

## **Council**

Members of the council are hereby summoned to attend the  
meeting of the council to be held in the  
council chamber, City Hall, St Peters Street, Norwich, NR2 1NH  
on  
**Tuesday, 24 January 2017**

**19:30**

## **Agenda**

### **Pages**

**1 Lord Mayor's announcements**

**2 Declarations of interest**

(Please note that it is the responsibility of individual members to declare an interest prior to the item if they arrive late for the meeting)

**3 Questions from the public**

**4 Petitions**

**5 Minutes**

**7 - 42**

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the council meeting held on 29 November 2016

**6 Questions to cabinet members / committee chairs**

(A printed copy of the questions and replies will be available at the meeting)

**7 Nominations for Lord Mayor and Sheriff 2017 - 18**

To receive nominations for the Lord Mayor and Sheriff for the next civic year

**8 Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2017-18**

**43 - 52**

**Purpose** - To propose for approval the council tax reduction scheme for 2017-18

**9 Members allowances scheme**

**53 - 70**

**Purpose** - To consider the recommendations of the independent panel set up to make recommendations on the members allowances scheme as required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations, 2003.

## **10 MOTION: Transition to low-emission vehicles**

Proposed by Councillor Carlo and seconded by Councillor Jackson

UK transport policy supports a radical shift to low and ultra-low-emission vehicles to help meet climate change targets. Such a transformation would also improve air quality. Recent government measures include a range of grants to support green vehicles and provide infrastructure for recharging and refuelling.

Norwich currently has little local planning and transport policy and guidance on this subject. A strategy for transition to low/ultra-low-emission vehicles and related infrastructure could help meet the council's key environmental priority of cutting the city's carbon dioxide emissions, demonstrate that Norwich is a forward-looking and ambitious city, and increase the likelihood of obtaining grants.

Council **RESOLVES** to ask cabinet to:

- 1) commit to using 100% electric vehicles for the staff pool by 2020;
- 2) update the Norwich Local Plan car parking standards by increasing the required number of electric vehicle charging points per major planning application (currently the number is one);
- 3) encourage partners such as Norse to move to low/ultra-low-emission vehicles as they update their fleet;
- 4) work with partners (including Norwich Highways Agency Committee, the Greater Norwich Development Partnership, Greater Norwich Growth Board and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership) to:
  - a) ,in developing the Greater Norwich Local Plan and updating the Transport for Norwich Strategy and the Norwich Local Plan, develop a vision, strategy and set of policies for promoting the uptake of low/ultra-low-emission vehicles and supporting infrastructure;
  - b) identify suitable projects and apply for available grants for extending the local network of charging/fuelling infrastructure for private low-emission vehicles, and for shifting the local bus/taxi/private hire car fleet to green fuels.

## **11 MOTION: Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement: 'Core spending power' and New Homes Bonus**

Proposed by Councillor Stonard and seconded by Councillor Waters

This year's provisional local government finance settlement for Norwich has resulted in a further significant deterioration in the council's funding position with a 9% reduction in core spending power for 2016/17– 2017/18. Only 12 local authorities have had a larger reduction.

Over the full spending review period to 2019/20 Norwich will suffer a reduction in core spending power of around 15.9% with only three councils in a worst position.

This deterioration in funding is a direct consequence of the loss of Revenue Support Grant and New Homes Bonus which required the council to find £30 million recurring revenue savings since 2010.

Council **RESOLVES** to:-

1) note with dismay:-

a) that it calculates the actual core spending power reduction over the full spending review period will be closer to 18.7%

b) the following effects of changes to New Homes Bonus announced in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement:-

i. The introduction of a 0.4% baseline for growth, below which no New Homes Bonus payments will be awarded. For Norwich this means an award of just 4% of our growth or just 11 new properties of 337 delivered!

ii. The broader impact across the country - 36 authorities will now receive no new New Homes Bonus reward for 2017/18 despite delivering a net increase of nearly 8,000 new homes between them.

iii. The changes to New Homes Bonus provides no incentive to some local authorities to build housing, and might delay building to maximise delivery above 0.4% to generate a reasonable level of New Homes Bonus the delivery of sustained, crucially needed, planned housing development.

2) ask the Leader of the Council and the Portfolio holder for Resources to write to:-

a) the Secretary of State for Local Government, asking him to :-

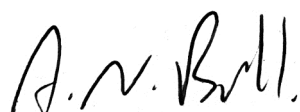
i. entirely remove the baseline growth threshold for New Homes Bonus

ii. reward councils for the number properties that are built rather than on the council tax banding of those properties

iii. find a national solution for adult social care, rather than shift funding from

New Homes Bonus which impacts negatively particularly on District Councils and on investment in much needed housing.

b) other relevant ministers, Norwich MPs, the Local Government Association and the District Councils Network asking them to also lobby the Secretary of State accordingly

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. N. Bull'.

Anton Bull  
Director of business services

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**COUNCIL**

**7.30pm – 9.50pm**

**29 November 2016**

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

**Apologies:** Mr Marks (Sheriff) and Councillor Coleshill

**1. LORD MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Lord Mayor said that as it was a long agenda she would keep her announcements brief. Since the last meeting she had attended a very poignant event commemorating the re-siting of the Roll of Honour in the foyer of city hall which took place immediately after the remembrance day service in front of the War Memorial. The roll commemorated those people of Norwich who died in the First World War, The remembrance day service was held the following Sunday. She had also attended the impressive Christmas lights switch on by Ed Balls organised by the city council's events team and supported by the Norwich BID.

