**

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

“Residents of Beatrice Road have put up with flooding in their street, and occasionally their homes, for some years, due to a build up of leaves in gutters each autumn. A Green amendment to the council's budget asked for more regular sweeping of the street to prevent this build up of leaves and the flooding it potentially causes, but the administration rejected that proposal. Residents have cleared up the leaves themselves from time to time but need support from the council to dispose of the leaves, which they are now getting. This is an example of environmental services being delivered in the city in an inefficient way which could be improved if the council carefully considered the knowledge and suggestions of ward councillors and residents. In the light of this, would the cabinet member and the director of Norwich City Services Ltd agree to meet with me and councillors from other wards in early June, approximately two months after services are first provided by the council's wholly-owned company, to make use of local councillors' specific knowledge of inefficiencies in current service provision in their wards?”

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

“I am aware that additional cleaning has been carried-out in this locality previously and has not yet resolved this issue. A more structured approach, potentially involving the county council (for gulley cleaning) and other parties, may be required. We also need to be mindful that by attempting to resolve one problem we don't create another, or move this particular problem to another area.

I accept the concerns of residents and am supportive of a joint approach to examining this issue and designing a solution. To this end I can confirm that the Operations director for NCSL will be happy to meet on site to discuss this and that June would likely be a reasonable time for this to happen. The environmental services manager will ensure that the meeting takes place.”

## **Supplementary question**

Councillor Price asked whether this meeting will be held with ward councillors and residents to drive efficiency with NCSL. Councillor Maguire answered that the company will be looking to meet with ward councillors to discuss this.

## Question 6

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

“I was pleased to hear, recently, that the Norfolk Pensions Fund Pensions Committee is taking steps to measure the carbon cost of its investments. As we are in the middle of a climate emergency, I hope the leader of this council will agree that complete fossil fuel divestment and investment in climate solutions is urgently needed if our world and culture is to remain recognisable long enough for these pensions to be claimed. Therefore, will the cabinet agree to apply similar policies to its own Treasury Management Strategy and measure the carbon cost of council investments as a first step to fossil fuel divestment and investment in climate solutions?”

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

“The approved Treasury Management Investment sets out that the council will not knowingly invest directly in businesses whose activities and practices pose a risk of serious harm to individuals or groups, or whose activities are inconsistent with the council’s mission and values.

Environmental, Social & Governance (ESG) driven investment strategies are a growing area with new options and products emerging in the market, as well as approaches to measuring ESG credentials. In addition, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) are currently consulting on proposed changes to the Treasury Management Code of Practice. These proposed revisions include consideration around ESG risk management. The council will review and build on the emerging guidance in this area of treasury management and continue to seek advice from its Treasury Management advisors.

Security, liquidity and yield remain the cornerstones of the Treasury Management Strategy, and it is vital that all investments continue to ensure the security of council funds as a priority and remain compatible with the risk appetite of the council and its cash flow requirements.

It is also important to remember that the cash balances held for investments are effectively already allocated to policy initiatives through the budget and MTFs and is simply cash awaiting spend, and so cannot be directly used for a separate policy initiative (such as green initiatives), or put at risk, which would impact the General Fund balance. As this cash is effectively council taxpayers cash, the Security, then Liquidity, before Yield requirements are paramount. As this cash is essentially held short term, and as cash deposits, an ESG agenda for the council is likely to be much more limited than would be available for a pension fund.”

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Neale asked whether the council would be taking the same approach in its own policies in divesting from fossil fuels. Councillor Waters answered that work is being done on the ESG on the Treasury Management fund but that pension fund investment is different to the Treasury Management Strategy. The general direction, however, is similar within the frameworks they operate within.

## Question 7

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

“Continued delivery on the practical green agenda to reduce our carbon emissions has been a consistent feature of this Labour led administration. Since our last council meeting I was pleased to learn that we have successfully been awarded over £1.5m to enhance our work to become net zero. Will the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment comment on the difference this will make to our city?”

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

“Thank you very for this timely question. You are correct that Norwich has made excellent progress towards reducing carbon emissions both on our own estate and across the wider city. In 2019 we declared a climate emergency, and have set an ambition target to become operationally carbon neutral by 2030, with plans for the city to follow suit by 2050 or sooner.

In terms of our success, the data speaks for itself.

