



MINUTES

COUNCIL

7.30pm – 9.50pm

20 March 2012

Present: Councillors Lay (Lord Mayor), Ackroyd, Arthur, Banham, Bradford, Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Carlo, Driver, Fairbairn, Fisher, Galvin, Gayton, Gee, Gihawi, Gledhill, Grahame, Grenville, Haynes, Henderson, Holmes, Jeraj, Kendrick, Lubbock, MacDonald, Makoff, Offord, Sands (S), Sands (M), Stammers, Stephenson, Storie, Thomas, Waters and Wright

Apologies: Chris Higgins (Chair) and Councillors George and Little

1. LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Lord Mayor said that since the last meeting she had attended a World Women's Day event in the council chamber organised by Norwich Mind; a concert at the Great Hospital by charity volunteers in aid of Norwich Care for Young Carers; a performance of "The Nutcracker" by Norwich schoolchildren at the Theatre Royal and she had hosted the Lord Mayor's Business Reception at Norwich Castle.

The Lord Mayor said that this was the last council meeting for some councillors who had indicated they would not be standing for re-election. The Lord Mayor invited representatives to acknowledge the contributions of the outgoing councillors namely Councillors Banham; Fisher; George; Gledhill; Holmes; Jeraj; Makoff; and Offord, and also former councillors Altman and Westmacott who had recently resigned.

2. PRESENTATION OF LONG SERVICE AWARDS

Councillor Bert Bremner, cabinet member for planning and transport, summarised the contributions of Phil Slater and Keith Wood to the work of the council during their careers and the Lord Mayor presented their long service awards.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

The Lord Mayor said that two public questions had been received in advance of the meeting.

Mr Neil Blunt to the cabinet member for planning and transport replied:-

'Since 2009 the Grove Pub site on Cadge Road has been derelict and is now an eyesore in the centre of the estate. The council has recently taken enforcement action by boarding some of the windows, but the rest of the site is still strewn with glass and debris and the building is in disrepair. What additional short term action can be taken by the council to make the site tidy and safe, and, if it remains derelict, what can be done in the medium to longer term to bring the site into use?'

Councillor Bert Bremner, cabinet member for planning and transport to reply:-

'I am aware of the concerns over this site and have been appraised regularly by local labour party colleague Vaughan Thomas.

The site was last visited by officers on Friday 16th March. Although secure, there is a problem with broken glass strewn about the car park from the first floor windows which have been broken by vandals. We have informed CNC Building Control who may be able to take immediate action to remove any imminent danger from falling glass.

Previously, action was taken in February to board up the pub and to secure the fencing to prevent access to the rear. The owner did not comply with our request to do this so we carried out the works and will be reclaiming our costs.

The appearance of the site is poor enough to justify further action by our planning enforcement officer. He will be able to require the owner to take steps to tidy the site, board the first floor windows and to replace the damaged brickwork at the front.

In addition, the site is patrolled by the west neighbourhood team on a near daily basis to check for vandalism, flytipping and unauthorised entry.

Unfortunately the site is not likely to be developed until market conditions improve. Officers are, however, keeping it under review and will continue to explore options for a longer-term solution to bring it back into use. In the meantime, if the building continues to deteriorate there are a range of powers available to us.

We have also been taking action in relation to the Shoemaker's Arms and Kings Head pubs. We recently re-secured the Shoemaker's Arms building against intruders and charged the owner for the cost of the works. The owner has also cleared the site of litter and re-erected the Herras fencing following a request by an officer from Citywide Services.

Action is currently being taken to re-secure the Kings Head against intruders.'

Mr Michael Stonard to the cabinet member for housing:-

'Will the portfolio holder tell me if the City Council knows yet how the changes in the right to buy discounts announced recently by Grant Shapps will affect Norwich. For example will the authority be able to replace each new home sold with another in order to maintain the level of much needed social housing in Norwich and what effect will the changes have on the ability to repay the £149 million debt which the council has taken on to give it and its tenants greater autonomy over housing in the city?'

Councillor Victoria Macdonald, cabinet member for housing replied:-

'Can I thank Michael Stonard for his very pertinent question. The coalition government have been rolling out a number of housing initiatives and statements and it is always important to place these in to a local context. From my position, promoting home ownership by encouraging more people to increase their level of debt to buy their council property is not the top priority for tenants in Norwich. When I speak to tenants they are more concerned about their ability to meet their existing financial commitments such as paying their rent, meeting the rising cost of fuel and anxieties about employment prospects and the impact of welfare reform. They are also keen to see investment in their council homes.

My immediate response to the question is that it will takes us some time to work through the implications of increasing the discount ceiling on council house sales from £34,000 to £75,000. It is not a straightforward matter. Officers are currently working through the government's announcements to assess the likely impacts for tenants and for the council as a landlord and as a strategic housing authority. The council will be working to ensure that the delivery of the government's policies in Norwich does not reduce the availability of affordable housing in the city, and particularly to protect the council's own provision of social rented housing.

