



Council

29 November 2016

Questions to cabinet members or chairs of committees

Question 1

Councillor Mike Sands to ask the leader of the council:

Nationally, the number of those classed as homeless has risen by 6.3 per cent every year since 2010 and if the rate is maintained this would result in 80,000 homeless families by 2020 – which would include 60,000 families with children.

Cuts to housing benefit, local authority support and a loss of 143,000 of council houses is resulting in tens of thousands more people becoming homeless across the country.

Given the significance of this national context can the cabinet member for council housing comment on the proposed cuts to supported housing being proposed by Tory run Norfolk County Council and the very significant risks this poses to homelessness services operating in Norwich?

Councillor Waters, leader of the council's response:

I would like to thank Councillor Mike Sands for his very pertinent question highlighting the drivers that have created a massive spike in homelessness since 2010: a situation that is set to get worse during the lifetime of this Parliament because of policies rolling forward from the Cameron-Osborne years. First as part of the Conservative Liberal Democrat Coalition, then a majority Conservative government from 2015 and now since the summer, the new administration of Teresa May and Philip Hammond.

In answering this question fully it is important to consider it firstly within the context of 1997 – 2010, the subsequent 6 years and the position we now find ourselves in this evening. Where we are today is not some accident of 'fate' or unforeseen circumstance. It is due to the deliberate and sustained policies of this government.

Firstly we should all be clear that the previous Labour government record on homelessness is one of our proudest achievements.

From 1998/99, when comparable statistics begin, to 2009/10, headline or 'statutory' homelessness fell by almost two-thirds (62%). The number of people sleeping rough fell by roughly three-quarters (75%) between 1998 and 2009. The action of the 1997-2010 government led to what the independent Crisis/JRF Homelessness Monitor describes as "an unprecedented decline in statutory homelessness".

During this period, Labour strengthened the legal protections for homeless people by expanding those covered by councils' main homelessness duties to include those aged 16 and 17 years old, care leavers, armed forces veterans, those leaving prison, those fleeing domestic violence or the threat of domestic violence. It introduced greater funding for homelessness services, including through the Supporting People programme, Hostels Capital Improvement programme and a new strategy to tackle rough sleeping.

It set up a new Rough Sleepers Unit; made a major shift towards a more preventative approach to homelessness with the Homelessness Act 2002 requiring local authorities to develop homelessness strategies, and encouraging them to develop earlier interventions including housing advice services, rent deposit guarantee schemes, mediation services, and help for people to stay in their homes. In short, active policy seeking to practically tackle the issue of homelessness.

Secondly, all of this began to rapidly unwind once the new ConDem government took office in 2010. Indeed, since 2010, this trend of falling homelessness has gone into reverse as the below horrifying statistics are quite plain to see.

Between 2009/10 and 2015/16 the number of statutory homeless households has increased to 57,740, an increase of 44%. The number of rough sleepers has doubled between 2010 and 2015, up 30% in the last year alone. The total number of households councils helped because they were homeless or threatened with homelessness increased by 29% to 213,290 between 2009/10 and 2015/16.

The shameful rise in homelessness is part of the ConDems six years of failure on housing, and has been driven directly by decisions made by Ministers. These include cuts to housing benefit support worth over £5bn since 2010 – thirteen separate cuts to housing benefit over the last five years, including the bedroom tax, breaking the link between housing benefit for private renters (local housing allowance) and private rents; cuts to 'supporting people' which funds homelessness services – (the National Audit Office have revealed that this vital funding fell by 45% between 2010 and 2015); soaring private rents - averaging more than £2000 extra each year than at the same point 2010; and the loss of affordable homes – with over 140,000 fewer council homes than in 2010. The number of new government funded homes started for social rent falling from nearly 40,000 in 2009/10 to less than 1,000 last year.

In addition the government are still pressing ahead with their plans to cap housing benefit for tenants of supported housing, including homelessness hostels, at the local housing allowance rate which is often much lower than housing costs and is only uprated by the CPI measure of inflation – excluding housing costs.

Thirdly, we need to examine where all of the above has helped lead us to this evening, effectively the very real prospect of mass homelessness within Norwich and Norfolk due to a potential decision by Norfolk County Council to cut the supported housing budget.

The new Tory administration at Norfolk County Council is proposing budget reductions of £4.6m to the £9.1m housing related support budget in Norfolk in 2017/18. Current details of the proposed reductions are limited at this time but will certainly impact upon both housing related (accommodation based) support and floating support for people in their own accommodation.

This will lead to potential increases to Norwich City Council's budget of £677,000 per annum because of increased footfall to housing options prevention and statutory homelessness work, general increased costs to the housing department and increases to rough sleeper outreach contract costs.

As anybody walking around Norwich can see we are already witnessing record numbers of people sleeping rough on the streets. In quarter two of 2016-17, the council will have verified 90 individuals. Reducing the number supported housing beds will mean that these people will have restricted options.

There will be increased tenancy failures for people who need help and support to retain their home. 400 people were supported in their homes last year in Norwich. The likelihood if tenancy support was scaled back is that these people would be at risk of losing their home.

Increased numbers of people would go into social housing in Norwich without the support and tenancy readiness that supported housing provides. Indeed 302 supported housing beds in Norwich are at risk. Approximately 450 to 500 people will use these beds every year. For example, Bishopbridge house (managed by St Martins Housing Trust) is the main direct access hostel for homeless people, which is always at capacity, with up to 180 people moving through this service each year. Any reduction in other supported housing beds would mean these people have restricted options.

For young people services, current demand outstrips supply with 357 presentations to YMCA Norfolk (Norwich based) for 94 beds in one twelve month period. Any further depletion of this stock would mean that more young people would be at risk of rough sleeping or living in unsafe environments.