The Lord mayor reported the sad news that Pat Siano, who had represented the Mousehold Heath Defenders on the Mousehold Heath Conservators for many years, had passed away. At the invitation of the Lord Mayor, Councillor Bradford commented on the contribution Pat Siano had made to the work of the conservators and council then stood for a moment's silence in her memory.

The Lord Mayor said she had one further matter to bring to the attention of council. She read out a letter received from David Bullock, the city's Cryer, resigning from that position after 32 years. The Lord Mayor said that David had been a wonderful servant to the city as cryer and the council would be commemorating that service in some way in the near future.

At the invitation of the Lord Mayor, Councillor Brociek-Coulton informed council that Norwich in Bloom had been recognised for its achievements in the large city category at the International Symposium of Communities in Bloom, a canadian non-profit organization committed to fostering civic pride, environmental responsibility and beautification through community involvement.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **3. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

### **Public Question 1**

**Mr F A Agombar to the cabinet member for environment and sustainable development:**

"I don't expect most councillors to know what a ULEZ is. It is an ultra-low emission zone. All vehicles must meet or exceed Euro 6 emissions, for example, trucks, vans, cars, etc; with buses, taxis, coaches or minibuses being made electric or to use other environmentally friendly fuel systems. I am requesting that Norwich City Council joins the many other cities by designating the city centre to be a ULEZ. It will not cost the council one penny. A private company is instructed to erect cameras which record the registration numbers and any vehicle not meeting the requirements is fined automatically. The system is already in operation all over the UK. Even Greater London Mayor Sadiq Khan has brought forward the whole of London, inside the North and South Circular roads, to be a ULEZ by 2019. Reading is another very environmental city and has electric and gas powered buses. Large conglomerates like First Group, Stagecoach, Go-Ahead etc can easily afford to provide electric buses. (Go-Ahead made a profit of £1,350 million in the last tax year.)

First Bus employs two fitters 16 hours per day based in a van on Castle Meadow, to maintain and keep running approximately 25 of fourteen year old Plaxton President, ex London buses from Westbourne Garage, around Norwich. If Norwich was made a ULEZ then clapped out fifteen year old polluting busses would be replaced with modern hi-tech fuel system buses.

There was a big article in the Eastern Evening News recently about old polluting buses in Norwich. A similar action is in progress as 25 four year old ex Leeds buses, which Leeds doesn't want in their city as they have stringent standards, are now being transferred to Norwich. Why should Norwich have to put up with this? We could stop this tomorrow by making Norwich a ULEZ."

**Councillor Bremner, cabinet member for environment and sustainable development to reply**

The whole of Norwich city centre has been designated an air quality management area (AQMA) since November 2012. An Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) is in place covering the AQMA, which includes the provision of a low emission zone (LEZ) in Castle Meadow. The latter places a restriction on bus euro emission standards backed by bus driver training. The AQAP compliments wider bus priority and sustainable travel measures currently being delivered to improve the sustainable accessibility of the city centre as part of the Norwich Area Transportation Strategy (NATS).



The AQAP was revised in August 2015 and includes the commitment to work with bus companies and aim to achieve Euro 5 compliance for the LEZ within a time period of 3 years.

Recent discussions with First and Go-Ahead has highlighted that both operators, who provide a significant proportion of buses operating in Norwich, have made significant progress towards running cleaner buses and they will continue to invest going forwards. First have 32% of their Norwich fleet operating at Euro 6, with a further 32% operating at Euro 5. Go-Ahead have 66% of their fleet operating at Euro 5.

There are also various initiatives currently underway that are specifically aimed at tackling air quality issues. Norfolk County Council secured £416,000 funding through the Clean Bus Technology Fund in early 2016 to retrofit equipment to the exhausts of 24 of the worst polluting buses in Norwich, which will lead to reductions of 100 tonnes of nitrogen emissions and 200 tonnes of carbon emissions over the next 5 years.

Norwich also has a voluntary bus quality partnership in place with bus operators and this has recently been reviewed. The outcome of the review is that the partnership will now include commitments to reduce vehicle emissions through driver training, engine switch off, fleet investment and securing of appropriate funding, both private and public. The city council is also examining how engine switch off could also be backed up via enforcement; making use of powers contained in the Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002.

The package of measures in the AQAP, such as those described above, is intended to achieve targets to reduce nitrogen dioxide air pollution to below EU limit values including Castle Meadow. The council is also obliged to continuously monitor air quality. Air quality is a major public health issue and if targets are not met then further initiatives will be need to be introduced by the two councils to address this. The councils are therefore monitoring with interest the implementation of mandatory Clean Air Zones in Birmingham, Leeds, Nottingham, Derby and Southampton.

## **Public Question 2**

**Mr Ian Stutely to the leader of the council:**

“Can the Leader comment on the impact of the autumn statement upon Norwich City Council?”

**Councillor Waters, leader of the council to reply:**

Thank you for your question Mr Stutely. Norwich has often been described as a ‘tale of two cities’. On the one hand Norwich is the engine of the economy for Norfolk & north Suffolk with many strengths as a city in terms of its range of businesses, the quality of its higher education institutions, cultural offer and dynamism in areas like the ‘Tech’ sector and inward investment. It also as a city characterised by high levels of deprivation (child poverty is around 40%) and low wages – 20,000 families have

an income of £15,000 per annum or less. There are also many working households that are in poverty – driven not just by low wages but by cuts to in-work benefits like working tax credits and irregular patterns of employment due to the proliferation of zero-hours contracts.

