



**COUNCIL**

**7.30 p.m. – 9.55 p.m.**

**3 March 2009**

Present: Councillor Hooke (Lord Mayor), Arthur, Banham, Bearman, Blakeway, Blower, Bradford, Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Collishaw, Divers, Driver, Dylan, Fairbairn, Fisher, George, Gihawi, Gledhill, Holmes, Jago, Jeraj, Lay, Little (A), Little (S), Llewellyn, Lubbock, Makoff, Morphew, Morrey, Offord, Ramsay, Read, Sands, Stephenson, Waters, Watkins, Wright,

**1. LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Lord Mayor announced that since the last meeting he had attended the following events –

The launch of the Norfolk and Norwich Festival  
First ever ECO Awards  
The Stranger's Club dinner  
Norwich Lads' Club dinner and boxing

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations of interest were made:-

- (a) Councillor Stephenson – personal interest in Item 8.
- (b) Councillor Holmes – prejudicial interest in Item 8.

**3. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

**Public Question 1**

**Robert Pugin to the Executive Member for Community Safety and Community Cohesion:-**

'Why do Norwich City Council paid officers operate an anti social behaviour policy with definitions that are determined by individual officers?

Why do Norwich City Council elected officers continue to agree with paid officers that there should be no published directives precisely defining what Norwich City Council perceives as acts of anti social behaviour?'

**Councillor Bert Bremner, Executive Member for Community Safety and Community Cohesion's reply:-**

'The Crime and Disorder act 1998 defines antisocial behaviour as *'Acting in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as (the defendant).'*

The City Council works to this definition. Our Antisocial Behaviour Policy and Procedures document provides a plain english version of this definition on page 6 which we believe is more reader-friendly whilst retaining the same meaning. *"Antisocial Behaviour is any activity which is capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to any person."* The document goes on to describe examples of behaviour which might meet the definition.

In tackling Antisocial Behaviour the City Council uses powers granted to it by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and subsequent amendments. Its officers are therefore bound by the definitions used in Law and comply with them. There is no question of officers using definitions they determine themselves.

Having had the chance to talk to you about your complaint I would like to offer you the opportunity to sit down with me and a senior Housing officer to discuss this, and to give you a chance to explain the full background to this case.'

**Robert Pugin** asked, as a supplementary question, why this document was not available to the public. **Councillor Bremner** said that it was and he would ensure that Mr Pugin received a copy.

#### **4. PETITION**

Michael Pendred presented the following petition -

'We the undersigned, do respectfully petition Norwich City Council to hear our plea to implement the following road safety measures.

That the on-street parking on the Aylsham Road between the King Edward public house and the entrance to the Royal British Legion is discontinued by the implementation of double yellow lines and twin pavement flashes.

We also ask that the single yellow line on the opposite side be removed to allow on-street parking.

To support this plea, would Councillors be reminded that the entrance to the British Legion serves the only exit and entrance to St. Lukes Church car park, Edmund Bacon Court and the Royal British Legion centre. The danger that occurs is on exit from the complex when the view from the right is obscured by parked vehicles.'

Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development, to respond:-

'This location as been assessed many times by the officers. A few years ago double yellow lines were introduced at the junction of Edmund Bacon Court and Aylsham Road, and these extend along Aylsham Road, 16m back from the junction. This is in fact longer than we would normally install to protect visibility at the junction, which is usually 10m.

The Highways Agency has a clear policy that waiting restrictions are only provided where there is a proven safety need. A check of the accident record shows no recorded accidents in the last 5 years that could be attributed to lack of visibility.

I'm sure members will appreciate that we receive many requests for changes to waiting restrictions, all of which are assessed on their own merits. But with the amount of staff resource that it takes to undertake the necessary legal processes required for making changes to waiting restrictions, the efforts have to be focused in areas of most benefit. Officers consider that the existing restrictions at this junction are adequate.

In recent weeks a pedestrian refuge was installed close to this location and this should have the effect of slowing vehicle speeds, to the benefit of people using the junction.'

**Councillor Brian Morrey**, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development, said that this location has been assessed many times by officers. A few years ago double yellow lines were introduced at the junction of Edmund Bacon Court and Aylsham Road and these extend along Aylsham Road, 16m back from the junction. This is in fact longer than we would normally install to protect visibility at the junction, which is normally 10m.

The Highways Agency has a clear policy that waiting restrictions are only provided where there is a proven safety need. A check of the accident record shows no recorded accidents in the last 5 years that could be attributed to lack of visibility.

I am sure members will appreciate that we receive many requests for changes to waiting restrictions, all of which are assessed on their own merits. But with the amount of staff resource that it takes to undertake the necessary legal processes required for making changes to waiting restrictions, the efforts have to be focussed in areas of most benefit. Officers consider that the existing restrictions at this junction are adequate.

In recent weeks a pedestrian refuge was installed close to this location and this should have the effect of slowing vehicles speeds, to the benefit of people using the junction.

He emphasised that all decisions about highways matters were made by the Norwich Highways Agency Committee, a joint committee between the City and County Councils. If Mr Pendred was able to attend the next Norwich Highways Agency Committee, he would bring the petition to that meeting and discuss it with them.

## **5. QUESTIONS TO EXECUTIVE MEMBERS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

The Lord Mayor advised members that 19 questions, from Members of the Council to Executive Members and Committee Chairs, had been received of which notice had been given in accordance within the provisions of Appendix 1 of the Council's Constitution. The questions were as follows:-

**Question 1** Councillors Stephenson and Read to the Chair of Planning Applications Committee regarding the Tesco public inquiry.