Sheltered housing schemes in receipt of block housing related support (HRS) grant will be included in the cuts. Currently this budget amounts to £1.6m in Norfolk; Norwich is currently in receipt of £290,000 (of this funding) for its sheltered housing tenants in Norwich City Council owned homes. There is a suggestion that only those in greatest need will receive this funding in the future. Withdrawing or reducing housing related support within sheltered housing would have a direct impact on tenants (especially around support and safeguarding issues) and staffing levels in the sheltered housing service.

These are just a few of the likely impacts already identified – horrifying as they are.

The specific issue raised in the final paragraph of the question is well chosen: the proposed cuts to supported housing currently under consideration by Norfolk County Council are so very serious that the Labour administration has tabled a motion (item 9 on the council agenda) asking the County Council to reconsider its position. The motion will provide a fuller discussion of the issues raised by Councillor Sands.

Question 2

Councillor Woollard to ask the cabinet member for council housing:

Since the previous council meeting, I have had the pleasure of a visit to the Hansard Close city council housing development. I was greatly impressed with progress on the site. Will the cabinet member comment on the significance for both tenants and the environment that this development offers Norwich City Council?

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

Council officers have been working with the Hamson Barron Smith design team and our Fabric First Framework contractors, E. N. Suiters, on the this scheme for ten affordable flats at Hansard Close. Once complete, these new homes will mark the first use of Passivhaus in the city and the first Passivhaus development for Norwich City Council.

The innovative use of the Passivhaus System will ensure that tenants bills are greatly reduced, tackling fuel poverty and driving down rent arrears, whilst also reducing emissions into the environment from the use of fossil fuels. A household living in a 70 square metre Passivhaus dwelling with gas central heating could spend as little as £25 on space heating each year.

The strength of the Passivhaus standard lies in the simplicity of its approach; i.e. to build a house that has an excellent thermal performance, exceptional airtightness and has mechanical ventilation. This robust approach to building design has allowed us to minimise the 'Heating Demand' of the building. Heat from bathrooms, kitchens and electrical appliances is recovered and circulated by a Mechanical Ventilation and Heat Recovery (MVHR) unit, which ensures that residents are comfortable in the summer and warm in the winter, whilst spending much less on their fuel bills.

As well as being an energy performance standard, Passivhaus provides excellent indoor air quality; this is achieved by reducing the air infiltration rates and supplying fresh air which is filtered and post heated by the MVHR unit. This has been proven to help those living with asthma

These ten new homes will be advertised via Choice-based Lettings in the next few weeks, with the new tenants due to move in in February.

Question 3

Councillor Manning to ask the cabinet member for Environmental and Sustainable Development:

Many fellow constituents have commented to me about the positive differences which the different pedalway improvements have already delivered. Promoting and raising awareness, particularly for those without internet access, remains an issue of importance to me.

Can the cabinet member for environmental and sustainable development comment on any new publicity to support the pedalways and how members of the public can access this?

Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environmental and sustainable development's response:

It is excellent to learn that your constituents in Lakenham are telling you that they like the work we are doing to improve the pedalways. This is certainly reflected in the increasing numbers of people who are using them.

It is important that people without internet access are aware of the pedalways. This is one of the reasons why we decided to publish a 2nd edition of our colourful and waterproof cycle map, which is an excellent way of raising awareness of the pedalways.

Following its launch in September we have distributed several thousand copies. Funding from the Department for Transport through the Pushing Ahead programme allowed us to make it available free of charge to local residents. We also published two bite size biking route leaflets. One of those takes in Lakenham Way, which is also the yellow pedalway.

The maps and leaflets were promoted through an article in Citizen which reached every household in Norwich. People can ring the council to obtain copies.

Another way that the pedalways are promoted and made more useable is the installation of wayfinding signs. People can see these on the streets in their neighbourhood. They show the distances and directions to popular destinations, especially our wonderful parks. Signs have been installed on the pink pedalway. Once the yellow and blue pedalways have been upgraded they will also be signed.

When we plan new infrastructure through the cycling ambition programme we often write to local people inviting them to comment on the proposals. This raises awareness of the pedalways.

We have been working with Active Norfolk to plan the BICICLE Winter event for all ages to enjoy outside the Forum and City Hall on 28 December. There will be a range of cycling themed activities and exhibitions on display, bringing together the magic of the holiday season with the fun of cycling. Among the fun things that will be happening are: a pedal-powered cinema showing Steven Spielberg's classic ET, paint spinning bikes, balance bike courses for younger riders, "Santa's Sleigh" fancy dress bike race with prizes and bikeability training. Information about the pedalways will be available. This is also being paid for by the Department for Transport through the Pushing Ahead programme.

We will ensure that when the work to the yellow and blue pedalways is complete in 2018 there will be another publicity campaign to maximise awareness, including among people without internet access.

Question 4

Councillor Herries to ask the cabinet member for fairness and equality:

The recent Winter Wellbeing event in St Andrews Hall was well attended and underpins just a part of our financial inclusion strategy. Given the relevance of the event to the time of year in which we are meeting tonight, can the cabinet member for fairness and equality comment on the strategy objectives and delivery in promoting winter health, particularly in our poorest communities?

Councillor Thomas, cabinet member for fairness and equality's response:

Thank you for your timely question on this winter evening.

I would agree the Winter Wellbeing Event was highly successful at bringing together many organisations to create a platform for affordable warmth work across the city and to ensure that every contact counts when identifying the most vulnerable.

The Winter Wellbeing event is an excellent way to ensure that all organisations in the City are aware of the services, support and assistance available so they are ready and prepared for whatever winter brings.

All types of poverty are addressed in the council's reducing inequality action plan which widened the previous specific approach to reduce financial inclusion which itself remains a key theme. The council also updated the Affordable Warm Strategy this year to take account of the negative funding changes caused by the removal of the Green Deal and other subsidies such as Feed In Tariffs (FITs).

Norwich City Council is doing all it can and taking a holistic approach to help residents stay warm this winter through the Affordable Warmth Strategy.

Unlike national and regional trends, which have seen an increase in fuel poverty, Norwich has seen a reduction of 2% between 2012 and 2014. (Latest data sets).