The £149m housing debt taken on by the council, replacing the constant drain of housing resources in negative subsidy payments, has been demonstrated to be affordable and to produce additional medium and long term resources for investment in the council's housing stock. The recently announced changes in the level of Right To Buy discount will have to be tested alongside the proposed investment in the housing stock. We are confident that repayment of the debt will not be endangered but the potential impact on investment in the existing stock and the scope to build new dwellings is more problematic. Our priority will be investment in the existing stock and this means we will need to work through the implications of the increased RTB discounts, to establish the financial viability of replacing additional RTB sales in combination with the planned repayment of the additional debt.'

5. PETITIONS

No petitions had been received.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2012.

7. QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

The Lord Mayor advised that 10 questions had been received from members of the council to cabinet members and committee chairs, of which notice had been given in accordance with the provisions of appendix 1 of the council's constitution. The questions were as follows:-

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| Question 1 | Councillor Gee to the leader of the council on the council's governance model. |
| Question 2 | Councillor Makoff to the deputy leader of the council and cabinet member for resources of the cost of street cleaning. |
| Question 3 | Councillor Carlo to the leader of the council on the Greater Norwich Development Partnership and Board. |
| Question 4 | Councillor Gledhill to the cabinet member for planning and transport on the effects of the forthcoming hosepipe ban. |
| Question 5 | Councillor Jeraj to the cabinet member for housing on the manifesto of Defend Council Housing. |
| Question 6 | Councillor Galvin to the cabinet member for housing on tenant contact. |
| Question 7 | Councillor Wright to the deputy leader of the council and cabinet member for resources on the government's 'work fare' scheme. |
| Question 8 | Councillor Lubbock to the cabinet member for planning and transport on 20mph speed limits. |
| Question 9 | Councillor Fairbairn to the cabinet member for planning and transport on dog control orders. |
| Question 10 | Councillor Little to the deputy leader and cabinet member for resources on the statement of accounts 2010/11. |

(The deputy leader of the council and cabinet member for resources agreed to accept this question which had been received late under the provisions in paragraph 12.3(ii) of appendix 1 of the constitution).

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| Question 11 | Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for planning and transport on pavement parking on Mornington Road. |
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(This second question from Councillor Carlo was accepted as the time taken on members questions had not exceeded 30 minutes under the provisions in paragraph 12.2(ii) of appendix 1 of the constitution).

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

8. NOMINATIONS FOR LORD MAYOR AND SHERIFF

Councillor Arthur moved and Councillor Stephenson seconded the nomination of Councillor Gayton as Lord Mayor designate and John Jennings as Sheriff designate for the next Civic Year and it was unanimously –

RESOLVED accordingly.

9. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2012/13

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Kendrick seconded the recommendations in the annexed report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to approve the –

- (1) prudential indicators and limits for 2012/13 to 2014/15 contained within Appendix A of the report, including the authorised limit prudential indicator;
- (2) minimum revenue provision (MRP) statement contained within Appendix A which sets out the council's policy on MRP;
- (3) treasury management strategy 2012/13 to 2014/15 and the treasury prudential indicators contained within Appendix B;
- (4) investment strategy 2012/13 contained in the treasury management strategy contained within Appendix B and the detailed criteria included in Annex B(1).

10. PAY POLICY STATEMENT

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Arthur seconded the recommendations in the annexed report, including the updated statement with an additional paragraph on pensions, which had been circulated to members.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to approve the pay policy statement for 2012/13 in accordance with the requirements of the Localism Act 2011.

11. APPOINTMENT OF SECTION 151 OFFICER

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

RESOLVED, with 21 voting in favour, 3 against and 9 abstentions, to appoint Caroline Ryba as the council's Section 151 officer.

12. MOTION - SUPPORTING BIODIVERSITY

The Lord Mayor said that the following amendment to the motion set out on the agenda, had been received in advance from Councillor Lubbock and had been circulated –

To add 'are drought tolerant' after '...support pollination'

A further amendment had been received in advance from Councillor Gihawi and had been circulated –

To add 'where appropriate' after '...to ask cabinet'

Councillor Stammers had indicated in advance that she was happy to accept the first amendment. Councillor Stephenson suggested that it would be sensible to accept the second amendment before debate and, with no member objecting, both amendments were accepted and became part of the new substantive motion.

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

RESOLVED, unanimously, that -

'Much work has been done by council's in Newcastle, Sheffield and Harrogate in creating a biologically diverse landscape and in supporting bees, butterflies, insects, beetles and other pollinators in maintaining the pollination of plants and the production of fruiting plants and food production. Pollinators are essential to the economy and the food chain and contribute to the richness and diversity of our living landscape.

Council **RESOLVES** to ask cabinet, where appropriate, to adopt a policy of planting plant and flower species that support pollination, are drought tolerant and encourage biodiversity within the management strategy of its parks and open spaces and to replace non pollinating or low pollinating species with those that are beneficial to bees, insects, butterflies and other pollinators.

