



COUNCIL

7.30 p.m. – 10.15 p.m.

31 March 2009

Present: Councillor Hooke (Lord Mayor), Arthur, Banham, Bearman, Blakeway, Blower, Bradford, Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Collishaw, Divers, Driver, Dylan, Fairbairn, Fisher, George, Gihawi, Gledhill, Holmes, Jago, Jeraj, Little (A), Little (S), Llewellyn, Lubbock, Makoff, Morpew, Morrey, Offord, Ramsay, Sands, Stephenson, Waters, Watkins, Wiltshire, Wright,

Apology: Councillor Read

1. LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Lord Mayor announced he had attended a number of engagements since the last meeting including Women's World Day of Prayers, a celebration of World Book Day, a concert by Oriele Singers at St Peter Mancroft, the Hewett School Rotary Technology Tournament, Norfolk & Norwich Rouen Friendship Association AGM, the Whoopee Cushion Orchestra on Red Nose Day, the re-opening of the Compleat Angler, the LGBT variety show at The Talk, the Lord Mayor's Business Reception, an evening with the Norfolk Traffic Club and the Freeman ceremony at the Guildhall.

The following week he would be delighted to welcome to City Hall the cast of the play 'Waiting for Godot' to be performed at the Theatre Royal, including Sir Ian McKellen, Patrick Stewart, Simon Callow and Ronald Pickup.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations of interest were made -

3. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Public Question 1

Frederick Agombar to the Leader of the Council

'As far as I can ascertain there is no council staff or employee of Norwich City Council whose remit, portfolio etc covers Tourism, Norfolk County Council has a tourism officer with several staff including a very highly looked at web site Visit Norfolk Tourism is left to outside organisation such as Visit Norwich.

Tourism is the largest money earner in this country not in £millions but £trillions. Norfolk alone earns £1.6 billion from tourism and employs paye staff of 44,000, this does not include one man self employed businesses such as myself.

I understand that Nikki Rotsos has overall charge of the Tourist Information Office but she has a hands off approach.

I am asking that some councillor or official be appointed to direct tourism policy and the management of the TIC is moved to a dedicated tourism portfolio. Tourism is a very important income earner especially during the credit crunch/recession and should not be left to outside bodies.

With the credit crunch and low £ it is predicted that UK residents will stay in this country and holiday as short breaks etc. The £ and Euro are almost equal in value attracting many visitors from Europe. The dollar this year is back to normal exchange rate of approx 1.5 to the £, last year it was 2 to £ which will mean many more visitors from North America. I know I have had many more hits than usual on my web site from North America. Norwich is on a par with York but doesn't get the high numbers of visitors that visit York.'

Councillor Steve Morpew, Leader of the Council's reply:-

'Thank you for you question. The head of communications and culture has ultimate responsibility for tourism in the city council. The day to day management of the service is carried out by the tourism development manager who also manages the tourist information centre.

I think you will find that the county council have outsourced their tourism function to Norfolk Tourism in the same way the city have outsourced tourism marketing to Visit Norwich. So the web site you are referring to is actually the Visit Norfolk website which is a sister site to the Visit Norwich site.

Norwich is in the top ten visitor centres in the county and the top 10 shopping destinations and improving all the time.'

Frederick Agombar asked, as a supplementary question, if he could know the name of the Tourism Development Manager. **Councillor Morpew** said that he would speak to Mr Agombar after the meeting.

4. PETITIONS

The Lord Mayor announced that no petitions had been received.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED to agree the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2009 and 3 March 2009.

6. QUESTIONS TO EXECUTIVE MEMBERS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS

The Lord Mayor advised members that 24 questions, from Members of the Council to Executive Members and Committee Chairs, had been received of which notice

had been given in accordance within the provisions of Appendix 1 of the Council's Constitution. The questions were as follows:-

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| Question 1 | Councillor Divers to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development regarding the condition of buildings in Elm Hill. |
| Question 2 | Councillor Collishaw to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development on wheelie bins left on the pavement. |
| Question 3 | Councillor Fisher to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development with regard to the Planning Department's acknowledgement of applications. |
| Question 4 | Councillor George to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance relating to encouraging businesses at Clover Hill. |
| Question 5 | Councillor A Little to the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Development regarding street leaders scheme. |
| Question 6 | Councillor Wiltshire to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development regarding location of lamp posts. |
| Question 7 | Councillor Wright to the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Development regarding the Sustainable Communities Act powers. |
| Question 8 | Councillor Lubbock to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development regarding the Private Members Bill on Fuel Poverty. |
| Question 9 | Councillor Watkins to the Leader of the Council on Unitary overall affordability. |
| Question 10 | Councillor Cannell to the Executive Member for Housing and Adult Services with regard to the success to lobby Ofgem. |
| Question 11 | Councillor Banham to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development regarding the Council not being overcharged for concessionary fares. |
| Question 12 | Councillor Fairbairn to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance regarding the Council promoting Business Rate Relief. |
| Question 13 | Councillor Ramsay to the Leader of the Council with regard to the Sustrans Connect 2 project. |
| Question 14 | Councillor Llewellyn to the Executive Member for Housing and Adult Services with regard to the establishment of a Housing Scrutiny Committee. |
| Question 15 | Councillor Stephenson to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development with regard to state of Earlham House car park. |

- Question 16** Councillor Gledhill to the Executive Member for Residents and Customer Services regarding an error with The Phone Book.
- Question 17** Councillor Holmes to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance regarding companies identified following an investigation by the Information Commissioner.
- Question 18** Councillor Dylan to the Executive Member for Community Safety and Community Cohesion regarding the Matrix Project.
- Question 19** Councillor Jeraj to the Executive Member for Residents and Customer Care regarding the Council identifying language needs.
- Question 20** Councillor S Little to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development with regard of the state of the road surface on Unthank Road.
- Question 21** Councillor Read to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development with regard to the average occupancy of cars coming into Norwich.
- Question 22** Councillor Makoff to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development on maintenance of a footpath.
- Question 23** Councillor Bremner to the Executive Member for Community Safety and Community Cohesion with regard to the future of the Safer Neighbourhood Action Panels.
- Question 24** Councillor Offord to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development on a proposed crossing on Rosary Road.

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

7. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Morpew seconded the recommendations.

RESOLVED, unanimously to:-

- (1) adopt the Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2009/10 to 2011/12 contained within Appendix A of the report;
- (2) approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2009/10, and the Prudential Indicators contained within Appendix B;
- (3) approve the Investment Strategy 2009/10 contained in the treasury management strategy (Appendix B), and the detailed criteria included in Annex B1.

