

MINUTES

COUNCIL

19:30 to 20:40

27 June 2017

Present: Councillor Fullman (Lord Mayor), Councillors Ackroyd, Bogelein, Bradford, Brociek-Coulton, Button, Carlo, Davis, Driver, Fullman, Grahame, Harris, Herries, Jackson, Jones(B), Kendrick, Lubbock, Malik, Manning, Maguire, Maxwell, Packer, Peek, Price, Raby, Ryan, Sands(M), Sands(S), Schmierer, Stonard, Thomas(Va), Thomas (Vi), Waters, Woollard and Wright

Apologies: Mr Walker (Sheriff) and Councillors Coleshill, Henderson and Jones (T)

1. Lord Mayor's Announcements

The Lord Mayor said that he went to the UEA court on 9 June. He was pleased to hear that many students had exercised their right to vote in the general election.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Questions from the Public

Two public questions were received.

Ms Jacqui Mackay asked the cabinet member for health and wellbeing the following question:

"I would like to know whether the council has any plans to invest in making the park on West End Street a safer and better space for play."

Councillor Ryan, cabinet member for health and wellbeing gave the following response:

"Thank you for your question. All play areas and parks are important to us as a council whether they are in West End, Wycliffe Road or wherever they are in Norwich.

We are aware more than most of the health and mental benefits of having a safe, secure environment to play in.

Unfortunately, because of damaging cuts by the Tory Government, as a council we are under huge financial pressure at the moment.

If and when the money becomes available, we will look at upgrading them – where ever they are in Norwich.”

Mr Shan Barclay asked the cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:

“Respected City Councillors, in the light of your commendable decision to adopt the motion of 24/1/17 by Councillor Denise Carlo that Norwich City Council should promote the use of low/ultra-low emission vehicles

Norwich City Council should especially promote the use of hydrogen powered vehicles within this remit which have been adopted elsewhere already, notably buses in Aberdeen and buses and taxis in London and been tested by our own Lotus cars.

Hydrogen has many other uses, for example, domestic fuel and is 100% clean, absolutely carbon free and safer than diesel and petrol.

Would Norwich City Council therefore agree that with government grants available and world-wide commitments to reduce carbon this would be a logical, clean and cost effective way to enhance our city and the national and international status of our council as well?”

Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion gave the following response:

“Thank you Shan for your question and recognition of the decision taken at council on 24 January 2017.

A press release was issued by the Department of Transport on 18 March this year which referenced £23 million of available funding to accelerate the take up of hydrogen vehicles and roll out more cutting-edge refueling infrastructure. It is acknowledged that as well as the current prohibitively high cost of hydrogen fueled vehicles, one of the main obstacles to the take up is the infrastructure required for refueling hydrogen vehicles.

However, whilst the press release promised that the funding would be available for application in summer 2017 a date has yet to be set for the opening of the application period and we are currently approaching the end of June. Clearly the details of the invitation to bid will need to be considered along with the availability of any matched funding.

As well as hydrogen fuel vehicles – and as the motion noted – there are a variety of newer technologies that can improve emissions levels. Induction Electric Vehicles are the next generation of EV's and do away with the need to plug in the vehicle directly into the electric supply, instead parking over the induction plate. This is an area of technology of particular interest to the council

In the meantime, Norwich City Council is currently working with the Car Club to further promote the use take up of Ultra Low Emissions Vehicles, Hybrid Vehicles and wireless Induction Electric Vehicles in the city.

With the county council, this council is well placed to assist with the implementation of charging points at street level, but the style of refueling points currently envisioned for hydrogen vehicles is similar to a traditional petrol-station forecourt where vehicles are driven in to refuel. It is believed therefore that whilst the council will ultimately have a role as a planning authority that it will be the private-sector which provides the catalyst to forging partnerships to apply for funding when it becomes available and as and when market forces dictate that hydrogen vehicles are financially within the reach of a greater number of customers. The council will of course welcome the opportunity for partnership working at such time as this becomes applicable and encourage public transport companies to add hydrogen vehicles to their fleet when it is practicable.”

4. Petitions

Tyrnan Mackay presented the following petition:

“Dear Council,

We are hoping that you could provide floodlights and resurface the basketball court at the park on West End / Nelson Street. We love using the court and these improvements will make our play safer and better.”

Councillor Ryan, cabinet member for health and wellbeing gave the following response:

“Thank you again for your petition Mr Mackay.

I am glad to hear that basketball is so popular in West End. We will take your comments on board.

It’s a great game and a very effective way of keeping fit. We do understand the benefits of playing the game.

Why don’t basketball enthusiasts in the West End form a community group to support you to raise external funds of the improvements.

Talk to your friends and your parents about this and if there is interest, please come back to the council to see how we can help you as we have expertise in this area.”

5. Minutes

RESOLVED, unanimously, to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2017.

6. Questions to Cabinet Members and Committee Chairs

The Lord Mayor said that 14 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 Price to the cabinet member for safe city environment on super strength alcohol
- Question 2** Councillor Raby to the leader of the council on the communications protocol of the GNDP
- Question 3** Councillor Grahame to the cabinet member safe city environment on Sexual Entertainment Venues.
- Question 4** Councillor Haynes to the cabinet member for safe city environment on A boards policy
- Question 5** Councillor Schmierer to the cabinet member for social housing on fire safety in tower blocks.
- Question 6** Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for social inclusion on climate change and landscaping.
- Question 7** Councillor Bogelein to the leader of the council on women's pensions.
- Question 8** Councillor Maxwell to the cabinet member social housing on compliance with safety standards in tower blocks.
- Question 9** Councillor Vaughan Thomas to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing on Waterloo Park.
- Question 10** Councillor Bremner to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth on the development at Threescore.
- Question 11** Councillor Packer to the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods on domestic abuse.
- Question 12** Councillor Malik to the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth on the Norwich Car Club.
- Question 13** Councillor Jones (B) to the cabinet member for health and wellbeing on Norwich market pop up stalls.
- Question 14** Councillor Brociek-Coulton to the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods on enforcement in the private rented sector.