Two hours having passed since the start of the meeting, at the invitation of the Lord Mayor, members indicated they were happy to accept item 13 as unopposed business.

13. MOTION – PROCUREMENT

RESOLVED, unopposed, that –

'The council's procurement strategy contains six key principles, which include commitment to fairness, sustainability and equality in the procurement process and the council's website states 'good procurement will lead to buying goods, works and services in an ethical and sustainable way...'. The council's procurement decisions can have wide ranging impacts, not only on Norwich and local residents, but on communities and the environment around the world.

The Public Services (Social Value) Bill 2010-12, if enacted, requires 'local authorities, when entering into public procurement contracts, to give greater consideration to economic, social or environmental wellbeing during the pre-procurement stage'.

Council, therefore, **RESOLVES** to –

- (1) ask cabinet to adopt the strongest procurement policy that the council can legally adopt to raise the ethical standards including an approach to procurement that will not involve contracting companies that are known to be in breach of international law and/or international labour organisation conventions;
- (2) write to the Secretary of State for business, innovation and skills to request a change in the rules that limit the council's ethical procurement policy.

LORD MAYOR

Questions to cabinet members and committee chairs

Question 1

Councillor Graeme Gee to the leader of the council:-

“Does the cabinet intend to arrange to examine changing the council's leadership model to a committee system, as enabled by the recent Localism Act 2011?”

Councillor Brenda Arthur, leader of the council's reply:-

‘As with most things in the coalition government's localism act this needs to be given very careful consideration in terms of consequences, and the advantages and disadvantages of both systems need to be weighed up. Any change could have significant impacts on how the council works and cost us more to run. So it is not something I would want to commit to or not at this stage. An interesting question to pose at this point in the year particularly as council set the budget for 2012/13 and agreed the corporate plan just last month.’

Councillor Graeme Gee asked, as a supplementary question, if the leader agreed that a committee system would be a more effective way of monitoring the new arrangements and partnerships that the council was entering into.

Councillor Brenda Arthur said that when entering into joint arrangements enhanced contract monitoring was set up to ensure control was maintained. The consequences of any new governance arrangements would need to be considered very carefully. This would need to include taking into account the increased resources that would be required and deciding what services the council would need to stop providing to fund the change. Any such decision would be one that could not be taken lightly.

Question 2

Councillor Ruth Makoff to the deputy leader of the council and cabinet member for resources:-

‘Will the council calculate and make available to councillors a comparison of the cost of provision of the street cleaning service in-house and through external contractors?’

Councillor Alan Waters, deputy leader of the council and cabinet member for resources' reply:-

‘The council uses a service delivery toolkit to assess the form of provision most likely to meet the needs of the service users and the council. The toolkit reviews options such as in house provision, public sector partnerships, shared services, contracting and third sector provision. The toolkit and analysis reviews a variety of factors of which cost is considered as part of the value for money analysis. The other factors are strategic alignment (to the council's operating model), delivery of continuous improvement (i.e. meeting the needs of the customer and the council and improving

outcomes), delivery within the proposed timescale and a risk assessment for each option.

The service delivery toolkit methodology was used for the housing repairs service and reviewed by the Contracts Working Party and Cabinet on 16 February 2011 to come to the final decision on the most appropriate form of provision.

The council has let a short term emergency contract for grounds maintenance, street cleansing and arboricultural work. This contract allows time to review the options for longer term provision to commence in March 2013. However, to reduce the risk of challenge to the council we must begin a tendering process for the replacement of these services and publish an OJEU notice inviting contractors to bid for the work in the future. This will allow the "pre-qualification" process to be undertaken. However, in parallel to this officers are working on the service delivery toolkit analysis for street cleansing (as well as grounds maintenance and arboriculture services). This will be presented to Contracts Working Party for review and discussion before going to Cabinet for a final decision in June 2012. If the outcome of the analysis is that a contracted service is best then the contracting process will be continued. If it is not deemed to be the best form of provision then the tender process can be stopped and the chosen form of provision can be pursued.'

Councillor Ruth Makoff said that the response referred to technical decisions and she asked, as a supplementary question, how factors such as risk, value judgements and the democratic debate would be taken into account when making decisions whether to contract out. **Councillor Alan Waters** said that the contracts working party looked at all circumstances with much care mixing technical considerations with other factors. The council would continue to look at all things carefully and make the best possible policy decision it could.

Question 3

Councillor Denise Carlo to the leader of the council:-

'Following the recent judgement of Mr Justice Ouseley on the legal challenge to the Joint Core Strategy in which he ruled that strategic growth in the North East Growth Triangle will be treated as not having been adopted, will the City Council's representatives ask the Greater Norwich Development Partnership to open up its Board to include Opposition Councillors? This would facilitate a greater level of accountability and scrutiny which has been lacking to date and improve public trust in the GNDP and the required re-consultation on the remitted parts of the JCS.'