The Council's key policies are driven by the ambition to lift people out of poverty and ensure that everyone has a decent standard of living; for example by providing decent affordable housing – a key strand of which is a major council house building programme; by encouraging employers to pay a genuine Living Wage as calculated by the 'Living Wage Foundation' – this year £8.45p outside of London; encouraging inward investment into Norwich to grow the local economy and provide more employment opportunities for local residents. This is not an exhaustive list by any means, but I hope I have said enough to indicate that the council's interest in last week's autumn statement is not just about investments in '**hard infrastructure**' (roads, rail, homes), but also investment in **social infrastructure** in peoples lives to provide them with 'social security' and personal opportunity to contribute to the community and live a good quality of life. I would add a third strand – **democratic infrastructure**: the ability of the city council, with a range of partner organisations including other local councils to have the resources to meet the needs and aspirations of the communities they represent.

It is against this background and these criteria I want to judge Philip Hammond's first outing as chancellor and his first (and apparently last) 'Autumn Statement'. This is not an exhaustive response (you will be glad to hear) but a commentary on how well matched the new Government's objectives meet the needs of Norwich, its residents and the council.

The Autumn Statement generally maintains the pre-existing direction of policy travel inherited from the Osborne years. The statement prioritises hard infrastructure. What additional spending is available is for long-term economic investment in roads, housing and research and development, rather than to support the incomes of the "just-about-managing" or public services including social care. On housing the government remains reluctant to recognise the vital role that council housing for rent plays in meeting the housing shortfall and cutting the housing benefit bill as well as stimulating the local economy. Some of the most contentious and mean spirited provisions of the Housing & Planning Act have been removed or kicked, perhaps temporarily, into the long grass. 'Pay to Stay' would have hit "the just managing" affecting households with a collective income of just over £30,000. Chloe Smith MP for Norwich North, spoke passionately in favour of this policy – she will be disappointed that it has been withdrawn: a disappointment that will not be shared by many others.

Although the Autumn Statement proposes some measures to increase income of those on lower incomes (e.g. raising the National Living Wage and changes to Universal Credit) this reverses only 7% of the inherited policy-related changes that hit the poorest half of families (Resolution Foundation) under the previous Conservative and Coalition Governments.

Wider projections around living standards show broader stress, particularly for working age households, with real wages projected to be no higher in 2020/21 than they were in 2006/07. This would mean that pay growth for the decade would be at its lowest since 1900 (Resolution Foundation).

Distributional analysis shows that overall changes between 2015-20 (including Universal Credit and announcements in Autumn statement) still disproportionately affect lower income groups. On the subject of Universal Credit – its full introduction in Great Yarmouth in April 2016 has seen a 300% increase in Food bank usage over the same period in the previous year and the food banks are running out of food. £2bn is being taken out of UC.

Although the income groups that benefit the most from the Autumn Statement policies are arguably the 'Just about Managing' households, these fade into insignificance once added to the previously announced cuts.

Theresa May defined a 'Just about Managing' household as one that earns between £16-21,000 per year (Resolution Foundation, 09.09.16). Norwich has just over 8,200 of these households, mainly based in Mancroft and Catton Grove raising personal allowance to £11,500 (to increase to £12,500 by 2020 and higher rate tax threshold to £50,000). Over 4/5ths of the gains from this change will benefit the richest half of households.

A notable omission from the Autumn Statement was the lack of additional funding for social care – despite significant combined lobbying by NHS and local authorities. There was also a lack of announcements re business rate funding or local government funding more widely.

On departmental spending government has recommitted to spending plans set out in spending review 2015 and to identify a further £3.5bn from public spending in 2019/20.

I believe the Autumn Statement is part of a rolling programme that gives primacy to hard infrastructure. Rebuilding the social infrastructure and helping to sustain our democratic capacity after six years of ruinous austerity are clearly only a secondary consideration in the mind of the Chancellor and the new Prime Minister. The political purpose of the council must be as far as it's resources allow to work with partners across Norwich to ensure that all three strands of infrastructure investment are given equal consideration in building a strong & prosperous city from which everyone benefits. In that sense we are offering, as a Labour administration, a distinct political alternative to the current direction of the Conservative Government.

#### **4. PETITIONS**

No petitions had been received.

#### **5. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, to agree the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2016.

## **6. QUESTIONS TO CABINET MEMBERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

The Lord Mayor said that 19 questions had been received from members of the council to cabinet members for which notice had been given in accordance with the provisions of appendix 1 of the council's constitution.

- |                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Question 1</b>  | Councillor Sands(M) to the leader of the council on the significant risks to homelessness services operating in Norwich of the proposed Norfolk County Council cuts to supported housing.                          |
| <b>Question 2</b>  | Councillor Woollard to the cabinet member for council housing on the Hansard Close city council housing development.   |
| <b>Question 3</b>  | Councillor Manning to the cabinet member for environment and sustainable development on promoting and raising awareness of the pedalways.  |
| <b>Question 4</b>  | Councillor Herries to the cabinet member for fairness and equality on the strategy objectives and delivery in promoting winter health, particularly in our poorest communities.                                    |
| <b>Question 5</b>  | Councillor Coleshill to the leader of the council on the partnership with the Norwich BID in developing new Christmas illuminations.   |
| <b>Question 6</b>  | Councillor Button to the cabinet member for customer care and leisure on the development of the digital hubs.  |
| <b>Question 7</b>  | Councillor Driver to the leader of the council on living wage week and the steps being taken by the council to promote the real living wage.   |
| <b>Question 8</b>  | Councillor Fullman to the cabinet member for fairness and equality on the work being undertaken to tackle domestic violence.   |
| <b>Question 9</b>  | Councillor Malik to the cabinet member for environment and sustainable development on the risk to road safety of proposed Norfolk County Council budget cuts to lollipop persons.                                  |
| <b>Question 10</b> | Councillor Jones(B), to the cabinet member for neighbourhoods and community safety on the expansion of the recycling service to include textile and electrical goods and the upgrade of the fleet refuse vehicles. |
| <b>Question 11</b> | Councillor Maguire to the leader of the council on the sustainable transformation plan for Norfolk and Waveney.  |
| <b>Question 12</b> | Councillor Davis to the cabinet member for neighbourhoods and community safety on working with the police and the courts to tackle drug dens.  |
| <b>Question 13</b> | Councillor Peek to the cabinet member for environmental and sustainable development on the improvements to the roundabout at the junction of Guardian, Sweetbriar and Dereham Roads.                               |