- Question 2** Councillor Holmes to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance with regard to the living wage.
- Question 3** Councillor Gledhill to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development relating to installation of grit boxes.
- Question 4** Councillor Ramsay to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development relating to contact with the planning department.
- Question 5** Councillor S Little to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance regarding postal delivery times.
- Question 6** Councillor Makoff to the Executive Member for Residents and Customer Care the Council contact number.
- Question 7** Councillor Jago to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development traffic management.
- Question 8** Councillor Dylan to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development with regard to help for businesses.
- Question 9** Councillor Offord to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development regarding business parking permits.
- Question 10** Councillor Bearman to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development with regard to parking on cycle lanes.
- Question 11** Councillor Jeraj to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development regarding communal recycling.
- Question 12** Councillor Llewellyn to the Executive Member for Housing and Adult Services regarding the number of affordable homes.
- Question 13** Councillor George to the Executive Member for Community Safety and Community Cohesion with regard to Castle Gardens CCTV.
- Question 14** Councillor A Little to the Executive Member for Housing and Adult Services regarding voids.
- Question 15** Councillor Collishaw to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance regarding reimbursement of the cost of unitary.
- Question 16** Councillor Wright to the Executive Member for Community Safety and Community Cohesion regarding the effectiveness of CCTV.
- Question 17** Councillor Fairbairn to the Executive Member for Children and Young People regarding upgrading of play equipment.
- Question 18** Councillor Lubbock to the Executive Member of Sustainable City Development with regard to 'Walking Works for business'.

**Question 19** Councillor Fisher to the Member of Sustainable City Development regarding Eco-Towns.

(Details of the questions and replies together with any supplementary questions and replies are attached at Appendix A to these minutes.)

## **6. NOMINATIONS FOR LORD MAYOR AND SHERIFF**

Councillor Morphew moved and Councillor Ramsay seconded the nomination of Councillor Collishaw as Lord Mayor designate for the next Civic Year and it was unanimously –

**RESOLVED** accordingly.

Councillor Morphew moved and Councillor Ramsay seconded Tim O’Riordan as Sheriff designate for the next Civic Year and it was unanimously –

**RESOLVED** accordingly.

## **7. MOTION – NATIONAL EXPRESS: JOB LOSSES AND SERVICE CUTS**

Councillor Jeraj moved and Councillor Read seconded the motion as set out on the agenda.

Councillor A Little moved, and Councillor George seconded, that the motion be amended by deleting both the third bullet point under ‘This Council believes:’ and Resolution (2).

With 9 members voting in favour, 27 against and no abstentions the amendment was declared lost.

**RESOLVED**, with 27 voting in favour, 4 against and 5 abstentions that:-

‘This Council notes:

- that National Express announced in November 2008 that it would cut its staff in Norwich by 314;
- that National Express recently announced a 9% rise in profits with pre-tax profits of £90 million;
- the work being done by Norfolk MPs and the RMT Union in opposing these cuts.

This Council believes:

- that a high quality rail service in Norfolk is vital to the County and cutting jobs will reduce this quality;
- the loss of local jobs in the railways will add to the level of financial hardship locally, at a time of an economic downturn;

- that the best long-term future for railways in Norfolk, and the country as a whole, is for them to be brought into public ownership.

The Council resolves to write to:

- (1) National Express to state its opposition to the local job cuts because of the affect it will have on the level of service to Norwich;
- (2) the Transport Salaried Staff's Association (TSSA) in support of its campaign to bring the railways back into public ownership because it is the best option for the long term future for Norwich.

## **8. MOTION – ROYAL MAIL PRIVATISATION**

(Councillor Holmes left the meeting during discussion of this item having declared a prejudicial interest).

Councillor Read moved and Councillor Jeraj seconded the motion as set out on the agenda.

**RESOLVED**, with 28 members voting in favour, none against and 5 abstentions, that:-

'This Council notes:

- the announced intention by the Business Secretary, Peter Mandelson, to part-privatise Royal Mail;
- that this proposal has attracted strong opposition;
- that a group of non-government organisations, trade unions and MPs is proposing that the Royal Mail be kept in public ownership.

This Council believes that:

- part-privatisation of Royal Mail risks tens of thousands of jobs, including some in Norwich;
- an added risk to local jobs in Norwich is especially worrying in the current economic downturn;
- the Royal Mail is best kept in public ownership to ensure the best possible service in Norwich.

This Council resolves:-

- (1) to write to the MPs for Norwich to ask them to support their fellow MPs in keeping the Royal Mail in public ownership and sign Early Day Motion 364 because this is the best way to ensure that Norwich receives the postal service it needs and deserves;

- (2) for the same reason to write to the:-
- (a) Business Secretary, Peter Mandelson, to express opposition to the plans to part-privatise Royal Mail;
  - (b) Communications Workers Union (CWU), Compass and John Grogan, MP, to express the support of Norwich City Council for a publicly-owned postal service.'

## 9. MOTION – FUEL POVERTY

Councillor Lubbock moved and Councillor Wright seconded the motion as set out on the agenda.

Councillor Llewellyn moved and Councillor Read seconded the following amendment:-

'Add the following points at the end of the resolutions of the motion:

- (4) Executive to explore ways of providing a free insulation scheme for all households in Norwich including private sector housing, as a way of reducing fuel poverty, heating bills and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and consult with the Head of Finance and with officers of Kirklees Council where such a scheme is already in operation and is partly funded through prudential borrowing.
- (5) Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change asking the Government to provide the necessary funding and support to enable free insulation schemes as described in point (4) to be implemented more easily across the country.

**RESOLVED**, with 17 voting in favour, none against and 18 abstentions, to approve the amendment which became part of the substantive motion.