Councillor Brenda Arthur, leader of the council's reply:-

'There are two parts to this question.

The first relates to the membership of the GNDP Board and the second concerns the decision making remit of the board.

In relation to board members, in September 2011 cabinet agreed the new governance structure for the GNDP. The new arrangements included moving meetings of the GNDP board to public meetings. As a public meeting, all members are welcome to attend and listen to the debate, and I note that Councillor Carlo did in

fact take up this opportunity to observe the GNDP Board meeting last week. Membership of the board has also changed and now includes three councillor representatives from each constituent local authority (i.e. Broadland, Norwich, South Norfolk and Norfolk County Council); and one representative from partner organisations (i.e. the Broads Authority; the Local Enterprise Partnership; and the Homes and Community Agency). Responsibility for appointing the people to represent the various organisations is not a GNDP decision but rests with each individual organisation. In the case of the city council, cabinet took the decision that in view of the strategic importance of the board, the council representatives would be the leader, deputy leader and portfolio holder for Planning and Transport. It is my view that this is an appropriate level of member representation on a sub-regional organisation.

In relation to the remit and work of the board it is important to remember that the GNDP Board has no executive authority. The GNDP acts as a forum to discuss sub-regional planning and related issues to achieve a consensus on specific matters and then to make recommendations for others to confirm. This seems a very sensible method of operation and leaves democratic accountability with the responsible organisation. Therefore, the responsibility for taking a decision on a planning policy matter will rest with the appropriate local planning authority not the GNDP. In our case this is the city council. I appreciate that Councillor Carlo has only recently joined the council but I can assure her that major planning policy items such as the joint core strategy have been the subject of extensive consideration by members within the city council and that this examination has normally culminated in a formal decision by the council. In this way all councillors have been, and will continue to be, involved in a very transparent and accountable decision making process.'

Councillor Denise Carlo asked, as a supplementary question, how all councillors would be involved in the decision making, including how funding raised from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) will be spent. **Councillor Brenda Arthur** said that she answered similar questions at the last meeting when CIL was considered by council. The governance structures require decisions to be made by each individual council so members would be fully involved.

Question 4

Councillor Bob Gledhill to the cabinet member for planning and transport:-

'What effects, if any, will the forthcoming hosepipe ban have on council services and what is the council doing to alleviate any disruption?'

Councillor Bert Bremner, cabinet member for planning and transport's reply:-

'Anglian Water Service Ltd has given notice that a hosepipe ban will be put in place with effect from 5th April 2012. The ban will cover all council owned parks, allotments, gardens, open spaces and highway verges that are open to the public. This will inevitably affect our summer sports pitches (e.g. bowling greens, cricket pitches) flower displays and water features within the parks.

We are working with our contractors to ensure the use of good horticultural practices to conserve water, use of mulches (woodchip gravels etc) and soil enhancers such as Broadleaf P4 to retain moisture. With regard to sports pitches and planted areas

such as bowling greens and herbaceous beds our approach over the years has been to use drought tolerant grasses where possible and to ensure a good density of planting to cover the ground and minimise water evaporation.

Here is information available on the Anglian Water website:

When on a hosepipe ban we can't do:

- Watering a garden using a hosepipe.
- Cleaning a private motor-vehicle using a hosepipe.
- Watering plants on domestic or other non-commercial premises using a hosepipe.
- Cleaning a private leisure boat using a hosepipe.
- Filling or maintaining a domestic swimming or paddling pool, except by using a hand held container filled directly from a tap.
- Drawing water, using a hosepipe, for domestic recreational use.
- Filling or maintaining a domestic pond using a hosepipe, except where fish or other aquatic animals are being reared or kept in captivity.
- Filling or maintaining an ornamental fountain, except where an ornamental fountain is in a fish pond.
- Cleaning walls, or windows, of domestic premises using a hosepipe.
- Cleaning paths or patios using a hosepipe.
- Cleaning other artificial outdoor surfaces using a hosepipe.

But we will still be allowed to:

- Use a hosepipe in a garden or for cleaning walls or windows of domestic premises, paths or patios, a private leisure boat or an artificial outdoor surface, where such use is necessary for health and safety reasons;
- Use a hosepipe in the course of a business to clean a private motor vehicle, or for cleaning walls or windows of domestic premises, paths or patios or an artificial outdoor surface, where this is done as a service to customers
- Use a hosepipe to water a garden attached to a domestic dwelling or to water plants on domestic premises by people with severe mobility problems or who hold a current Blue Badge issued by their local authority.
- Use a hosepipe to water an area of grass or an artificial outdoor surface used for playing sport or recreation (but not for any ancillary use), where this is required in connection with a national or international sports event only.
- Use of drip or trickle irrigation watering systems fitted with a pressure reducing valve and a timer, that are not handheld and which place water by drip directly onto the soil surface or beneath the soil surface, without any surface run off or dispersion of water through the air using a jet or mist.