Over these years the council has brought in approximately £1,000,000 of energy efficiency measures to the city to benefit private sector housing which is in addition to the £9,830,000 of energy improvements to the council's own stock. This has included:

- Over £3.4 million each of the past two years installing 1833 new energy efficient boilers
- Nearly £1 million each of the past two years on external wall insulation in 124 properties
- Just over £700,000 on solar thermal improvements in 145 properties.

The Council has also offered savings over 1.3 million to residents over this period via the Big Switch and Save.

Norwich City Council has adopted a targeted approach to ensure that it helps maximise incomes in our poorest communities. In addition to this, the council does help residents to be relieved of fuel debt via Age UK Norfolk's surviving winter appeal and through the energy supplier's trust funds.

The Cosy City project identifies vulnerable residents in fuel poverty and offers them financial assistance for energy efficient solutions if they fulfil a certain criteria such as boiler replacements, cavity wall and loft insulation. Alongside this the council was fortunate enough in 2016 to obtain £40,000 from Community Action Norfolk to install heating upgrades to residents who have an illness that is exacerbated by the cold. Cosy City also unlocks additional funding from the big 6 energy suppliers such as British Gas.

Council will be pleased to know that the 10th round of the successful collective energy switching scheme, the *Big Switch and Save* has been completed. The previous round of Big Switch and Save delivered average savings of £230 a year per household. Norwich City Council always endeavours to engage with fuel poor households to ensure that they are aware of the Switch and Save.

Finally, the small administration fee the Council receives from the Switch and Save is invested back into affordable warmth work. This has been invaluable for vulnerable residents, as it has provided urgent heating need for them in the winter.

Question 5

Councillor Coleshill to ask the leader of the council:

I was particularly pleased to see Ed Balls, former Labour Shadow Chancellor, turn on the Christmas lights at City Hall. Can the leader of the council comment on the success of the event together with the positive outcome of the partnership between the council and Norwich BID in developing new illuminations?

Councillor Waters, leader of the council's response:

The Christmas lights switch on event was a huge success this year. This was down to a number of things, the continued good work of the councils events team, the excellent partnership that we have with our Business Improvement District and their continued investment in keeping Norwich vibrant, the people of Norwich who come out in their thousands, And, last but by no means least Strictly's Ed Balls! A former politician now known to millions for his extraordinary contribution to light entertainment, who was kind enough to stop off here on his way to Blackpool to turn on the lights in his home city.

This year the BID made a huge difference to the scale of the event and the continuing light show in the city. The BID invested in extra lighting with the tunnel of light and projections onto the front of City Hall. All made possible by the contributions of the local business community and all free for people to view.

Festive lighting like this is a real opportunity to show Norwich at its best to visitors from the UK and beyond. Only last week a study of the UKs top 40 most visited tourist destinations found that Norwich was the Eighth most entertaining place to live in. And is it any wonder when we produce events like this.

But for us as a council, just as important is the chance to for the city to collectively celebrate. This is summed up in two tweets for me

One from Wensum junior school "Thank you for a wonderful parade and switch on event"

And the other from the Anglican Cathedral
"Hats off to Norwich you are really smashing it this year. Re tweet if you agree"

I am sure those of us who can, will retweet that!

Question 6

Councillor Button to ask the cabinet member for customer care and leisure:

Promoting and developing digital inclusion is a key objective for this Labour administration. The city's first Digital Hubs have been launched as part of the council's mission to help all Norwich residents get online.

Can the cabinet member for customer care and leisure comment on the development of the Digital Hubs and the opportunities they present for communities and individuals?

Councillor Ryan, cabinet member for customer care and leisure's response:

In October 2016 as part of Get Online Week, we launched our first tranche of Digital Hubs with our Digital Inclusion Project partners. There are eleven Hubs in different community venues including libraries, community centres and other venues across the city, including City Hall. The concept of Digital Hubs was first sited in our funding application for the project, so we are delighted that we have been able to launch these community venues.

A Digital Hub is a venue where anyone can go to receive help to get online, offering a friendly and welcoming environment, access (computers, WiFi, etc) and some regular support. The support may be a weekly drop in session, a bookable appointment system or offering regular courses for beginners. All of this is offered free of charge.

Digital Hubs are spread out geographically across the city, however we have worked hard to ensure that some of the areas identified as of greatest need through our original data analysis are catered for. For example, there are three Hubs in the Catton Grove and Mile Cross area. In January we hope to launch a second wave of Digital Hubs, which will include some of our Sheltered Housing Scheme communal rooms and other community partners venues. We are also offering small community grants to support grassroots organisations to become Hubs.

The Digital Hubs offer Norwich resident's two opportunities - firstly a venue where a resident can gain free access to go online. This is useful for people who do not have a home computer, or internet connection, or rely upon their smart phone and costly mobile tariff. Secondly, Digital Hubs are staffed with volunteers or employees who can give support to help our residents to gain basic digital skills or support them to improve the skills needed to take advantage of all the opportunities the online world can bring.

As an example, at this week's Digital Hub session at City Hall volunteers supported –

- one person to make a CV
- another to apply for planning permission
- and a third person who had just left prison without any digital skills was referred to a free beginners IT course.

Question 7

Councillor Driver to ask the leader of the council:

More than one in five workers - some 7.1 million people - now face precarious employment conditions that mean they could lose their work suddenly as businesses insist on using more self-employed workers and increasingly recruit staff on temporary and zero-hours contracts.

Given the significant effect of workplace changes and assaults upon low-paid workers, can the leader of the council comment on the importance of the recent Living Wage Week and the efforts and steps taken by this council to promote the real living wage in our city?

Councillor Waters, leader of the council's response:

This November saw another successful week of event in Norwich during Living Wage Week and it is therefore timely to highlight this council's achievement's on living wage but also the challenges that remain for works in the city which we know overall is a low economy and with significant levels of in work poverty.