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

7. Annual scrutiny review 2016 - 17

Councillor Wright moved and Councillor Maguire seconded the recommendations in the report.

RESOLVED, unanimously, to receive the annual review of the scrutiny committee 2016 – 17.

8. Appointment of representatives to outside bodies 2017 - 18

The Lord Mayor announced that a revised version of appendix A to the report had been circulated to members and published on the council's website.

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

RESOLVED, unanimously, to:-

- (1) make appointments to outside bodies for 2017-18 as set out in the revised 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.

9. Motion: Alternative Queen's speech

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Kendrick seconded the motion as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED, unanimously, that –

“Following the General Election and a minority Conservative government likely to continue, the present local government agenda and austerity associated since 2010 may persist. Continued cuts to Norwich City Council will threaten valued services and the ability of the city to meet the significant challenges it faces. Weakness in a national government will make strong local leadership ever more important in meeting the challenges we face over the next few years.”

Council **RESOLVES** to ask the Leader, in anticipation of the Queen's Speech, to write to the Secretary of State for Local Government requesting a fundamental reversal in current government policy affecting local government and the inclusion of new measures which will secure the sustainable funding of Norwich City Council.

LORD MAYOR

Questions to cabinet members or chairs of committees

Question 1

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

Over the last 6-12 months, residents have reported to my colleagues and me concerns about an increase in the number of people drinking high-strength beers and ciders on the streets of Norwich, in particular in the city centre. In 2013, health chiefs urged off-licences and other stores in Norwich to stop selling cheap high-strength beer and cider. This followed a scheme in Ipswich which encouraged shop owners to stop selling super-strength alcohol. The result was a 49 per cent reduction in “street drinker events” in Ipswich according to Suffolk Police, during the first six months of the voluntary “Reducing the Strength” campaign.

Could the cabinet member give his opinion on these or similar initiatives that have happened in Norwich such as the local alcohol action area (LAAA), and does he agree that the council should do more to encourage shops in Norwich to stop selling super-strength alcohol?

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

The initiative Cllr Price may be referring to is the “Reducing the Strength” Norwich campaign which was launched in February 2013.

This initiative led by the NHS, Norwich Clinical Commissioning Group with the Norfolk Constabulary and Norwich City Council forms part of the Healthy Norwich programme following the city being awarded “Healthy Cities” status by the World Health Organisation

Being a member of the healthy city network, means that partners have demonstrated a joint commitment to work together to improve the health outcomes for the people in greater Norwich.

The Healthy Norwich programme has seven core themes and this includes a core theme of smoking, alcohol and drug misuse with one of the outcomes being to reduce drug and alcohol misuse.

The campaign encourages premises holding an off-licence to sign-up and in supporting this campaign to actively remove strong beers and ciders from sale in their premises. Premises advertised their involvement with a window sticker to raise public awareness.

The council continues to support this initiative through the fee for a minor variation to an existing off licence being waived by the council.

Some of the positive outcomes included fewer calls from members of the public because of street drinking and fewer thefts of alcohol from shops that took part.

This initiative reflects the aims of the original local alcohol action area programme in relation to an intervention to reduce alcohol consumption.

In January 2017, the Home Office announced the second phase of local alcohol action areas (LAAA) programme which will see 33 new regions coming on board including a Norwich action area.

The new phase of the LAAA programme tackles alcohol-related crime and health harms and to create a more diverse night-time economy

The partners in the Norwich area action plan include the Police, Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital NHS Trust, Norfolk Public Health and Norwich city council who will receive dedicated support and expertise in crime prevention, licensing and public health provided by the Home Office, Public Health England and Nightworks, a company that specialises in diversifying the night-time economy.

The first Norwich alcohol and violence LAAA meeting will take place in July which will begin the development of the Norwich plan and its implementation.

A partnership approach is considered the ideal methodology for highlighting the dangers and consequences of high strength alcohol or excessive alcohol consumption and encouraging reduced consumption, rather than any single of individual action for the city council. The Healthy City Programme and the LAAA project are examples where this can take place.

The development and roll out of the LAAA, will provide an opportunity for partners to consider the impacts of super strength alcohol and further updates to this important work will be provided to members as the LAAA plan is progressed.

In response to a supplementary question from **Councillor Price, Councillor Maguire** said that items for the agenda of the next meeting of the LAAA were still being considered.

Question 2

Councillor Raby to ask the leader of the council the following question:

The Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP), which includes three cabinet members from Norwich City Council, is currently drawing up a new Greater Norwich Local Plan. Despite the GNDP meeting in January having agreed a communications protocol which listed no fewer than 15 different channels through which information about the local plan would be shared with

residents, there has been nothing in the local paper since July 2016, nothing in the latest issue of Citizen magazine, nothing on social media and minimal information on the council's website. With the official consultation date only four months away, the average Norwich resident still has no idea this plan is being drawn up at all, let alone how to engage with it. Does the leader of the council agree that this is not in line with the city council's stated governance values of transparency and comprehensive stakeholder engagement, and that more should be done to encourage and enable public participation in the creation of the plan?