Per capita emissions for the city of Norwich have decreased from 6.8 tonnes per capita in 2005, to 3.5 tonnes per capita in 2018. Per capita emissions include data related to: Transport, Domestic dwellings and Industrial and Commercial settings, and are provided annually by the Department of Business, Energy and Environmental Strategy.

And we continue to work on reducing carbon emissions in the city. We do this through a number of different pathways - Cosy City, our scheme helping private sector residents access funding to improve the energy efficiency of their homes, continued retrofitting in our own stock to support our citizens, and are working with partners on the matter through the City Vision Partnership.

We were delighted to have been successful recently in a number of different bids aimed at reducing carbon emissions in the city by focusing on the built environment.

This includes £715,700 from the Green Homes Grant which will improve 80 homes in the city with improved insulation on private sector homes and installation of solar technology on our own estate. Not only will these improvements reduce fuel bills for some of our more vulnerable citizens, and reduce the risk of fuel poverty, we also estimate this will reduce carbon emissions in the city by a further 30,000 tonnes.

In terms of our own estate, officers continue to work tirelessly, in partnership with our asset-management team, to drive down carbon emissions from council operations. To date, we have made a huge reduction of 62.1% against our 2007 baseline. This has been achieved by continually seeking new and innovative ways to reduce the council’s carbon footprint.

Recently, we have also been awarded £740,000 through the government decarbonisation funding scheme, which will be used to deliver renewable heating at City Hall, three major LED lighting retrofitting programmes, and a large solar system at the council’s new environmental services depot at Hurricane Way. The work on City Hall is especially challenging, given the technical issues presented by the building’s grade 2\* listed status.

The council has also allocated £88,000 to LED lighting retrofitting for St Giles car park and Blackfriars Hall, as well as over £36,000 on more energy efficient servers. A number of further projects will be developed and delivered in the next financial year, all funded through eco-financier Salix. This, combined with our long term programmes, will enable the council to continue to deliver carbon reduction both within our estate and throughout the wider city, as we continue to work towards achieving our net zero ambition. Whatever our own aspiration, however, we will need government support to deliver. Instead of having to bid to secure different funding for particular programmes as each arrives (and to do so within an often very tight deadline), we would be able to achieve so much more if government were to provide the confidence of stable funding sources which would support delivery over multi-year programmes. That would greatly help us to deliver even more in this area.”

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Oliver had no supplementary question.

## Question 8

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

“Like many councillors who represent wards with a large number of private renters I was deeply angered by the government’s decision to end the eviction ban. This will act as a driver for homelessness in our city and bring untold worry to hundreds of people in Norwich struggling due to the economic impacts of Covid-19. Given this position, can the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods comment on the important work our private sector housing team will undertake to continue to support both tenants and work with landlords to prevent evictions in our city?”

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

“We remain acutely aware of the difficulties both private sector landlords and their tenants are facing as a result of Coronavirus. The latest research estimates that over 800,000 people across the nation are in rent arrears with 445,000 private renters being served some type of notice.

We are here to help and have been publicizing the assistance available through letters sent out to landlords and agents and through updated pages on our website.

Our tenancy relations adviser and colleagues in the housing advice team are wholly committed to supporting landlords and their tenants to maintain tenancies wherever possible. Experience has shown us that early intervention is key and we are able to provide tailored advice and support to help those struggling to pay their rent or who may be unaware of their rights, particularly in light of recent changes in government rules about notice periods and the further extension of the eviction ban to May 31st. This is a personalised, bespoke service with the focus on working closely with clients to maintain their tenancy by whatever means possible.

In line with best practice, we have a range of options available should a tenant be experiencing difficulties in meeting the rent. Where there are financial issues, we can assist with getting help with Discretionary Housing Payments where there is a shortfall in rent, or applying for the Homeless Prevention Fund (HPF) loan scheme where a lump sum is needed to maintain the tenancy. Where a tenancy proves unsustainable, we are able to assist clients to source alternative, affordable accommodation. A standard budget form has been developed in line with new case-law and all of our advisers have received training in carrying out budget and affordability assessments. Where appropriate we will assist with rent deposits and up-front payments.

