NORWICH
City Council

MINUTES

Council

19:30 to 21:15 **20 March 2018**

Present: Councillor Schmierer (Lord Mayor), Councillors Ackroyd, Brociek-Coulton, Button, Carlo, Coleshill, Davis, Driver, Fullman, Fulton-MacAlister (E), Fulton-McAlister (M), Hampton, Harris, Henderson, Huntley, Jones, Kendrick, Lubbock, Maguire, Malik, Maxwell, Packer, Peek, Price, Raby, Ryan, Sands (M), Sands (S), Smith, Stonard, Stewart, Stutely, Thomas (Va), Thomas (Vi), Trevor, Waters, and Wright

Apologies: Ms Ros Brown (Sheriff); and Councillors Bradford, Manning and Sands (S)

1. Lord Mayor's Announcements

The Lord Mayor gave an update on his first engagements of the civic year.

He noted that a motion had been withdrawn from the agenda.

The Lord Mayor said that Raymond Frostick, a previous Councillor and Lord Mayor had sadly passed away. He invited Councillor David Fullman to say a few words before a minute's silence was held.

2. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Questions from the public

No public questions were received.

4. Petitions

No petitions were received.

5. Minutes

RESOLVED, unanimously, to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 20 March 2018 and 22 May 2018.

6. Questions to Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs

The Lord Mayor said that 12 questions had been received from members of the council to cabinet members for which notice had been given in accordance with the provisions of appendix 1 of the council's constitution.

Question 1 Councillor Raby to ask the cabinet member for resources about the council's investment strategy.

Question 2 Councillor Henderson to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing about locks on blocks of flats.

Question 3 Councillor Carlo to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment about the search for a new recycling centre for Greater Norwich.

Question 4 Councillor Maxwell to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing about replacing houses sold via Right to Buy.

Question 5 Councillor Vaughan Thomas to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion about the Financial Inclusion Strategy.

Question 6 Councillor Fullman to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment about partnership working to reduces anti-social behaviour.

Question 7 Councillor Button to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion about the Switch and Save savings.

Question 8 Councillor Stutely to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion about Better Off Norwich.

Question 9 Councillor Malik to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment about the Rough Sleeping Strategy.

Question 10 Councillor Stewart to ask the leader of the council about the National Writers Centre.

Question 11 Councillor Mike Sands to ask the chair of licensing about maximum stakes fixed odds betting terminals.

Question 12 Councillor Lubbock to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment about the Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy.

(Details of the questions and responses and any supplementary questions and responses are attached as Appendix A to these minutes.)

7. Annual review of the scrutiny committee 2017-18

Councillor Wright moved and Councillor Fullman seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously to receive the annual review of the scrutiny committee 2018-19.

8. Annual report of the audit committee 2017-18

Councillor Price moved and Councillor Driver seconded the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED unanimously to receive the annual report of the audit committee 2017-18

9. Appointment of representatives to outside bodies 2018-19

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

RESOLVED, unanimously, to:

(1) make appointments to outside bodies for 2018-19 as set out in appendix A to the report; and,

(2) delegate to director of business services, in consultation with the leaders of the political groups, to agree nominations to any vacancies arising during the year.

10. Motion: Refugee week

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

Following debate it was;

RESOLVED unanimously that:-

“Norwich has just celebrated the 20th anniversary of Refugee Week which ran from 18- 24 June 2018 and it is recognised that the refugee crisis has uprooted almost 50 million children from their homes who are now vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and trafficking.”

Council therefore **RESOLVES** to;

(1) Acknowledge that this year's messaging for Refugee Week of 'Different Pasts, Shared Futures' is of great significance to ensuring refugees in our area are welcomed by us all
(2) Formally thank the many organisations that supported Norwich Refugee Week this year.
(3) Ask group leaders to write a joint letter to the City's MPs to call on the Government to do more to support the Refugee Crisis by:

a) Considering the extension of the Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Scheme; and

b) Acknowledging the importance of Family Reunification by reconsidering its position on not allowing children to sponsor their parents to be reunited with them in the UK.

11. Motion: Brexit

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

Councillor Waters proposed and Councillor Mike Sands seconded a motion to defer the debate on the item until a proper proposal was presented.

With 28 voting in favour, 6 against and no abstentions it was:

RESOLVED to defer debate on this motion.

12. Motion: Air quality

The Lord Mayor announced that notice had been received in advance of an amendment to the motion from Councillor Maguire set out as follows:

At the end of resolution (2) add the words:

'following research into Norwich specific fine particulate pollution in Norwich'

At resolution (3)(a) insert the words:

'consider extending' after 'review and..'

At resolution (3) (b) insert the words 'continue to' at the beginning of the resolution

Councillor Carlo had indicated that she was willing to accept the amendment and as no other member objected, it became part of the substantive motion.

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

The Lord Mayor agreed to include in the minutes Councillor Maguire's comments regarding the statement in the motion relating to 'high levels of nitrogen oxide…' were that the data was based on estimates rather than readings; the error margin was large enough that a snapshot reading could not reflect the readings of the entire year; and that once a correction had been applied only one site had been estimated to exceed targets and not sites had exceeded the one hour target.

