



Council

27 November 2018

Questions to cabinet members or chairs of committees

Question 1

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

“As the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth has previously indicated, per capita carbon emissions for Norwich fell between 2011 and 2016. However, per capita figures are measured by Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for three categories: industry/commercial, domestic, and transport. They exclude significant sources, notably consumption (e.g. overseas manufacturing of goods and services) and from residents’ air flights and shipping. Can the cabinet member give the true per capita emission figures for Norwich and explain what action the city council is planning to take in the light of the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report which urges the need for radical cuts by 2030 if human civilisation is to survive in its current form?”

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

“Thank you for your question. Which I need to break down into two parts.

Firstly, the use of the per capita carbon emissions data produced by DEFRA is an extremely efficient way for the council to measure its progress which is independently verified by an external source. The DEFRA dataset also allows us to compare ourselves against other local authority areas which helps to identify if our policies are effective.

The DEFRA dataset follows the internationally agreed standard for reporting greenhouse gas emissions to the UN. However DEFRA acknowledge that this is not a perfect indicator of “the true” per capita emissions consumption of the UK and have been working on consumption-based emissions reporting for a number of years.

Consumption-based emissions do not have to be reported officially by any country, but in the UK these figures are reported by DEFRA. The latest data for the UK is 2015 but this data does not report down to a Local Authority (LA) level.

Therefore until DEFRA produce a robust and statistically reliable dataset for the UK which goes down to LA level the council will continue to report emissions using the internationally agreed standard methodology.

In this respect per capita emissions have fallen over time from 6.9 tonnes of carbon emissions per capita in 2005 to 3.8 tonnes of carbon emissions per capita in 2016, the most recent and statically certain dataset available at this time.

The second part of your question asks what action the City Council is planning to take in light of the latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report.

The reports you reference make it clear that we do need to dramatically improve our use of resources and ensure our future services are sustainable in the long term. If we are to minimise the risks highlighted by the IPPC then it would not be about maintaining civilisation in its "current form" or "business as usual". It would be something more.

The council is very much aware of the impact that climate change can have at global, regional and local levels. This is why, in 2008, we took the initiative to work with the Energy Saving Trust and Carbon Trust to benchmark the council's carbon footprint. Following this exercise, we have been working hard year-on-year to reduce the council's own carbon footprint. To date we have achieved an impressive carbon emissions reduction of 57.1 per cent, which far exceeds our target of a 40 per cent reduction by 2018. In fact, to set some context, the government's national 5th carbon budget target of 57 per cent carbon emissions reduction is due to be delivered by 2030, so Norwich City Council has achieved this national target 12 years ahead of that date.

This is one of the reasons the council has been nominated for a UK-wide sustainability leader's award.

As noted above Norwich area per capita emissions have also been falling over time from 6.9 tonnes of carbon emissions per capita in 2005 to 3.8 tonnes of carbon emissions per capita in 2016. It is interesting to note that both Norwich and Bristol City have achieved a per capita carbon emissions reduction of 44.3 per cent to date.

More details of the council's environmental work can be found in the current environmental strategy document. Progress made against the objectives set in the strategy is reported upon biennially in the council's environmental statement.

Last week we launched the City Vision 2040 document. Over the past year the council have engaged with focus groups, conducted public and stakeholder interviews and organised two conferences in order to bring

together the views of the city of Norwich into one document, the purpose of which is to detail how the people of Norwich want their city to be as a place to live and work in the future.

Sustainability was identified as a top priority for those we engaged with and accordingly, “A liveable city” is one of the key themes in the City Vision 2040 document. Most specifically the document states that we are “committed to shifting to clean energy by 2040 and becoming carbon-neutral by 2050”.

Sustainable living, defined as a need to ensure that “today’s citizens meet the needs of the present without compromising future generations”, is a common thread which runs throughout the work of the council and is not a new concept for us. Now that the City Vision document is finalised, the council will seek to complete the council’s Corporate Plan and correspondingly work to produce the new Environmental Strategy, which will be launched next year.