We appreciate everything that landlords are doing to support tenants during this difficult time and urge them to continue to show flexibility and support to tenants whose income has been affected by coronavirus. We also understand that some landlords will also be experiencing difficulties and we are here to help and advise any landlords who are experiencing tenancy related issues or have any queries about government rules which may be affecting them.

Our commitment to supporting those in the private rented sector, now and in the future, is set out in our [charter for private sector tenants](#). Our efforts to enhance our service, particularly in this difficult time, are testament to our commitment to protect private sector tenants and deal with the challenges that the sector faces.”

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Stutely had no supplementary question

## Question 9

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

“In place of the failed and grotesquely costly private sector track and trace programme, I was pleased to see this city council roll out its own ambitious Covid tracing programme in late January. Working with public health can the Leader update council on the difference this has made locally to tackle this virus in the city?”

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

“Norfolk has been supported some elements of devolved contact tracing since late 2020, with colleagues at Norfolk County Council undertaking positive contact tracing where the central service was unable to make contact with residents. Our council supported that with additional data checks to identify other ways to get in touch with those people and undertook doorstop checks to encourage residents to engage with the contact tracing team where contact could not be made by phone and this was very successful, leading to Public Health to make the case to further devolve the engagement needed with the close contacts of these positive cases. After recruitment of our initial team, this Enhanced Contact Tracing service went live in Norwich on 1st February 2021 with a team of two seconded supervising officers and five call handlers which is rising to 8 this week to cover the 7-day working rota we operate.

The role of this team is to reach out to those contacts, ensure they are aware of the need to self-isolate and are doing so, and understand any additional support they need to isolate safely and not need to leave their homes, increasing the risk of spreading the virus should they become positive or be asymptomatic. The calls to residents have been well received and since the start of the service 1,078 residents have been successfully contacted which is a 96% success rate compared with the data given. Where there have been unsuccessful contacts, these are usually due to a lack of information provided and we encourage anyone engaging with any test and trace service to give as many details as possible as it allows us to offer support when they need it. There have been very rare cases where people have indicated a refusal to self-isolate and compliance is 99% from those contacted Norfolk wide and under 0.3% non-compliance for Norwich. They have also supported door stop checks for 27 covid-positive residents who have not been contactable by Norfolk County Council and made follow up welfare calls to 84 residents who have indicated additional support needs when applying for Self-Isolation Payments through our Revenues and Benefits team.

In terms of being able to meet the needs of those who needed additional support to isolate or who are experiencing hardship as a result of the pandemic, the team have directly delivered food parcels to 209 households since the beginning of February, have referred 160 people to medicine collections from Voluntary Norfolk which is instrumental in coordinating local volunteers and over 200 people have been supported to apply to the Norfolk Assistance Scheme's Winter Hardship Fund. This is on top of

signposting people via LUMi to the wonderful work done by local communities to meet their neighbours' needs and other VCSE partners for specific advice such as debt management advice and legal concerns.

By being able to ensure people have what they need to support themselves and their families, we have been able to minimise residents' reasons to leave the house and thereby contain any potential further spread of the virus to protect Norwich communities.”

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Mike Sands had no supplementary question



## Question 10

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

“As a strong supporter of directly controlled public services under democratic accountability at a local level, I fully support the work to bring in house currently the joint ventures. I am excited by the prospect of our environmental services returning in April with over 250 staff. With regards to the new depot which is under construction can the cabinet member comment on the environmental and biodiversity improvements which shall be made?”

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

“Thank you for the question. Like you I am keen to see Norwich City Services Ltd up and running from 01 April, so we can work closely with the company to deliver against our objectives including improving the environmental performance in terms of land management and service delivery.

With regard to the new depot which we are providing for the company on Hurricane Way, your question is particularly timely as this is due to be handed over by the contractor to the company tomorrow. I would like to express my thanks to the contractor, Council staff and current and future company employees who have all worked to get us to this point. Delivering such a project during the pandemic has taken a considerable team effort and am hugely grateful to all involved.

As you are aware we have been able to incorporate many environmental features within the design of the new depot to improve the environment locally and so it can contribute to our target in the Environmental Strategy for the council to become carbon neutral by 2030. Moreover, it is worth noting that the project itself is inherently sustainable as it is reusing a former wine warehouse building that has been vacant for some time.