There are some exemptions:

- Non-domestic horticultural or agricultural activity.
- Any activities that are necessary for health and safety reasons (i.e. necessary to remove or minimise any risk to human or animal health/safety or prevents/control the spread of causative agents of disease).

What is a garden as relates to the hosepipe ban?

- A "garden" includes all of the following:

- A park.
- Gardens open to the public.
- A lawn.
- A grass verge.
- An area of grass used for sport or recreation.
- An allotment garden.
- An area of an allotment used for non-commercial purposes.
- Any other grass space.

Officers are currently in discussion with Anglian Water about how far the hose-pipe ban goes - for example will they allow us to use a water bowser for watering and can we water trees that have just been planted.

We don't have the answers yet, in time for council, but we will make sure that when we have the information it will be communicated to councillors.'

Councillor Bob Gledhill, asked as a supplementary question, what plans would be in place before problems arose. **Councillor Bert Bremner** said that it wasn't possible to give a full answer to that yet as there were lots of things to consider but the council would be looking into it very carefully indeed.

Question 5

Councillor Samir Jeraj to the cabinet member for housing:-

'Does the council agree with the aims of Defend Council Housing's *Manifesto for Council Housing* and, if so, what is the council doing to support it?'

Councillor Victoria Macdonald, cabinet member for housing's reply:-

'I have assumed that Councillor Jeraj is referring to the Defend Council Housing Manifesto dated March 2010. For the information of all members the Manifesto states:

- Protect existing secure tenancies and low rents
- Stop the robbery – reinvest all rents and receipts into council housing
- Funding at level of need so every council can deliver and maintain decent homes and estates
- Fund the backlog of capital works
- Resources to increase the energy efficiency of all council housing
- Protect working conditions including pensions, in any self-financing settlement
- Use directly employed building workers and apprentices –no cowboy contractors
- A mass programme of new council housing for all who want and need it, making first class council housing a tenure of choice
- A moratorium on further stock transfer, sell-offs or PFI.

The council is committed to council housing and has retained its stock following a clear mandate from its tenants in the 2005 stock option process. Defend council housing (DCH) is one of a number of organisations which promote council housing as a tenure of choice. Although the council is not directly associated with DCH, it is a founder member, and current executive member, of the Association of Retained

Council Housing (ARCH). ARCH is an apolitical group with member, tenant and officer representatives of 56 stock retaining councils and is recognised by the government as a major stakeholder in council housing.

The council has voiced concerned on a range of the issues raised in the DCH manifesto, for example, the council has voiced its concerns to the government regarding the following housing policy matters;

- fixed term tenancies
- affordable rents
- 75% of capital receipts going to the government
- Funding for major works backlogs

Furthermore the council is taking part in other initiatives such as;

- partnering with British gas to secure funding to improve energy efficiency in the housing stock and reduce fuel poverty;
- within the constraints of procurement legislation the council encourages all contractors to use local labour and to support apprenticeships
- seeking to secure appropriate funding to commence a council new build housing programme.'

Councillor Samir Jeraj asked, as a supplementary question, if the council would commit to retaining housing stock where only a few council houses remained in a street. **Councillor Victoria MacDonald** emphasised that the council was committed to retaining its council housing stock and was committed to mixed tenures.

Question 6

Councillor Lucy Galvin to the cabinet member for housing:-

'I am aware that tenants sometimes unfortunately have a sudden acute illness that means they are not able to return to their existing accommodation due to their condition (for example if they have a stroke and are not able to return to an upstairs flat). How does the council maintain contact with the tenant and (if applicable) their carers or social workers to ensure that they are aware of benefit and rent arrangements, and to enable them to find suitable housing into which they can move?'

Councillor Victoria Macdonald, cabinet member for housing's reply:-

'This is a very sensitive issue and each situation will be different. The responsibility for formally notifying the Council rests with the individual concerned, a family member or a carer. Once the council is made aware of a tenant's illness arrangements are put in place to ensure the contact can be maintained via the most suitable means i.e. with the tenant at a different address or if appropriate, and following authorisation, through a social worker, carer or relative.

With regard to benefit and rent arrangements, Income officers, when aware of the change of circumstances will ensure that appropriate advice is provided in order to maintain the rent account and liaise with colleagues in the benefits service.

The neighbourhood housing officer would deal with any request for re-housing and refer to housing options for an assessment of their change of circumstances which may result in emergency banding; enabling the tenant to move to a more suitable new home.'

Councillor Lucy Galvin said that she was aware of many cases and asked, as a supplementary question, if there could be a formal review of the process.

Councillor Victoria MacDonald said that she was disappointed if Councillor Galvin had come across such cases and said that she was happy to discuss individual cases with her.