Councillor Waters, leader of the council's response:

The process of preparing a new local plan for Greater Norwich will be a lengthy one involving the preparation of much evidence and the consideration of many differing views on how it is best to plan for the homes, jobs and infrastructure we need. It will also be inherently public, meetings of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership are held in public with papers available for scrutiny and the opportunity for the public to ask questions. Regular reports on progress will be made to Sustainable Development Panel, and all decisions at key stages will be taken either by Cabinet or Full Council. All documents are published and kept available on the Greater Norwich Local Plan website (<http://www.greaternorwichgrowth.org.uk/planning/greater-norwich-local-plan/>).

Ensuring public awareness and input into the process of preparing the Local Plan will be crucial. However, it is important that our efforts to get public engagement are meaningful and are focussed on the periods of plan preparation where there is genuine scope for the public to influence the content of plan. This is one of the reasons a consultation protocol has been developed.

It is all too easy to get consultation fatigue and turn the public off getting involved in Local Plan preparation through seeking to engage on Local Plan issues when it is not clear what the implications of the Plan may be for them. Seeking to generate the maximum amount of press coverage at this stage when technical evidence is still in preparation and many questions cannot be answered is not the best way securing genuine public involvement and may actually be counterproductive in the long run.

In reply to a supplementary question from **Councillor Raby, Councillor Waters** said that he along with Councillor Grahame and Councillor Carlo had attended public meetings. Seven options were being considered but all needed to be supported by evidence and put into consultation which could run for another two years which was ample time for thorough consultation. He added that when the consultation was launched, the public needed to be confident that the options presented had been tested. It was important to get this right so that no one was disaffected by the consultation with incomplete evidence.

Question 3

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

The issue of licensing sexual entertainment venues (SEVs) is a matter which particularly affects my ward of Thorpe Hamlet. I asked a question of the cabinet member in November last year about the status of our SEV policy after seven years of delays. I was subsequently assured in March that all four SEVs in Norwich would have to apply for a licence under the new policy. Having heard nothing more, I contacted the licensing department on 13th June for an update, and was informed that the applications had been made and the consultation period had passed, and that it would now not be possible either for me or for residents to submit an objection.

The council routinely publishes details of licence applications on its website. Those interested can sign up for alerts. There was no alert for these SEV applications and no details are available online. Neither were members of the licensing committee aware of the applications. Despite my repeated requests to see the applications, which are theoretically in the public domain, the licensing department has refused to supply them or tell me where I can find them.

As a councillor for one of the wards affected by this issue, who has asked questions, objected to previous applications and requested on numerous occasions to be kept updated, I find this deliberately obstructive behaviour and avoidance of public scrutiny to be deeply worrying and undemocratic. This is a controversial issue of great interest to the public, and it is unacceptable to try to slip it under the radar in this way. Several residents have now written to the council expressing their dismay that they were not informed of the applications in time to comment, and asking that the consultation be rerun.

Will the cabinet member see to it that the decision on these applications be postponed and the consultation rerun to allow for proper public engagement, with the information made publicly available including online?

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

Thank you for your question.

The premises which have applied for sexual entertainment venues (SEV's) are required legally as part of the application to advertise the fact that an application has been made.

Each of the applicants has advertised their application by displaying an external notice at the premises and by placing an advert in a local newspaper. Each applicant subsequently provides a confirmation notice to the council to confirm this requirement has been complied with, together with a copy of the newspaper advert. Compliance is also checked by an officer visiting the premises.

The advert template used is contained in the council's sex establishment policy statement which was adopted in December 2014 and requires the following details to be provided:

- premises address
- proposed hours of operation
- the address of Norwich city council, which is where any person wishing to make a representation regarding the application should do so in writing.

The representation has to be relevant to the statutory grounds for refusal as set out in the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, where the grounds relevant to the majority of those objecting to the application are as follows:

“that the grant or renewal of the licence would be inappropriate, having regard to the character of the relevant locality or to the use to which any premises in the vicinity of the premises, vehicle or vessel or stall in respect of which the application is made”

The Licensing Authority will not consider objections which relate to moral grounds as these are outside the scope of the 1982 Act.

The period for making a representation is 28 days from the date of the application which is stated in the advert.

There is only one statutory consultee, the police who are provided with copies of the full applications.

The legislation governing the licensing of sexual entertainment venues does not require applications to be made publicly available, although certain information (name and address of applicant, address of proposed licensed premise and days/hours of proposed operation) is required to be included in the advertisements that are placed at the proposed licensed premises and in the local press.

The approach to consultation for SEV licences is in keeping with other council licensing responsibilities where applications are publicly advertised by the applicant. This includes for example, the licensing of tables and chairs to be on the public highway under the Highways Act 1980 where applications are published by way of street notice and in accordance with previously agreed policy to responsible authorities and affected groups e.g. the Norwich Access Group.

One Council licensing responsibility which is treated differently is for applications relating to the Licensing Act 2003. The licensing act requires the council to maintain a public register of (alcohol) licence applications.

Additionally, members agreed to a policy to notify all residents and businesses within a 50 metre radius of the application premise of liquor licence applications received by the council and there is also an alert system for those who have signed up to it.

There is no such requirement within the council's sex establishment policy.

With regards to the applications raised by Cllr Grahame in her question, the applications have been made in due form including public advertising, and a period of 28 days for representations to be made which has now closed.

Given that this period is now closed there is no further opportunity for additional representations to be received or considered.

The full applications will be available when the committee documents are released into the public arena for licensing committee.

I will be discussing with officers how members and residents might be notified through an alert system via the council's website when the council receives a licensing application for a sexual entertainment venue to increase the visibility of these applications.

In response to a supplementary question from **Councillor Grahame**, **Councillor Maguire** said that this was a new area and the model being followed worked in other aspects of licensing. Meeting papers would be available once agendas were circulated.

Question 4

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

In September 2016, the Cabinet agreed to adopt a policy limiting the use of A-boards for advertising in the city. The full text of this policy is available nowhere that I or my residents can find, and a councillor enquiry I submitted on the 5th June asking for a copy has still not been answered.