You will be aware of the UK Committee on Climate Change which is an independent, statutory body established under the Climate Change Act. Their purpose is to advise the UK Government and Devolved Administrations on emissions targets and report to Parliament on progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions and preparing for climate change.

To meet the targets set under the Climate Change Act, the government has set five-yearly carbon budgets which currently run until 2032. They restrict the amount of greenhouse gas the UK can legally emit in a five year period. The UK is currently in the third carbon budget period (2018 to 2022).

Norwich City Council will therefore support the UK’s Committee on Climate Change report ‘Reducing UK emissions, 2018 Progress Report to Parliament’ which draws attention to Government inaction in a host of areas as well as not providing the correct levels of finance to allow councils to properly engage with citizens on sustainability and climate change.

Question 2

Councillor Raby to ask the chair of the licensing committee the following question:

“At November’s full council meeting last year, I asked the chair of the licensing committee when the council’s out of date gambling statement of policies would be updated. May I remind the chair that Norwich city council’s gambling statement of principles was last updated in 2007, even though the Gambling Commission expressly tells councils that it should be ‘reviewed at least every three years.’

I am disappointed that over the last year there seems to have been no progress made on this important policy statement which could allow councillors to limit the proliferation of gambling premises across the city, especially in some of the most deprived communities. In answer to my question in November 2017, the chair of licensing expressly said that she had asked that ‘the council’s gambling statement of principles be updated as a priority.’ ‘A timetable for when the new statement of principles will be completed during 2018’ was also requested by the chair of licensing. Given that we are now a year on from when I originally raised this question, could I urgently ask the chair what the progress on this very important matter is, and why this does not seem to have been prioritised as originally promised?”

Councillor Malik, chair of the licensing committee’s response:

“I cannot understand why Cllr Raby is so disappointed since we are only one month behind the original timetable.

I am pleased to be able to tell Council that progress has indeed been made not only with the gambling policy but also with the revision of other important licensing policies namely the Sexual Entertainment Venue policy, the cumulative Impact Policy, and the Local Area Profile: these all require revision.

The draft policies will all be presented to licensing committee on the 18th December 2018 for members to review.

If licensing committee endorse the draft policies, this will allow the council to undertake consultation during January and February with the comments and final policies being presented to the first meeting of licensing committee after the May elections.”

Question 3

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

“The welcome renovation of the customer centre has left other parts of City Hall, such as the main foyer, looking a little dull in comparison. I was pleased that a portrait of Mary Seacole was recently displayed in the main foyer to City Hall. I note that the foyer is sometimes used for other displays, such as the results of elections and I wonder whether the cabinet member would agree to it being used for displays of work by local artists and community groups?”

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

“Thank you for your question. The Mary Seacole painting was on display as part of Black History month and it is our intention to occasionally display, one off pieces, as part of other events. For example, you will probably have seen that we most recently hosted one piece from the White Ribbon Window Display trail, organised in partnership with Leeway.

The main foyer is really not suitable for larger art exhibitions as it is a main exit and entrance, so we are constrained in what we can do in that space.

However, we have the very successful arts space, the Undercroft, situated at the back of the Market, which is already extremely well used by individual artists and groups. Exhibitions in that space can also include works for sale, which City Hall cannot. Information about how to hire the Undercroft is on our website.”

Question 4

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

“As part of its income generation strategy, South Somerset District Council has recently partnered to build a 25MW Battery Storage facility that will provide essential power management assistance to the National Grid. It will be one of the largest and most-advanced in the UK.

The batteries store excess energy production at low usage periods, that would otherwise be wasted, and resupply it to the grid when needed at peak times.

Could the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth advise if this council is considering going forward with such a project?

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

“Thank you for your question.

The UK is facing potential energy shortages as the gap between supply and demand narrows ever closer, mainly due to the closure of coal power stations and the intermittent nature of renewables. It is therefore common knowledge in the industry that levelling the grid is key and batteries of commercial and domestic scale present some exciting new investment opportunities.