8. COUNCIL RENTS AND OTHER HOUSING CHARGES FOR 2009/10 - REVISED

The Lord Mayor announced that the following amendment had been received from Councillor Arthur –

‘Replace:-

- (2) revised Housing Rent Increase of an annual average of 3.13% be set and brought into effect from Monday 4 May 2009:

with:-

- (2) revised Housing Rent increases of an annual average of 3.13% for HRA properties and 3.71% for General Fund properties be set and brought into effect from Monday, 4 May 2009’

With no member objecting, the amendment was accepted and became part of the substantive motion.

Councillor Arthur moved and Councillor Morphew seconded the motion.

RESOLVED, unanimously to:-

- (1) rescind the decision of the Council on 24 February 2009 to set an average rent increase of 6.41% (to include garages and parking spaces)
- (2) set revised Housing Rent increases of an annual average of 3.13% for HRA properties and 3.71% for General Fund properties and brought into effect from Monday, 4 May 2009;
- (3) set increased rents for garages and parking spaces at the annual rate of 3.13% in line with that recommended for dwelling rents.

9. MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME

Councillor Morphew moved and Councillor Ramsay seconded that consideration of this item be deferred to July Council to enable issues raised in the report to be discussed between the groups in light of possible changes to the committee structure and developments in the position regarding Unitary status and it was –

RESOLVED accordingly (with 28 voting in favour, 6 against and 2 abstentions)

10. MOTION – LOW CARBON BUILDINGS PROGRAMME (LCBP)

Councillor Fisher moved and Councillor A Little seconded the motion as set out on the agenda.

RESOLVED, unanimously, that –

‘This Council notes:

- That last month the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) announced it was closing the £50m second phase of the Low Carbon Buildings Programme (LCBP) to new applicants from June 2009.

- That the second phase of the LCBP was aimed at public sector buildings.
- That there remains (at time of writing) more than £23m in the LCBP account
- The account of Ray Noble, the former UK manager at BP Solar who now heads up the Renewable Energy Association's (REA) solar division, who said the LCBP was the industry's most important funding stream.

This Council believes that:-

- under these plans, introduction of feed-in tariffs, an alternative incentive for micro-renewables that involves paying above market price to those who generate renewable energy, may not be introduced until April 2010;
- the LCBP should continue until the feed-in tariff is launched
- makers of micro-generation technology have become reliant on the LCBP, which pays up to 50% of product and installation costs for micro-renewables.

I In view of the serious consequences that this could have on public bodies and housing associations in Norwich and the City Council, this Council resolves:-

- (1) to ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change to urge him to reconsider and reverse this decision;
- (2) to write to the Norwich MPs Charles Clarke and Ian Gibson to urge them to support our campaign against this decision.'

11. MOTION – PROTECTING NORFOLK'S FIRE CONTROL SERVICE

Councillor Holmes moved and Councillor Jeraj seconded the motion as set out on the agenda.

During debate, Councillor Holmes moved the following amendment –

'Recommendation 1 be amended to read – 'to the Government and ask that the reorganisation be stopped.'

With no member objecting this became part of the substantive motion.

RESOLVED, unanimously, that -

'This Council notes:

- that the Government has acknowledged the excellent work of Norfolk's Fire Control Service by placing it in the top rank of services throughout the country;
- that the Government is planning to amalgamate county fire services into regional centres.;

- the stated reason for the Government embarking on this reorganisation is to bring other fire services, ranked at a lower level, up to the standard of Norfolk.

This Council believes that:

- the proposed amalgamation would reduce the effectiveness of Norfolk's Fire Control Service by taking away local knowledge and introducing inferior equipment;
- the Government is misguided in trying to raise the standards of other fire services by reducing the effectiveness of Norfolk's fire service.

This Council resolves to write:

- (1) to the Government and ask that the reorganisation be stopped;
- (2) to Norfolk County Council and asking it to make similar representations to the Government;
- (3) to the trade unions of Norfolk's firefighters to express support for their stand against the proposed amalgamation.'

12. MOTION – SUPPORTING THE MATRIX PROJECT

RESOLVED, to note this motion had been withdrawn.

2 hours having passed since the start of the meeting, the Lord Mayor asked whether any remaining items could be taken as Any Other Business.

13. MOTION – POST BANK

RESOLVED, as unopposed business, that –

'This Council notes that:

- The credit crunch has caused a loss of public confidence in both banks and bankers;
- Even before the credit crunch, about three million people nationally and many locally did not have basic bank accounts, with pensioners and those on low incomes most marginalised.
- The need to safeguard the future of the Norwich Post Office network by keeping it in the public sector, increasing investment, and diversifying its business model.
- The Post Bank Coalition (made up of the Communication Workers Union, Federation of Small Businesses, New Economics Foundation, Public Interest Research Centre, and Unite the Union) has been established to advocate the setting up of a Post Bank based on the Post Office network;

- A Norwich Post Bank could offer a safe, reliable banking service for local businesses and individual customers alike through the existing Post Office network;
- A Norwich Post Bank could help those struggling to access the normal banking system through a "universal banking obligation" - to ensure all people have access to accounts;
- The coalition's calls for links with local credit unions, such as the four credit unions in Norwich, to ensure post offices have closer ties to the local economy;
- Business groups say Post Bank could create jobs in Norwich and across the country.

Council resolves:

To help the Norwich Post Office network and local residents by writing to:

- (1) the Minister for Employment Relations and Postal Affairs Pat McFadden MP asking him to further explore the idea of a creating a Post Bank;
- (2) Charles Clarke MP and Ian Gibson MP asking them to support the creation of a Post Bank in Norwich.'

14. MOTION – PROMOTING LOCAL BUSINESSES

Councillor Stephenson moved and Councillor Makoff seconded the motion as set out on the agenda.

With 12 members voting for, 18 against and 5 abstentions, the motion was declared lost.

LORD MAYOR

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONS TO EXECUTIVE MEMBERS AND CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES

Question 1

Councillor Joyce Divers to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-

'As local councillor in Thorpe Hamlet I have received a letter from the Norwich Society, which sets out their concerns about the condition of buildings in Elm Hill. It would appear that not only are many repairs outstanding but the condition of some are actually quite dangerous.

As this is one of Norwich's most outstanding Heritage areas, can the Executive Member reassure local residents and visitors that it is safe to visit and can they also clarify what arrangements are being put in place to remedy this situation?'

Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-

'The Norwich Society has set out concerns relating to a number of buildings on Elm Hill, and we have been able to give them a comprehensive reply.

Where the issues are the responsibility of the City Council we have also updated them with the actions in hand to remedy the issues.

The only problem raised in the letter was with reference to one non operating fire sounder that had stopped functioning with ingress of some water. This was repaired as a matter of urgency and is now fully functional. We are not aware of any other issues that would put any users of Elm Hill at risk, and it therefore remains safe to visit.'

Councillor Divers asked, as a supplementary question, whether she could see a copy of the response sent to the Norwich Society. **Councillor Morrey** said yes, he would ask officers to send her a copy.

Question 2

Councillor Evelyn Collishaw to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-

'I have been contacted by many residents recently who are concerned that wheelie bins that are left on the pavement (often for the whole of the day that they are collected on) are becoming a nuisance for pedestrians, many disabled people and those with buggies. Does the Executive Member have any thoughts on how this could be dealt with in the future?'

Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-

'The roll-out of Alternate Weekly Collections (AWC) has provided an enormous boost to the Council's recycling rate and transformed the city into the most improved recycling authority in Norfolk. Alongside the successful introduction of the blue bins it has always been recognised that there would need to be measures in place to manage the way that residents set-out their bins.

The guidance regularly issued to residents, which was reinforced during the successful AWC communications campaign, is that bins should be set-out no earlier than 6 p.m. on the day before collection and no later than 7 a.m. on collection day. Residents should return their bins on to their own property at the earliest available opportunity after collection.

Environmental Services staff has carried out a number of targeted operations in various parts of the city to help residents to understand the need to keep their bins off the pavements as much as possible. Progress is being made and more and more residents are recognising the need to store their own bins securely. In the event that someone chooses not to heed our advice and deliberately causes a prolonged nuisance, Officers do have the power to take formal action, which could result in a Fixed Penalty Notice of £80.

The Council is committed to ensuring that the new AWC service operates as smoothly and successfully as possible and as part of the continuing communication campaign the March edition of Citizen contains a full-page article of wheelie bin guidance for residents, as well as supportive coverage in the local media.'

Councillor Collishaw said there were concerns about this in Catton Grove and asked, as a supplementary question, whether the surplus bins that people did not use were collected and re-distributed. **Councillor Morrey** said that excess bins were taken in and re-distributed. He said that officers were aware of issues in Catton Grove and had been talking to residents.

Question 3

Councillor John Fisher to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-

'I was surprised to learn that the Planning Department doesn't send out acknowledgement letters to residents who contact them in either response to a planning application or for a general enquiry. This often makes the resident feel that they have been forgotten. Is there a reason for this and could Council practices be changed in the future?'

Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-

'The Planning Department does acknowledge letters it receives in relation to planning applications. All people who comment on an application have their letters acknowledged, are advised of the date the application will be considered at Planning Applications Committee (if reported to Committee) and are notified on the decision on the application when it is made. With regard to general enquiries these are not currently acknowledged although we do aim to issue a substantive response within less than 3 weeks. It is intended that planning service standards will be re-examined as part of the Planning Improvement Programme this year.

If you have a specific incident you are concerned about please raise it with the Planning Department.'

Councillor Fisher asked, as a supplementary question, whether councillors could be informed of the timetable for the completion of the programme. **Councillor Morrey** said that this programme was ongoing and the next phase would be undertaken this year.

Question 4

Councillor Niki George to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance:-

'As the Executive Member may be aware, the condition of Clover Hill Centre in Bowthorpe is a SNAP priority. Now that the Cameras have been put in place we would like to see continued development of this area and it is vital that the Council considers adopting this soon if we are to create a safe, prosperous village centre that will attract businesses and provide services to the people of Clover Hill and Bowthorpe. Does the Executive Member have an action plan for this to happen and what more could the council do to encourage business into this important community hub?'

Councillor Alan Waters, Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance's reply:-

'This is a priority with focus on ensuring we can generate business and community activity.

The general store has been running successfully for many years and the leaseholder will shortly be taking over the former dental surgery initially as storage but ultimately as extra sales space.

The former white goods unit known as 16-18 Humbleyard is on the verge of agreement to let to an established business

We are looking at how best to market the former area housing office that will give the best chance of attracting an occupier

A large part of the village centre is utilised by Sure Start with the community balancing with commercial activity. The community centre further compliments this.

It is ultimately the intention to apply for the village centre to become adopted highway. In the meantime we are looking at ways we can address the issues that include access, litter, and weeds along with general issues such as lighting.

Of course, with regard to community safety issues, I don't need to remind Councillor George that the purpose of SNAPs is for them to come up with action plans to which we and our partners respond.'

Councillor George asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Executive Member was embarrassed that this area had been left unadopted. **Councillor**

Waters said that he knew from experience in his own ward what a complex issue adoption of areas was and no he was not embarrassed.

Question 5

Councillor Antony Little to the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Development:-

'In the NELM area of Norwich, which includes the Earham area of my ward, a recent "street leaders" pilot was set up that encouraged self-selecting residents to report issues to the council and who could be used as a consultative body about changes to the area and the delivery of council services. This scheme is now being extended into other councils and I would like to ask the Executive Member if Norwich City Council has plans to do so?'

Councillor Linda Blakeway, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Development's reply:-

'The scheme that Councillor Little refers to was established in 2007 by the NELM Development Trust as part of their neighbourhood management work. Over 100 residents were recruited by the trust on a voluntary basis to report a variety of street issues such as litter, fly tipping and defective street lighting through to the Trust and then onto the various public bodies including the City Council.

Councillor Little appears to be rather behind the times in his knowledge of the street leaders pilot as the NELM area Neighbourhood Management programme, which included the street leaders scheme, ended rather prematurely in the latter half of 2008 when NELM Development Trust chose to redirect its remaining funds into other projects.

Although the pilot project was ended by NELM it is hoped that at least some of the street leaders have continued on an individual basis to report local issues through other recognised channels of communication such as the Residents Service Team (RST) and the Anti Social Behaviour Hotline or, where appropriate, to the area's Safer Neighbourhoods Team.

Norwich City Council does not have any plans to operate its own Street Leaders scheme in the immediate future but we do already have a range of other initiatives which replicate the principles of such a scheme including a large number of Tenant and Resident Associations, Community Associations and Community Partnerships which are spread across the City. These groups all take an interest in their local community and the members of these groups regularly report issues of concern to the local area that they represent. Through the work currently being undertaken to strengthen community engagement across the Council we aim to build upon this good work and work with local residents to develop a more co-ordinated, better resourced service which enables volunteers to further develop their skills and encourages more residents to become involved within their local communities.'