In March of this year, a public question about implementation of this policy was asked at Full Council and the resident was told that the delay in implementing it was due to vacancies in the street works team, but that the launch was planned for around Easter.

I have heard nothing about this since, and A-boards in the city centre continue to cause an obstruction for many people including people with disabilities.

Could the cabinet member give his opinion on how effective this new policy has been?

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

The council's new policy is contained in the September 2016 cabinet report and it is published on the council's website on the 'Roads and Pavements' page. The policy applies to public highway only whereas I understand that Councillor Haynes query also raised some specific issues in relation to the provision market which is being looked into with a full response from officers being very imminent.

Whilst it has taken longer than I hoped, now that we have a full complement of staff within the street works team and have reached agreement with Norse to assist in the enforcement of the policy, officers are actioning the following in relation to A boards on public highway:

1. A letter is being sent to every business within inner ring road this week – as well as to all councillors and other relevant stakeholders such as Norwich BID and the Norwich Association for the Blind. It will advise businesses of the policy in detail and advise that each business should be compliant within 1 month of the letter.
2. During that month officers will be monitoring the city centre area and where possible advising and educating businesses of their obligations, as well as noting those businesses that are continuing to flout the policy.
3. At the end of the month officers will then write again to any businesses not adhering to the policy to advise that we are giving 48 hours to comply with the policy.
4. If they do not comply, Norse will, if necessary, attend and remove the offending item, storing the item for a maximum of 28 days at cost to the owner

Whilst officers will monitor the city centre, they will also respond to any complaints by businesses or the general public.

I have asked officers to report back on the implementation of the new arrangements later on in the year.

In response to a supplementary question from **Councillor Haynes, Councillor Maguire** said that with regards to access to information on the council's website, the pages were under constant review by the communications team and accessibility of the A boards policy would be followed up.

Question 5

Councillor Schmierer to ask the cabinet member for social housing the following question:

In response to the question 'Just how safe is your Norwich tower block?' in an Evening News article on 19th June, the article reported a resident who commented on the lack of smoke alarms and fire extinguishers in communal areas at a tower block in the city. A City Council spokesperson was reported as acknowledging the presence of sprinklers in the refuse areas only. In this context, could the cabinet member comment on the council's reported budget underspend of £122,000 achieved by carrying out fire prevention work in council-owned properties "when identified rather than planned"?

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

As was reported to Councillor Schmierer at cabinet on Wednesday, the budget identified is a 'responsive budget' used to rectify any minor defects or issues identified and arising from our comprehensive fire safety inspections regime across all of our council housing stock.

This might be for repairs identified by the Council's onsite caretakers or from the regular fire safety visits undertaken by the Norfolk Fire and Rescue Service - for example overhead door closers.

In response to a supplementary question from **Councillor Schmierer**, **Councillor Harris** said that she could not confirm at this stage what would be discussed as part of the budgetary process in February next year.

Question 6

Councillor Carlo to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:

Meeting the Paris Agreement on climate change reduction will involve a Herculean effort of utmost urgency within a short timespan. Norwich City Council's Corporate Plan sets an unambitious 2.2% target reduction in carbon dioxide emissions from local authority operations in 2017/18.

Furthermore, the City Council actions are inconsistent across a number of policies. For example, the Council's replacement of grass tennis courts by floodlit all-weather tennis courts and its support for hard landscaping in City Council projects as a way of cutting maintenance costs and in approval of new development undermines the ability of the climate to regulate itself. The City Council is making very limited effort to ask developers to provide green roofs and walls. Hard surfaces increase urban temperature by as much as 8 degrees C. The young and elderly are at particular health risk from high temperatures.

Does the Cabinet Member accept that reducing the amount of hard surfaces and increasing the amount of soft landscaping will help to mitigate climate change as well as prevent flooding, and if so what steps will the Council take to ensure this happens?

Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion's response:

I would like to thank Cllr Carlo for her question and her un-enthusiastic view about the council's corporate plan target for carbon reduction.

Climate change and heat effects are complex and influenced by many factors and they need to be considered alongside other priorities, on a case by case basis. For example, replacing an asphalt path in an area of the city with grass would make a positive contribution to reducing the city's heat island effect and reduce flood risk, but would not be desirable for a number of reasons

including increased maintenance requirements and costs which itself would add to carbon emissions and clearly not fit for purpose.

The choice of surface needs to reflect the intensity of use that is anticipated and the conversion of a soft surface to a hard surface can be justified where it allows for an intensification of use for walking, cycling or sporting activity, where the health and environmental benefits can outweigh the loss of ground porosity.

The Council seeks to promote mixed, diverse, inclusive and equitable communities, by increasing opportunities for social interaction, community cohesion, cultural participation and lifelong learning. In determining applications for development the Council will also seek to afford equal weight to the economic, environmental and social dimensions of sustainability as set out in local and national policy to seek to deliver the best possible development for Norwich and for the environment.

Encompassed within policy for achieving and delivering sustainable development is a thrust to help to combat the effects of climate change and achieve national and local carbon reduction targets by making the most efficient practicable use of resources, minimizing the overall need to travel, reducing dependency on the private car and high-emission vehicles and ensuring ease of access to facilities and services for all users both now and in the future.

In terms of landscaping, all new development will be expected to make appropriate provision for both the protection of existing and the provision of new green infrastructure as an integral part of the overall design which complements and enhances the development.

Careful consideration is given to the choice of hard and soft landscaping and when opportunities arise the Council promotes green enhancements within schemes. The installation of green walls at UEA and Marks & Spencer are high profile examples of where porous surfaces with biodiversity value have been secured through the planning process.