Following debate it was:

RESOLVED unanimously that:

"Although improvements in the Norwich Air Quality Management Area have been shown, City Council monitoring still indicate levels exceeding Local Air Quality Management objectives for nitrogen dioxide. A report by the Anglia Square developer reveals even higher levels of nitrogen dioxide pollution on the nearby inner ring road which have not been picked up by Council monitoring. In relation to particulates, the World Health Organisation (WHO) named Norwich as one of 30 UK cities in breach of safe average limits. The EU is now taking the UK to the European Court of Justice on its poor compliance with the EU Directive."

RESOLVED to:-

(1) Ask council in relation to the Corporate Plan to:

a) make air quality a priority and key action under 'A safe, clean and low carbon city';

b) make Local Air Quality Management Area objectives for nitrogen dioxide a key performance measure and target;

(2) make WHO guideline values on fine particulate matter a key performance measure and target, following research into Norwich specific fine particulate pollution in Norwich.

(3) Ask cabinet to:

a) review and consider extending the council's air quality monitoring network to cover the inner ring road and in areas of vulnerability;

b) continue to work with partners to develop further measures to improve air quality across the Norwich built up area.

13. Motion: Consideration of a major planning application

The Lord Mayor reminded members that they should not discuss the details of any specific planning applications as part of the debate on this motion.

Councillor Lubbock moved and Councillor Wright seconded the following motion:

> "The proposed Anglia Square development is significant for the city, with hundreds of comments received by the council as part of the consultation process.
>
> Council therefore resolves to agree that the planning application for Anglia Square be determined by Full Council in order that all councillors can participate in taking this decision."

Following debate, Councillor Ryan moved and Councillor Harris seconded a motion to move to the vote. The motion was passed with 28 voting in favour, six against and one abstention.

Being passed, the original motion was put to the vote (regrettably the mover of the original motion was denied the right to reply) and it was:-

RESOLVED with six voting in favour, one abstention and 28 against, the motion was lost.

LORD MAYOR

APPENDIX A

Questions to cabinet members / committee chairs

Question 1

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

"Over the last few months, we have heard about a string of major retailers, banks and restaurant groups either downsizing or folding altogether and Norwich has not been left unharmed by this trend, with premises formerly owned by Maplins, Natwest and Toys R Us now lying empty. A report by the Guardian last month found that the high street is currently shedding stores and jobs at a faster rate than during the recession in 2009 and major high-street names including Marks & Spencer, Debenhams, Topshop and House of Fraser are also struggling with all blaming 'challenging' conditions in the retail sector. Given the fragility of the retail market, does the cabinet member for resources still believe that Norwich City Council should be borrowing large sums of money to invest in retail premises in Norwich or across the UK?"

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for resource's reply:

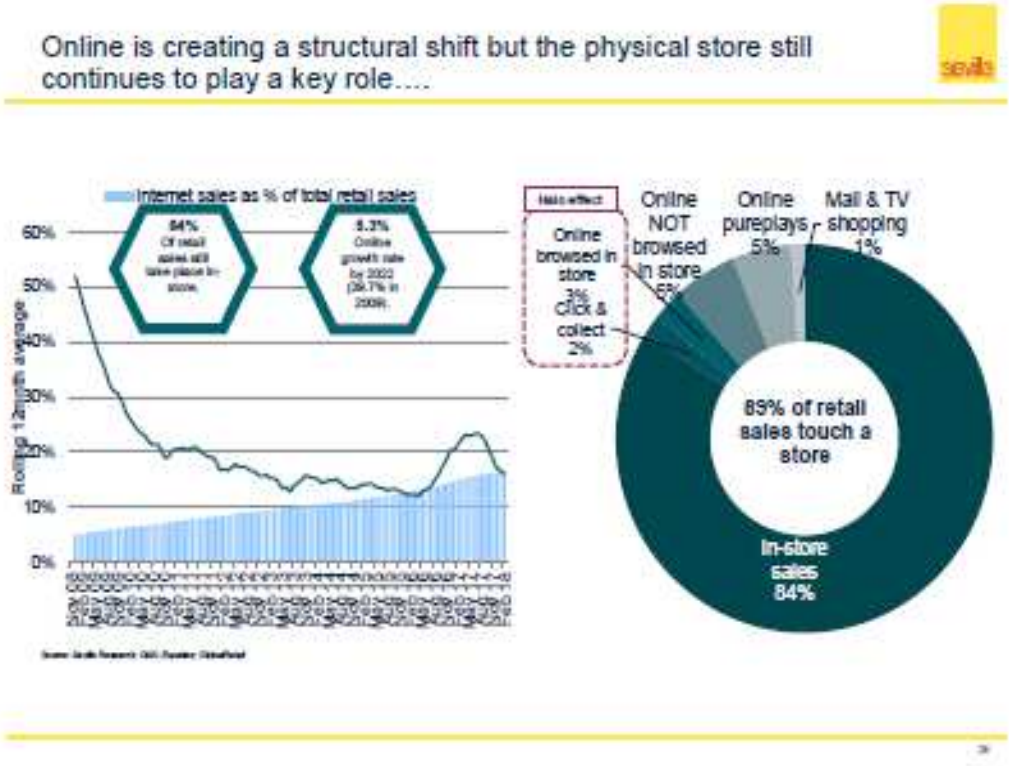
"This question, or a variant of it, has been answered on numerous occasions in the past. In addition our strategy for buying commercial property is clearly set out in the cabinet report of 12 April 2017 where we said that:

"*Ideally the portfolio should be balanced with a spread of assets across different sectors, with a range of lot sizes so that one asset does not dominate the entire holding, and there is a combination of single and multi-let properties".*

Since starting this current programme of acquiring commercial property (although I would remind Members that we have held commercial property for decades) we have acquired 4 properties; namely one bank, a gym, a chilled food warehouse and one block of property in the centre of Norwich let to multiple retail tenants at ground floor.