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, that:-

'This Council notes:

- The Government estimates that fuel poverty currently affects 2.5 million households in the UK.
- The Warm Front Energy Initiative, a key component of this government's fuel poverty strategy, is failing as according to a February 2009 National Audit Office report:
  - 57% of vulnerable households in fuel poverty do not claim the relevant benefits to qualify for the scheme;
  - 75% of households, who qualified under the scheme, were not necessarily in fuel poverty;

- £34 million in grants was awarded to comparatively energy efficient households;
- 11,020 qualified householders, who applied to the scheme in 2008-09, pulled out because they were unable to afford the top-up fees to the grant to cover the cost of upgrades.
- Many older people in Norwich, most vulnerable to fuel poverty, are unable to access information about which benefits they are entitled to, according to the Council's Independent Commission for Older People.
- David Heath MP introduced a Fuel Poverty Bill to Parliament on January 21, with a second reading scheduled for March 20. This bill includes two measures:
  - A major energy efficiency programme to bring existing homes up to the current energy efficiency levels enjoyed by modern homes;
  - Social tariffs to limit vulnerable households' exposure to high energy bills.
- This Fuel Poverty Bill is backed by a wide range of organisations including Age Concern, the Centre for Sustainable Energy, and the Child Poverty Action Group.

This Council resolves, in view of the impact of fuel poverty on the people of Norwich, to ask the:

- (1) Leader of the Council to write to David Heath MP in support of the proposed fuel poverty bill and to Dr. Ian Gibson MP and Charles Clarke MP to ask them to support the bill;
- (2) Leader of the Council to write to Energy Secretary Ed Miliband and Environment Secretary Hilary Benn asking them to re-evaluate the Warm Front Scheme in the light of the National Audit criticisms, particularly the eligibility requirements and funding arrangements;
- (3) Executive to consider, in relation to fuel poverty, how to implement the recommendation set out in the Independent Commission for Older People report to use its financial inclusion initiative as a means to improve access to information for older people;
- (4) Executive to explore ways of providing a free insulation scheme for all households in Norwich including private sector housing, as a way of reducing fuel poverty, heating bills and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and consult with the Head of Finance and with officers of Kirklees Council where such a scheme is already in operation and is partly funded through prudential borrowing;
- (5) Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change asking the Government to provide



the necessary funding and support to enable free insulation schemes as described in point (4) to be implemented more easily across the country.

LORD MAYOR

## APPENDIX A

### QUESTIONS TO EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES

#### Question 1

#### **Councillor Claire Stephenson to the Chair of the Planning Applications Committee:-**

'At the Public Inquiry into the application for a Tesco store at 84 Unthank Road, the Council barrister gave the impression that the City Council would be supportive of an application without a car park, yet the Council does not have a position on this because no such application has been considered. Who authorised this approach?'

#### **Councillor David Bradford, Chair of the Planning Applications Committee's reply:-**

'In the closing submissions to the Planning Inquiry the Council's Barrister made it clear that if a store was to be provided on this site it would be preferable for it to have no customer car parking provision, this line was authorised by Council Officers. This was authorised because previously the Planning Inspector had specifically asked this question of the Council's independent highway witness who had answered on the basis of his professional opinion and the reasons for refusal. He had stated that in his opinion no parking would be better than a store with parking. At no point during the Inquiry did the Barrister or expert witness say that a store without parking would be acceptable in this location.'

**Councillor Stephenson** asked, as a supplementary question, if the implications of a store without parking was never considered why was this condition agreed by the Barrister. **Councillor Bradford** reiterated that, as far as he was aware, the barrister did not do this. He emphasised that the issue of a store without a car park was not considered by Planning Committee.

#### **Councillor Rupert Read to the Chair of the Planning Applications Committee:-**

'At the Public Inquiry into the application for a Tesco store at 84 Unthank Road, the Tesco retail consultant said that Tesco was hoping to double the existing convenience market turnover in the Unthank Road area by adding a turnover of £2m for the new store to the current £2m annual turnover for existing stores. Council planning policy SHO12 says that new retail developments should not affect the viability of existing centres. Given these two facts, and that the idea of doubling the amount of convenience store shopping on Unthank Road seems a very unlikely scenario, do you agree that City Council's Planning Application Committee members should not have been advised when considering this application to discount retail impact as a material planning consideration?'

#### **Councillor David Bradford, Chair of the Planning Applications Committee's reply:-**

'The retail impact of development can clearly be a material consideration to be taken into account in the determination of the planning applications. The agreed minutes of the meeting of Planning Applications Committee held on 6<sup>th</sup> December 2007 clearly show this was referred to by officers in their presentation to Committee as well as in their written report. The specific information about turnover to which you refer and which was raised at the Inquiry was based on the results of a study undertaken to support the appeal against the refusal of planning permission. This study was not required by the planning department because the size of the proposed development did not support it. However, Tesco's decided to undertake the survey anyway, but the results were only available after planning permission had been refused. The study was based on a telephone survey of local residents shopping habits and mode of travel. As this information was not available at the time that the Planning Applications committee made its decisions, Officers were not able to refer to it.'

**Councillor Read** asked, as a supplementary question, at what stage was Planning policy SHO12 taken into account. **Councillor Bradford** said that an assessment was not required for a store of this size and officers had no sight of the study initiated by the applicant.

## **Question 2**

### **Councillor Adrian Holmes to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance:-**

'At November Full Council, Councillor Ramsay asked about progress that had been made on the Council's living wage strategy. The Executive member for Corporate Resources and Governance suggested that work would be finished to calculate the Norwich living wage "early in the new year". Has this work now been completed?'

### **Councillor Alan Waters, Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance's reply:-**

"I reported to Council In November that financial inclusion is one very important strand of the Executive's strategy to sustain the local economy in these very difficult times.

This work is progressing with partners to identify the issues being faced by our residents and communities in these challenging times.

Last week I chaired a recession summit with partners to gather the views of partners and to help shape the responses that are required.

This identified a number of priorities including:

- More accessible debt advice
- The need for services to improve financial literacy
- Training for staff to provide supported sign posting
- Better partnership working
- Sharing information on the impacts of the recession

Whilst there are many emerging issues relating to the current recession, the Executive is very aware of the low wage levels that occur in Norwich and the “in work” poverty that exists.