Councillor A Little asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Executive Member could expand on the reasons why this scheme could not be extended. **Councillor Blakeway** said this had been a NELM scheme which NELM had chosen to terminate. She hoped that local people would continue to report issues to us and other partners and reiterated the work the Council was doing with tenant and

resident associations, community associations and community partnerships. The Council would continue to look at ways of ensuring that the legacy of the NELM work continued.

Question 6

Councillor Andrew Wiltshire to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-

‘Could the Executive Member tell me what consultation there was with the City Council and residents about changes to the location of lamp posts under the recent replacement scheme that is currently underway?’

Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development’s reply:-

‘Street lighting is the responsibility of Norfolk County Council and it is not one of the highway functions delegated to the Council through the highways agency agreement.

If Councillor Wiltshire has concerns about the location of lamp posts please can I suggest that he contacts Norfolk County Council’s street lighting section via the County Council call centre accordingly?’

In reply to a supplementary question from **Councillor Wiltshire, Councillor Morrey** said that the Council was not formally consulted by Norfolk County Council who had replaced the lamp posts as part of a PFI contract.

Question 7

Councillor Rosalind Wright to the Executive Member for Neighbourhood Development:-

‘In the light of the recent Executive decision regarding use of the Sustainable Communities Act powers, could the Executive Member please clarify how the Council will work with the local community in drawing up these important proposals and ensuring that this is a truly bottom-up approach?’

Councillor Linda Blakeway, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Development’s reply:-

‘I am pleased to note that the Liberal Democrats are now embracing the principles of bottom-up, community-led initiatives. With regard to the use of the powers offered through the Sustainable Communities Act, the approach agreed recently by the Executive is to test the process by capturing community issues through the neighbourhood level work currently being undertaken by the community engagement team and neighbourhood management programme as they start to develop community profiles with residents in their areas.

The neighbourhood profiling and community planning work which will be co-ordinated by these teams will provide an ideal opportunity for community members, including local ward Councillors, to voice local issues and aspirations that may be

appropriate for the Sustainable Communities Act and will ensure that as far as possible the issues that are captured are undertaken through a bottom up, community-led approach.

Issues raised which may be suitable for consideration under the Sustainable Communities Act will need to be 'tested' through a local panel of community representatives and reported to the Executive in June or July prior to submission to the LGA who are acting as the selector on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Councillor Wright needs to be aware that the qualifying criteria for proposals as laid out within the Sustainable Communities Act are very specific and when considering whether to submit proposals to the LGA, the Council will also have to give consideration to the following criteria:

- proposals should be innovative and make a clear contribution to the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy and link to the Local Area Agreement
- proposals should be something that requires intervention from Central Government to enable its delivery, for example a change in Central Government Policy. Proposals should not cover something that this Council or its partners already has the powers to deliver and,
- proposals should ideally be cost neutral and should command or be capable of commanding a broad range of community support including resident and employment / business sectors.

If it is found that some of the proposals raised do not meet the criteria laid out within the Sustainable Communities Act it is hoped that other more-localised solutions could be developed to address these important community issues. These solutions would also be developed using the principles of a bottom-up community-led approach which will greatly enhance the sustainability of any work undertaken.'

Question 8

Councillor Judith Lubbock to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-

'At the last full Council a Liberal Democrat motion to support the Private Members Bill on Fuel Poverty was unanimously backed by this council.

A Bill which would have seen the launch of a major energy efficiency programme to 'fuel poverty proof' the homes of the fuel poor by bringing them up to the energy efficiency levels enjoyed by most homes. It would also have seen the use of social tariffs to limit vulnerable household's exposure to high energy bills. In short it would have addressed the statistics of 14,000 Norwich homes in fuel poverty and the 80 people who die in Norwich each year from cold related deaths.

Regrettably our Norwich MPs Charles Clarke and Ian Gibson were not present and regrettably the Bill failed to pass its second reading on Friday. The Government opposed it and were able to 'talk it out' using their allotted speaking slot at the end of the debate. David Heath, Liberal Democrat MP and sponsor of the Bill attempted to stop the Minister from being able to do this by using a 'closure motion' to bring

debate to a conclusion. However closure motion required 100 MPs to support it and only 91 MPs were present.

The Bill could receive further consideration on 12 June but the reality is there's little chance without Government support. The Liberal Democrats are looking to apply as much pressure as possible to the Government to support the Bill.

Please can the Portfolio Holder join the Liberal Democrats in lobbying our MPs for their support through letters from this council?'

Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-

'I am happy to confirm that a letter has already been sent signed by the Leader of the Council asking the two Norwich MPs to support the Bill if it is considered again on the 12 June.'

Councillor Lubbock asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Leader would be willing to ask the two MPs, if they cannot attend to support the Bill on 12 June, to submit their support in writing or to explain to the Council why they are not willing to do so. **Councillor Morrey** said that he could not speak on behalf of the Leader who would respond accordingly.

Question 9

Councillor Brian Watkins to the Leader of the Council:-

'The Boundary Committee recently announced that the Greater Norwich 'doughnut' option meets all of the five government criteria for local government reorganisation. Alongside the county unitary proposal, it will now be one of the two options that will form part of the eight week consultation process which will culminate in a final recommendation to the Secretary of State in July.

Whilst this is welcome news for the city bid, opposition remains strong and reservations continue to exist regarding its overall affordability. Can the Leader please inform Council how the transition team hope to address these concerns over the coming weeks?'

Councillor Steve Morphew, Leader of the Council's reply:-

'We are delighted that the boundary committee now recognises the 'doughnut' has the capacity to meet all the government criteria and has put it forward as a proposal for consultation.

This is a big step forward, but we are not complacent. There is a great deal at stake and we will keep working to promote our case to the boundary committee and ministers who will ultimately take the final decision.

We have always believed the best way of improving services and overseeing the massive growth planned for greater Norwich is to create a unitary authority which can focus on the distinct issues that affect the city. In a recession, national research has shown that it is vitally important to promote and support cities such as Norwich, which are so vital to the economic and social well-being of the wider area. Unitary

status for the city will ensure that it gets that focus, and is not lost in a massive Norfolk super council.