- Question 14** Councillor Lubbock to the cabinet member for environment and sustainable development on reducing the high numbers of deaths and serious injuries to cyclists.
- Question 15** Councillor Grahame to the cabinet member for neighbourhoods and community safety on regulating sexual entertainment venues.
- Question 16** Councillor Price to the cabinet member for environment and sustainable development on reminding coach companies of the council's policy on air quality requiring them to switch off engines when stationary.
- Question 17** Councillor Carlo to the cabinet member for environment and sustainable development on the windows of the Lodge, Essex Street owned by MJB.
- Question 18** Councillor Schmierer to the cabinet member for neighbourhoods and community safety on the impact of fixed odds betting terminals.
- Question 19** Councillor Raby to the leader of the council on asking the Greater Norwich Development Partnership to do everything in its power to ensure action on climate change is at the heart of the Local Plan.

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

## **7. EXTERNAL AUDIT APPOINTMENT**

Councillor Stonard moved and Councillor Kendrick seconded, the recommendations in the annexed report.

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, to approve the sector led appointment of external auditors from 2018-19.

The Lord Mayor said that Councillor Wright had suggested to her that the order of the agenda be changed so that his motion, Item 8, be taken at the end of the meeting. As the other group leaders had both agreed to this she was happy to change the order of the meeting accordingly. Therefore the next item to be considered would be Item 9.

## 9. MOTION – HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT BUDGET REDUCTIONS

The Lord Mayor said that she had received notice in advance of an amendment to his own motion being moved by Councillor Waters – to insert the word...potential...in resolution (1) of the motion. Copies of the amendment had been circulated. As group leaders had indicated they were happy to accept this minor amendment, and with no other councillor objecting, it automatically became part of the substantive motion.

Councillor Waters moved and Councillor Harris seconded the motion as set out on the agenda, and as amended above.

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, that –

“Norwich City Council works closely with a number of statutory and voluntary sector organisations, some of which the council commissions, to provide significant support to people affected by homelessness and to meet the housing needs of some of the most vulnerable people in the city.

Norfolk County Council is proposing budget reductions of £4.678 million to the £9.1 million housing related support budget in Norfolk in 2017/18. This will impact significantly upon services commissioned by Norfolk County Council in Norwich for housing related (accommodation based) support and floating support for people in their own accommodation.

Council, **RESOLVES**, to -

- (1) note that if Norfolk County Council’s proposals are implemented, it could lead to increased demand on Norwich City Council’s services which are already under pressure and a potential increase in costs of £677,000 per annum because of increased pressure upon housing options prevention and statutory homelessness work, the neighbourhood housing service and an increase to rough sleeper outreach contract costs;
- (2) support Norfolk County Council to re-consider these proposed cuts in light of the evidence that this will expose some of the most vulnerable in our society to even greater risk;
- (3) ask the leader of the council to write to Norwich MPs highlighting, once again, the impact of central government cuts on local government and the direct impact of these on the most vulnerable people in Norwich.”

## 10. MOTION - ACCESSIBILITY IN THE CITY CENTRE

The Lord Mayor said she had been informed of a technical amendment required to this motion. Having accepted the original motion as published on the agenda, officers had since advised that resolutions 2(b) and (c) are functions of Norwich

Highways Agency Committee and this needed to be reflected in the motion. Revised copies of the motion had been circulated. She said that group leaders and the mover had indicated they were happy to accept this technical amendment without debate so this automatically became the substantive motion.

Councillor Haynes moved and Councillor Grahame seconded, the new substantive motion.

Councillor Bremner moved, and Councillor Fullman seconded, the following amendment –

To insert “continue to...” at the beginning of resolution (1)

To change the order of the resolutions after “(2) ask cabinet:” so that continuing to fund and promote the Norwich Access Group comes first.

In resolution (3)(a) to insert “...where possible, ...” after “...highway changes...” and delete “...not only consulted at the end”

In resolution (3)(b) to insert “...where necessary...” after “...an access walk...”

With 27 voting in favour, 10 against and no abstentions the amendment was carried.

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, that –

“people with disabilities – including learning disabilities or neurological disabilities – can face barriers to getting around Norwich, including road crossings that are difficult to use, street clutter and lack of accessible toilets. Changes in temporary roadworks pose particular problems, as reported in the EDP on 23 July 2016 and to scrutiny committee members during an “access walk” in July. Alterations that may seem small can determine whether or not a person is able to navigate the city independently.

Other councils, including Hull, have worked with local access groups to develop a “street charter”, setting out the council’s promise to people with disabilities regarding highways issues.