The importance of a living wage for residents is therefore vital and will be tackled in good time. The focus currently is on those residents that find themselves out of work, struggling to pay bills, are falling prey to doorstep loan sharks or are simply lost in the many systems and forms that people find themselves having to deal with which are at times confusing.

The Executive also recognises that the recession is impacting on businesses and developing activity on the living wage has to be timely if we want to have an opportunity to make it a reality.

The first part of this work will be a mapping exercise which will start in March. The timetable for completion will rely on the assistance of employers and partners and I will be able to update Council as the work progresses over the next few weeks.

The Executive will shortly be considering a draft Financial Inclusion strategy which will include proposals for activity directly by the council, partners or collaboratively, to help our residents through the recession.’

**Councillor Holmes** expressed concern at the lack of progress on the mapping exercise and asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Executive Member agreed that the living wage was important to address the imbalance between the rich and poor. **Councillor Waters** agreed that the living wage was vital both to help those on low incomes and to help the economy as high incomes would be spent locally. However, since the question was originally asked in November, there had been significant economic turbulence and the Council needed to concentrate on the effect of that on the budget process. He assured members that the mapping exercise would be done as soon as possible and he would keep Councillor Holmes informed of progress.

### **Question 3**

**Councillor Bob Gledhill to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

‘I am very concerned that footpaths never seem to be gritted following snow. For frail and older people especially this makes walking very dangerous. Could the Executive lobby the County Council to make more money available for the installation of grit boxes so that key pedestrian and cycle routes at least can be gritted as well as main roads?’

**Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development’s reply:-**

‘Under the Highway Agency agreement Norwich City Council has with Norfolk County Council, the City Council provides the winter maintenance in Norwich. The funding for this operation is provided by Norfolk County Council which is the Highway Authority.

City Care (on behalf of the City Council) uses a brine sprayer to keep the footways in the City centre as clear of ice and snow as is practicable.

Away from the City centre, grit (rock salt) bins are used to allow residents to treat ice and snow on footways and roads that have a significant slope. There are 214 grit bins maintained from October to April around the City Council area.

Norwich hasn't experienced the worst of the winter weather that the rest of the country has endured this season. However, the £482k originally allocated by Norfolk County Council for winter maintenance in Norwich has already been spent with 6 weeks of the winter season to go. While Norfolk County Council will meet the cost of any further action required this winter, a significant increase in the number of grit bins in Norwich is unlikely to be possible in the present budgetary climate.

I will arrange that the annual review of the Norfolk (& Norwich) Winter Maintenance Plan during the summer considers this request for additional grit bins for the residents of Norwich.'

**Councillor Gledhill** asked, as a supplementary question, how far the Executive Member considered people should be expected to carry salt and could the Council advertise the location of grit bins. **Councillor Morrey** reiterated that Norfolk County Council was responsible for providing the funding for grit bins and he was not aware whether it had any guidelines on the location of grit bins. He would lobby Norfolk County Council to try to get them to provide more.

#### **Question 4**

#### **Councillor Adrian Ramsay to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'Several residents and developers have told me of their frustration that, when calling City Hall to speak to a planning officer, they are told that the Planning Department can only be contacted by post or e-mail. Why is this? '

#### **Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'This is not currently the case. In relation to general telephone queries, there was, last year, a policy of asking for all queries to be put in writing by letter or email due to particular staff shortages at the time, this has now ended and the Customer Contact now put general planning queries through to the planning reception. Staff on reception may be able to answer some queries direct, or redirect the query if not planning related e.g. for Building Control or on a County matter. If planning reception staff cannot deal with the query they either pass the call through to a planning officer, or, if a planning officer is not available, take full details or ask the enquirer to email full details of the query. These queries are passed to one inbox which is checked by one person (and a substitute if absent), acknowledged and passed to the appropriate planner to deal with.

Developers who have made applications are given full details of the case officer dealing with their application and their direct line telephone numbers. At the regular planning forum of agents working in the Norwich area a full telephone list of all the

planners direct line numbers has been provided to assist in communication. Neighbours who are notified by letter of an application are also given details of the case officer and direct line telephone number.

Ways of making routine queries easier to answer by the Customer Contact staff by the provision of better information on the internet and appropriate training are currently being examined. If Councillor Ramsay could give me the contact details of these people we will speak to them to find out about their concerns. We are always looking at how we can improve our service so would welcome this discussion.'

**Councillor Ramsay** said that he was pleased the situation had improved and asked, as a supplementary question, whether all people seeking to submit planning applications had the opportunity to speak to planners. **Councillor Morrey** said that all agents were entitled to the same information.

### **Question 5**

**Councillor Stephen Little to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance:-**

'Has the Council undertaken any assessment of the average delivery time of TNT post as compared to, for instance, second class Royal Mail?'

**Councillor Alan Waters, Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance's reply:-**

'As part of our contract monitoring with TNT we do undertake regular checks to ensure that the service standard of 3/4 days for delivery is being met. We do have in place a system whereby monthly spot checks are made on mail being delivered to specific addresses within and outside the City. We have not experienced any problems with the service standard being met by TNT for months now.

The standard for second class Royal Mail is the same (3/4 days) but since we do not use that service corporately it is not possible to operationally compare.'

**Councillor Stephen Little** asked, as a supplementary question, if the Council was aware of the proportion of mail that did not reach its destination within 4 days. **Councillor Waters** said it didn't and he would look into it.

### **Question 6**

**Councillor Ruth Makoff to the Executive Member for Residents and Customer Care:-**

'I have spoken to several residents who will no longer phone the Council to report problems because of the cost of having to phone the new telephone number that was introduced last year. Has the Council tried to assess the impact of the new telephone number on contact from members of the public?'