Last month it was announced that the council had been awarded just over £100,511 through the government decarbonisation funding scheme to deliver energy efficient LED lighting within the depot and a solar PV system on its roof with associated battery storage measures. The LED lighting has been installed for depot opening, both within the main depot and the office accommodation, the solar PV scheme will follow in the summer.

These measures sit alongside the other measures that were built into the scheme to promote cycling to work, to future proof it by providing ducting to ease the process of adapting to using electric vehicles in future, and external lighting schemes that are specially designed to minimise disturbance to bats.

Furthermore, we are particularly proud of the on-site features designed to support biodiversity in the area. These include multiple bat and bird boxes, new pond and various measures to encourage reptiles and amphibians on the site.

A carefully designed landscape scheme, including 84 native trees, 88m of hedging and 71 climbing plants, has been developed in close consultation between Council officer’s and landscape and ecological consultants. This provides new and varied habitat opportunities across the site. Significant tree and hedge planting has taken place in accordance with the agreed

landscaping plan which, in time, will more than compensate for biomass lost as part of the development.

A combination of trees, hedging and climbers has been used. The climbers are designed and located to attract invertebrates which will in turn benefit the local bat populations. Native trees and woody shrubs have been planted, many as standard trees. The native hedgerow species have been chosen to increase diversity and promote good management for the benefit of wildlife in accordance with specialist ecological advice.

An area of fruit trees has been planted in the south of the site. The fruit trees have been selected to provide additional food sources. As they will not grow to be tall trees, this leaves an area of open grassland near to the proposed wildlife pond which should create considerable habitat opportunities for reptiles and amphibians.”

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Button had no supplementary question

## Question 11

### **Councillor McCartney-Gray to ask the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment the following question:**

“As a keen follower and supporter of the climate change charity ‘Carbon Copy’, I was pleased to read of their praise for Norwich City Council being a top mover in the race to reach net zero in carbon emissions 20 years ahead of schedule. Can the cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment comment on the significance of this?”

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

“Thank you for this timely question, and for highlighting the work of Carbon Copy. If anyone is not aware, Carbon Copy are a UK charity who celebrate local low-carbon success stories, raising the profile of best practice projects and encouraging communities, councils and companies to make a difference. In addition to recognising us as a top mover, we have also been pleased to see Carbon Copy have promoted best practice case studies about Norwich Car Free Day and the Passivhaus development on Goldsmith Street.

I think it is very important to recognise the successes we are having in our approach to responding to the climate emergency alongside appreciating the scale of challenge that remains. Such recognition builds confidence in the team delivering this change and is helpful in ensuring political support. The recognition from Carbon Copy is indeed welcome in this regard. This follows on from other recognition including:

In October 2019, a wide-ranging survey undertaken by Friends of the Earth, found that Norwich city council was ranked joint-15th nationally (out of 350 local authorities surveyed) and first in Norfolk, with a performance score of 80 per cent.

In addition to this Norwich city council has won a wide range of accolades for our environmental work, the most recent of these being; a RIBA Stirling Award for the Goldsmith Street Passivhaus Development and the EDIE Carbon Reduction Award in 2019, as well as a Global Good Award in 2020.

We are proud the fact that in past years we have also received recognition from the Carbon Trust for our work in carbon management, as well as being awarded a coveted Green Apple award for our efforts to repurpose council computer equipment.

We are by no means complacent about the amount of work that still needs to be undertaken to achieve our targets, both on our own estate and in the wider city. But, thanks to our vision and ambition, and the excellent work of the dedicated officers who deliver the initiatives, we remain optimistic that we will achieve our targets. It is an optimism that is based both on our own carbon emissions data, and supported by recognition from other organisations looking to Norwich city council as a best practice case study in carbon emissions reduction.”

**Supplementary question**

Councillor McCartney-Gray had no supplementary question.

## **Question 12**

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

“Protecting all of our community against Covid-19, particularly the most vulnerable, is something which I know this council is fully committed to. There are few groups more vulnerable than homeless people in our city and I know there has been significant interest in how best health providers will provide and deliver the vaccination programme for them. Can the cabinet member for social housing comment on the work our officers are achieving, in partnership, to help deliver this important goal?”