We are therefore meeting our stated intentions by investing in property in good locations with a spread of tenancies in order to minimise the risks. We are not just investing in retail premises and in fact this element of our commercial property portfolio is a low percentage of the total.

Unfortunately the retail sector does seem to be hard pressed but this can be overstated. At a recent CIPFA investment conference attended by the council's chief finance officer and the head of citywide services, Savilles gave details of how 89% of all retail sales in the UK still involve a physical store. The presentation slide is given below.



In addition our officers learnt that primary retail shopping centres which can offer other 'experiences' in addition to retail outperform secondary smaller retail locations. Norwich can be considered to be such a primary location.

We have always acknowledged that investing in commercial property has its risks. That is why we proposed and got council agreement in February this year to put aside some of the new net rental income we receive from these acquisitions into an earmarked reserve to cover future voids, rent free periods, and future repairs on the property. In addition we have explained on many occasions the rigorous due diligence we take in considering acquisition opportunities including the buying in of independent expert advice from property agents, tax, and treasury management advisers.

Yes there is a risk in buying commercial property and in our other commercial activities; including lending to our wholly owned company, Norwich Regeneration Ltd, but there is also a risk of us not doing so. The risk of the latter is that we will not be able to find new income streams to subsidise the front line services we wish to provide to our citizens. If we can't diversify and increase our income base away from a high dependency on Business Rates and Council Tax income, then the likelihood is that we will need to reduce and cut our services. I would remind Members that the government is looking at how much funding and Business Rates income each tier of local government can retain as part of its Fairer Funding Review to be introduced in 2020 - 21. Very early indications seem to suggest that more Business Rates income will in the future be passed to unitary and county councils than kept by district councils.

Finally we are not alone in our commercial approach. The National Audit Office's report 'Financial sustainability of local authorities 2018' published 5 March 2018 comments that in reaction to the 49.1% real terms cut in local government funding from central government from 2010/11 to 2017/18:

“Local authorities have changed their approach to managing reductions in income, shifting away from reducing spending on front-line services, to looking for other savings and alternative income source, such as income from commercial activities.”
Information obtained from our property advisers Carter Jonas, who subscribe to information sets produced by propertydata.com, shows that there were 166 commercial property acquisitions by 150 different local authorities during 2017/18 (47 of these were out-of-borough purchases).”

In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Kendrick said that he would join calls for fairer business rates schemes.

Question 2

Councillor Henderson to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:
“Since 2014 residents have been calling for the installation of secure entry systems in communal blocks of flats across the city. Despite repeated promises, little progress has been made over the last 4 years in this regard. It has reached the point where some residents have considered joining together to organise secure entry systems themselves. What would the cabinet member say to reassure residents blighted by anti-social behaviour (e.g. people taking drugs, urinating and defecating) in these blocks?”

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing’s response:
“The council is currently in year two of a five year rolling programme, which started in 2017/2018, to upgrade existing door entry systems. This includes all eight high rise tower blocks and the installation of two new door entry systems at Paragon Place and West Pottergate as there were no door entry systems in place on these. The upgraded system being installed will give additional security to existing blocks, with better control of access and fob management.

To date access control/door entry systems have been upgraded in 81 blocks which includes eight high rise tower blocks and two large areas of low and medium rise flats, Suffolk Square and Johnson Place. At 15 locations, new steel doors have been installed to provide additional security as current timber frames were due for replacement. This work was delivered in year one of the programme. In year 2, which the council is currently in, a further 47 blocks are due to be upgraded.

In summary, over the 5 year programme 398 existing blocks will be upgraded with new doors also being installed in 31 of these blocks. By the end of year 5 new installations of access control/door entry will also have delivered to 20 blocks within Paragon Place and West Pottergate.

This 5 year programme is based on reports and evidence of crime and anti-social behaviour and the budget of £236,000 was apportioned between 75% for upgrading and 25% for new installations. The priority sites, for new installations, were identified at this time as Paragon Place and West

Pottergate due to incidents of anti-social behaviour (ASB) related incidents in the areas.

Officers are aware of enquires and information from residents, both tenants and leaseholders, in other housing areas and this is currently under review. The council will also be working across teams regarding the ASB issues, including encouraging residents to report issues to help identify the areas most at risk. Residents are also encouraged to report issues of criminality to Norfolk Police. From internal discussions officers are aware that the installation of a door entry system is not always the 'cure' to any persistent ASB issues in an area and additional work is undertaken to try and pinpoint causes and other solutions that may be more appropriate and successful.

The council does not encourage the installation of residents own door entry systems due to this raising other security issues, access requirements and costs involved. Scheme priority is dependent on the available evidence of ASB and crime reporting which is analysed to identify persistent hotspots. Also, any review which could lead to identifying new installation areas will need to take into account any consultation requirements with tenants and leaseholders in the blocks."