**Councillor Julie Brociek-Coulton, Executive Member for Residents and Customer Care's reply:-**

'The 0844 number was introduced on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008. Prior to that date on average 37,500 calls per month were successful, since that date over 38,000 calls per month are successful, so we are dealing with more enquiries. Of those successful calls only 1% are repeat callers meaning our customers do only need to make one call.

The new number has given us the tools to manage the queues more effectively and resource the peaks around service requests enabling more people to get through to our Customer Service Advisors the first time they call.'

The benefits are -

- wait times have significantly reduced - average waiting times for July – Sep were 1 minute 41seconds and Oct - Dec were 1 minute 36 seconds
- getting to the right person first time – so enabling a faster resolution of a query

Customers continue to contact us in a variety of ways of which the telephone is only one channel. Over the last year we have seen an increase in electronic contact with over 154,000 visits to our website during Oct – Dec and over 10,000 emails received for the same period.

In reply to a supplementary question from **Councillor Makoff, Councillor Brociek-Coulton** said that the Council was looking at ways to get the 0844 number to be free as per the BT 0845 number. She emphasised that the Council was able to help more people more quickly through the new phone system and this increased efficiency meant that people paid less for phone calls as they could be dealt with quicker .

## **Question 7**

### **Councillor Howard Jago to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'During the consultation on traffic management for Silver Road, some residents have complained that the leaflet is difficult to read because the text is too small, especially with regard to the different options, which are crucial. Although there is a note suggesting that residents could request the consultation leaflet in another format or language would it not be helpful to have further Council consultations to the public printed in a 12 or 14 point font such as Arial - regarded as acceptable for those with visual impairment.'

### **Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'Firstly, I would like to apologise for the leaflet that was distributed as part of the Silver Road consultation, the text was too small and the maps were difficult to read, and I have asked officers to ensure in future that any consultation material is clear and legible.

The reason for the problems with the Silver Road leaflet was the need to condense a lot of information into a small space. Ideally the leaflet should have been at A4 size but the Royal Mail has strict rules on the format of the business reply (Freepost) slips, which meant the leaflet had to be A5 size. By the time the proofs of the leaflet were produced and officers realised the problem, it was too late to re-design the

leaflet without losing the pre-booked printing and distribution slots, which would have delayed the consultation. With hindsight the delay may have been preferable. In my opinion a delay is what should have happened to ensure the leaflet could be read by everyone. In future officers will be instructed that no material for consultation can go out unless it has been checked by Communications to ensure that it meets all our criteria including being readable without using a magnifying glass.

Some people have contacted the council and asked for larger versions, which they have been sent. Alternatively all the information is also available on the internet. To date over 300 people have responded to the consultation, and while it officially closed last Friday late responses are being accepted until the end of this week and I would encourage people to have their say.'

**Councillor Jago** said he had received complaints from residents who had not received a leaflet and asked whether it was possible to have an extension.

**Councillor Morrey** said that Councillor Jago should have asked this in his original question and he would have been able to investigate the issue. He would discuss, with officers, the implications of a delay.

#### **Question 8**

**Councillor Tom Dylan to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'In light of the news that the developer of Anglia Square has put its plans on hold due to the recession, can the Council take more action to help support businesses in the area? For example, could the Council offer to work with traders to help promote the Magdalen Street and Anglia Square area in the way that the Norwich Lanes has been successfully promoted in recent years?'

**Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

The Lanes project was funded by around £500,000 of European and Regional Development Agency funding and was able to deliver a range of improvements to the area that contributed to its local distinctiveness such as new signage, paving, interpretation and public space development. Projects of this size usually have a relatively long lead- in time and might not at this time be the most appropriate way of supporting local businesses in the Northern City Centre pending the temporary delay signalled by the developer of Anglia Square caused by the recession. Local businesses are more likely at this time to be in need of more immediate support and the council is able to signpost access to that support through such programmes as the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative and the range of advice and support services available through the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and agencies such as Business Link and initiatives such as Train to Gain.

'The Council's Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) programme is active in supporting businesses in the area. For instance shops in Wensum Street and Magdalen Street were "letter dropped" last year and evening meetings were held to inform the shop owners about the Neighbourhood Business Grants Scheme being funded by the LEGI Programme. Every business was offered the opportunity to participate in the Neighbourhood Grants scheme to enhance the trading



environment. A number of businesses have subsequently participated – one shop has already had their shop front repainted, and applications approved but not yet completed include signage, shop front and window replacement and other repainting. A wide range of other LEGI programme work is also supporting businesses in this area and other parts of Norwich. This includes:

- Activity to attract inward investment to Norwich such as marketing materials and soon to be launched, property search web site for potential investors.
- The BizFizz projects offer help and support to new and existing businesses and Norwich Enterprise Centre is open to all and offers information, business advice, financial advice, training and support to new businesses and existing businesses with growth ambitions.
- LEGI also funds a Community Development Finance Institution (CDFI) which offers low cost loans to new and existing businesses.
- Buy Local, a LEGI supported project, helps local businesses by encouraging sustainable local procurement at all levels. Buy Local's membership includes manufacturing and professional services businesses as well as retail. The LEGI Programme has also commissioned a study to investigate local procurement practice and further work is being undertaken to develop local supply chains with the County Council and the Norwich Chamber of Commerce.

The Economic Development Service has worked with the Magdalen Street Traders' group in the past and helped them to promote the shopping offer. It would be happy to meet with them again to explore ways in which they would like to promote the area.'

In reply to a supplementary question from **Councillor Dylan, Councillor Morrey** said he would discuss with the Communications Unit the possibility of using the Citizen to promote small businesses in the area and would ask the Economic Development Unit to consider further ways of helping.