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

“Our officers have been working closely with our partners in the NHS to identify people in Norwich who are still rough sleeping (despite our continued efforts to offer accommodation), those living in temporary accommodation, and supported housing projects. I can confirm that the first vaccinations took place on Thursday 11 March and this will continue to be rolled out across the city in the coming days and weeks.”

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Erin Fulton-McAlister had no supplementary question.

### **Question 13**

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

“Brazengate Bus Gate operates 365 days a year Monday to Friday 7.30am to 9.30am.

It was implemented to make sure that priority was given to buses and so that there were no private motor cars using the road at these times.

However when a resident of Eaton was caught on camera and fined for using the bus gate on Christmas Day it made Eaton Councillors think that it was unnecessary

for the Traffic Regulation Order to include this one day of the year, a Bank Holiday on which no buses were running.

Does the cabinet member not agree that this is a rather opportunistic way of making money when common sense would say that there is no need to have the bus gate operating when buses are not running?”

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

“Thank you for your question. It is correct that the bus gate was introduced by the city council when it had the agency agreement. Sadly, and in my view through an act of folly, this was then terminated by the county council. It is clear from advice from officers that responsibility now sits fully with Norfolk County Council and therefore the question should really be aimed at them as they are now responsible whether to have it and its hours of operation. To clarify once again for the avoidance of doubt, the city council simply undertake the camera enforcement on behalf of county.”

#### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Ackroyd asked whether the cabinet member would agree to add his support to raising the issue of the mistake to the county council. Councillor Stonard stated that he would raise the issue with the county council.

## Question 14

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

“A number of local residents have got in touch to express concerns about missed food waste collections, despite leaving the caddies out for collection in the usual way.

Having followed this up with the council, they were told it was accepted that the contractor should have collected but that no return visit would be made. Is Councillor Maguire, as cabinet member for safe and sustainable city environment, satisfied that the contractor is fulfilling their obligations to both the council and to residents?”

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

“The food waste collection service continues to be a successful part of this council’s doorstep recycling service – which is the most extensive such service in Norfolk. Norwich residents are regularly diverting over 3,300 tonnes of putrescible waste into food waste recycling each year. The service is both popular and well used

It is recognised that food waste collections are more challenging than normal waste and recycling collections –

- The participation rate is lower than for waste or blue bin recycling and participation is not constant or consistent – not everyone who participates sets their food bin out for every collection
- The containers are much smaller, which makes them easier to miss if obscured by vehicles, bins or other pavement obstructions
- The containers are easy to handle – so they do occasionally get moved away from their collection position, usually accidentally

Despite these challenges the food waste collection service is very efficient. The number of missed collections has reduced consistently over the last two years and with thousands of collections each week a missed collection rate of just 30 per month is very low – as evidenced in the latest performance data below. We estimate that the service is 99.9% effective. Officers have checked the notes from customer contacts regarding the small number of missed food waste collections and there is no mention of residents being told that Biffa will not return. Customer contact officers are trained to use the same wording as is presented on the council’s website. This asks if the residents bin is half-full and, if so, residents can help reduce the council’s carbon foot print by waiting a week until their next scheduled collection. About 60/70% of residents request Biffa to return, which they will. The only time the resident would be informed that Biffa will not return is if the report is outside of the stated 48hr period for reporting a missed collection.

Given all of the available evidence, I am very satisfied that the contractor is fulfilling their obligations to both the council and to residents.



This trend line is very encouraging and reflects the focus and stability of the food crews during this year.



### Supplementary question

Councillor Wright asked whether bins should be collected from both the inside and outside edge of the property. Councillor Maguire answered that it should be collected from both the inside and outside of the property and if they aren't collected residents should report the issue immediately.



## Question 15

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

“In Eaton there is a detached house which for the last 10 years has been covered with ivy and other vegetation to the point that is inhabitable. The garden is overgrown and covers part of the footpath.

Needless to say this house has not had an occupant for that period but despite this the council tax is paid each year.

It is a target for anti-social behaviour and for vermin. The neighbours are fed up with the situation and continually ask what can be done.

Despite many emails to the council I have had no success whatsoever in ridding the neighbourhood of such an eyesore.

Can the cabinet member give me some hope that despite no action being taken in the past, that a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) could be used in the near future to bring the house back into use as a home?”