We are also convinced that a second, separate unitary authority for rural Norfolk would be able to concentrate on addressing the equally important, but very different issues that exist in the market towns and rural areas across the rest of the county.

The “doughnut” is therefore clearly the best deal for all parts of the county.

During the 8 week consultation period that is now underway, the City Council will be examining the boundary committee’s report, and preparing a response before the 14 May deadline. We are very clear that there is considerable stakeholder support for the “doughnut” model, and that it represents an affordable pattern that will deliver significant benefits for both the city and the rural areas of Norfolk.

We will also continue to communicate and consult with local people and stakeholders about the draft proposals. We would also strongly encourage everyone to respond to the boundary committee with their views.

Finally can I thank members of the Green and Liberal Democrat groups for their continuing support for the City Council’s unitary status campaign. I think this consistent and overwhelming political support for change will be helpful in securing more efficient and effective local government in Norwich and Norfolk in the future.’

Councillor Watkins asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Executive Member could comment on the recent high court judgement and where that leaves the process. **Councillor Morphews’** said that on the 25 March in response to appeals from Breckland District Council and East Devon Council to the judgements by Justice Cranston on their judicial reviews of the Boundary Committee’s review process, the Court of Appeal:

- upheld all of Justice Cranston’s previous decisions – the councils’ appeal against the two previous judgements was defeated
- agreed that at this stage there is no need to compare unitary proposals and the status quo, stating this was a matter for the Secretary of State
- commented that easy to understand financial information should be made available – this information has since been published on the Boundary Committee’s website (see section 2 of this briefing note)
- agreed that more than one proposal can be consulted on and put forward to the Secretary of State – following the Boundary Committee publishing revised draft proposal on the 19 March the two unitary “doughnut” option is now an equal draft proposal to the single county unitary option
- stated there was enough time for any issues to be corrected – the further draft proposals published on 19 March have taken account of all previous recommendations
- the councils’ have not achieved their intention of quashing the process and starting the process all over again.

In summary, the Appeal has failed, although some minor concessions on the process have been won (e.g. the need for more consultation, and the ability to put forward more than one option). However, given that the original High Court hearing was over 4 weeks ago, the Boundary Committee has already made changes to the process to deal with these process problems.

In response to the ruling of the Court of Appeal the Boundary Committee published a summary of the headlines of the financial cases for both the 2 unitary doughnut and single Norfolk unitary models. This set out, after the financial modelling of the Boundary Committees's independent financial consultants, that:

- the single county unitary would cost £42.1m to set up. It would make savings over the transition period of £71.5m and deliver payback in three years.
- the 2 unitary doughnut model would cost £64.7m to set up. However, it would make savings of £83.7m (£12.2m more than the £71.5m saved by the single unitary county) and deliver payback in four years.
- after the payback period the 2 unitary 'doughnut' would save £18.8m a year compared to £16.2m for the single county unitary, meaning the doughnut would save £2.6m more a year ongoing than the single county unitary.
- within the 2 unitary doughnut model, in order to ensure that there is a sufficient level of funds (balances) to support the plans being delivered in both these unitary authorities, there will be a need to transfer balances from the greater Norwich unitary authority to the rural Norfolk unitary authority as part of the disaggregation process.
- it will not be necessary to increase the average council tax in Norfolk as a result of the change to new unitary authorities, the actual levels of council tax will be decided by the new authorities.

The Boundary Committee will be holding consultation meetings with local authorities in Norfolk on either the 17, 22, or 23 April. We are waiting for confirmation from them on the exact date.

The Boundary Committee will also be holding meetings with specific local stakeholders including businesses, voluntary organisations and parish and town councils. Again, we are waiting for confirmation from them on the dates.

The Boundary Committee has already written to local authorities to ask them to circulate information, and bring the review to the attention of local people. Ironically, given that part of their appeal was a complaint about the lack of public consultation, Breckland Council (now joined by North Norfolk DC) have written back to say they will not help the Boundary Committee raise awareness or by distributing posters or information leaflets.

During the consultation period the City Council's transformation team plans to carry out the following main activities:

- Produce further materials and communications to demonstrate to the public and stakeholders why the 2 unitary doughnut model will best meet the needs and aspirations of the residents of greater Norwich and rural Norfolk
- Develop a further submission to the Boundary Committee to demonstrate how the 2 unitary doughnut model is the best option to provide strong economic leadership to both greater Norwich and rural Norfolk during a recession.
- Respond in detail to issues raised by the Boundary Committee's independent financial consultants to further demonstrate the affordability of the 2 unitary doughnut model.
- Continue to work collaboratively with Norfolk County Council and others on planning for transition to unitary authorities
- Collaborate with Ipswich and Exeter to promote the cities agenda, particularly in this time of economic recession.

Question 10

Councillor Mary Cannell to the Executive Member for Housing and Adult Services:-

'Can the portfolio holder update council on the progress of the Labour Group's motion to condemn price differences for pre-payment meters, specifically updating council on how successful our attempts to lobby Ofgem have been?'

Councillor Brenda Arthur, Executive Member for Housing and Adult Services reply:-

'Prepayment meters are used predominantly by people on low incomes who can least afford the unfair premium that is placed on their energy bills. The Labour motion to council last November asked the Executive to condemn in the strongest possible terms the unfair practice by which people on prepayment meters are paying the highest tariffs for their energy and to participate in Ofgem's consultation on the deregulation of the energy market.

The Executive participated in the consultation and welcomes the publication of the results in which Ofgem has responded to our concerns. Its Governing Authority is minded to produce a new license condition on suppliers that will ban unjustified price differences. It will require that prices reflect the costs to the companies.

This is excellent news for those people of Norwich who are unfairly disadvantaged by the practice. It will mean that energy companies can no longer unfairly disadvantage those on lower income. It is another step towards helping put more money into people's pockets people a fundamental element of our work on financial inclusion.

Although the administration is extremely pleased that we have managed to effect this change in regulation we are not complacent and will continue to pursue our strategy to ensure everyone has access to affordable energy bills.'

Question 11

Councillor Michael Banham to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-

'Many of my constituents are concerned that when they are issued with concessionary tickets their destination is shown to be much further than they are travelling. Can the portfolio holder assure my constituents that the Council is not being overcharged for its concessionary fares by the bus companies?'

Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-

'The method for repaying operators for the fares foregone under concessionary travel is complicated but the destination on tickets does not affect this.

Payments are made on the basis of:

| | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The number of journeys made by pass holders using a bus service | multiplied by | The average fare charged to adult fare paying passengers using the same service |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

The number of journeys is recorded by most bus companies by issuing a ticket but it has no value and the destination shown is not relevant, the tickets issued serving simply as a journey count.