In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Harris said that spending had to be prioritised and that there was no easy answer to this issue.

Question 3

Councillor Carlo to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:
"Norfolk County Council is presently consulting the public on a future site for a new recycling centre for Norwich and what people would like to see. The County Council search is focused on the greater Norwich area on the basis of finding a site within a 20 minute drive time for residents. Land at Norwich Airport off the NDR is being considered as a possible site. The County Council questionnaire asks people to comment on the importance of parking availability but it makes no mention of access by foot and cycle. Currently, the Mile Cross depot is accessible to people who rely on foot and cycle. Relocating the depot to a site on the edge of Norwich off the fast moving NDR would seriously disadvantage the 33% of households in Norwich who do not own a car. Can the Cabinet Member comment on how the needs of Norwich residents without access to a car will be met in the selection of a new site and can different additional forms of collection be considered for those who don't have a car?"

Councillor Maguire, cabinet member for safe city environment's response:
"As Councillor Carlo points out in her question the provision of a new household waste and recycling centre is a matter for Norfolk County Council and the consultation which runs until 27 July is asking the public and other stakeholders to provide information about what they want to see on any replacement site. I would therefore recommend Cllr Carlo to ask the question

to them directly as they will be best placed to answer it. I would also encourage all Councillors and residents to contribute to the consultation.

Whilst the present centre is fairly central within the urban area I understand the county council are not able to continue to use it. Therefore they have to find a new site, which is convenient for people to use and above all available. The latter is significant as locating such a centre can be challenging taking into account neighbour issues and traffic generation for example. The location of a new site is yet to be confirmed but I understand that consideration will be given as part of the design to the safe movement of pedestrians and bike users arriving at the recycling centre. The final site chosen will also have to meet planning and logistical considerations, for example site availability and transport issues.

Apparently the existing centre is used mainly by people in a car or van and with very few visitors arriving on foot or cycle. It is difficult to separate those that walk to the site from those that park further down the road and walk in to the recycling centre but anecdotal evidence is that the number is very low, perhaps understandable when one considers:

(1) The limited bulk of waste it is possible to transport via these means;

(2) That more often than not items that one could transport on foot or cycle can be readily disposed of via domestic waste collection provision or via the mixed recycling bring banks; and

(3) The present site is equally a long walk or cycle ride for much of the urban area's population.

In terms of alternative options, householders in Norwich have the most extensive kerbside recycling service in Norfolk. There are regular collections of mixed recycling, electrical products and batteries, food waste, garden waste and textiles. There are also a number of bring banks across the city, a well-used and relatively inexpensive bulky item collection service and many charity and re-use organisations. There is extensive information on the City Council and the Recycle for Norfolk websites on recycling options.

In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Maguire said that he would consult officers for timescales on communal recycling for small electrical items. He would also raise the issue of the location of the new recycling centre with the chair of the sustainable development panel.

Question 4

Councillor Maxwell to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:
"I was concerned by research from the Local Government Association (LGA) which found local authorities only have enough money to replace less than one-third of the number of homes sold over the past six years through RTB. More than 60,000 houses have been sold, some at half the market rate. With

the Government taking some of the sale cash, councils have been left with enough for just 14,000 replacements, prompting the LGA to call for a 'fundamental reform of the way the scheme is funded'. The LGA says two thirds of councils in England will not be able to replace the same number of homes they sell under the scheme in five years' time. Can the cabinet member for social housing comment on the impact of this policy upon Norwich since 2010?"

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

"Thank you for the question and yes the LGA research demonstrates the worrying impact of the right to buy legislation nationally. In Norwich this council has had to sell 955 homes through right to buy from 37 in 2010 to a high of 187 in 2017-18. The details of this can be seen in the table below which shows the number of properties sold through Right to Buy since 2010-2011:

Financial year	Number of properties sold
2010-2011	37
2011-2012	38
2012-2013	90
2013-2014	139
2014-2015	149
2015-2016	151
2016-2017	164
2017-2018	187

In April 2012 the government increased the discount cap that applies to Norwich from £32,000 to £75,000 which resulted in a dramatic increase in sales - from an average of 38 to 90 in a year, more than doubling the loss of properties. Having previously been static at £32,000, the discount figure now increases annually by a percentage equal to the percentage change in the consumer price index (rounded down to the nearest £100) and is now £80,900 for the current financial year (up to 70% or the cash maximum – whichever is lower).

The number of sales in the next year 2013-2014 increased again dramatically to 139 and has been steadily increasing since.

The qualifying period also reduced from 5 years to 3 years in April 2015 which means a greater risk of the council losing council properties. If the council is unable to utilise the retained RTB receipts within this three year time scale, we will always try to work with a registered provider to contribute funds to a scheme they may lead on. As portfolio holder for social housing, I want people to have homes, not to have to give money to the government with interest because we have failed to spend these receipts.

Whilst I fully understand some residents desire to own their own home in Norwich, this should not be paid for by this council from a discount on the value of the property where right to buy applies and the restrictions placed on the council by government on how new council homes can be built."

In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Harris said that the Right to Buy figures were horrifying and that she would continue to speak to the government about issues such as lifting the one percent rent cap.