Question 7

Councillor James Wright to the deputy leader of the council and cabinet member for resources:-

'Meaningful work experience gives young people the opportunity to become familiar with the work place, build skills, develop contacts and boost their CVs. Even the Government's controversial 'workfare' scheme has had good results with more than half of all young people who started a work experience placement with it off benefits within 3 months. Recently the County Council has announced that it will participate in this programme and has received the qualified backing of the trade union UNISON. The City Council has to date stated that it will not participate in such an arrangement. Will Cllr Waters consider changing this stance, given how beneficial many young people find work experience?'

Councillor Alan Waters, deputy leader of the council and cabinet member for resources' reply:-

'I'd like to thank Councillor Wright for his topical question – given the recent controversy about Workfare schemes and the scandal surrounding the private contractor: Action for Employment' ('A4e') who are being investigated for fraud. In this context, who really can tell how successful the Government's scheme has actually been?

Specifically in relation to the County Council's proposed placements. These are extremely short – between two and eight weeks and one has to question the benefit to be gained from such a short 'work experience'. Mr Dunning, from UNISON – a point you didn't make when summarising his views (EDP – Thursday 9th March) commented that the County Council had previously run a "successful" apprenticeship project 'in which people were placed in real jobs and paid the going rate". The same principles should apply to any graduate scheme.

As, I'm sure you know, the city council is committed to offering learning opportunities and work experience to young people. The council offers work experience to young people still in education. Last week Cabinet was informed that three apprenticeship posts are being established and these will give young people both learning opportunities and experience, and a wage.

Part of our agreement with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is to create apprenticeships for local, young people. We also work with our major contractors

along the same lines. So far the contractors that provide the housing repairs and maintenance services have engaged 4 apprentices, and we are in discussion with them to encourage them to employ more apprentices.

Finally, looking at the bigger picture and drawing upon Margaret Thatcher's view that there is "no such thing as society – only families and individuals" – the Coalition's positioning on welfare and work is to 'de-couple' it from its macro-economic context. This is what Councillor Wright does with his question – quotes the EDP article selectively but ignores one of the principal reasons for Graduate unemployment in Norfolk - again quoting the EDP – "Government cash cuts have left the public sector making drastic reductions in staff numbers". In 'Coalition-land' there is no sense that unemployment is a direct result of its actions (unemployment now at a 17 year high); but rather it is down to individuals; failure to get a job is a personal failure. The increasingly punitive measures applied to those without work, through 'welfare reform', is designed to re-enforce that message.

As deeper cuts in public expenditure roll forward- unemployment will continue to rise and the economy will continue to weaken. Workfare schemes are certainly not the solution to the flawed economic 'strategy' of the Coalition.'

Question 8

Councillor Judith Lubbock to the cabinet member for planning and transport:-

'The Liberal Democrat amendments to the Council's Corporate Plan 2012/2015 were extremely welcome. They both present an opportunity for this council to achieve greater performance on behalf of the citizens of Norwich.

The number of killed and seriously injured road casualties is 46 for the coming year. A very shocking statistic which this council will reduce year by year by adopting a commitment to introduce 20 mph default speed limits in its residential streets.

I have long campaigned for this city to have 20 mph speed limits on all of its residential streets and I am delighted that we are now closer than ever before to achieving this, given that we are not the Highway Authority.

Please could the Cabinet Member explain what the next steps will be to achieving 20 mph speed limits on our residential roads and thus encourage more walking and cycling, reduce pollution, improve the safety of our roads and the 'wellbeing' of our residents?'

Councillor Bert Bremner, cabinet members for planning and transport's reply:-

'I would like to answer Cllr Lubbock's question in two parts. The first is a matter of clarification. The 46 Killed and Serious Injury (KSI) casualties for the coming year is the council's benchmark target and I naturally hope that the figure at the end of the year will be much lower. In 2006/07 there were 72 KSI casualties in the city, whereas in 2010/11 there were 47. This progress has been achieved by agencies such as Norfolk County Council, the police and this council working together through the Norfolk Road Safety Casualty Reduction Partnership to improve road safety through a combination of education, enforcement and engineering

Turning to speed limits, as Cllr Lubbock knows the council has for many years supported the idea of 20mph being the default speed limit for residential areas. The highways agency committee looked at the possibility of introducing a city wide 20 mph speed limit in all residential areas back in 2009. While the majority of people supported the idea, the estimated half a million pound cost to implement it was considered unaffordable given limited budget availability; and other competing priorities.

In the two years since then a couple of things have changed. On the positive side, nationwide and within the Department for Transport, there has been a shift in thinking to confirm the appropriateness of 20 mph speed limits in residential areas.

However on the negative side the integrated transport grant has been cut by 80% making it harder to fund implementation of either speed limits or other highway improvements. As you will be aware, the council receives funding for highway improvement schemes from Norfolk County Council. Whereas the council used to receive in the region of £1 million a year, with changes in Government funding in the coming year it will only be £215,000. At such levels – which look set to continue for the foreseeable future – funding the implementation of the 20 mph would require the entire budget for at least two years. This would therefore be at the expense of other worthwhile measures such as pedestrian crossings, cycle routes, schemes to address specific safety problems and changes to parking restrictions, etc.