Turning to the average fare paid by fare paying passengers, this reflects actual transactions and takes account of both single ticket sales and other discounted ticket sales (e.g. return tickets or 10 tickets, etc.).

Actual payment is adjusted downwards to take account of generated travel. The law places an objective on councils to ensure bus operators are no better and no worse off under the scheme compared to the situation if no scheme existed. Clearly with free travel there are a proportion of passengers who travel by bus because it is free but would be unlikely to do so if they had to pay the normal adult fare.

Councillor Banham asked, as a supplementary question, what were the costs to the Council of the changes in concessionary travel. **Councillor Morrey** said that the Council had been hit hard by changes in the way concessionary fares were financed and was facing an additional cost of £1.4million. All other Norfolk local authorities, except Great Yarmouth, were making a 'profit' from the changes to concessionary fares and Norwich City Council was in effect funding their savings. The new way that costs were being apportioned was clearly wrong and the Council was part of a LGA lobbying group and had written to relevant ministers.

Question 12

Councillor David Fairbairn to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance:-

'In light of the government's decision to increase the small and standard business rate multipliers by 5% and end the 'transitional relief' scheme, will the Executive Member look at how Business Rate Relief can be promoted in Norwich and look at

how the Liberal Democrat controlled London Borough of Sutton Council is successfully promoting rate relief?’

Councillor Alan Waters, Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance’s reply:-

‘The Council publicises hardship relief provisions in the Booklet that accompanies the annual rate bill. Ratepayers are also made aware of the provisions when an organisation is known to be in financial difficulties. The Council does not have a specific budget available for this purpose due to its own financial constraints. However, we would normally encourage payment by making arrangement to settle over an extended period to help firms in this situation.

When considering the provision for hardship relief the Council is required by law to consider the impact granting the relief would have on the local council tax payers as well as the benefit to the business. Each request is considered on an individual basis.

25% of cost of the relief is met by the council tax payers of Norwich. The remaining 75% is met by the National Pool. The receipts from non domestic rates collected by the Council is paid into the national pool each year and redistributed as a grant to each authority in accordance with the formula set by the government.

Another form of relief is the small business rate relief that applies to property with a rateable value of less than £15,000. Where the rateable value is below £10,000 additional relief will be granted. However, there are a number of qualifying conditions where the ratepayer has more than one property. The scheme is advertised in the booklet that accompanies the annual bill and is advertised on our website. An application form must be completed before relief can be granted.’

Councillor Fairbairn asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Executive Member agreed that it would be better to have a letter or pamphlet advertising the provision rather than it being hidden within a booklet. **Councillor Waters** said that this was a matter of judgement. He suggested that it was more likely that people would keep a booklet for reference rather than a leaflet. However, he was happy to listen to other people’s views and if businesses expressed concern he would look into it.

Question 13

Councillor Adrian Ramsay to the Leader of the Council:-

‘Recent press reports have claimed that the Sustrans Connect 2 project, to connect Thorpe Hamlet and the City Centre to Whitlingham Country Park by cycle and pedestrian footpaths and bridges, is at risk. A reported six year delay until 2013 will be deemed unacceptable by many residents who voted to win £900,000 of Lottery money by a public phone-in in 2007. Could the Leader of the Council please detail what the situation is with funding and, as the current chair of the Greater Norwich Development Partnership, can he indicate the current prioritisation of this project compared to other projects for funding and resources?’

Councillor Steve Morphew, Leader of the Council’s reply:-

'The Whitlingham Link project is estimated to cost £5 million. It was originally envisaged to be paid for via a mixture of developer, Local Transport Plan and government grant. The Connect2 funding will provide £0.9 million towards the £5 million. Since then the economic situation has changed significantly and the amount of grant funding to the Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) in the short term is significantly less than bid for. Also changes in audit regulations mean it is now more difficult to capitalise project development fee costs.

These changes present challenges to the project particularly as the project is so linked to development at the Deal Ground and Utilities sites and therefore dependent on market conditions. Such risks have been understood since the project's inception however and they are not affecting the project's critical path.

The most time critical task at present is to undertake ecological surveys and funding for these has been secured (from a mixture of public and private sector sources) to allow these to be carried out.

Unfortunately no further funding can be committed through GNDP at this stage due to a lack of revenue funding. As the immediate need is to progress with surveys, design work developer negotiations etc, this is being taken forward in conjunction with the landowners. There is not necessarily a need for major capital funding during 2009 and 2010. This will change as we move through to 2011 and 2012. City Council and GNDP officers are working on a revised project funding package and I remain optimistic about delivery.'

Councillor Ramsay asked, as a supplementary question, whether councillors would be kept informed of the revised funding package. **Councillor Morphew** said yes. There were a large number of projects and it was important for councillors to be kept informed.

Question 14

Councillor Tom Llewellyn to the Executive Member for Housing and Adult Services:-

'Recent events have demonstrated the need for wider scrutiny of housing decisions and services in the Council. Does the Executive member agree that introducing a Housing Scrutiny Committee, as already exists in many other local authorities, would be an important step towards this?'

Councillor Brenda Arthur, Executive Member for Housing and Adult Services' reply:-

'Greater scrutiny is an essential part of ensuring that decisions are effective and that those making the decisions are accountable. It is central to the democratic process. The scrutiny function at Norwich City Council has, as I am sure Councillor Llewellyn will agree, evolved over the past 2 years such that it is not just holding the decision makers to account but is more effective and focused as non executive member scrutineers bring their own independence to the fore when looking at strategic and policy issues.

Having a specific Housing Scrutiny Committee focussing solely on one service could bring to bear an uneven approach as any development of the scrutiny function needs

to take into account the Council's wider activities. It is up to the Scrutiny Committee to decide if it wishes to scrutinise any aspect of the Housing Service and I am aware, for example, that it has recently been looking at Choice Based Lettings. Clearly any growth in the work of the Scrutiny committee will also have an impact on resources.

However a key pressing priority of this administration is developing tenant participation so that our tenants can properly scrutinise and be influential in matters affecting their tenancies with the council. They are, I believe, our best scrutineers and we are already working with tenant representatives and the Citywide Board to look at how we enable that to happen more in the future. Therefore if there were a proposal to establish a Housing Scrutiny Committee I would want to test this with tenants in the first instance.'