The council's landscape team designs green infrastructure improvements and provides advice on planning applications. In doing so it refers to the [Landscape and Trees supplementary planning document](#), which guides decision making. This document recognises the importance of planting and sustainable urban drainage. The council has implemented or funded several projects that have incorporated these principles, such as transforming asphalt playgrounds at Leonard Street and Grapes Hill into porous, planted surfaces. The play project at Eagle Walk off Newmarket Road incorporated swales to capture rainwater. Transport projects also incorporate planted areas, such as Westlegate and All Saints Green, Little Bethel Street and St Andrew's Plain.

In response to a supplementary question from **Councillor Carlo, Councillor Maguire** said that he would find out more information regarding the landscaping solutions on the Westlegate project but said that in the case of tennis courts that had recently been resurfaced, porous macadam had been used and that there had been a reduction in cutting in the grassed areas.

Question 7

Councillor Bogelein to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:

You may be aware of the grave injustice done to all women born in the 1950s affected by the changes to the State Pension Law. The changes to state pension age, raising it from 60 to 65/66, have been implemented in an unfair way with little or no personal notice, faster than promised, and no time to make alternative plans. Up and down the country, councils have recognised this unfair treatment of women born in the 1950s and offered their support. I am asking this question following a request from a resident, who has approached Norwich City Council several times about this issue but received only a very unsatisfactory answer stating that the issue doesn't relate to city council functions. Could the cabinet member please comment on whether Norwich City Council will join other councils in backing the WASPI campaign and lobby government to put in place fair transitional arrangements for this group of women?

Councillor Waters, leader of the council's response:

I can confirm that the council has received a request from Gill Lemmon on behalf of Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) to support the WASPI campaign and join other local authorities to lobby government on this injustice.

The Pensions Act 1995 brought in changes to the State Pension Age (SPA) for women born after April 1951. At that time, the changes were to be implemented from April 2010 and would take ten years to complete. By 6 April 2020 the women's state pension age would have been 65 and equal to that of men. To add to this women were not notified of the changes until 14 years after the 1995 Pensions Act.

The Pensions Act of 2011 increased the state pension age for men and women to 66 by 2020; this had the effect of speeding up the changes for women and effectively moving the date they could draw their pension to later.

These changes by central government affect 2.6 million women and could have a big impact on a considerable number of our residents. We are concerned that the changes may have been brought in so quickly that those affected have left little time to make changes to retirement plans or make alternative financial provision. These changes to the state pension age for women and the delay in notifying them of the change has, without a doubt, resulted in women born on or after 6 April 1951 facing hardship in retirement.

In 2011 the then Work and Pensions Secretary committed to looking at transitional provisions to help the women who have been hit hardest by the changes but he has failed to do so. There have been a number of Parliamentary debates on this issue in recent months, including a Westminster Hall debate in November 2016, where the Shadow Frontbench

urged the Government to take appropriate action. Given the mishandling of the acceleration of the pension age for women born in the 1950s, which has already caused huge financial worries for 2.6million women across the country, I believe that the Government should take action as a matter of urgency. My colleagues and I, working with local MP's who are supportive of this campaign, will continue to support efforts to press the Government to introduce transitional protections to help the women who have been disadvantaged.

This is why I can confirm that Norwich City Council will join the campaign to help women in the area who are affected. The council will be urging the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to ensure that women affected are treated fairly and transitional arrangements are in place where the changes have been accelerated without sufficient notice for them to make alternative plans.

Question 8

Councillor Maxwell to ask the cabinet member for social housing the following question:

Following the devastating fire at Grenfell Tower in London can the cabinet member for social housing give her opinion on the efforts so far taken to ensure our City Council owned tower blocks remain safe and comply with all safety standards?

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

Waking up last Wednesday morning to see the scenes of Grenfell Tower in Kensington on fire will have filled us all with horror.

Our sympathies go out to the victims and their families at this extremely difficult time. What they experienced was and continues to be unimaginable.

I am sure we will all want to acknowledge our admiration for the public servants, from the London Fire Brigade and Metropolitan Police particularly, for the work they undertook, putting their own lives at risk to respond to the disaster.

Whilst it will be some time before we understand the full details of the causes of the fire and how it could have been prevented, the residents living in our own tower blocks and members of the council, will expect that our own fire safety procedures and systems are reviewed to ensure they are robust.

Last week a letter was sent to all residents living in the council's eight tower blocks, to help provide reassurance about the fire safety precautions in their block. That letter also provided reassurance that no cladding had been affixed to our high rise flats since they were first built.

It also explained that as further details of events in London unfolded, the council would review and reassess our procedures.

The Norfolk Fire Service has also visited the tower blocks to talk to residents and provide reassurance. These visits by the fire service highlighted some very minor issues and repairs have been actioned.

The council has 8 tower blocks these are:

Normandie – 16 floors and 95 flats

Winchester – 16 floors and 95 flats

Ashbourne – 11 floors and 44 flats

Burleigh - 11 floors and 44 flats

Compass - 11 floors and 44 flats

Aylmer - 11 floors and 44 flats

Seaman – 11 floors and 44 flats

Markham - 11 floors and 44 flats

There are some key points that I do wish to highlight here:

- Each flat is 'compartmentalised' with a fire door.
- No external cladding has been added to any of our tower blocks.
- Daily safety checks are carried out at each block, including at weekends, by the caretaking staff.
- Fire safety information is provided to our residents. An important element of this is the requirement to keep communal areas clear.
- The Fire Service visit and undertake a safety check every 3 to 4 months.
- The fire service undertook an exercise at Normandie Tower on the 18 and 25 May.