As part of our balanced investment portfolio the council is continually horizon scanning for new investments. Renewable energy and other energy services including the “capacity market” or “balancing services” present some potentially rewarding returns.

However these are not without risk. As the battery storage market in the UK develops and more projects are completed it is increasingly important to track the types of projects being built, by who and which revenues they are accessing. This allows us to see which projects are being proposed and who is active in the different segments to identify future market gaps, trends and their associated investment associated opportunities

For example only very recently the investment landscape has been altered by the capacity market being suspended due to state aid rules (European General Court) and the UK balancing market changing the rules on battery storage by asking for longer grid enforcement (usually 1-2 hours) which can be beyond most facilities capacity.

I can confirm that we have already had discussions with ENGIE and the DNO in regards to our investment aspirations and plan to have further discussions in the future with a number of other significant local and national stakeholders.”

Question 5

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

“Cycling is both a means of fitness and a way of reducing our carbon footprint, and the implementation of the pedalways across the city is therefore welcome.

But walking is equally important.

Currently on some stretches of the pedalway, shared use is in place – acceptable for cyclists and pedestrians to mix, but with apparently insufficient width to allow for clear demarcation between them. This leaves many pedestrians feeling nervous about cyclists who suddenly head towards them or appear behind them with no warning.

Could the cabinet member advise if this situation could be improved - perhaps by a change to the rules that prevent white lines being painted or clearer signage as seen for example in Winchester?”

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

“When we are delivering new cycling infrastructure, wherever possible we look to provide facilities for cyclists that are separated from both pedestrians and vehicles. However this is not always possible and sometimes we have to provide shared use footpath cycleways. This can either be segregated or unsegregated. In order for a path to be segregated there needs to have a minimum width of 4m; this is national policy and we have no scope to change that.

Members may have noticed that in recent weeks ‘share with care’ signs have been erected at the entrances to the pedestrianised areas in the city centre; these are not officially authorised traffic signs but are part of a publicity campaign to encourage safe cycling in the city centre. Officers advise me that it would be possible to provide similar temporary signs at other locations across the city where there are shared use footpath cycleways. They are currently making arrangements to provide such signing on the Bluebell Road facility which I understand is the path you have raised concerns with them about.”

Question 6

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

“Reducing air pollution is a significant issue for many of my constituents particularly those living near busy roads. Reducing the level of pollution emitted by cars vehicles while parked can make a real difference. I was therefore pleased to see the city council take a bold step in asking enforcement officers to request drivers turn off their engines when parked. Can the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth comment on the benefits this can offer the city in terms of reducing pollution still further?”

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

“Enforcing stationary vehicle idling is a small but significant step in reducing engine emissions in the city centre areas where pollution levels are greatest. As these are busy areas with high footfall and where many businesses have their doors open, the benefits here can be quickly realised.

An idling engine can produce up to twice as many exhaust emissions as an engine in motion. Reducing the time that vehicles spend idling will therefore directly reduce Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) emissions from vehicles which are known to be detrimental to health. This is an issue that the council and all drivers in the city can really get hold of and together make a difference.

Since enforcement began in October, our enforcement officers have given eight verbal warnings. We publicised the initiative beforehand and we are pleased that the majority of drivers are already switching their engines off when stationary. It is clear that a large proportion of the bus and taxi drivers have been briefed by their companies, read the signs, or had some knowledge of the change via published articles etc., which is very positive. So far no Fixed Penalty Notices have needed to be issued as the drivers had complied with the request.

Our enforcement officers’ patrols are a key part of making this work but this is also about winning hearts and minds to get people to change their habits. A combination of the signs, posters, web information, press releases and media coverage has got this off to a good start.

The council continues to be committed to providing a range of transport alternatives to enable people to make healthy and low emission trips.”