Therefore to introduce 20 mph speed limits remains challenging but I am committed to pursuing the Corporate Plan (2012-15) commitment to advocate for the introduction of 20mph zones in residential areas. In this context Cllr Lubbock may be interested to know that there is a conference about 20 mph speed limits on 1st May that the transport minister Norman Baker will be addressing. An officer will be attending to see how other cities have approached the issue, how questions of funding and affordability have been resolved and to understand the outcomes that have been achieved. The latter is particularly important as in the council's albeit geographically limited 20 mph speed limit trials we found no discernable reduction in speeds. Also officers will be interested in the effect of 20 mph speed limits on casualties which was not possible to assess in Norwich but where elsewhere there may by now be robust information.

I hope the conference will be a useful stepping stone in helping us turn the vision of 20mph speed limits in Norwich into a reality.'

Councillor Judith Lubbock said that she would be asking the Norwich Highways Agency Committee, at its next meeting, to commit funding and asked, as a supplementary question, why 20 mile per hour zones could not be funded from developer contributions. **Councillor Bert Bremner** said that he would look into this but reiterated that Norwich City Council had an agency agreement and Norfolk County Council was the authority responsible.

Question 9

Councillor David Fairbairn to the cabinet member for planning and transport:-

'In September 2011, council passed a Liberal Democrat motion asking Cabinet to consider introducing dog control orders requiring owners to keep their dogs on leads

in areas where there are established problems with unleashed dogs. Since this motion was passed there have been further dog attacks in Norwich. Could the cabinet member outline what progress has been made on this issue since September?’

Councillor Bert Bremner, cabinet members for planning and transport’s reply:-

‘The council continues to monitor the enquiries and complaints about dogs. Since 1st April 2011 we have received 1,323 complaints about dogs of which

557 were about barking dogs

432 were about dog fouling

282 were about strays

Only 13 complaints were made about dogs being off their leads

As has been said many times the council has to act in proportion to the reports being received and the evidence does not support a need for dog control orders to keep dogs on leads at this present moment.

With regard to dangerous dogs the council has been in close liaison with the Police to establish how dangerous dogs will be managed. A recent meeting was held between the Norfolk and Suffolk joint Dog Section and the Norfolk district councils which agreed a protocol for dealing with dangerous dogs.

The police have made it clear that they will deal with all reports of dangerous dogs. All reports of dangerous dogs need to be directed towards the respective police control rooms for their investigation. A dog can be regarded as dangerously out of control where it causes fear or apprehension to a person that it may injure them. I urge any member of the public who has any such fear to report the matters direct to the police either by calling 999 or the 101 service for reporting non-emergency crimes.’

Councillor David Fairbairn said he believed the evidence did support a dog control order and asked, as a supplementary question, how many serious incidents would it take to trigger a decision to introduce one. **Councillor Bert Bremner** said that he would not define a figure but reiterated that there were 13 reports in the previous year and the council’s response needed to be proportionate.

Question 10

The deputy leader of the council and cabinet member for resources agreed to accept this question under the provisions in 12.3 (ii) of the appendix 1 of the constitution.

Councillor Stephen Little to the deputy leader and cabinet member for resources:-

‘Could the cabinet member give an explanation as to why the City Council's Statement of Accounts for 2010-11 have not yet been presented for final approval and signing off?’

Councillor Alan Waters, deputy leader and cabinet member for resources' reply:-

'Councillor Little, as Chair of the Audit Committee knows the answer to this question, especially as there was a meeting of this committee this afternoon.

However, in answer to this question posed to council:

At the Audit Committee meeting the District Auditor commented that the underlying accounting processes of the Council are satisfactory, that the Council has robust finances with increasing levels of reserves which needed to address the future financial risk facing the Council, and substantial cash resources to enable the delivery of its capital programmes.

The completion of the statement of accounts is imminent. The last two items that have contributed to the delay are the Cash flow statements for 2011/10 and 2010/09. The cash flow statement for 2011/10 has been completed and the 2010/09 cash is due to be finalised in the next two/three days.

After a number of years of continuous improvement in the production of statement of accounts the difficulties faced this year have been a disappointment.

Difficulties in the preparation of the IFRS accounts has been recognised (Norwich City Councils SOA is extremely complex probably more so than a number of first tier authorities) and this combined with the absence of key staff has lead to the delay.

Steps have been taken to increase the resilience of the accounts closure team

Transfer of Asset and City Management to joint venture with NPS. Although not the primary reason, one of the benefits of transfer is both increased resilience and greater technical strength in valuation work.

The transfer of the finance team to LGSS will both increase resilience and provide much resource for supporting closure of accounts.'

Question 11

This second question from Councillor Denise Carlo was allowed as members' questions have not exceeded 30 minutes under the provisions in 12.2 (ii) of the appendix 1 of the constitution.