## **Question 9**

### **Councillor Peter Offord to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:**

'Residents living in and near the city centre are often complaining to me that the parking permit scheme for businesses causes problems on their residential streets. They would like the scheme to be reviewed and for the Council to consider whether the number of permits issued is appropriate. However, given that the Service Plans for 2009/2010 do not include such a review, the residents are hoping that the Council will at least be able to give greater attention to enforcing the existing rules over the next year. Apparently there is often a great need for business parking in streets near the football ground on match days! Can enforcement of the existing policy be made a priority in the next year, and will the rules of the scheme be reviewed in the following year?'

**Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'There are many issues with the resident permit parking scheme and the Highways Agency Committee(NHAC) has set up a working group of Members and Officers to look at a variety of issues around the whole issue of Civil Parking Enforcement in Norwich, including waivers, permit allocation, level of fees, times of operation, visitor permits and many more.

While this group is determining priorities it would be premature to look at business permits in isolation, and therefore the issue is not included in the 2009/10 service plan. The group is expected to report back to NHAC later this year.

In terms of enforcement, there is nothing we can do about the number of business permits that are used on match days, assuming that the permits are parked in the correct zone. The legal order backing the permit system sets out strict criteria on how business permits are issued but it does not say that they can only be used when the driver is in the business premises, or conducting business associated with that company. It may be that the order needs to be changed, and this is something for the member / officer group to consider.

Before NHAC has considered the recommendations of the group, it would not be appropriate for me to say when the rules might be revised.'

**Councillor Offord** asked, as a supplementary question, if the possibility of amending the rules to ensure that business permits could only be used when the driver was in the business premises, or conducting business associated with that company, could be on the agenda for the Working Group. **Councillor Morrey** said yes.

**Question 10**

**Councillor Janet Bearman to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'I've had a lot of complaints about motorists parking in cycle lanes. I understand that because the County Council has not adopted enforcement restrictions of vehicles parking in cycle lanes unless a parking restriction, such as double lines, exists for that part of the highway, offending motorists can't be prosecuted. Would the Executive member support a move to ask the County Council, through the Joint Highways Agency Committee, to adopt the powers available and make parking in any cycle lane an offence?'

**Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'I can understand Councillor Bearman's frustration with people who thoughtlessly park in cycle lanes causing an obstruction. However at present the Government has not delegated the powers to be able to enforce obstructions in the highway to local Councils. The powers are contained within the Traffic Management Act 2004, and while many of the functions in that act have been enabled, the ones relating to Local

Council enforcement of traffic offences, other than parking in contravention of waiting restrictions, have yet to be enabled.

When the Government enables the appropriate legislation I am sure the County Council will seriously consider taking on those powers and we will certainly ask them to do this.'

**Councillor Bearman** asked, as a supplementary question, how we could ensure that the County took on these powers and what would be the possible timescale. **Councillor Morrey** said that a report would be received by the Norwich Highways Agency Committee.

#### **Question 11**

**Councillor Samir Jeraj to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'When can people living in Council flats expect to receive communal recycling facilities? Some such residents were promised these facilities months ago. It's important that residents of flats are not left out given the recent changes to recycling facilities for houses.'

**Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'When we started on our improved recycling provision we realised that one solution was impossible for all of the different housing tenures in the City. One of the areas we knew would require a lot of work and a different solution was the flatted areas of the City. The Waste Management Working Party decided that we would put in communal recycling facilities where appropriate.

Work on providing communal waste and recycling facilities commenced at the end of 2007. A list of all potential sites has been compiled and the solutions available to provide the facilities reviewed. Members were able to see these at a briefing session organised in February 2008. Initial resident consultations took place at a number of sites in March / April / May 2008 where plans were available of specific solutions for specific sites. Delays were then experienced in getting estimated costing for the work from the contractor.

When I as the Executive Member responsible for the Waste Strategy saw the draft report I had it withdrawn because the costs had spiralled and I was unhappy with the proposed funding suggestions. It was better to delay than go ahead with something I thought had too many unanswered questions contained within it. I told the Vice Chair of the Waste Management Working Party, Councillor Ramsay, of the reasons why the report and installation would be delayed.

Officers have now established what the funding options are and these are due to be discussed at the next Waste Management Working Party on 26 March 2009. Once the way forward is agreed the project can continue and the current estimated and date of April 2011 revisited. As soon as the Working Party is happy and Executive approval has been obtained work can start on installing the facilities at the locations already consulted on and agreed. I hope these can be started this summer.'

**Councillor Jeraj** asked, as a supplementary question, whether residents had been kept informed of the reasons for the lack of progress. **Councillor Morrey** said that he would ensure residents were updated as soon as possible.

#### **Question 12**

**Councillor Tom Llewellyn to the Executive Member for Housing and Adult Services:-**

'During the period April 2006 - April 2009, how many affordable homes were decommissioned in Norwich, either through being demolished, purchased for another use, or for some other reason?'

**Councillor Brenda Arthur, Executive Member for Housing and Adult Services' reply:-**

'During the period in question a total of 89 affordable council homes have been decommissioned. I can't say how many affordable homes from other providers have been decommissioned or why.

52 of these units have gone to developers to enable the regeneration of an area including an additional 200 residential units of which 60 will be affordable.

27 are awaiting development and will produce an additional 108 affordable housing units.

10 have been demolished and 20 new affordable housing units provided in their place. These are the final phases of the concrete block replacement programme.

In addition 208 properties have been purchased under the right to buy scheme during this period and so are no longer considered affordable housing by the definitions we use.'

#### **Question 13**

**Councillor Niki George to the Executive Member for Community Safety and Community Cohesion:-**

'During our recent discussions on the matter, you said that CCTV for the Castle Gardens was a priority. Could you tell us when this will be installed and if the delays that such schemes, like in Clover Hill, suffered?'