Question 5

Councillor Vaughan Thomas to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:
"A poll commissioned by the *Independent* found that nearly 4m adults in the UK have been forced to use food banks. The poll comes as a major report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows that more than 1.5m people were destitute in the UK last year, more than the populations of Liverpool and Birmingham combined. Will the cabinet member for social inclusion comment on the increasing food bank use in Norwich and the importance of the financial inclusion strategy in underpinning the effective work this local authority takes to partly mitigate this problem?"

Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion's reply:
"The city council has worked closely with the city's Foodbank since its inception and, as Councillor Vaughan has stated, the council's Financial Inclusion Strategy guides the council in its work with vulnerable people throughout the City.

The end of the 17-18 financial year showed an increase in need for help with food of 5%, as well as an increase of 9% in donations. For the first time however there has been a change in the main reason that people are approaching the Foodbank. There can be many reasons why people find themselves in need of help from the Foodbanks and these have been closely monitored. While benefit delays (25%) and benefit changes (16%) remain significant drivers, low income (31%) has become the number one reason for people turning to Foodbanks in a crisis. This suggests that more and more people in work are struggling to afford to feed themselves and their families, and this problem has been growing and is likely to continue to grow.

The council's Financial Inclusion Strategy has focussed, firstly, on supporting people to maximise their income, including by ensuring that they get all of the benefits they are entitled to and, secondly, on addressing issues around the efficient use of their money. The below sections summarise some of the work the council is doing in these areas.

Maximising income

Work to support people to maximise their income has included:

- Support for the Real Living Wage (as opposed to the legal minimum wage) by signing up as a Living Wage employer and acting as an advocate for the living wage across the city
- Running a Jobs Fair to support residents to get into work, or better work
- Benefits take up campaigns, including the recent roll out of the successful pupil premium/free school meals uptake campaign which was funded by Norfolk County Council following our successful pilot in Lakenham
- Support for people in claiming and challenging benefits entitlements through the financial inclusion consortium funded by the council (including Age UK, MAP, Citizens Advice, NCLS, Shelter and Equal Lives)
- Wider work to support increased incomes through the council's reducing inequality action plan, including through development of a social value framework for procurement and wider work with partners around promoting a more inclusive economy in Norwich

Affordability and efficient use of money
Work in this area has included:

- Money and budgeting advice provided for tenants by our housing service
- Support for sharing of resources through the council's community enabling programme, for example the stuff hubs being funded in local neighbourhoods which will allow residents to borrow equipment rather than buying it
- Increasing focus on food poverty in the City – the council has been working with a range of organisations involved in food (supply, provision, growing and healthy eating) to establish a network which will further increase coordination within the sector and develop skills and initiatives designed to use food resources more efficiently
- Promotion of council home contents insurance for tenants to raise awareness about options around this
- Provision of the Go For Less card allowing residents on low income to access leisure facilities at a lower cost"

Question 6

Councillor Fullman to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:
"Rising crime, anti-social behaviour and the negative consequences of drug dealing connected to Operation Gravity have plagued my ward of Mancroft. Will the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhood's comment on the ongoing work this council takes to support the police and other agencies to tackle this problem?"

Councillor Maguire, cabinet member for safe city environment reply:
"Crime and disorder linked to County Lines drug dealing is a national problem, which presents challenges both in terms of scale and complexity to police forces working closely with a range of partners. The council continues to work

closely with the Norfolk Constabulary response called Operation Gravity, through the joint council and police, operational partnership team. This involves sharing information and intelligence and working with front line police teams to address drug related disorder linked to properties within the city, some of which are council tenancies.

However, the vulnerability of many people involved in County Lines means that a purely enforcement based approach by the police or council is neither appropriate or possible. Each case is different and requires a tailored set of interventions. For example these can include support from the council's Specialist Support Team, enforcement action by the ABATE team (including the absolute ground for possession in some cases), as well as managed moves where appropriate to protect those at particular risk of harm. There will of course be police action required due to the seriousness of the criminality that is occurring.

The council is also working with other partners including the newly formed Child Criminal Exploitation team in Norwich, which seeks to address another facet of the County Lines problem, and has input from a number of different agencies within the city. Similarly, the ABATE team has an ongoing input into the Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation Forum coordinated by the Home Office. This forum brings together local authorities, housing providers, youth offending teams, police and NHS workers from across the country, who share good practice and initiatives intended to tackle issues caused by County Lines.

Finally, the Norfolk community safety partnership which is led by the council's chief executive officer has identified County Lines as one of its three priorities. The partnership is developing an action plan that will identify the interventions required across Norfolk that will support those who are or are at risk of being vulnerable to County Lines and the resources available or required from partners to contribute to this activity."

Question 7

Councillor Button to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:
"I was impressed by the recent Big Switch and Save savings achieved for a constituent I was supporting, and experiencing fuel poverty. Now that the latest tranche has closed can the cabinet member for social inclusion comment on the savings achieved so far?"

Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion's response:
"Thank you for your question. I am glad our scheme was able to help your constituent achieve savings on their bills. While people may not think about switching while the weather is good, it is a great time to do so as people are more likely to be in credit with their suppliers, and it means they can get onto a good deal before the winter begins. Our current tranche is running until July

3, with an average saving of £230 for residents. As well as this a 100% renewable energy company has won our auction to supply online tariffs.

Over 1,400 people have signed up to the current tranche of the Big Switch and Save, and over the past 5 years over 10,000 people in Norwich have registered with our scheme with a cumulative saving of over £480,000. As you can see our scheme has been very successful in helping people make savings on their bills.
Please help us to assist as many people as possible by spreading the good news."