Councillor Denise Carlo to cabinet member for planning and transport:-

'Will the Council put in place measures to prevent pavement parking on the Colman Road Hospital side of Mornington Road? Ten or more vehicles are often parked here with four wheels on the pavement leading to the obstruction of pedestrians, in particular the elderly and parents with children. Will the Council also write to the Transport Minister and ask him to bring in a cheaper alternative to Traffic Regulation Orders for installing signs to prohibit pavement parking in an area?'

Councillor Bert Bremner, cabinet member for planning and transport's reply:-

'Pavement parking is unfortunately a problem that is common to many areas across the city.

I know Mornington Road and as you will know on one side of the road there are terraced houses and on the other is the Colman hospital. Out of interest you might like to know that was the site of the original Jenny Lind Children's Hospital, and I was a patient there 3 or 4 times! On the residential side of the road cars are parked on the road, leaving the pavement clear for pedestrians. However on the hospital side of the road a number vehicles park fully on the pavement, completely blocking it.

If you look at Muriel Road which runs parallel and adjacent to Mornington Road, and even Highland Road the next road up which acts as a boundary between University and Nelson Wards, cars are parked on both sides of the road, sometimes half on the path, narrowing both pavements. This happens in many other terraced streets in the city and often results in pavements too narrow to negotiate in a wheelchair or with a pram. I know that you know of these problems as we have even arranged special meetings between you, me and the relevant officers, where we talked about the problems in other parts of Nelson Ward. I remember pointing out cars fully blocking the path in Gladstone Street, which really annoys me, and how people, especially those in wheelchairs and with pushchairs, had to walk in the middle of the road in Sandringham Road. It is not necessarily clear which road is better for pedestrians: one with a generous usable footpath, or one with two very narrow footpaths.

In terms of what can be done about pavement parking there is a balance to be struck between what is legally possible and what is practical. As part of this I do not believe that writing to the transport minister is necessary. The Government has already introduced powers to allow local authorities to implement a single and therefore relatively straightforward traffic regulation order covering their area that makes pavement parking an offence where the correct signs are in place.

However, more difficult is deciding where to prevent pavement parking, and therefore where needs to be signed. Ideally all pavements should be kept free of parked cars, be they partially or fully blocked. However much of the city's housing was built before car ownership was commonplace. If all pavement parking was banned, therefore, in many terraced streets, for example, it would only be possible to park on one side of the road and half of the cars that parked in the street would no longer be able to do so. The desirability of preventing pavement parking would need, therefore, to be weighed against the consequences and implications of such a reduction. What would the residents of Mornington Road, Gladstone Street, or Sandringham Road have to say at these suggestions?

Therefore, whilst there are relatively straightforward powers that the council can use to enforce against pavement parking, use of them requires very careful consideration. As a consequence, I could not recommend taking action in Mornington Road in isolation. A review of city wide pavement parking could be undertaken with recommendations for future action. This would need to be considered, however, as part of future service planning alongside other priorities and could not be taken ahead readily in the short term.

And don't forget what a change car clubs could make to parking in the narrow terraced streets. There are great things happening with the Car Club, now being expanded even further in the City, as you will know as a member of Norwich Highways Area Committee (NHAC). Car clubs have been proven nationally to reduce car ownership in its membership group so easing parking pressures. Several

research studies confirmed this; findings by Transport for London in 2007 indicate that a single car club vehicle can directly remove 4 private vehicles and defer purchase of a further 6 vehicles. More recent research for Carplus by the respected Transport Research Laboratory (which included data from the Norwich Car Club) has demonstrated the much greater reward that for every 1 car club vehicle more than twenty private vehicles are either sold, or not purchased, representing a very significant reduction in parking pressure.

So there is one solution to the pressures on parking in the City - get as many people in the terraced streets to join the car club. The car club launched in Norwich in November 2006 and is currently operated by Commonwheels. It now has a total of 10 vehicles with 5 locations in the Unthank Road area. Additional vehicles are planned to be installed in 2012 including one in Christchurch Road, which is a road that crosses Mornington Road.

And another thing to remember - the integrated transport grant has been cut by 80% making it harder, even impossible, to fund implementation highway improvements. As you will be aware, the council receives funding for highway improvement schemes from Norfolk County Council. Whereas the City used to receive in the region of £1 million plus a year, with changes in Government funding in the coming year it will only be £215,000. At such levels, funding even signage becomes a problem. Don't just be narrow and parochial but think for all the citizens of Norwich - there are other worthwhile measures such as pedestrian crossings, cycle routes, schemes to address specific safety problems as well as other changes to parking restrictions, etc, that need to be prioritised.'

Councillor Denise Carlo asked, as a supplementary question, if the cabinet member would write to the transport minister asking him to introduce a cheaper alternative to traffic regulation orders. **Councillor Bert Bremner** said that he recognised that parking on pavements was a serious issue in many areas and he would give it some consideration.