In reply to a question from **Councillor Llewellyn, Councillor Arthur** reiterated the measures the Council was putting in place and that the Council was happy to continue to talk to residents about how to improve the Housing Service. Her personal view was that having a separate scrutiny body would reinforce concerns expressed by some that Housing was separate from the rest of the Council and she would prefer it remained corporate.

Question 15

Councillor Claire Stephenson to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-

'The front car park at Earlham House is in a dangerous condition, pitted with holes and having severe drainage problems. The property company responsible for the maintenance of the car park has so far ignored requests from ward councillors to carry out the work necessary to make the area safe. As the City Council is aware of these problems, when will an improvement notice be served on the company to bring the property up to a safe and acceptable standard?'

Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-

'The safety of private property is normally a matter for the private owner concerned. However, the Council can take action under S.215 of the Town and Country Planning Act in cases where the amenities of the area are adversely harmed by the condition of land. This involves serving notice on the owner and, if the specified improvement works are not completed in a specified time, then prosecution or works in default can be initiated.

This site was last inspected by the Council's planning staff in autumn 2008 and it was not considered that the condition of the land merited action at that time. Following this question being raised the site has again been inspected and the matter was discussed at the appropriate officer working group on 25th March. It was agreed to take appropriate action to improve the car park so that the amenities of the area are not adversely harmed. This could involve potential action under s.215 and, if the owners fail to complete specified works then the Council's Direct Action Fund will be utilised and payment recovered from the owner.

The process involves the owner(s) being identified, a specification of works being drawn up, the formal service of the notice, a reasonable period for the works to be completed and, if not done, the Council arranging for a contractor to do the works specified. Therefore it could be some months before the car park is improved.

Councillor Stephenson said she was surprised that staff had not agreed that work was required when inspected last autumn. She could help as she knew who the owner of the site was and asked as a supplementary question, has the work started, what stage had it reached and who was responsible for it? **Councillor Morrey** said that this was more than one question and too detailed and should have been asked in advance in the original question. He would ask for the information and respond in due course.

Question 16

Councillor Bob Gledhill to the Executive Member for Residents and Customer Services:-

'I understand that, due to an error on the part of The Phone Book, the main Council number is not listed in the latest edition. Has the Council taken any action to minimise inconvenience caused by this mistake?'

Councillor Julie Brociek-Coulton, Executive Member for Residents and Customer Services' reply:-

'The correct and updated advert was submitted to BT with plenty of time to spare, but they did not update the listing correctly before publication. We made a formal complaint at the time, and received an apology from BT. The advert is correctly listed in the classified section of the phone book under "C" for Councils, and on BT's website for directory enquiries. We spoke to Richard Balls in communications at the time, but he felt that a press release would not be useful, and would more than likely draw attention to the error. Other than councillor enquiries, we have no record of any complaint from the public about the number being incorrect in the phone book.'

Councillor Gledhill asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Executive Member considered that the lack of complaint from the public was due to the fact the number was not in the book and the public did not know the number to use to complain? **Councillor Brociek-Coulton** emphasised that when the old number was phoned it did inform people of the appropriate number to use. She agreed that this was not ideal and could lead to extra phone calls. However, as members were aware, the new phone number was more efficient and ensured that people were dealt with quicker.

Question 17

Councillor Adrian Holmes to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance:-

'Earlier this month, an investigation by the Information Commissioner highlighted that 40 companies were buying information on trade unionists to vet potential employees. Does the Council have contracts with any of the companies implicated in this investigation? If so, does this constitute a breach of contract?'

Councillor Alan Waters, Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance's reply:-

'The Council does not have any contracts with those companies identified by the Information Commissioner following their investigation into the "Consulting Organisation" earlier this month and consequently there cannot be a breach of contract. Some of those companies named in the investigation are part of wider contract groups that we do have a contractual relationship with and we are writing to these companies to ensure that no discrimination has taken place.'

Councillor Holmes asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Executive Member would report back to members if replies were received. **Alan Waters** said yes he would.

Question 18

Councillor Tom Dylan to the Executive Member for Community Safety and Community Cohesion:-

'The Matrix Project is one of the organisations in the city that carries out crucial work helping women working in the sex industry. For example, it helps women get out of prostitution and into work or college and its work has also reduced the anti-social behaviour and crime associated with street based sex work in Norwich. However, the organisation currently has a funding gap of £16,000 per year and may have to reduce its services if this gap is not plugged. What help can the Council give in helping Matrix explore all funding options?'

Councillor Bert Bremner, Executive Member for Community Safety and Community Cohesion's reply:-

'The Matrix Project does indeed play an important role in supporting some of the most vulnerable women in the City as well as also reducing the impact of the sex industry on the local neighbourhood.'

When I was made aware of the original proposal to stop the funding to the Matrix Project the Leader wrote to the Norfolk Drug and Alcohol Partnership raising our concerns that the valuable work the of the Project would stop. I am particularly pleased that this had a positive effect and that interim funding has been put in place to maintain the service and that a number of other agencies have made a financial commitment to them.

I am aware that there is still a gap in the Matrix Project budget and officers have been working with their staff to identify any opportunities to resolve this.

Unfortunately the Council does not have commissioning or project budgets to contribute to the Matrix budget gap. However, officers have offered to continue to explore funding opportunities and to support any grant applications that are developed so that the valued work can continue.'

Councillor Dylan asked, as a supplementary question, if the Executive Member could give an update on progress regarding funding and application for grants and do all he could to ensure that communications between the project and the Council

was improved. **Councillor Bremner** said that if this had been asked in advance in the original question he could have answered it. He would respond in due course.

Question 19

Councillor Samir Jeraj to the Executive Member for Residents and Customer Care -

'Someone has contacted me on behalf of a resident who speaks very limited English and had difficulty in being able to express details of a housing issue to the Council. What support can the Council give in such cases, and how is this available support publicised to those who may need it?'

Councillor Julie Brociek-Coulton, Executive Member for Residents and Customer Care's reply:-

'Translation services to the council are provided by Intran. This service is advertised on all public counters, on the back or front of every publication, and on the internet. The service is used frequently by all front-facing teams as needs are identified. In addition, where identified, these needs are recorded in the councils various computer systems, allowing officers to identify language needs before a contact is initiated.'

Councillor Jeraj asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Council would undertake more proactive work to ensure that more documents were available in the various languages. **Councillor Brociek-Coulton** said that the Council had helped 56 users through the INTRAN's service during the previous year and documents had been translated into 19 different languages.