Question 8

Councillor Stutely to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:
"The Labour led City Council purchased Better off Norwich last year and I am aware of many constituents which have set up accounts and used the services which it can provide, in particular the claiming of entitled unclaimed social security benefits. Can the cabinet member comment on the additional entitled support and benefits now claimed by this valuable resource?"

Councillor Davis cabinet member for social inclusion's response:
"The city council purchased the suite of programmes collectively known as Betteroff Norwich the system going live from October 2017.

It is primarily designed for people to self-help. To clarify what if any benefits they may be entitled to, to assist with the claiming process including demystifying some of the language used and to keep track of the claiming process. In addition to this, an important feature of the system was a package that allowed people to search for employment or even volunteering opportunities (especially useful for people who are returning to the labour market after a prolonged absence). This is tied in to completing a 'Journal' to readily show your activities completed in your search for work.
Finally, there is a wealth of local and national information available for people to help search for childcare options or budgeting methods.

As Councillor Stutely has stated individuals have the ability to create their own accounts which can record their activities and can help people towards deciding on different strategies including 'What If' scenarios and the options which will impact on their overall impact and resources.

In addition to helping people who are confident in dealing with the claiming process, Betteroff Norwich is an invaluable tool for advice agencies across the city to help and advise their clients. The city council has promoted its use throughout the advice sector and officers have provided training in all of its aspects to advisors.

Finally, the programmes are very easy to update and new, local information is regularly put onto the site.

The latest statistics available for the end of the financial year clearly indicate that the most visited pages are those related to job searching and checking on benefit entitlements. In keeping with Data Protection legislation, the city council cannot access any personal information put into the system however results show over 900 accounts were created by new users to the site, 449 entitlement calculations were carried out for people and there were 2,535 views of job pages. Each month has shown an increase in its useage."

Question 9

Councillor Malik to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:
"Rough sleeping is a growing issue within the city, and I was particularly pleased by the launch of the new Making Every Adult Matter (MEAM) pathways strategy in February, securing nearly £1m of additional funding. Can the cabinet member for safe city environment comment on progress with the scheme since then?"

Councillor Maguire, cabinet member for safe city environment's response:
"Norwich city centre, like many urban centres, faces a number of issues from increased levels of homelessness, rough sleeping and at times anti-social behaviour, which is due in part to a reduction in the level of public services and the impacts of welfare reform.

Particular points are that:

- There is an increasing number of people sleeping rough in Norwich
- The people seen sleeping rough and those congregating in the city centre during the day and evenings may have a set of complex needs including drug and alcohol dependency, mental illness and a history of offending
- Some people sleeping rough may not be homeless and may display or have some vulnerability
- Some individuals congregating in the city centre may be experiencing food or financial poverty, loneliness or social isolation.

Many of these issues are the responsibility of other organisations including Norfolk County Council, Norfolk Public Health and the Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust and the council's approach to respond to these issues, is to work with these organisations to ensure the services are available in Norwich.

In December the Council endorsed a rough sleeping strategy which sets out to reduce the numbers of people who are homeless and sleeping rough and to ensure that services are accessible for those who are homeless and have complex needs so they can move away from being homeless.

In March cabinet awarded funding for a three year period to a consortium of organisations led by St Martins Housing Trust to deliver a new service to

address many of these issues and problems. The Pathways service will provide access to accommodation as well as the support services for drug and alcohol dependency and mental health to tackle and prevent rough sleeping in the city.

The Pathways will focus on the following outcomes:

- An overall reduction in numbers of rough sleepers in Norwich
- Former rough sleepers with multiple and complex needs sustaining accommodation
- Numbers of people prevented from rough sleeping
- Helping sustain former rough sleepers with complex and multiple needs in their own accommodation
- Improving the quality of day centre provision for rough sleepers
- Enable rough sleepers and people who have experienced homelessness to give back to services who helped them.

The Council is also putting additional resource into Home Options as a result of the homelessness reduction act for those who are or at risk of homelessness and seeking additional bed spaces for those who require them.

Progress

The partners are currently mobilising the new service. There is currently 5.5 staff in the Pathways team providing two early morning outreach counts per week and increased daytime outreach on the streets and providing in-reach into services. Recruitment for four more outreach posts is underway covering criminal justice liaison with prisons and probation service; a nurse practitioner, and a housing advice and rights worker and a young person worker. Two additional staff are also due to be recruited (by early autumn) including an additional young person and day centre worker.

St Martins with other members of the partnership including Norwich City Council have been meeting with stakeholders to open up discussions of how the new service will work alongside existing services. These meetings have/will include the following agencies:

- Norfolk constabulary
- DWP – who have committed to provide a specialist homelessness work coach
- Probation service
- New drug and alcohol service provider - Change Grow Live (CGL)
- Emmaus Norfolk and Waveney (homelessness charity)

An official launch is planned for July 2018. St Martins and the Council are in discussion regarding the details and interested parties will be invited to attend. This will tie in with communications, web and some printed information providing advice for and to rough sleepers, the public and businesses.

Government rough sleeping fund

The Council is one of 82 local housing authorities who have been awarded funding by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government from a £31m rough sleeping initiative fund. The Government is targeting areas with rough sleeping populations to award the funding.