Key to how we ensure the safety of our residents is the work of our caretakers who have a visible presence in the towers. As well as contributing to the blocks being safe through their day to day duties, they will be talking to residents and answering any questions they have.

This brings home to us all, the importance of a well-resourced locally relevant council. And I am going to be political here.

My colleagues around the table and beyond have long believed that the systematic reduction in public funding, coupled with an ideological desire to make public service "minimalistic", to the point of an inability to respond to residents cannot be right.

As it may be some time before the causes of the London fire are fully known, I have already commissioned a report from officers that will review the risk assessment and fire safety plan for each of the council's eight tower blocks. Officers will engage with the Norfolk fire and rescue service in the preparation of these reports and these will highlight whether we should make any changes now to our fire safety procedures.

The findings of these reviews will be shared with both councillors and the residents in our blocks.

The council are also responding to the requests from Government for information on fire safety arrangements in tower blocks.

The approach being taken balances the immediate need to review our current arrangements based on current fire safety regulations and to make changes that may be required.

As we learn more about the causes of the London disaster or if fire safety regulations for tower blocks change, which we can expect they will, further reviews will be carried out to ensure that the homes that the council provides, particular those in the towers, remain safe and secure.

Communication at this time has been absolutely critical. We are talking to residents, answering enquiries from our residents, the Government, the media and our MPs.

At this time, I would like to thank all of our officers for the tremendous amount of work they are undertaking in response to this tragedy and their diligence is to be commended.

In response to a supplementary question from **Councillor Maxwell, Councillor Harris** said that another letter had been hand delivered to all tenants in council owned tower blocks and that the fire service had visited two tower blocks.

Question 9

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

Waterloo Park is an important treasured amenity for the community in my ward, and the opportunity to secure investment and proper usage for the historic listed pavilion has been a significant priority for local Labour ward councillors. Can the cabinet member for health and wellbeing give his opinion on the positive opportunities which will be achieved through the innovative agreement between this council and the social enterprise, 'Britannia Enterprises' to ensure the pavilion is improved and put to lasting good use?

Councillor Ryan, cabinet member for health and wellbeing's response:

'The partnership between the council and Britannia Enterprises is one that will see both the park as a whole, and the much-loved pavilion benefit.

Both serving and ex-offenders will work alongside the council to maintain and enhance the park, including helping with gardening, restoring the iconic benches and keeping the grounds and the public toilets clean.

Britannia Enterprises will also take over the repair and maintenance of the pavilion, which is due to open a café on the ground floor later in the summer. This will see this striking Grade II listed building open its doors to the public for the first time in more than a decade.

Britannia Social Enterprise was launched in 2014, the brainchild of Davina Tanner. It was set up to offer job mentoring, training, employment and rehabilitation to prisoners with the aim of reducing re-offending rates and has gone from strength to strength. It has an excellent track record, and a national reputation.

Having well-maintained and equipped leisure areas on people's doorsteps can play a valuable role in their well-being. So it is important we make sure that these are the best they can be, in spite of continuing funding challenges.

There has been much discussion in the last few weeks about the adverse effects of austerity and how its march will continue to affect public services.

Our partnership in Waterloo Park is one way of us to making sure that parks, which are free for all residents to enjoy, remain so. This is yet another example of innovation in difficult times by Norwich City Council.

Question 10

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

The need for more affordable and social housing in the city grows ever more acute. I was therefore pleased to see the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth at the ceremony to mark the start of work for the first landmark project of Norwich Regeneration Company, which is wholly owned by Norwich City Council. The development, called Rayne Park in Three Score Bowthorpe, will incorporate modern building techniques with 112 properties built to Passivhaus standard. It will also include a range of properties from 1-bed apartments to 5-bed family houses as well as 57 affordable homes. Can the cabinet member give his opinion on the significant opportunities which the development will offer and how the Norwich Regeneration Company, can continue to provide solutions to our housing needs?

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

The start of development at Rayne Park is a significant milestone and exciting first project for the Norwich Regeneration Company. The Company was set up to deliver housing to meet market demand and housing need in Norwich. At the same time it will help the council to become more financially self-sufficient by developing commercial opportunities which makes it less reliant on dwindling government funding.

Rayne Park consists of a total of 172 new homes, 112 of which will be built to passivhaus standards - an approach that produces ultra-low energy buildings that need very little fuel for heating or cooling and can save residents up to 70% on their energy bills. This "fabric first approach" also places emphasis on the excellence and quality of the construction.

The mix of 1,2,3,4 and 5 bed houses and flats will be constructed to innovative modern designs, including a number with roof terraces and meeting lifetime homes standards. The development is designed to be "tenure blind" which means that all houses look the same and are built to the same standard irrespective of tenure. There will be a mix of homes available for sale and rent on the private market so the scheme will make a valuable contribution towards improving the standards of accommodation in the private rented sector. The council has already agreed to take on 18 social housing units in the first part of the development.

Rayne Park also helps to provide much needed employment for local people through an initiative called "Building Futures in Norwich" run by Construction Training Specialists. This matches local people who are currently out of work

with job opportunities on the development project. The target is for 10% of the workforce to be made up of people who were not in work before. Training is also available via the Fabric First Institute based at Easton and Otley college established by Whole House Energy with the support of the LEP and the city council to provide specific training for contractors and sub- contractors in the skills needed to build to passivhaus or other “fabric first” standards.

The show homes are due to be completed by the end of October this year with residents moving into the first homes for sale by the end of November 2017. The first homes for council tenants will be ready in April next year.

The council is already actively looking at other sites in its ownership which could be taken forward by Norwich Regeneration Company or by other means. The Three Score site is now fully serviced, following the completion of the road and infrastructure by the council (with the help of funding from the innovative partnership with the Homes and Communities Agency). This will enable future phases to follow on seamlessly from the Rayne Park development. The council is also taking steps to bring forward other housing development sites.