In 2010 the council agreed to seek accreditation to the Living Wage Foundation and committed to ensuring that all council staff and contractors providing services on behalf of the council are paid a living wage.

I am very pleased to be able to inform Council, that this has been achieved. It was important to do this before we could fully engage in encouraging all employers in the city to adopt the 'Real' Living Wage.

During Living Wage week I heard of some very moving stories from people receiving the Living Wage and the difference it has made to them. In addition at an event hosted by Aviva, who are themselves a Living Wage employer, I heard from the Manager of the Riverside Centre who spoke passionately of the extra value that paying the Living Wage has meant to his service both to his employees but also to his organisation. His rhetorical question to the audience was, 'Why should an employer pay the Living Wage' the answer should be 'Why wouldn't you!'

As we approach the Christmas period with retail shopping going into overdrive we should remember that nationally over 1 million retail staff are being paid

below the 'Real' Living Wage and here in the City we have nearly a third of the working population being paid less than £8.25 per hour.

These are some of the challenges that still face the city and some of the hard working residents of the city.

The Council with its broad range of partners will be working to increase the number of workers who can at last look toward a less bleak future and that means not just tackling low pay but insecurity of employment and rights at work. We have much to do.

Question 8

Councillor Fullman to ask the cabinet member for fairness and equality:

I was shocked - but sadly not surprised - to read that two-thirds of women's refuges in England are facing closure due to a change in the way housing benefit is paid to supported and sheltered housing, according to the national domestic abuse charity Women's Aid. Tory government plans to cap housing benefit in the social sector at the same levels paid to private landlords will risk destroying the finances of the refuges, which take in women and their children who have been victims of violence at the hands of their partners.

As this council celebrated International White Ribbon Day last Friday, can the cabinet member for fairness and equality comment on the important, ongoing, crucial work to tackle domestic violence in our city?

Councillor Thomas, cabinet member for fairness and equality's response:

Women's refuges play a crucial role in giving women a safe route out of an abusive relationship. Anything that threatens their existence, equally threatens the lives of countless numbers of vulnerable women and children.

Whilst the chancellor in his autumn statement has indicated that the implementation of the benefit cap for residents in supported housing which includes refuges will be delayed, this will only delay the increased risk to victims of abuse.

These rules unfortunately apply to all manner of supported accommodation which, at the end of the day helps vulnerable people to live in a safe environment as well as have the opportunity for an active and stimulating life in the community. The removal of this support will be quickly felt with increased demand for much higher cost institutional care. Past history has shown that the impact of this on residents is greater reliance rather than independent living in a supported manner.

Last Friday was indeed White Ribbon day and as a holder of White Ribbon status this Council is committed to raising awareness of the appalling impacts

of domestic abuse and the support services available to Norwich residents who are experiencing abuse.

Norwich City Council leads the domestic abuse campaign being undertaken across the county to promote White Ribbon objectives and the Council may have noticed the White Ribbon flag and the White Ribbon sign mounted on the front of City Hall on entering the building. You may also have seen the 'I Walked Away' campaign messages, which the council arranged to be stencilled onto the pavements in your neighbourhood.

Norwich City Council has a long history of partnership working with Leeway domestic abuse and refuge services. The council provided Leeway with its start-up grant in 1974 and continues to commission its services. In addition, council officers attend housing advice surgeries held at Leeway refuges.

At present, the council is in discussion with Leeway to establish a 'Safe House' in Norwich and is also exploring how a refuge for male victims of domestic abuse could be established – a miss-understood and often forgotten area of abuse.

Domestic abuse reports to the council are increasing year on year and the council continues to work with police and other partners to help protect those either experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse.

To support this, all front line council officers are trained to recognise the signs of abuse, to be empowered to ask if support is required and to know what services are available for those experiencing abuse.

The council now has 16 fully trained domestic abuse champions who can advise colleagues on all aspects of domestic abuse and through the establishment of the early help hub in city hall, more effective joint working with partners is occurring where front line staff become aware of the early signs of vulnerability and abuse.

Question 9

Councillor Malik to ask the cabinet member for environment and sustainable development:

"Thanks to the efforts of the party opposite in deliberately collapsing the anti-Tory coalition at County Hall, parents and children now risk having their lollipop person cut at Colman Junior School which serve predominately the Nelson, Eaton and University Ward communities. Given the importance of avoiding road accidents, particularly for vulnerable people and children, will the Cabinet Member for Environment and Sustainable Development condemn these ill thought out proposed changes, and work with me to highlight the risks associated with making them to county councillors?"

Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and sustainable development's response:

"I fully appreciate councillor Malik's thoughts on this matter and understand his and the general public's anger at these dangerous cuts. Here is the list of those schools with Crossing Patrols proposed to be cut in Norwich by Norfolk County Council:

- Bluebell Primary
- Colman Infant and Junior
- Lionwood infant and Nursery
- Lionwood Junior
- Magdalen Gates Primary
- Mile Cross Primary.

In two of those - Colman Infant and Junior, and Mile Cross Primary - on two very busy major A Roads they have not given the number of children using the crossing, the numbers of cars, or the number of lorries and coaches, so I will be asking the County Council to provide that information. This is of course not a matter just for the people of Norwich so I urge everyone to go to <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/consultation/roadcrossingpatrols/> and give their opinion.

To help understand the background, Norfolk County Council Children's Services committee is c. £9 million overspent. They are struggling to meet their statutory responsibilities let alone things that are not statutory. School Crossing Patrols are not a statutory responsibility and the criteria for such patrols is set nationally, but Norfolk is the only authority which currently funds crossings that do not meet that criteria. All options were reviewed, including ceasing the service altogether, but that option was discounted and it was agreed to consult on continuing the service for all crossings that meet the nationally set criteria. Norfolk are emphasising that it is parents' legal responsibility to get their children to school safely.