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

“I recognise that the problems created by empty and unkempt homes can create problems for neighbourhoods across the city. Thankfully we don’t have large numbers of such properties in Norwich but they can certainly act as a magnet for anti-social behaviour and cause distress to neighbours.

The council is well aware of the property you are concerned about and it does blight the neighbourhood. We have taken action to address its condition previously through serving a community protection warning which did result in improvements being made to its appearance. It is unfortunately to see that over time it has deteriorated once again.

The council has a number of powers that it can use to address issues such as this. These generally result in temporary improvements to appearance and not the root cause of why the property is standing empty. Whilst it may be possible to use these powers again I tend to agree with you that the only way a more permanent solution is likely to be found would be for the council to compulsorily purchase the property in order that it could then be either sold on the open market or taken into the HRA. Either way would not only relieve the blight on the community but also result in a much needed home being provided.

We have some experience of using CPO successfully to ensure that empty homes are repaired and reused. Some years ago we had an officer based at City Hall who was responsible for taking such action across a number of areas. Unfortunately government withdrew the funding for this activity a number of years ago since when we have not been funded to carry it out. As you will also be aware we have recently taken a more active approach to CPO. We compulsorily purchased the site of the former Kings Arms in Mile Cross last year where we will commence construction of 5 much needed new council houses over the summer. We have commenced the same process on another site and are working up a business case to establish a revolving fund to address derelict sites as part of the towns deal funding we were awarded last year.

Much of this funding is directed at wider regeneration and officers will need to investigate whether any of it may be able to be used to tackle issues of single homes that are left empty as in the case that you refer to. I’m afraid I cannot offer any instant solution to the problem you have identified. The threshold for CPO action against individual homeowners remains high and

there are considerable costs and risks for the council in pursuing the matter. However, I will ask officers to look into the matter further and explore whether there are options for a more permanent solution that we can identify in this and other similar cases.”

### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Lubbock asked the cabinet member whether he supported a revolving funds to purchase single-use properties like the mentioned property. Councillor Stonard answered that he would discuss with officers.

**Please note that the following questions are second questions from members and will only be taken if the time taken by questions has not exceeded thirty minutes. This is in line with paragraph 39 of appendix 1 of the council's constitution.**

#### **Question 16**

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

“The council's Corporate Asset Management Strategy 2011-16 states it 'is essential to develop an investment programme that aligns to the asset review process and is consistent with the aim of the council to maintain a high income from assets'. In the light of this, it is surprising that a budget report in February 2021 said the “existing maintenance backlog on the council's existing general fund assets is estimated to be in excess of £21m” and that the council's focus “has been largely on using the council's limited capital resources on reactive rather than planned improvements”. The build-up of such a massive backlog means the council is likely to end up spending more than if it had proactively planned repairs so that last-minute reactive repairs are not needed - not to mention the fact that delayed maintenance has negatively impacted people living in and using the affected buildings. Why has the council not paid any attention to its Asset Management Strategy in the last ten years, leaving such an expensive backlog which will end up costing the council more than planned maintenance would have done?”

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

“The objective to increase income from assets in the 2011 Corporate Asset Management Strategy related specifically to the investment portfolio. Income from the investment portfolio stood at £3.4m in 2011 and over the last ten years we have significantly increased income from such assets to £7.5m pre-covid.

The maintenance backlog to which you refer relates solely to general fund properties, it does not therefore affect our tenants and indeed our housing stock is subject to a rolling program of condition survey and maintenance to ensure all stock meets the high bar of the Norwich Standard.

The council also owns a significant number of non-residential properties which serve a variety of purposes to meet our corporate objectives. Many of these are reaching the end of their life or are heritage properties with high repair and maintenance costs. The sustained period of austerity over the past ten years has put significant pressure on the general fund including funds available for capital investment in existing properties.

However, as you will see from paragraph 5.12 of the medium-term financial strategy to which you refer, the council is committed to reviewing and updating the asset management strategy. Work is well underway in progressing this project which will align with and inform the insourcing of our asset management function as of April 2022. The new strategy aligned with the insourcing of asset management functions will give the council greater control over the management of property and ensure that our assets are fit for the future”

#### **Supplementary question**

Councillor Osborn asked how the backlog could have happened. Councillor Kendrick answered that the lack of funding has meant that the works had to be prioritised, additionally Norwich has many older properties that require more

extensive maintenance.