Question 20

Councillor Stephen Little to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-

'The state of the road surface on Unthank Road near the shops is poor. Are there any plans to resurface this?'

Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-

'Officers acknowledge the relatively poor surface condition of Unthank Road near to the shops. However there are other roads in the City which are in a worse condition and are likely to be a greater priority for treatment. One example is Unthank Road towards Convent Road where some dips have formed.

Given limited budgets and given its relative priority it is unlikely that any resurfacing will take place on Unthank Road near to the shops in the coming financial year. The County Council as the Highway Authority allocate funds to the City Council to do works that they can afford. The budget is limited so any additional works that are not deemed serious enough have to wait for funds. It is one of the problems of two tier Local Government because the Highway Authority will always do what it considers best for all of Norfolk. Whereas, if we had control over the funds for Norwich we could look at ways of improving the service by prioritising certain elements if it was warranted.

The road is regularly inspected however and any potholes or other defects will be repaired accordingly. Also if members of the public have specific concerns they are encouraged to contact the Council and one of the highway inspectors will investigate the situation and order repairs as required.'

Councillor S Little asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Executive Member would try to ensure that surveys etc show how high levels of cycle use could be used to prioritise schemes in areas such as Unthank Road. **Councillor Morrey** said that he was not willing to give that undertaking as there would be other interest groups, ie motorists etc who would be lobbying for the same priority.

Question 21

Councillor Rupert Read to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-

'What is the average occupancy of cars coming into Norwich, and does the Executive member think enough is done to increase this?'

Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-

'The County Council collect data on car occupancy which indicates average car occupancy of 1.8 per car rising from 1.67 in 2003. The figures contrast with an UK average for all trips of 1.6 and 1.2 for commuter trips.

The above data is encouraging but there is always more that could be done. The Council is not the transport authority but I would commend the County Council to take any steps in this direction, an area which I know they are prioritising. For the City Council there are three areas; setting suitable parking tariffs, encouraging car sharing as an ingredient of travel plans associated with new development and encouraging our own staff to car share.

Car sharing was promoted and encouraged as one of the measures forming the recent EU funded CIVITAS sustainable transport project in Norwich. Evaluation of the measure as the EU project draws to a close shows that the initiative generated 2167 new members and has saved in the region of 1.4 million vehicle miles, 371 tonnes of carbon dioxide and £320,000 in fuel costs.'

Question 22

Councillor Ruth Makoff to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-

'In March 2008, I submitted a petition to the Norwich Highways Agency Committee about the footpath between Bowthorpe School Community Park and Tollhouse Road, which is in need of maintenance. I have recently been told by officers that the path is not registered, and as a result the Council has no way of getting involved in maintaining neither the path nor taking action to ensure it is maintained. I understood that recent legislation has made it easier for Councils to get involved in such situations. Please could the Executive member investigate all possible routes for the Council to help?'

Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-

'I suspect Councillor Makoff may be referring to section 215 of the Town Planning Act 1990 (as amended) which gives various powers to Councils over the owners of untidy or derelict land. However, to exercise such powers it is necessary to establish the owner of the land in question and, as in this particular case the land is not registered, this is very difficult.

I understand that Councillor Makoff is in continuing discussion with officers and whilst adoption also appears to be impossible it may be possible to take action to maintain the path providing it can be established that members of the public have enjoyed unfettered access along the path for at least 20 years. Officers are also taking steps to confirm whether highway authority funding would be available to pay for any maintenance.'

Councillor Makoff asked, as a supplementary question, whether the Executive Member would support adoption if the efforts of the officers proved unsuccessful. **Councillor Morrey** said that he did not know the area so it was difficult for him to comment. However, if it was deemed adoptable he would support it.

Question 23

Councillor Janet Bearman to the Executive Member for Community Safety and Community Cohesion:-

'In view of the proposals that have been put forward by the police for establishing 'priority setting meetings', how does the Council see the future for the Safer Neighbourhood Action Panels (SNAPs) given that these were originally set up as a partnership between the police and the Council?'

Councillor Bert Bremner, Executive Member for Community Safety and Community Cohesion reply:-

'The establishment of SNAP panels has provided a valuable opportunity for residents to be able to have an influence over the services in their local neighbourhood and to improve their quality of life.

The Council and partners are also aware that SNAP's are one of a number of mechanisms that residents can use to engage with service providers.

Cllr Bearman is quite correct in saying that SNAP Panels were established in Norwich in conjunction with the Council. However, whilst there has been a strong partnership ethos to this work, it is a Home Office – Police led programme and in Norfolk is therefore led by the Police at a force or county level.

The Police are currently reviewing how partners can contribute to the proposals on a more structured basis and once the Council have been informed of the process this will be circulated to members and SNAP Chairs so SNAP panels can contribute to the debate.

The Community safety team will continue to update and involve members and officers as far as is possible in discussion with the Police on these future plans.'

In reply to a supplementary question from **Councillor Bearman, Councillor Bremner** said that the Council had been involved in discussions on the proposals with partners, including the Police.

Question 24

Councillor Peter Offord to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-

'The halt in the development of Hopkins Homes on the former Bertrams Books site on Rosary Road means a delay in the proposed crossing over Rosary Road that was going to happen at the same time. Residents have been expressing concern to me about this. It is especially dangerous for those approaching the city from the St. Leonards Road and Hill House Road side. Would the Executive member look into providing a crossing on this road ahead of the proposed development?'

Councillor Brian Morrey, Executive Member for Sustainable City Development's reply:-

'I am afraid that Councillor Offord has been misinformed; the Hopkins Home development is not required to provide a crossing on Rosary Road. However it is required to make a sustainable transport contribution of £31,883. At present the intention is to use that money for public transport improvements in the area.

Last year the City Council introduced a traffic management scheme on Rosary Road, which involved changes to the road markings and the introduction of interactive signs on the approach to the bends by Chalk Hill Road. Officers at the time did not consider that the numbers of pedestrians crossing Rosary Road warranted a formal crossing point and nor did there appear to be an obvious desire line for pedestrians.

If Councillor Offord could let the officers know direct exactly where he thinks a crossing should be provided they will carry out an assessment of the numbers of pedestrians in the area and the delays they experience when they cross the road. This will then inform where Rosary Road comes in the pedestrian crossing priority list, and whether it would be appropriate to bid for funding for a crossing in 2010/11.'

In reply to a supplementary question from **Councillor Offord, Councillor Morrey** said that he was pleased that Councillor Offord had done as he had suggested in the last paragraph of the reply.