Schools are not able to employ their own crossing patrol as only the local authority has the power to stop traffic. It would require a change of legislation for them to be able to do so, which the government has shown no interest in doing. The county also discounted the proposal that the service become a traded service that schools can buy, delivered by the local authority. The reason for this was that crossings should be based on risk and nationally accepted criteria rather than who can afford it (as this would likely disadvantage urban schools with greater levels of need / pressure on budget).

I am totally happy to campaign on this issue, and will be doing so, however the real problem is the lack of proper funding from government to local authorities and Norfolk MPs should be targeted to explain why they are not funding Norfolk County Council enough to keep our school crossing patrols.

I do think that the Colman School crossing is on a busy road, with heavy lorries, coaches, masses of vehicles and with vehicles coming from three or

more directions, and pupils from four schools - Colman Junior School, Colman Infants, the Clare school, and students from CNS High School.

Petitions have an impact but it would also help for all parents to give their opinion on the county council survey and to gather evidence – including photographs - of what the crossing is like, vehicles jumping traffic lights etc. The parents need to get involved.

What we all need to understand is that if this budget cut is reversed the money will have to come out somewhere in the county council budget but certainly not from areas in children's services like early help, children's centres, child protection, leaving care service, fostering or adoption and other really important parts of the county council.

So as well as campaigning to save the crossing patrols at places like the Colman Road / South Park Avenue junction, we all need to press our Norfolk MPs for a fairer financial settlement for Norfolk to stop the cuts, for the people of Norwich and all of Norfolk.”

Question 10

Councillor Jones to ask the cabinet member for neighbourhoods and community safety:

Can the cabinet member for neighbourhoods and community safety comment on how in December the recycling service will be expanded to include textile and electrical goods together with the effect of the change in refuse rounds due to the upgrade of the fleet of refuse vehicles?

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for neighbourhoods and community safety's response:

Council will be aware that from Monday 5 December, a weekly kerbside recycling service will commence for unwanted small electrical items, batteries and textiles. This service is being introduced to help to reduce contamination in the recycling collections and improve the level of recycled materials as currently only a small amount of these materials are currently recycled.

Audits of collected recycling carried-out earlier this year revealed that as many as 74% of blue bins contained textiles and 46% contained small electrical items. Incorrect items such as textiles and small electricals in recycling collections cost the council over £50,000 a year in sorting and disposal costs.

If the council can reduce the level of contamination and increase the level of materials being recycled it will reduce the council's waste collection costs.

Small electrical items

Small electrical items contain materials such as plastic and metals that can be used repeatedly, so by recycling unwanted items residents can ensure that these valuable resources will be reused.

The recycling is also a simple process as it is well known that to encourage and increasing recycling rates; the mechanism has to be kept as simple as possible. All residents need to do is place the small electrical items in a standard-sized carrier bag then place the bag next to either their recycling or waste bin by 7.00am on their collection day. These items can be collected every week, regardless of whether it is a waste or recycling collection day.

Small electrical items that will be collected for recycling include kettles, shavers, toasters, calculators and hair dryers and an two page article was included in the winter edition of Citizen.

Residents should leave cables and plugs attached to electrical items and remove all batteries so they can be collected separately. If the batteries are small, such as AA, AAA, or mobile phone batteries then these should be placed loosely in the same bag as they too will be recycled.

Large items such as TVs, fluorescent tubes, fridges and freezers and other large domestic appliances cannot be collected through this service and for items such as these, residents should continue to use the bulky items collection service, the Swanton Road recycling centre or look-out for the next WEEE (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) event.

Larger batteries, such as car, motorbike or industrial batteries, these should never be placed in either recycling or black waste bins and should be disposed of safely at the Swanton road recycling centre

Textile collection

The collection of textiles which is a significant change covers all clean dry textiles that will fit easily into a standard carrier bag. Items which are in a good condition will be sorted and bailed and exported to Eastern Europe and Africa for reuse. Items which are not suitable for reuse (because of their condition) will be separated into material type and recycled so that they can be used again as textiles.

Again this is an easy to use service with residents asked to place the textiles in a standard-sized carrier bag and place this next to their recycling or black waste bin by 7.00am on your collection day.

Residents can of course continue to take unwanted textiles to their local textile bank or charity shop if they prefer.

Further details of these services, including details of what can and cannot be collected, are available on the council's website.

The current fleet of collection vehicles were introduced in 2010 and as these vehicles typically have a lifespan of around seven years they are now ready to be replaced. To address these particular contamination issues and to facilitate the new service, the new vehicle fleet has been specially fitted with cages enabling the council to offer these new services.

Apart from these new services residents do not need to do anything different. Waste and recycling collection will continue as normal, though residents should consult the website or their collection calendar for information about when their collections will occur over the Christmas and New Year period.

Question 11

Councillor Maguire to ask the leader of the council:

The Sustainable Transformation Plan (STP) for Norfolk and Waveney was only published late last week. Health scrutiny councillors (across both city and county) have not had time to review it in detail, meaning they cannot do their important job of scrutiny. There has been no engagement with the trade unions or the public. Furthermore, the document is impenetrable to the lay-person. This is totally against the spirit of partnership working between the unions, the NHS and the local authorities.

Trade unions and the public will be consulting on a done deal, unless the STP document is given proper scrutiny with time for change and amendment. Will the leader monitor this important issue closely and make full use of our partnership relationships with both the Clinical Commissioning Group and Norfolk County Council to ensure adequate time is given to consider and influence this document?

Councillor Waters, leader of the council's response:

With the Council's aspiration for Norwich to be 'a healthy city with good housing', the health and wellbeing of residents is of huge importance to this Council and I welcome the fact that the plan has now been published.

Norwich City Council has had no role within the STP executive that has been leading the process but there is now an opportunity to more fully engage and contribute to the proposals going forward.

However, Council will be aware that the development of STP's is driven by central government within strict guidelines and at the local level, Norfolk county council, the acute and community health trusts and clinical commissioning groups are having to respond to what is a very challenging health and social care environment including the development of the STP.