Question 11

Councillor Packer to ask the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods the following question:

Following the shocking and tragic murder of Sewell Ward resident, Kerri McAuley, earlier this year who had suffered sustained and prolonged domestic violence, can the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods comment on the continued work this council takes, working with partners, to tackle domestic abuse in this city?

Councillor Herries, cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods’ response:

None of us can imagine what Kerri McAuley experienced during her life which tragically led to her murder. Domestic abuse is something that no one should have to tolerate.

Domestic abuse can affect anyone and takes all kinds of forms – physical, emotional, psychological, financial, or sexual. Much of it goes unreported.

In one single month in 2016, there were 1,115 domestic abuse crimes and incidents reported to Norfolk Constabulary, of which 407 were crimes and 72 deemed of significant risk to be referred to the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC).

Every year, domestic abuse costs Norfolk an estimated £60million.

A number of measures at a Norfolk wide and Norwich level have and are being developed to respond to a crime that should not be occurring and the following is a sample of the range of activities that have been developed.

The Norfolk wide response to domestic abuse is led by the county community safety partnership. The partnership has identified domestic abuse as one of its three priorities as it is an area of concern where a partnership approach is required to make a difference.

Working initially with the East of England LGA, a range of work has been undertaken to review the issues and response on a system wide basis with the objectives to:

- reduce the incidents of domestic abuse taking place within Norfolk
- to improve the level of services to those who are victims of such abuse.

Partners have developed a number of new approaches which will facilitate a programme of change focussing on:

- Integrated service provision
- Enhanced service delivery
- Enhanced workforce capability
- Improved awareness

The key outcomes required are prevention and earlier intervention through there being a Norfolk wide culture of non-acceptance, early disclosure and access to help early.

In particular, the programme developed a high profile “campaign” titled *I walked away*, to highlight its non-acceptance. This aimed to reach those responsible for abuse, those who experience it and friends and family members who may be aware of it.

Posters using the strapline *#IWalkedAway* to highlight how others have left abusive situations and made new starts have been distributed and members will see these throughout city hall and other public venues.

SafeLives beacon site

Norfolk has been successful in becoming a ‘*SafeLives* Beacon Site.’ This aims to address the gaps in the response to domestic abuse by implementing the *SafeLives* blueprint over a five year period with funding provided to the programme. This work will focus initially in Norwich and is supported by the council.

The identified gaps include:

- limitations in the range and quality of services available for victims and their children, with significant unmet need
- no consistent national response to perpetrators, with limited help or challenge for those perpetrating high risk abuse;
- gaps in support available across whole families; insufficient opportunities for longer term recovery and support.

The first support service in the programme to be delivered will support Norwich victims assessed at medium risk of harm.

As part of the white ribbon campaign, white ribbon ambassadors have been recruited, who are respected men who are willing to encourage men and boys

in the community to participate in the global movement to eliminate violence against women and girls.

White ribbon advocates have been recruited, who are respected women from a wide range of sectors who have identified themselves as supporting the aims and objectives of the White Ribbon Campaign.

Many members of council are white ribbon ambassadors or advocates.

The council delivers a range of local services or activity.

The City Council in conjunction with Leeway have been successful in being awarded £100,000 from DCLG to improve services to victims of abuse in Norwich. This will see a new safe house in Norwich with one bed reserved for victims that have no recourse to public funds. It will also offer a rent guarantee scheme for individuals where the only barrier to moving in private rented accommodation is the security deposit.

Domestic abuse is a significant driver of homelessness and the council has always taken a pro-active approach to support victims and ensure they are safeguarded working closely with the police and Leeway.

A dedicated domestic abuse officer has recently been created as part of a review of the council's homelessness and landlord housing services to ensure that sufficient focus continues on victims of abuse.

Finally, Norwich City Council has been awarded white ribbon status, in recognition of the council's efforts to challenge male violence against women.

Question 12

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

As a keen supporter of the excellent Norwich Car Club, I was pleased to see a new Norwich Car Club bay added into Atthill Road in Wensum Ward, together with additional bays in St Giles, Oak Street and more come. Can the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth comment on the continued development and success of the car club and the support and help this council provides the popular initiative?

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

I am pleased to say that Norfolk Car Club is going from strength to strength in the city and is experiencing a significant growth in membership and usage. The Car Club now has nearly 1000 members, using 40 vehicles

Approximately 50% of those members are known to have ceased to own their own vehicle. That not only saves Norwich citizens money, but also frees up significant amounts of on-street parking in some of our most congested streets. In addition to residential members, the car club is also used by an increasing number of companies, organisations and charities.

The car club expects to grow to 4,000 members and 120 vehicles in Norwich. To support this growth, the Car Club is planning to launch more new vehicles and locations in the coming months, including low emission and ultra-low emission vehicles. Car Club members are also known to walk, cycle and use public transport much more than car owners. The car club therefore supports the county and city councils' overall transport policy, and helps to improve air quality.

In the longer term, the car club plans to be at the forefront of trialling and launching wireless charged shared electric vehicles.

There are very good reasons for the council to continue to support the expansion of the Car Club. We therefore require, through the planning process, larger developments to provide Car Club spaces in or close to the site, and provide the vehicles. The council also provides on-street spaces for the club to develop and the council will also be instrumental in facilitating the introduction of the wireless charging point on street once that initiative commences.

Question 13

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

I was pleased to see new pop up stalls arrive at Norwich Market, together with the Feed and other new food outlets. Given the investment and work to continue to promote and develop this important and much loved Norwich landmark, can the cabinet member for health and wellbeing comment on the range of recent improvements and changes so far completed?