The purpose of this funding is to bring about a reduction to rough sleeping levels this coming winter. The council was asked to identify service gaps over and above and complementary to, existing provision with these being identified as:

- A rough sleeper mental health nurse clinician (this service was closed 4-5 years ago)
- Crash bed provision at YMCA Norfolk to mirror provision at St Martins direct access hostel
- Dry house provision with clinical staff
- Hostel link tenancy support workers (to encourage flow through the supported housing system)
- Winter shelter co-ordinator (a review of the SWEP arrangements from last winter is in progress).

The Council submitted a bid totalling £260,000 for spend in 2018-19 which has been agreed. Whilst funding beyond this current financial year is not guaranteed, it is possible and better to be part of the overall programme.

Providing indoor evening food and support

The current outdoor food provision which whilst well meaning, perpetuates issues of dependency and does not allow the individuals to move on from rough sleeping. The food provision on Haymarket also results in the area being a significant hotspot for crime, drugs, street drinking and ASB. There have also been safeguarding concerns raised about some of the client group with attendees and volunteers being at risk.

The providers distribute food to individuals and families who may be poor and short of food or lonely who come into the city centre for the provision as well as rough sleepers. The council's work on food poverty is focussing on encouraging the development of VCSE led neighbourhood food and advice hubs hosted, or highlighting the many that already exist through a Norwich food network.

In order to address the issues on Haymarket and the eventual removal of the two market stalls once the new service provision becomes available, the council have commissioned *The Feed* to develop an evidence base of why people are using the food provision to inform alternative provision. A survey to identify users started on 12 June.

There is already considerable provision at various locations in the neighbourhoods which can be promoted better, but further provision in the city centre area is required. The Feed have been exploring a model for a social enterprise sandwich shop which is also used as training and food provision for

the homeless in Norwich in the evening with support from the council. This is based on the successful *Social Bites* model in Scotland (*this is a web link*).

The Feed are the Lord Mayor and Sheriff's charity for the 2018-19 civic year and have had their offer accepted on a property in Prince of Wales Road for this. A Crowdfunding campaign to fit out the venue has been launched Off-the-street-into-the-kitchen and the Feed has also been notified that the Norfolk and Suffolk LEP have confirmed funding for a further year to fund the feed academy work which will support the facility."

Question 10

Councillor Stewart to ask the leader the following question:
"Representing Thorpe Hamlet ward, as the first Labour City Councillor since 1982, I am particularly proud of the historic Dragons Hall and the National Writers Centre, opened earlier this month by the Leader. Can the Leader comment on the importance this centre offers, building on the establishment of Norwich as a UNESCO city of literature?"

Councillor Waters, leader's response:
"The National Centre for Writing at Dragon Hall marks an important milestone in our city's story as England's first UNESCO City of literature. For Norwich to host the National Centre for Writing, yes, **the** national centre is a tremendous accolade. This is testament to our great literary history and current status as a creative writing hothouse. It is also testament to the hard work and tenacity of all those who have helped to make this a reality.

Over £2.6m investment has been used to upgrade Dragon Hall, a Grade 1 listed, 15th century Merchant's Hall. Owned by the City Council, and lovingly restored by the previous custodians, the Norfolk and Norwich Heritage trust.

This investment in the National Centre for Writing will bring new spaces for collaborative working, accommodation for writers-in-residence and make the building a unique new venue for public engagement with literature. The new south wing will house a purpose built education centre. This education centre will act as the base for work to engage young people in and out of school to overcome barriers to participation in literary and culture, develop skills, improve life chances and employability. It will promote best practice in education, tolerance and understanding and freedom of expression.

As a local, regional, national and international hub, the National Centre for Writing will develop education and outreach work in collaboration with existing partners, as well as through new partnerships with national and international organisations.

Engagement with children and young people identified as having low access to the arts is projected to increase from 10,000 to 20,000. In total the five-year business plan projects that the national Writers Centre's physical space and partnerships will reach a total of 1.3 million people (or an average of 260,000 people per year) across all audiences and platforms and will have a positive

economic impact on the local economy. Including employment, capital investment, additional spends of visitors and cultural tourists – in the region of £500,000-£1,000,000 per annum.

Norwich has a long and proud history of recognising the importance of culture in helping to enrich people's lives, bring enjoyment and making Norwich the place it is.
The National Centre for Writing will contribute to keeping culture at the heart of everything we do."

Question 11

Councillor Mike Sands to ask the chair of licensing the following question:
"Like many councillors who care about the negative impacts of the gambling industry upon residents in my community, I was disappointed that the government's recent promise to reduce the maximum stake on fixed odds betting terminals from £100 to £2 has been delayed by their granting the gambling industry a two year stay of execution. Will the chair of licensing join me in voicing these concerns to both our City MP's and ensuring the LGA continues to lobby on this important issue?"

Councillor Malik, chair of licensing's reply:

"The government's consultation on gaming machines and social responsibility measures ran from 31 October 2017 to 23 January 2018.

The government's response to this review was to suggest the need to ensure the right balance is in place between a sector that can grow and contribute to the economy, and one that is socially responsible and doing all it should to protect consumers and communities from harm.

The council's response to the consultation, completed in consultation with the cabinet member for safe city environment, supported the proposal to reduce the maximum stake on B2 gaming machines (Fixed Odds Betting Terminals) from £100 to £2.