There are significant financial and operational challenges for the sector to be able to meet the growing demands in health and social care, and that integration across all of these services at the acute, primary and community level, together with district council functions such as housing is vital.

However, such significant system-wide changes, to be successful, need to be well thought through, timely and involve all key stakeholders including the City Council, other stakeholders such as unions and most importantly the public.

This Council will wish to play a significant role in the evolution of the STP, given the significant levels of health and social inequality in the city including through the Norfolk Health and Wellbeing Board on which Council is represented by the cabinet member for fairness and equality.

One of the key areas of focus will be to influence those aspects that relate most closely to the so-called 'wider determinants of health' and the prevention agenda.

I encourage the STP executive to develop the plan in a truly collaborative way and look forward to seeing the final version of the plan in December when available.

Question 12

Councillor Davis to ask the cabinet member for neighbourhoods and community safety:

Following numerous complaints from concerned residents I was delighted that the council, using powers from the previous Labour government, took speedy action to close a notorious drug den on Victoria Street. Can the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods and Community Safety comment on the ongoing and important work this council takes to tackle this type of problem, working closely with the police and courts?

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for neighbourhoods and community safety's response:

The Council's ABATE team are part of the co-located council and police operational partnership team who work jointly on some of the more serious anti-social behaviour and issues of criminality in the city where a partnership response is required.

The team work closely with police colleagues, who applied for the recent Victoria Street closure following joint work and consultation with the council, to identify and take action to tackle drug related antisocial behaviour within the community.

This includes, in the most serious cases, the ability to apply to the courts to close premises for up to three months and if required take action against the occupants.

The value of having a co-located team is that it allows more effective joint working between the council and police through the sharing of information and concerns on a real time basis and joint problem solving that allows the use of all the powers available to the council and police to keep Norwich a safe city.

As with any formal legal action that can affect a person's housing, the council approaches these situations with great care, because of the potential vulnerability of the tenant and their families.

The council continues to work collaboratively with the police and other agencies to tackle this type of issue. Tackling drug use is a high priority for all partners and will not be tolerated in our communities due to the damage it can cause.

Question 13

Councillor Peek to ask the cabinet member for environment and sustainable development:

Would the cabinet member for environment and sustainable development comment on the reasons for, and the opportunities presented by, the proposed improvements to the roundabout at the junction of Guardian, Sweetbriar and Dereham Roads?

Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and sustainable development's response:

The Norwich area Transportation Strategy (NATS) now more widely known as Transport for Norwich (TfN) is the adopted strategy which will deliver the transport improvements needed over the next 15 plus years. The strategy aims to give people viable options on how they choose to travel and actively promotes sustainable transport, but whilst providing for sustainable transport modes is a priority, maintaining and enhancing the main road network is also a key part of the strategy

The junction of Dereham Road with the Ring Road forms part of Norwich's strategic orbital and radial road network and provides a link to the A47 trunk road and Norwich city centre and this junction experiences significant levels of congestion on all arms. This is primarily due to the small size of the roundabout.

There is currently only very limited provision for cyclists and pedestrians as well.

Dereham Road is identified in NATS as one of six Bus Rapid Transit BRT corridors and it is currently a high frequency bus corridor with in excess of 20 buses per hour during peak periods. The bus corridor serves growth and employment areas at Longwater, Lodge Farm, West Costessey (Queens Hills) and Bowthorpe. These services are often delayed in traffic at this junction, particularly during peak hours reducing the reliability of the service across a wide area

The new roundabout will significantly reduce queues and congestion on all the arms of the roundabout and also improve bus reliability, particularly during peak hours. The proposals provide much needed light controlled crossings for pedestrians and cyclists across both Dereham Road and Guardian Road which have been campaigned for over many years, as well as retaining the uncontrolled crossings near to the roundabout for those that need to use

them. It will cater for the anticipated traffic demand from the expansion of the City over the foreseeable future

Question 14

Councillor Lubbock to ask the cabinet member for environment and sustainable development:

I, like many others, am alarmed at the rise in the number of cyclists who have been killed or seriously injured on Norfolk roads. New figures show - and I am quoting an EDP article of 2 November - that in the 12 months up to the end of September, 65 cyclists died or were seriously injured in crashes around the county. This reflected a 'sharp increase' in such crashes since 2014, according to the Norfolk Road Casualty Reduction Partnership. The report went on to quote a county council officer as saying that the 'spike' - primarily in Norwich - was a consequence of the rise in people cycling.

As the council responsible - along with Norfolk County Council - for encouraging more cycling through the improvement of cycling facilities across the city, we should be very concerned about this rise. We should be examining the figures closely to see what measures we could take to address this unacceptable rise and not accept that it is simply as a consequence of the rise in people cycling.

The Cycle City Ambition Grant is giving both authorities more opportunities to improve cycle facilities within the city and the urban area, which will, in turn, increase further the number of cyclists. In addition, there is further awareness of the need to keep healthy through walking and cycling more.

Hand in hand with engineering works to improve cycle facilities, the Liberal Democrats believe there needs to be an awareness campaign to explain to motorists how to drive more carefully and slowly around cyclists, and to both motorists and pedestrians how valuable cyclists are in reducing congestion on our roads and pollution in the city, as well as the savings they deliver to the NHS services. Hopefully this would lead to less animosity towards cyclists which I have personally experienced and possibly have a positive effect on these statistics.

Rather than just put the increase of deaths and serious injuries down to an increase in the number of cyclists, what work has been undertaken to examine these figures more closely in order to get a better understanding of them, and to examine what can be done to help reduce these unacceptably high numbers of deaths and serious injuries? I feel we have a moral responsibility to undertake this work.

Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and sustainable development's response:

I think we all share Cllr Lubbock's alarm at the rise in the number of cycle casualties in the City. However while the article in the EDP focussed on the

number of accidents, it failed to report all the excellent, ongoing work that is being undertaken to address the issue.