Councillor Ryan, cabinet member for health and wellbeing's response:

Thank you for this question. It allows me to recognise the hard work that has been put into improving Norwich Market over the last year.

One of the first tasks undertaken was to review the market's "balance of goods policy" in consultation with traders. There were around 46 out of 190 stalls standing vacant and we knew from previous public surveys that people wanted to see more varied street food and interesting retail food.

Developing a new balance of goods policy enabled the council to increase the food offer. A new food aisle has been launched on Row A of the market with

eight fantastic new food businesses. We have also welcomed a further nine new food outlets across the market.

I am keen to ensure these new businesses provide a different offering to the existing stalls on the market, so it's great that we now have street food from South East Asia, Chile, France, Spain, India and Italy, as well as smoothies, deli sandwiches, cakes and falafels.

To support the new food outlets and encourage people to dwell on the market for longer for the benefit of all traders, six new picnic benches have been installed along the back of the market to create a vibrant seating area where people can sit and talk, enjoy the market ambiance and importantly, consume produce purchased on the market.

In the last year, 21 new businesses have set up on the market occupying 30 stalls (some of these businesses have taken on single stalls while others have taken doubles with one business a triple stall).

Market officers have focused on attracting new business to the market to fill the vacant stalls. The vacancy rate at its highest was 24 per cent.

Today I can report to the council that the vacancy rate has reduced by two thirds to only eight per cent giving an occupancy rate of 92 per cent. Only 15 stalls are now classified as vacant.

Whilst the majority of our new stalls are food businesses I remain very keen to maintain and improve the diversity of the market offer. On 20 June this year a pilot Pop-up project was launched mainly focusing on non-food items using nine of our long-standing empty stalls. The aim is to enable businesses to test their brand or product on the market for as little as three days or up to a month. It is early days for the pop-ups but the intention is to use these to bring new business to the market and also to support new business start-ups in the city.

I believe the market has an important and unrivalled role to play as an incubator for new business which will contribute to the council's emerging theme of inclusive growth. The Pop-ups will also be used for themed attractions for collectives of antiques, arts and crafts, records etc. and it is hoped that this will further increase footfall.

A vital improvement in the market and for its continuing development has been developing a good working relationship with the Norwich Market Traders' Association. Meetings are held every other month and I cannot praise the traders association enough for their proactive representation of the views of their members and their positive approach towards the plans for the market and working with the council. The creation of an onsite market services office has been well received and has enabled council officers to be more easily available to traders and shoppers.

As well as driving the business forward, all the lighting diffusers in the common areas of the market have been cleaned or replaced if necessary, to make it much brighter, and new signage has been installed at the top and bottom of each of the eight aisles listing every single business and its

products. This helps shoppers on Gentleman's Walk and those at the back of the market to find what they're looking for. There are also plans to replace 12 of the cross aisle awnings most in need of repair.

A review of the fees and charges has been completed, which has seen the introduction of discounts on a second stall for any existing trader who rents more than one stall and six-month introductory incentive discounts for new businesses. Improvements have also been made to "back of house activity" including re-launching the tenant's handbook, updating controls in respect of debt and updating and modernising the fire risk assessment.

The final point to mention is that the council has expanded the marketing to include advertising and editorial with a wider range of local magazines and newspapers appealing to a broader audience in an effort to attract more people of all ages and from all backgrounds to the market.

This is only the first year of a 10 year plan to bring improvements to Norwich Market and I hope council will agree that a great start has been made and will join me in looking forward to what the next year will bring. It is yet another example of innovation by the council in the face of financial hardship.

Question 14

Councillor Brociek-Coulton to ask the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods the following question:

Tackling abuses in the private rented sector remains a key ambition for this administration and for many years we have lobbied government for additional powers. Can the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods comment on the way in which this Labour led council is seeking to maximise the new powers and opportunities contained in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 to better protect private tenants and enforce requirements to improve properties?

Councillor Herries, cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods' response:

To date the private sector housing team have taken a robust approach to tackling the poorest most hazardous privately rented homes. The team have successfully used enforcement powers to remove hazardous conditions in hundreds of homes in cases where, without the council's intervention, the landlords are unlikely to have carried out the work. Where necessary, landlords have been held accountable in court. The team are currently preparing 3 cases for court hearings next month. Preparation for court is a long process and can be arduous, it includes formal interviews under caution, liaison with landlords and solicitors, preparation of a bundle of legal evidence, input from the solicitors at NP Law, and finally, a court hearing involving both the council officer and the solicitor from NP Law. Due to this the council only contemplates prosecuting a small number of the worst offenders because of the length and cost of the legal process. The court fines imposed are varied,

sometimes reflecting the potential harm and the culpability of the landlord and at other times are woefully low. Seen together, these two problems have meant that there has been little to deter landlords from letting sub-standard homes and it is primarily this situation the new policy intends to address.

The council's new private sector housing enforcement policy utilises new enforcement powers. The imposition of a civil penalty as an alternative to prosecution means that landlords who let sub-standard and poorly-managed properties are much more likely to face substantial financial loss. The council will now be able to impose a civil penalty on landlords who commit offences. These fines, of up to £30,000 per offence, will reflect the seriousness of the offence and be used as a robust way of clamping down on criminal landlords. The policy also introduces the use of rent repayment orders for offending landlords, banning orders for the most persistent offenders and penalties for landlords who fail to provide smoke detectors.

The council's policy acts as a warning to criminal landlords that if they do not change their behaviour they will be penalised while other landlords who provide safe, good quality accommodation are more able to continue their business without being unfairly disadvantaged. This approach enables the Council to further focus resource on the poorest conditions and improve the homes of the most vulnerable tenants.