Question 7

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

“As a council tenant who knows the value of decent, well maintained and democratically accountable social housing I was further impressed to learn that our award-winning housing development on Goldsmith Street has been further shortlisted for a top accolade in next year’s prestigious Local Government Chronicle (LGC) awards. Will the cabinet member for social housing comment on this exciting news?”

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

“Thank you for your question. We welcome Goldsmith Street being shortlisted for the housing initiative award by the LGC.

As we said in our submission, in recent years we’ve purposely stepped away from adopting a typical local authority approach as a housing provider at Norwich City Council. We felt we had a choice: go for safe, standard housing or be bold and ambitious. We choose the latter. As a result, we can proudly boast that we’re now delivering what will be the country’s largest Passivhaus scheme for social rent in Norwich.

Thanks to Passivhaus technology, our residents should see up to 70 per cent savings on their energy bills due to the technology in use – a big help to a significant proportion of residents in Norwich who we know are in fuel poverty.

As a result of the council’s commitment to developing Passivhaus homes it has also significantly upskilled the local workforce, allowing them to create a niche in the construction market.

Goldsmith Street will see the city council deliver the largest Passivhaus scheme for social rent in the country and was recently presented as an exemplar case study to the UK Passivhaus Conference.

The shortlisting for the LGC awards also follows the recent success for Goldsmith Street at the Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) Norfolk awards where the scheme won the Green Build Award.

We have a particularly proud history of seeking higher environmental standards for affordable housing by working in partnership with local registered providers and wanted to ensure our own development projects set that standard even higher and help to address fuel poverty for our residents.

All in all, as a council housing provider, we’re taking bold steps to provide energy efficient, high quality homes to meet housing demand for the people of Norwich and surrounding areas. And that’s something we’re deeply proud of.”

Question 8

Councillor Mike Sands to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:

“As crime continues to rocket and the full effects of ‘county lines’ are felt within our city, many residents have commented on the positive impact of CCTV, particularly around reassurance and the prevention of crime. Despite huge cuts to our council budgets since 2010, I was pleased to see the cabinet report which will see the procurement of new CCTV for our city. Given the opportunities this will give can the cabinet member for safe, city environment comment on the benefits which will be secured through this policy?”

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

“The current CCTV equipment is now out of date and requires an upgrade to continue to support the Norfolk Constabulary in managing public order and responding to emerging crime and anti-social behaviour issues in the city.

The council is investing in the region of £500,000 in a cutting edge CCTV system with its own wireless collection points, which will provide improved imaging for evidential support and reduced maintenance costs on an ongoing basis.

The new CCTV suite will be based at City Hall, which will make it easier for colleagues and partners to liaise directly with the council’s CCTV monitoring operators particularly during city centre events and demonstrations, for improved visibility and coordination of community safety response.

The new system has been developed and designed in conjunction with police and other stakeholders to ensure evidence based high priority areas are covered. The new CCTV system will retain a comparable number of CCTV cameras to what the council currently holds, although some of the new cameras will be re-sited to improve visibility of key locations.

The council will retain the policy of recording CCTV footage 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days of the year and retain that footage for 28 days. In addition, live monitoring of the CCTV system by trained and licensed council officers will continue on a Friday and Saturday evening from 6pm until 6am the following morning, as well as on Bank holidays, all council events and one off events and demonstrations that give the police cause for concern.

Cameras will still be live and be able to be monitored by the Norfolk Constabulary outside of these periods.

In line with the national surveillance camera commissioner’s code of practice, all of the council’s CCTV camera locations are published on the CCTV pages of the council’s website and individuals can request access to footage recorded of them via the website, as well as via traditional routes if required.

In addition to the static CCTV cameras, the council jointly owns with local police, a set of re-deployable CCTV cameras, which can be moved to locations for specified periods of time, to help address evidenced high level or prevalence crime and antisocial behaviour.

With the new CCTV system, the council's data sharing agreement with the police will be retained, to enable the police to access and review the council's CCTV footage, either retrospectively or in almost real time, from one of its 27 remote access sites across Norfolk.

This clearly identifies the importance that the council affords community safety and how CCTV contributes to all of the current council objectives.”