Within Norfolk there is a Road Casualty Reduction Partnership with representatives from local authorities, public health and the police. There are a number of subgroups in this partnership, one of which is the vulnerable users groups. They have been working for the last year to look at how to reduce KSI's to vulnerable road users, mainly cyclists and pedestrians and have carried out 2 campaigns:

- Keep Your Mind on the Road – focused on pedestrians
- Mind Out For Each other – focused on Cyclists

The key focus of the group is to stop the blame culture and to shift thinking to a 'common sense' that everyone has a responsibility to look out for one another and create a safe shared space. They have developed a 5 pronged approach under the ICEEE banner – Intelligence, Communication, Engagement, Education and Enforcement

Looking forward the group have a number of actions planned, these include:

- A focus on the enforcement element with the Police;
- Commissioning an animation focused on cyclist and driver behaviour to be used on social media and at key video points;
- A large family fun cycling event on the 28 December in Norwich, with an element of cycle safety; and
- A pavement cycle and pedestrian safety campaign.

In the time available I can only touch upon all the good work that is underway. If members are interested in learning more about the work of the Norfolk road casualty reduction partnership and particularly of the vulnerable users sub group, representatives would be very happy to do a presentation of their work in the New Year.

Question 15

Councillor Grahame to ask the cabinet member for neighbourhoods and community safety:

At a meeting of the licensing committee on 18 March 2010, members resolved to adopt new government legislation (section 27 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009) regulating sexual entertainment venues (SEVs). However, the adoption was never finalised by officers, causing the council to miss the deadline for implementation in April 2010. Missing this deadline meant that the council was obliged to undertake a public consultation before deciding on its policy.

On 15 September 2011, the licensing committee resolved to proceed to public consultation. On 14 June 2012, the committee resolved to adopt the legislation with effect from 27 July 2012, and delegated implementation of the decision to the council's head of law and governance. Officers failed to notify

the public within the required timescale, and the date for implementation had to be pushed back to 15 October 2012. The legislation was finally adopted on this date.

Having decided to adopt the provisions of the Policing and Crime Act, and following a question from me to the cabinet member about the delay, the licensing committee resolved on 13 March 2014 to consult on a draft sexual entertainment venue policy, setting out the conditions under which licences would be granted. This policy was adopted in December 2014. Despite misgivings expressed by some members about the weakness of the policy, the committee felt that it was better than having no policy at all. However, it appears that the SEVs currently trading in Norwich have never been informed of the policy or offered the opportunity to apply for a licence.

The committee reports on this subject state that they “help to meet the corporate priority of a safe and clean city and the service plan priority of protecting the interests of the public through the administration of the licensing function.” These priorities have been unacceptably compromised through a delay of almost seven years.

What will the cabinet member do to ensure the council acts as soon as possible to regulate SEVs in the city?

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for neighbourhoods and community safety’s response:

Out of the six hundred and sixty three alcohol / entertainment premises currently licensed by the council, three of these fall within the definition of a sexual entertainment venue (SEV). This equates to less than half a percent of the total licensed premises. Each of these venues currently holds a premises licence issued under the Licensing Act 2003. Conditions attached to each of these premises licences specifically address the type of entertainment provided at the venues, including codes of conduct for patrons and performers, CCTV and the provision of security.

The Licensing committee resolved to adopt the current SEV policy in December 2014, with ten members voting in favour and one against.

At the meeting, the Norfolk Constabulary’s Licensing Inspector informed members that SEVs were inspected in the same way as other premises and the police had no concerns which were significant enough to be brought to the attention of licensing committee. The Inspector also informed members that there had only been eight recorded crimes at such venues in the last twelve months.

Although there has been some delay in implementing section 27 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009, it is important that the correct procedures are followed and obtaining detailed legal advice is necessary to ensure this.

Arrangements are in place for NpLAW, council's legal services provider, to provide the final legal advice required for the implementation of the SEV licensing regime.

Whilst the three identified premises do not currently hold a licence under the legislation governing SEVs, they are not completely un-regulated as they are licensed under the Licensing Act 2003 and are conditioned to a large extent in line with the adopted SEV policy.

Question 16

Councillor Price to ask the cabinet member for environment and sustainable development:

There are many coach bays in Thorpe Hamlet ward, and I find that I frequently have to approach the drivers and ask them to switch off their engines as they can be unaware of our policy and are sometimes unwilling to comply with it.

I have had extensive correspondence with officers on this subject, notably in relation to Bishopgate. However, despite officers' best efforts, it is clear that the message has not successfully reached some operators.

Will the cabinet member please ask officers to write to all coach companies that regularly operate in the city to remind them of the council's policy on air quality and to switch off their engines when stationary?

Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and sustainable development's response:

We are happy to write to operators as suggested. We did this in September concerning an operator whose coaches were parking in Rouen Road and leaving engines running; and which appears to have been successful. An officer will therefore write to known coach operators in the next couple of weeks.

Question 17

Councillor Carlo to ask the cabinet member for environment and sustainable development:

I recently sent photos to council officers showing the need on safety grounds for urgent replacement of boarded up and cracked windows at The Lodge premises, owned by MJB. On the Essex Street side of the building, three of the bedroom windows are boarded up and three of the windows show cracked glass behind the dirty crumpled white plastic covering.

The City Council Environmental Health Officer visited the site (15 Nov) and has written to the MJB operator to request remedial work to the windows, with the intention of reviewing the situation in a month's time. The need for remedial work gives the city council the opportunity to specify the need to apply clear safety film to the windows concerned in place of the white plastic.

Will the cabinet member ensure that the city council asks the operator to install clear safety film on the new replacement glazing?

Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and sustainable development's response:

The complaint raised by Councillor Carlo in relation to damaged glazing to hotel rooms in the MJB Lodge Hotel has been investigated in relation to the potential for injury to the occupant of the room under the requirements of current health and safety legislation.