Council **RESOLVES** to –

- (1) continue to recognise access issues within its corporate priorities;
- (2) ask cabinet :-
  - (a) to continue to fund and promote the Norwich Access Group and its efforts to highlight access issues in the city;
  - (b) in association with disability groups, to create an accessibility charter for Norwich which sets out the council’s promise to people with disabilities;

- (c) to ensure non-visible disabilities such as autism are considered when planning access requirements;
- (3) ask Norwich Highways Agency Committee:-
  - (a) when planning highway changes, where possible, to ensure people with disabilities are included in the process from the start;
  - (b) to organise an access walk, where necessary, whenever a new major project is created, including representatives with a variety of types of disability.

## **11. MOTION – HOMES FIT FOR AN AGEING POPULATION**

Councillor Lubbock moved and Councillor Ackroyd seconded, the following motion:-.

“Through the adoption of the ‘Norwich Standard’, this council accepts the need to provide adequate living conditions for its tenants which is especially important as they grow older. Ensuring elderly tenants retain their independence and dignity, living in their homes as long as possible must be an essential part of this council's housing services.

Council **RESOLVES** to ask cabinet to ensure choice is offered to tenants when upgrades to bathrooms are scheduled to properties - the choice of having a walk-in shower installed instead of a bath, with emphasis that this choice should be given to tenants without the need to prove that they are disabled or have certain medical conditions.”

With 12 voting in favour, 23 against and one abstention, the motion was declared lost.

(Two hours having passed since the commencement of the meeting, the Lord Mayor asked members to consider whether the remaining item could be considered as unopposed business)

## **8. MOTION - UNACCOMPANIED REFUGEE CHILDREN**

**RESOLVED**, unopposed, that –

“The refugee crisis has continued over the summer including refugees from Syria but also from other countries, with an estimated 88,000 unaccompanied children believed to be travelling through continental Europe, vulnerable to falling prey to exploitation and abuse.

Council **RESOLVES** to:



- (1) welcome the central government's commitment to the Immigration Act 2016 to create a resettlement scheme to bring unaccompanied refugee children from continental Europe to safety in the UK, but notes the very slow progress that has been made in implementing a scheme to cater for this highly vulnerable group;
- (2) endorse Liberty's "statement of support" pressurising central government to honour its commitment without delay and also call on council members to pledge their individual support via Liberty's website – [www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/campaigning/protect-refugee-children](http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/campaigning/protect-refugee-children);
- (3) recognise the important role that residents of Norwich have been playing in caring for children and their families seeking sanctuary;
- (4) urge central government, by asking group leaders to write to appropriate ministers, to work closely with local government to ensure that councils have the funding and support to build the essential regional infrastructure necessary to secure the placement and support of children across the country, especially in relation to housing provision, educational needs and English language provision, and help us to build them a brighter, safer future."

LORD MAYOR

## Question 1

### **Councillor Mike Sands asked 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 asked 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 asked 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 2<sup>nd</sup> 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 asked 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 asked 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 asked 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 asked 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 asked 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 asked 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 asked 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 baled 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 asked 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 asked 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 asked 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 asked 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.

**Councillor Lubbock** asked, as a supplementary question, if any of the funding from the Cycling Ambition Grant could be used to prevent accidents to cyclists. **Councillor Bremner** said that all Cycling Ambition Grant money was capital funding used for schemes for the benefit of cyclists.

**Question 15**

**Councillor Grahame asked 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.

**Councillor Grahame** said that contradictory advice had been given by planning and licensing officers as to whether SEVs needed to apply for a licence and asked, as a supplementary question, if the cabinet member was willing to share legal advice and when will such premises be required to apply for licences. **Councillor Kendrick** said that a total of four such premises in the city had been deemed to be a reasonable number by members in the past and one of those had since closed. One more new SEV would therefore be deemed to be reasonable. He added that there were no "grandfather rights" on a premise so if one closed there was no guarantee that the new operator would be given a licence in the same premise.

## Question 16

**Councillor Price asked 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.

**Councillor Price** said that Councillor Bremner had referred to the possibility of carrying out enforcement in his answer to an earlier public question and asked, as a supplementary question, when the council would start "fining" bus operators who failed to comply. **Councillor Bremner** said that officers were exploring how to use such powers which would need Secretary of State approval. There was a lot of detailed work to undertake to work out how this could be carried out. Due to staff absence this work had not progressed further and there was no target date.

## Question 17

### **Councillor Carlo asked 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.

**Councillor Carlo** asked, as a supplementary question, why officers at this stage couldn't spell out the need for safety measures, improvement to amenity and measures to deter prostitution. **Councillor Bremner** said he couldn't comment on speculation about activities which are "supposed to" be going on in the building. He said that there had been many explanations given in the past as to the powers that the council had in respect of this matter. He agreed that the state of these buildings were a "blot on the city's landscape". However, Councillor Carlo was aware that the council had limited powers. However, he would raise the matter with officers again.

## Question 18

### **Councillor Schmierer asked 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.

**Councillor Grahame** said that the answer focussed mainly on the bookmakers rather than the "scourge" of FOBTs and she asked, as a supplementary question, if the cabinet member agreed that the council should do more to lobby the government to reduce the maximum stake. **Councillor Kendrick** said that he would be emailing the local government association and Newham Council to let them know that they had the city council's full support in their campaign.

## **Question 19**

**Councillor Raby asked 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 our 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.

**Councillor Raby** welcomed the response and asked, as a supplementary question, if the leader of the council would ensure that the Local Plan required all transportation and infrastructure investment to be sustainable. **Councillor Waters** said that "we will see what we can do".