**Councillor Bert Bremner, Executive Member for Community Safety and Community Cohesion's reply:-**

#### **Castle Gardens ASB Summary**

##### **Priority**

'As I reported to Council in September last year, a range of work was being implemented through the Safer Norwich Partnership in response to some of the

problems that had been reported to the Safer Neighbourhood Team and discussed at the Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel.

Castle Gardens is within the City Centre Safer Neighbourhood. The August meeting of the City Centre Safer Neighbourhood Action Panel (SNAP) made Castle gardens one of its priorities because of issues of anti-Social Behaviour, use of alcohol (which contravenes the Control of Alcohol in Public Places Order 2003) and reported smoking of drugs in Castle Gardens, Castle Moat and Castle Mound.

However, this does not infer that Castle Gardens is not safe for the public or an open space that is not used and enjoyed by the public.

An environmental audit took place in September 2008 which highlighted areas for improvement.

Work put in place includes elements to increase public reassurance and reduce the opportunity for the low level crime and anti-social behaviour to take place.

This includes:

- Daily uniformed patrols by the police
- Highlighting contract failure on litter picking and providing more suitable litter bins which are to be installed in March 2009
- Changes to some of the shrub areas to reduce the potential of their use for substance misuse and / or rough sleeping
- Re-painting and improvements to security of the stores beside the bridge.
- Proactive work from the County Council's Youth Team to engage with young people
- Ongoing review of some of the bedding and grass areas to consider opportunities for refurbishment

It has also been noted by the Safer Neighbourhood Team that improvements to CCTV could make a difference.

There are currently two cameras in the area one in Castle Gardens and one on Castle Green neither of which is in the ownership of the Council. Concerns regarding the impact trees are having on the sight lines of the cameras are being investigated to determine an appropriate plan of action.

The museum are also being approached to see if the fixed view camera at the lift entrance could be changed for a pan, tilt and zoom camera. I will ask members of the City Council on the Joint Museums Committee if they could follow this one up.

There are currently no plans for the City Council to install a camera on site from its own resources.

In addition, Scrutiny Committee are visiting the Gardens as part of their work programme on 12th March to consider the action already taken by the Safer Norwich Partnership to address problems of antisocial behaviour in Castle Gardens and whether there are any further measures which can be pursued.

A site visit will take place at the start of the meeting and Cllr George may wish to join this site visit.'

**Councillor George** said he welcomed the site visit being planned by Scrutiny Committee but asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Council had considered working with the Norfolk Museums and Archaeology Service who had experience in working with hard to reach groups. **Councillor Bremner** welcomed the suggestion and said that he would put it forward.

#### **Question 14**

**Councillor Antony Little to the Executive Member for Housing, Adult Services and Older People:-**

'The Council's scheme to reward tenants who leave their properties in a good state has now been abandoned. Can the Executive Member expand on why this was, how many people successfully claimed the reward, how many people claimed but were not rewarded and what the total cost, when every thing is taken into account, of this scheme was?'

**Councillor Brenda Arthur, Executive Member for Housing, Adult Services and Older People's reply:-**

'The Leave it Clean procedure was launched in December 2007 as a good practice incentive scheme for vacating tenants to leave their properties in good order thus saving the council both time and money in void turnaround, repair costs and subsequent loss of rental income.

The total number of Leave it Clean payments issued to date is 113 amounting to £11,300. This was out of 1013 voids during the same time.

In a sample taken over 600 void properties the Leave it Clean void cost repair was just over £300 less on average than where no Leave it Clean reward was given. There was also a reduction in cost of £184 on void repairs where a pre leave visit took place suggesting that the incentive did have the desired effect.

In November of last year the scheme was put on hold while we reviewed how it was a working in practice and looked at how we might increase take up from some 11%.

To date we have developed an improved procedure which has been informed by the officers who were responsible for implementing the scheme.

The next step is to consult with tenants after which we will be in a position to re launch this incentive scheme as soon as is practically possible.'

**Councillor A Little** asked, as a supplementary question, why it was necessary to freeze a scheme if it was working well and requested a response to his question about the amounts claimed, but not rewarded and the total cost. **Councillor Arthur** said that the scheme had been suspended pending a review because there were issues relating to capacity, resources and training. It was important that there was a transparent policy that could be implemented by everyone. She would try to find out the information regarding costs and pass those on to Councillor Little.

## **Question 15**

### **Councillor Eve Collishaw to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance:-**

'If, or when, the unitary plans fail, would the Executive Member consider writing to the Secretary of State for Local Government to demand reimbursement of the cost of this whole saga?'

### **Councillor Alan Waters, Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance's reply:-**

'We remain very confident that there will be a Greater Norwich unitary council.

Indeed the chances are improving. We have noted the consistent failure of a number of recent High Court appeals against the process, and recent positive ministerial statements setting out the Government's determination to see new unitary councils being created as they can be more efficient and more effective.

We also note the recent legal advice which indicates that the Boundary Committee had "misdirected itself", and that this now means that all unitary patterns which meet the Government criteria must be put forward for formal consideration. This increases the chances of the "doughnut" model being recommended.

Unitary status has long been a very high priority for the City Council, and a significant majority of elected members from this Chamber has consistently supported our participation in the bidding process, and our early work to develop proposals.

We are therefore satisfied that our early preparation work is a good investment.

The unitary bidding process was a voluntary process, set out within the "Strong and Prosperous Communities" White Paper in late 2007. Given that this council entered into the process voluntarily I do not think there is any prospect of reimbursement. We will, however, consider this matter at the appropriate time.

I presume that Councillor Collishaw is aware that the Conservative Party has stated that it will rescind any decisions to create new unitary councils, if it is elected at the next General Election. Given her question, I therefore assume that, should that happen, Councillor Collishaw will support the reimbursement of costs that councils such as Norwich City Council have spent on preparation?'