The person operating the hotel has been contacted and asked to take remedial action to ensure the windows do not present a risk to occupants of the rooms.

The remedial works necessary will be determined by the person responsible carrying out a risk assessment and thereby determining the work necessary to protect the room occupants.

As this remedial action may be achieved in more than one way, the council cannot specify only one solution and therefore, the situation will be reviewed in one month to determine if the works undertaken satisfy health and safety requirements.

Question 18

Councillor Schmierer to ask the cabinet member for Neighbourhoods and community safety:

Last year a bid to have the maximum bet on some gambling machines significantly reduced was rejected by the government, despite a campaign by Newham council – backed by almost 100 other councils in England and Wales, including Norwich – which called for the highest stake on fixed-odds betting terminals (FOBTs) to be cut from £100 to £2.

In response to my enquiry about assessing the impact of bookmakers on citizens in Norwich, I was informed that there has never been an objection to a planning application for betting premises. However, absence of formal public objections is not the same as absence of impact, especially considering that the groups most affected by FOBTs are not necessarily those most engaged with the planning process.

Would the cabinet member give his opinion on what more the council can do to protect residents from what has been called “the crack cocaine of the gambling industry”?

Councillor Kendrick, cabinet member for neighbourhoods and community safety’s response:

In a recent written ministerial statement, Tracey Crouch, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, advised that the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has published a terms of reference and a call for evidence for a review of gaming machines and social responsibility requirements across the gambling industry.

The review will be considering robust evidence on the appropriate maximum stakes and prizes for gaming machines across all premises licensed under the Gambling Act 2005; the number and location of gaming machines across all licensed premises; and social responsibility measures to protect players from gambling-related harm (including whether there is evidence on the impacts of gambling advertising and whether the right rules are in place to protect children and vulnerable people).

The review will include a close look at the issue of B2 gaming machines (more commonly known as Fixed Odds Betting Terminals - FOBTs) and specific concerns about the harm they cause, be that to the player or the communities in which they are located.

The council will be responding to the review where there is evidence to support any change to the current position.

The All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) welcomed the Government’s Review of Gaming Machines and Social Responsibility Measures. The Group is currently undertaking a wide-ranging inquiry into FOBTs and will be submitting evidence from its inquiry into this review.

Evidence given to the FOBT All Party Group inquiry has demonstrated the impact these machines are having on all our communities and proven that there is strong case for stake reduction.

Under current gaming legislation up to four FOBTs may be provided in betting premises. The city council has taken a firm line with betting operators who have sought to sub-divide existing betting premises with a view to creating a 'new' betting premise and therefore the ability to provide additional FOBTs.

Applications to amend the licensed area of betting premises under the Gambling Act 2005 by internally partitioning the footprint of currently licensed betting premises to achieve this have been refused.

In respect of the role of the council as Local Planning Authority there are no specific controls on FOBTs as they are ancillary to the main function of the premises in which they sit. New betting shops are now “sui generis” and this

means that planning permission would be necessary for all changes of use to a betting shop.

Decisions on planning applications have to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan and all other material considerations. There are no specific policies in the current Development Plan (the JCS and Norwich Local Plan) relating to betting shops nor is there any national planning guidance or policy. There are policies and guidance on retail centres but this principally relates to their retail function and not to the specific characteristics of a betting shop.

When the Council is considering new policies for the emerging Local Plan (Development Management Policies) the need for any new wording relating to betting shops could be considered at that time. Members will be able to engage in that process, however, no timetable has been set for this exercise.

Question 19

Councillor Raby to ask the leader of the council:

Despite growing evidence that global climate change is occurring at a much faster rate than previously realised, at the meeting of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) on 14 November, a member of another authority argued that the region's climate change commitments should be downgraded in the new Greater Norwich Local Plan.

Will the leader of the council guarantee that he and our other Norwich representatives on the GNDP will do everything in their power to ensure action on climate change is at the heart of the local plan, including on the issues of housing standards, transport emissions and infrastructure?

Councillor Waters, leader of the council's response:

The meeting of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership on the 14 November was a sobering experience in a number of ways, suggesting that there quite significant differences between the approach to working and the relative priorities of the GNDP Councils in relation to the Greater Norwich Local Plan.

As you may be aware we operate under a duty to co-operate on planning matters with our neighbouring Councils. This is a general duty existing on all local planning authorities but one that is particularly important for Norwich due to the fact that much of the urban area overflows our boundaries, and many of the most suitable sites for meeting the development needs of the City lie in neighbouring administrative areas.

It is inevitable that in bringing forward the Greater Norwich Local Plan that views on the relative weight to be attached to different priorities will vary between the partner authorities. As the plan preparation process proceeds

we will need to work hard to reconcile these differences to achieve a solution that is in the interests of the wider area. It is in the interests of all the Councils and their residents for the Greater Norwich Local Plan to be prepared swiftly to ensure that development over the coming decades is properly planned and delivered in tandem with the infrastructure to support it. I hope this common interest is appreciated fully by all our partners.

That said, it should be recognised that the duty to co-operate is not a duty to agree. The final decision on whether to submit and adopt the Greater Norwich Local Plan rests with this Council. The Plan must be agreed unanimously and the City cannot be outvoted by its more rural neighbours. The Council's representatives on the GNDP will continue to represent the interests of all our current and future residents to ensure that the plan facilitates the development of the economy, homes and infrastructure to meet our needs and those of future generations.

In other words, the plan must deliver sustainable development. This clearly will include paying significant attention to the nature of communities created not just the number of houses delivered; the full range of infrastructure needed to support them including social, educational, green and transport infrastructure; and having regard to the implications of climate change.

Any plan which fails to recognise and respond to the challenges we face as our climate changes will be seriously deficient. This must not only include due recognition of the importance of minimising our contribution to climate change to respect out international obligations but also to ensure that, insofar as is possible, our City is resilient and can cope successfully with the increasing number of extreme weather events we are likely to experience.