Question 9

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

“Like all councillors in this chamber, access to housing remains a key concern for my constituents. I was therefore pleased that the city council announced plans to re-develop the former Bullard Road Housing Office into new social housing. Can the cabinet member for social housing comment on the scheme and the great opportunities this development will offer people in Norwich?”

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

“The national housing crisis and continued shortage of homes for people to live in is of great concern to this council. The local picture shows that:

- there are over 4000 households on the council’s housing waiting list which shows the considerable demand for the council’s own housing
- between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2018, 662 properties were purchased under the right to buy scheme
- The most recent strategic housing area assessment from 2017, which looks at all housing need in Norwich, highlighted that an additional 278 ‘affordable’ housing units are required each year.

This illustrates the demand for housing in Norwich and the importance of the council looking at all options and opportunities to build new council homes.

The new scheme on Bullard Road, along with other new developments across the city, will assist in meeting the demand for affordable and sustainable homes in thriving communities.

At the recent awards ceremony where the city council won the prestigious award for the “Green Build Award,” from the Norfolk Campaign for Protecting Rural England, it was pointed out on more than one occasion, how exciting it was to see a housing stock retaining council building and creating new homes.

The Bullard Road project proposes to convert numbers 1 to 23 Bullard Road from offices to a number of residential properties, which will meet ‘lifetime homes’ principles and the construction of an additional single bungalow which will be adapted for disabled used. The precise details are subject to planning approval and to be specified by housing needs. However, the project will deliver much needed housing provision.

When deciding on how best to meet the housing need, consideration will be given to ensure that the new development compliments the existing environment.

Cabinet agreed that the work will be undertaken by Norwich Regeneration Limited (NRL) and will demonstrate how NRL, as a wholly owned company of

the council, can deliver projects of this type and maximise returns which will directly benefit the council as well as the residents.

As cabinet member I know much more is needed and the Bullard Road development is one further example, where this administration is making a positive difference to the lives of families in Norwich.”

Question 10

Councillor Trevor to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:

“As a councillor who represents a ward which contains high levels of constituents experiencing both poverty, but particularly fuel poverty, I am acutely aware of the impact this has. Positive policies such as Big Switch and Save and our wider affordable warmth strategy have made significant differences to thousands of people within Norwich. I was therefore particularly excited by the launch of the new Energy White Label and decision to award this at cabinet earlier in the month. Can the cabinet member for safe city environment comment on the opportunities and benefits this policy will offer?”

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

“Thank you for your question on the new Energy White Label. The programme will particularly support efforts to reduce fuel poverty and health inequalities in Norwich via working with and supporting vulnerable customers in areas of high fuel poverty whilst also offering access to affordable renewable energy to all.

Firstly I would like to take this opportunity to highlight that in Norwich 12.3 per cent of households, or 7,804 homes, are experiencing fuel poverty. This means our elderly citizens are at greater risk of catching the flu or developing other chest infections and/or other respiratory problems, all of which can be fatal or put extra pressures on our overstretched NHS. Sadly the UK has a high rate of excess winter deaths, with over 3,000 people dying every year solely due to cold homes.

Regretfully the numbers of fuel poor are expected to rise due to the increasing cost of utilities. In 2017 alone electricity prices increased by 6 per cent which disproportionately affected fuel poor households, and households who are often only just above the fuel poverty line with incomes which are either static or being decreased by the implementation of universal credit.

The vision of the new energy supply service will be to create an attractive local energy brand offering a long term ‘fair deal’ to our consumers, so they are encouraged to stay and not shop around. This means people will be able to take advantage of long-term affordable tariffs. We are also hoping to invest any potential profits into a fund to help fight fuel poverty which can offer highly targeted support, which may include discounted tariffs, to our most vulnerable residents helping them to heat their homes.