**Report to** Council  
24 January 2017  
**Report of** Director of business services  
**Subject** Council tax reduction scheme 2017-18

**Item**

**8**

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### **Purpose**

To consider the council tax reduction scheme for 2017-18

### **Recommendation**

To approve the council tax reduction scheme (CTRS) 2017-18 by continuing with the 2016-17 scheme with four modifications

- 1) The applicable amounts shall be uprated by the composite rate of council tax increase that excludes adult social care. Including in the scheme the principle of the uprating rather than the actual figure;
- 2) The provision of backdating shall be reduced from six to two months.
- 3) The eligibility of CTRS applicants shall be aligned with the housing benefit regulations for those temporarily living away from Great Britain
- 4) The eligibility to CTR shall be aligned with the maximum six-month non- payment of Universal Credit, subject to being entitled to CTR during the period in question.

### **Corporate and service priorities**

The report helps to meet the corporate priority a fair city

### **Financial implications**

The proposed changes to the council tax reduction scheme are not anticipated to increase the costs of the scheme to the council overall. There will be increased costs from the uprating of the applicable amounts but these are expected to be offset by savings from the reduction in backdating.

**Ward/s:** All Wards

**Cabinet member:**

Councillor Stonard – Resources and business liaison

Councillor Thomas (Vaughan) – Fairness and equality

**Contact officers**

Tracy Woods Business relationship and procurement manager	01603 212140
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Anton Bull Director of business services	01603 212326
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**Background documents**

None

## Report

1. Since 1 April 2013 the council has operated a council tax reduction scheme (CTRS), which replaced council tax benefit.
2. There are currently approximately 16,647 recipients of CTR, of which 63% receive full entitlement.
3. As pensioners have been protected by the government any changes to CTRS will only impact working age claimants. Therefore the council can only control the cost of CTRS in relation to working age claims.
4. The council adopted the government's default CTRS in 2013, having made only minor technical changes since then. The government has been reducing its financial support to local authorities for the cost of the scheme therefore changes to the council tax discounts and exemptions have been made to try and address any shortfall.
5. There will be no revenues support grant to help cover the cost of the scheme from 2020-21. The reduction in the funding has already been incorporated into the MTFS.
6. The council tax reduction scheme cross party working group met on 12 September 2016 to review in detail options.
7. Recommendations from this cross party group were considered by cabinet on 12 October 2016 which led to the public consultation questions.

### **Consultation process for 2017-18 council tax reduction scheme**

8. Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 states :
  - (1) For each financial year, each billing authority must consider whether to revise its scheme or replace it with another scheme: and
  - (2) The authority must make any revision to its scheme, or any replacement scheme, no later than 31 January in the financial year preceding that for which the revision or replacement scheme is to have effect.
9. The budget consultation concluded on Sunday 8 January 2017, with 970 respondents. However full comments and analysis for the consultation was not available at the time of writing this report. However, from the raw data as below there is support for the proposed changes.
10. The results of the CTRS consultation questions asked are:-
  - i. QC1: Do you agree the council should continue to increase 'applicable amounts' for the scheme to protect those on low incomes?;  
Yes – 60.96% No – 25.80% Don't know – 13.24%
  - ii. QC2: Do you agree we should allow a Universal Credit claimant to remain eligible for CTRS during a period when they are not receiving Universal Credit?  
Yes - 48.74% No - 31.74% Don't know - 19.52%

iii.QC3: Do you agree we should reduce the backdating of CTRS from six to two months?

Yes - 56.65% No - 24.31% Don't know - 19.04%

iv.QC4. Do you agree we should change CTRS to match recent changes in housing benefit regulations for applicants temporarily living away from Great Britain?

Yes - 60.89% No - 17.22% Don't know - 21.89%

11. As preceptors Norfolk County Council and the Office of the Police and Crime commissioner have also been consulted on these proposed changes. No adverse comments have been received from the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Norfolk County Council have responded "Yes" to each of the questions as set out in paragraph 10 supporting the proposed changes. In addition, Norfolk County Council responded:

In addition we would ask that the City Council give consideration to exploring the following proposals:

- A. To limit Council Tax Support where claimant has savings to a lower level than the current £16,000 (Breckland use £10,000 & Kings Lynn and West Norfolk use £6,000)
- B. To limit Council Tax Support discount to occupants of properties no higher than Band D Council Tax
- C. To work with district colleagues across the County to establish the cap for the Council Tax Support discount for working age claimants at a uniform amount in Norfolk, suggested at 75% of the maximum Council Tax charge. The range is currently from 75% - 100%, with only the City Council offering 100% in the County.

### **Proposals for 2017-18 council tax reduction scheme**

12. As the Government shall not be providing future uprating figures for applicable amounts Norwich City Council is proposing to update by the same amount as any increase in council tax (the composite rate of any rise in the city council, county council and office of the police and crime commissioner but excluding any increase attributable to the adult social care)

13. In the Government's summer budget of 2015 it proposed a change to the back dating of housing benefit from six months to one month, this came into force in April 2016. The council chose not to mirror this change in the CTRS for 2016-17 however are proposing in the 2017-18 scheme that this should be reduced to two months.

14. The council are however proposing to align with the housing benefit regulations for applicants (or other members of the household) who are temporarily living elsewhere away from Great Britain for a period of more than four weeks. They would cease to be entitled to CTR. There would be extensions to the four week absent period for particular reasons.

15. The final proposal is for applicants to retain eligibility to CTR during the maximum six month non-payment of Universal Credit, subject to being entitled to CTR during the period in question.