Underlying this, the council has duty under the Gambling Act objective *"to protect children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling."*

The potential delay of introducing the reduction in the maximum stake will impact on achieving the gambling objective to protect vulnerable persons and inevitably impact on our residents.

With the high levels of financial exclusion and inequality occurring in certain parts of the city, this decision means that for some of our most vulnerable residents, there remains a continued risk of being drawn into the false lure of a quick win from the use of fixed odds betting terminals resulting in spiralling levels of debt.

I fully support the proposal to raise this matter with both our MP's and give our support to the LGA to continue to lobby the minister on this important issue which will affect all communities."

Question 12

Councillor Lubbock to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:
"In my ward of Eaton neighbours have been plagued by anti-social behaviour (ASB) both inside a council property and outside in the streets. These problems have been extremely distressing for the community over many months and also for myself as an advocate for that community. Whilst I accept the complexity of this particular issue I am sure this is not an isolated problem.

Can the cabinet member for safe city environment comment on the council's process for dealing with ASB, how it works with other agencies, how it communicates with the individuals and communities affected and the effectiveness of its approach?"

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

"Antisocial behaviour (ASB) covers a broad range of issues, which can vary greatly in terms of seriousness, complexity, and impact on local residents.

ASB complaints can be raised via the council website, or by calling the customer contact centre, and these reports are initially passed to the area management team in citywide services to investigate. When reports of criminal behaviour are reported, the complainants are encouraged to report these to the police. All noise complaints are sent directly to the team via the 'noise app' and are passed to an area management officer (AMO) to investigate.

For reports of other ASB which are not noise related, the council contacts the complainant to gain an understanding of the situation, and to assess the level of risk posed. All information is recorded accurately on a case file, and the complainant updated as the case progresses. Officers ensure that any safeguarding concerns such as mental health issues, mental capacity, domestic abuse or substance misuse, are raised with the relevant agencies, and advice is given to the complainant about what action may be taken in the case.

Where possible it's the council's aim to resolve issues in an informal manner using letters, visits and mediation, or a combination of interventions. If this is not effective then more formal action may be considered.

For noise related issues, noise abatement notices can be issued if there is proof that a statutory nuisance has occurred (this does not include ordinary domestic living noise, such as loud voices, doors banging etc). A statutory

notice can be issued on amplified music/noise, mechanical noise and animal noise e.g. barking dogs. In order to gain evidence, officers from environmental protection will work with AMOs and may need to deploy detection equipment to prove a nuisance exists.

For other forms of ASB, initial enforcement interventions could include a community protection warning (CPW) or community protection notices (CPN) that were introduced as part of the anti-social behaviour and policing act 2014. Subsequent breach of a CPN can result in a fine or prosecution. If initial interventions are not successful in resolving the issue, the case may be referred to the Antisocial Behaviour and Tenancy Enforcement (ABATE) team for further action.

The ABATE team has a number of tools and powers available including a variety of notices (relating to housing tenancies) and injunctions. The team are co-located with Norfolk police, with whom they have a very close working relationship. Together they form the Norwich Operational Partnership Team (OPT).

Upon referral, the case is allocated to a specific ABATE case officer who contacts the complainants, and gathers information from them and other sources. The risk to the complainant is re-assessed, and the most appropriate response to the reported problems is considered. If enforcement action is believed to be the most appropriate solution, the officer completes an equality and community impact assessment. This is to demonstrate that council has taken an all round view of the case, including any vulnerabilities of the perpetrator or their household, and to ensure the council's responsibilities under the Equalites Act 2010 are met.

The ABATE team also deals with some serious ASB cases from the outset, for example where there has been a particularly serious incident of violence at a property, or where the police have informed the council of a significant drugs seizure or arrest at a tenanted property.

The team also receives and handles all 'hate' related cases reported to the council in our capacity as a third party reporting agency. The team then shares that information with the police for action and monitoring. Similarly the police also share information with ABATE regarding hate incidents and crimes which have been reported to them and are linked to the council's housing stock.

All cases are different and must be treated on their own merits, and some incidents may be so serious that once a notice is served the ABATE team will progress it to court immediately. However, more generally, progress to court will depend on the behaviour of those subject to the notice after it has been served. The most serious sanction available to the council is eviction, and that decision ultimately rests with a judge.

Both AMOs and ABATE officers liaise with a number of different agencies as part of their casework. Clearly there is ready access to police colleagues via the OPT, but for those cases where early intervention is required, both teams

regularly attend the Norwich Early Help Hub, where a wide variety of agencies and organisations are available to offer advice and signposting. Similarly where significant safeguarding concerns are raised, all officers within the ASB service regularly contact the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), who can offer support and advice in relation to issues such as concerns for childrens welfare, adults being exploited, and individuals at significant risk from domestic abuse. Furthermore, the ABATE team also have direct access to the Mental Health Assessment Team (from NSFT) who are based at the police control room,

Where ASB cases are particularly complex, and may feature some of the issues mentioned above, professionals meetings are held at which solutions are sought and actions set. Ultimately the effectiveness of interventions in more complex high level cases, relies not only upon actions taken by the council, but also the appropriate input and assistance of partner agencies."

In response to a supplementary question, Councillor Maguire said that in many cases, reports of anti-social behaviour should be dealt with by the police.