Aside from helping people access fairly priced energy all tariffs will be 100 per cent renewable (gas and electricity) at no extra cost. Therefore future customers of the scheme will be able to save on average 3 tonnes of CO₂ (approximately the equivalent of 45 trees growing 30 years) per year as well as getting a fair deal when compared to other companies offering green

energy at a premium. In addition to also being cheaper than many of the standard energy deals available.

This project therefore one more step towards delivering our city vision aspiration to be shifting the city to clean energy by 2040 and helping our citizens to take practical steps to lowering their CO2 emissions whilst making the city more liveable and fair.”

Question 11

Councillor Lubbock to the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing:

“Please can the portfolio holders for housing or property comment on why the council does not comment on planning applications in their capacity as a landlord or land owner, when an application has an impact on tenants and their environment?”

Other departments of the council do comment and these comments are on the website for all to see and prove to be helpful to residents; for example the tree officer’s comments.

In terms of openness and transparency I think this would be extremely helpful.”

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

“Whilst I cannot comment on particular applications, Councillor Lubbock makes an interesting point. The Housing service is not a statutory consultee on planning applications unlike the tree officer and in most circumstances would not have a view that was distinct from council policy in relation to planning matters or applications.

However, where applications that it was considered would have a detrimental impact on land held within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), council estates and tenants enjoyment of a council property, or group of council properties, and were brought to the attention of officers via tenants or others as part of the statutory consultation process, then tenants, officers and indeed, councillors, would be encouraged to comment accordingly.

Officers will identify the best way of ensuring this happens.”

Question 12

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

“Can I ask the cabinet member for resources whether the city council will adopt ethical and sustainability criteria in deciding whether to purchase commercial properties? This follows from Norwich City Council’s purchase of The Gym for £2.3 million at the Westwood Cross Shopping Centre near Ramsgate. I recently visited the Isle of Thanet and the towns of Ramsgate and Margate. The high streets of these two towns have been gutted by the Westwood Cross Shopping Centre which I was forced to visit because all the shops have relocated from the town centres to a vast shopping centre in open countryside several miles equi-distant from three towns on the Kent peninsular. In my view, it is one of the worst planning decisions I have seen. The impacts on the local economies and community facilities are apparent. Access is mainly by car and if people can’t afford to use the dedicated buses, they either have to walk many miles or go without. The environmental impact is heavy – the shopping centre is reliant on high fossil fuel energy usage. It is regrettable that Norwich city council has purchased a commercial property in a retail development which on the sustainability scale is at the lowest end?”

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resources’ response:

“I thank the councillor for her views on the Westwood Cross shopping centre in Kent. The property, which has an A rating Energy Performance Certificate, makes a net initial return to the council’s general fund of 2.1 per cent. This is used to fund council services as previously explained and discussed.

Whilst we are planning to introduce some ethical considerations into the commercial property investment strategy which comes to Cabinet for approval in December, this would not include automatically excluding investments located in out-of-town shopping centres. Westwood Cross would have received planning consent taking into account comments such as those raised by Cllr Carlo. The development has been subsequently constructed and as regards this building there were other parties who submitted bids. Had the council not been successful, the building would still have been completed but sold to a different party.

I lived in Margate between 1992 and 1997 and even then the town centres of Margate and Ramsgate were serious decline. The reason was the collapse of the holiday trade in the towns. Instead of the towns being full of hotels with tourist with money in their pockets, those hotels had become Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) mainly filled with those living on social security benefits.

At that time I attended a local gym, there were no gyms in the high streets of Margate or Ramsgate. So the Gym in Thanet, Councillor Carlo mentions has in no way diminished the town centres in Thanet. Instead a good gym provides a useful resource to community to improve health and fitness.

The Green Party has opposed the commercial purchases of this council. Yet it is the income from those properties that have allowed this council to protect front line services, unlike many other councils, which instead have had to cut front line services, often dramatically. Norwich City Council remains one of the few councils, left in England that still provides 100 per cent council tax rebates to its poorest citizens.

It is about time that the Green Party had the honesty to tell the people of Norwich what front line services they would cut if the council were not to have this income steam from commercial properties.”