Customers remain eligible for UC for a six month period where UC payments stop due to income being too high. This enables customers whose earnings fluctuate to receive UC without the need to continually reclaim. If a customer receives no award of UC for a full six month period (due to income being too high) the UC eligibility then ceases; after which a UC application would be necessary. This proposal means that although the customers would still be required to report changes to their income / earnings / capital during the six month period, they would not be required to re-apply if they become entitled to CTR within the six month period.

16. The overall cost of these proposals will be covered by the increase in council tax but would reduce the amount collected.

### **Proposals for 2017-18 council tax discounts and exemptions**

17. There are no proposed adjustments to existing discounts and exemptions.

### **Implementation**

18. The scheme has to be agreed by 31 January 2017 but council tax will be set for precepting authorities in February 2017. The S151 office will populate the scheme with the actual figures once the council tax has been set.

## Integrated impact assessment



**NORWICH**  
City Council

The IIA should assess **the impact of the recommendation** being made by the report

Detailed guidance to help with completing the assessment can be found [here](#). Delete this row after completion

### Report author to complete

<b>Committee:</b>	Council
<b>Committee date:</b>	24/01/2017
<b>Director / Head of service</b>	Anton Bull Director of business services
<b>Report subject:</b>	Council tax reduction scheme 2017-18
<b>Date assessed:</b>	19/12/16
<b>Description:</b>	To propose for approval the council tax reduction scheme for 2017-18



	Impact			
Economic (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Finance (value for money)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	There is a negative impact in that continued protection of the 100% CTRS will not be fully funded by the reducing revenues support grant placing pressure on the council's budget. However a positive impact of maintaining the scheme is that the council won't be chasing a large number of small debts that would be difficult to recover
Other departments and services e.g. office facilities, customer contact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ICT services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Economic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Financial inclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	100% CTRS will protect financially vulnerable citizens
Social (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Safeguarding children and adults	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>S17 crime and disorder act 1998</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human Rights Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Health and well being	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

	<b>Impact</b>			
<b>Equality and diversity (please add an 'x' as appropriate)</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Relations between groups (cohesion)</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Eliminating discrimination &amp; harassment</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Advancing equality of opportunity</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Transportation</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Natural and built environment</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Waste minimisation &amp; resource use</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Pollution</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Sustainable procurement</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Energy and climate change</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>(Please add an 'x' as appropriate)</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Comments</b>

	<b>Impact</b>			
<b>Risk management</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

<b>Recommendations from impact assessment</b>				
<b>Positive</b>				
<b>Negative</b>				
<b>Neutral</b>				
<b>Issues</b>				



**Report to** Council  
24 January, 2017  
**Report of** Director of business services  
**Subject** Members allowances scheme

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**Item**

9

### **Purpose**

To consider the recommendations of the independent panel set up to make recommendations on the members allowances scheme as required by the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations, 2003.

### **Recommendations**

To determine whether or not to accept the recommendation of the independent panel to retain the current scheme of members' allowances, as detailed in the panel's report.

### **Financial Consequences**

If the council retains the current scheme the budget required for 2017/18 would be £359,055

**Ward/s:** All wards

**Cabinet member:** Councillor Stonard – Resources and business liaison

### **Contact Officers**

Andy Emms

01603 212459

### **Background Documents:**

None

# Report

## Background

1. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations, 2003 provide that it is for the council to decide its scheme of allowances and the amounts to be paid under that scheme. However, the council is required to establish an independent panel to provide advice on its scheme. The council must have regard to this advice.

## Review by independent panel

2. An independent panel undertook a full review of the council's Members Allowances Scheme in November, 2016. The Terms of Reference of the Panel were –  
  
    “To make an independent assessment of the current Members’ Allowances Scheme and to make recommendations on amendments to the scheme to Council, if required.”
3. Comparative data on the allowances paid by some other similar local authorities was made available to the panel and is attached as appendix 1.
4. The panel's report which details its work, all matters considered and recommendation is attached as appendix 2.
5. As required by the regulations the panel's recommendation has been advertised and the panel's report made available for inspection at City Hall.
6. The recommendation of the panel is to retain the current scheme of members' allowances. The scheme already has a built in index increasing members' allowances in line with staff pay increases awarded to staff by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services.
7. A staff pay increase of 1% has already been agreed to commence on 1 April 2017 and therefore the current scheme, instigated following the recommendations of the 2013 panel, includes a 1% increase in members' allowances to commence on that date. If council accepts the 2016 panel's recommendations, there will be no change to the plan to implement that increase and members' allowances will not increase for a further four years unless staff are awarded any increases in that period.

## Integrated impact assessment



**NORWICH**  
City Council

The IIA should assess **the impact of the recommendation** being made by the report

Detailed guidance to help with completing the assessment can be found [here](#). Delete this row after completion

### Report author to complete

<b>Committee:</b>	Council
<b>Committee date:</b>	24 January 2016
<b>Head of service:</b>	Anton Bull
<b>Report subject:</b>	Members Allowances
<b>Date assessed:</b>	9 December 2016
<b>Description:</b>	Consideration of recommendations of independent panel

	Impact			
Economic (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Finance (value for money)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	The 1% index increase in 2017 is already in the current scheme and built into budget projections
Other departments and services e.g. office facilities, customer contact	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
ICT services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Economic development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Financial inclusion	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Social (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Safeguarding children and adults	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<u>S17 crime and disorder act 1998</u>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Human Rights Act 1998	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Health and well being	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



	Impact			
Equality and diversity (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Relations between groups (cohesion)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Eliminating discrimination & harassment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Advancing equality of opportunity	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Environmental (please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Transportation	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Natural and built environment	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Waste minimisation & resource use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Pollution	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sustainable procurement	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Energy and climate change	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
(Please add an 'x' as appropriate)	Neutral	Positive	Negative	Comments
Risk management	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Recommendations from impact assessment	
<b>Positive</b>	
<b>Negative</b>	
<b>Neutral</b>	
<b>Issues</b>	