## **Question 16**

### **Councillor Rosalind Wright to the Executive Member for Community Safety and Community Cohesion:-**

'At January's Council meeting, Councillor Bremner noted the £448,000 spent on CCTV coverage in the city. Could he outline the effectiveness of these cameras in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour?'

### **Councillor Bert Bremner, Executive Member for Community Safety and Community Cohesion's reply:-**

'The City Centre CCTV now has 100 cameras in operation being monitored and recorded 24/7. The control room has radio communication to the Police radio system, retail radio, pubs and clubs, parking services and the SOS bus.

The cameras provide valuable information to the Police as live picture are sent to the Police HQ control room, the operators can be in radio link to the officer on the ground relaying information which has been captured by the system (images can be reviewed whilst live recording is taking place. Evidence that is required for investigation is downloaded to a Police evidence locker, this gives allows CD or DVD to be burn off as evidence to be presented in court.

CCTV has been identified as a main player in monitoring the night time economy.

As part of the Labour drive to take the benefits of CCTV out to areas away from the City Centre the retail shopping centres around the City have had CCTV installed, part of the LEGL funding to regenerate the local shopping economy. This has been welcomed by residents, shoppers, the Police and, of course the shopkeepers themselves.

The effectiveness of the system is difficult to pin point as there is a large amount of data passed to the Police for observation / Information. In the recent months as an example of the effectiveness these are a few of the events which the Police have made use of the images captured:-

- Murder outside Leeds Building society ;
- Murder at Great Witchingham;
- an affray outside Leeds Building Society;
- Violent disorder in Prince of Wales Road and various times;
- Assistance to Suffolk Police with Murder Enquiry;
- Abduction;
- Numerous anti – social evidence gathering;
- Several robberies;
- Missing person;
- RTC and damage to road side furniture;
- Assisting County Council traffic monitoring;
- Begging and street trading.

Prince of Wales Road is certainly a success story. "Norfolk's most dangerous street" was how it was described by a senior police officer in 2001, and that certainly was how it felt. Great strides have been made to crackdown on crime and anti-social behaviour. It now feels and is much safer, full of clubbers and full of fun. The CCTV in Prince of Wales Road has certainly played its part in making the street safer for the public, and for the Police.'

In reply to a supplementary question from **Councillor Wright, Councillor Bremner** said that there had been very positive responses to the implementation of CCTV from residents around the city including Colman Road, Long John Hill, Bowthorpe and Mile Cross.



## Question 17

### **Councillor David Fairbairn to the Executive Member for Children and Young People:-**

'What are the criteria for the improvement or upgrading of the play equipment in the City's parks? When I enquired about improvements to equipment at Lea Bridges Park in Lakenham, I was told that, because no additional accommodation has been built there, there were currently no funds available for new play equipment. Surely there is a better way of assessing need?'

### **Councillor Susan Sands, Executive Member for Children and Young People's reply:-**

'The majority of the Council's new play provision is funded from Section 106 (S106) commuted payments paid to the council by local developers. These sums are calculated according to the City of Norwich Replacement Local Plan and associated Supplementary Planning Documents.

The purpose of S106 payments are that local residents can benefit from additional facilities in order to balance any increased pressure on local infrastructure from the new development. For this reason, the funds can only be spent by agreement with the developer and within the locality of the development. Such facilities can include payments to improve or create new open space and play facilities.

Occasionally, external funding becomes available and this is allocated through the priorities identified in the Play Strategy, which was adopted in 2007, and the more recent Open Spaces Needs Assessment, which contains detailed technical information. Both these documents were the subject of extensive public consultation.

The city council's capital budget currently has insufficient funds to be able to build new facilities over and above those that are funded by externally generated income such as specific grants or S106 commuted sums.

On 18 February this year, the Executive recommended to Council the approval of £525,294 non housing capital expenditure for play space. This programme of work is financed by S106 funds and will be used to fund local play facilities in locations where there has been associated development.'

In reply to a supplementary question from **Councillor Fairbairn, Councillor Sands** confirmed that Section 106 money came from developers and could only be used in the area that the development took place for example, money coming in from Three Score could be released across Bowthorpe. It was also important to realise that Section 106 funding could be used for ongoing maintenance.

### Question 18

#### **Councillor Judith Lubbock to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'Following my attendance at a Living Streets conference 'Why walking works for business', I put forward the idea of a half-day conference to be held at City Hall during Walk to Work Week, 27 April 2009 to 1 May 2009.

The purpose being to promote walking to employers and employees with practical suggestions, promote a healthy life style and promote Norwich as a great walking city. Will the Executive Member confirm that the Executive is willing to take up this idea?'

#### **Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'I support greater levels of walking (and cycling), which as Councillor Lubbock suggests is a healthy alternative to using the car or public transport and is often quicker or more convenient.

Once the Environmental Strategy Manager has finished our Carbon Management Programme which is part of our involvement in the Local Authority Carbon Management, which should be in the next 2 weeks. He will then look to finding a way to have a half day conference working with the Living Streets organisation.'

### Question 19

#### **Councillor John Fisher to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

'In view of the fact that the proposed Eco Town of Rackheath is within the extended City Boundary of greater Norwich outlined as part of the Norwich Unitary bid, has the Council responded to the Government consultation on the draft 'Eco Town Planning Policy Statement' and if so could the details be made available?'

#### **Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-**

'In view of the cross boundary implications of the Eco-Town proposal we have considered it best to respond on the draft Eco-Town Planning Policy Statement jointly with our neighbouring authorities and the County Council through the Greater Norwich Development Partnership. This approach and the draft response to the consultation was endorsed by the Local Development Framework Working Party on 12 January 2009. I understand you have already been sent a copy of the final response which has now been issued.'

**Councillor Fisher** asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Executive would consider a more robust response now that the consultation period had been extended. **Councillor Morrey** said that this was a Greater Norwich Development Partnership response and it was therefore a joint response from all the local authorities within the Partnership.