	Authority							
	Norwich City Council	City of Lincoln Council	Cambridge City Council	Oxford City Council	Exeter City Council	Gloucester City Council	Preston City Council	Ipswich Borough Council
Population	138,872	97,065	130,907	159,574	127,308	127,158	141,302	135,600
No of wards	13	11	14	24	18	15	22	16
No of councillors	39	33	42	48	40	36	57	48
Basic allowance	£6,193	£4,670	£4,300	£4,881	£5,000	£5,600	£3,682	£4,140
Special responsibility allowances (SRAs)								
Leader of the council	£10,322	£9,924	£10,433	£14,643	£16,250	£19,600	£10,243	£11,302
Deputy leader of the council	n/a	£6,422	n/a	£4,881	n/a	£12,600	£7,967	£7,911
Executive/cabinet member with portfolio	£5,161	£5,253	£8,346	£7,322	£8,750	£9,800	£6,715	£7,533
Executive/cabinet member without portfolio	n/a	n/a	n/a	£2,441	£2,500	n/a	n/a	£3,767
Opposition/minority group leader/deputy	£5,161	£2,335	£2,307	£4,881 <sup>1</sup>	n/a	£5,600 £1,400	£3,415 <sup>2</sup>	£3,767
Minor minority group leader	£2,581 <sup>3</sup>	n/a	£1,108	See above	n/a	n/a	n/a	£1,904
Scrutiny/overview committee - chair	£2,581	£4,086	£1,113	£4,881	£5,000	£2,800	£2,846	£3,767
Scrutiny/overview committee – vice chair	n/a	n/a	Spokes-persons <sup>4</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	£1,093	n/a
Scrutiny committee member	£1,548	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Audit committee Chair	£2,581	£1,168	n/a	£1,220	£2,500	£2,800	£1,707	n/a
Audit committee Member	£1,548	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

<sup>1</sup> Shared between groups.

<sup>2</sup> Minimum 6 councillors

<sup>3</sup> Where group comprises minimum 10% of the council

<sup>4</sup> Cambridge has SRAs for scrutiny/overview opposition and lead minority spokespersons.

Allowances paid to councillors in comparator “family” authorities – October 2016

	Authority							
	Norwich City Council	City of Lincoln Council	Cambridge City Council	Oxford City Council	Exeter City Council	Gloucester City Council	Preston City Council	Ipswich Borough Council
Planning chair	£2,581	£4,086	£3,226	£4,881	£5,000	£4,480	£3,415	£3,767
Planning vice chair	n/a	n/a	£607	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Planning member	£1,548	n/a	£556 <sup>5</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Licensing/regulatory Chair	£2,581	£4,086	£1,113	n/a	£3,750	£2,800	£1,707	£3,767
Licensing/regulatory Vice chair	n/a	£2,335	£835	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Licensing/regulatory Member	£1,548	n/a	£417 <sup>6</sup>	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Standards committee Chair	£362	£1,168	£1,113	n/a	n/a	n/a	£1,707	n/a
Standards committee	£362	n/a	£362	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	£3,767

<sup>5</sup> Cambridge also has SRAs for the opposition and lead minority group spokespersons on its planning committee and also has a joint development control committee for which the chair and members receive SRAS

<sup>6</sup> Cambridge also has SRAs for the opposition and lead minority group spokespersons on its licensing/regulatory committee and also has a joint development control committee for which the chair and members receive SRAS

Other considerations:

	Authority							
	Norwich City Council	City of Lincoln Council	Cambridge City Council	Oxford City Council	Exeter City Council	Gloucester City Council	Preston City Council	Ipswich Borough Council
Restrict members to one SRA	Restricted <sup>7</sup>	Yes	No	No <sup>8</sup>	Yes	Yes	No <sup>9</sup>	No
Child care (£/hour)	£10 + specialist care	£5 per child	Full cost	Max total £1,000 pa See above	£9.91	£9	Full cost	£10
Dependants (£/hour)	£10 + specialist care	£5 per dependant	Full cost		£9.91	£9	Full cost	Up to £25
Qualify for local government pension scheme	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No

<sup>7</sup> Only 1 SRA from tiers 1, 2 and 3 ie leader of the council, minority group leaders, chairs of audit, licensing, planning applications and scrutiny committees and only 1 SRA from tier 4 allowance (members of audit, licensing, planning applications and scrutiny committees) and a councillor shall not get a tier 3 allowance as chair as well as a tier 4 allowance as a member of the same committee.

<sup>8</sup> Members receive their two highest

<sup>9</sup> Members receive their two highest

**NORWICH CITY COUNCIL**

**INDEPENDENT PANEL**

**INTO MEMBERS ALLOWANCES**

**REPORT TO THE COUNCIL**

<b>Members of the independent panel</b>
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- |                         |   |                                    |
|-------------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Graham Creelman (Chair) | - | Chair, Norwich Culture Partnership |
| Rev'd Robert Avery      | - | The Church of St Peter Mancroft    |
| Ros Brown               | - | CEO, Norfolk Community Law Service |
| Brian Lynch             | - | UNISON                             |
| Kate Money              | - | Chair, Age UK Norwich              |

Contact Officer :- Andy Emms, Democratic Services Manager.

t: 01603 212459 e: andyemms@norwich.gov.uk

## **Terms of Reference**

1. The Terms of reference of the panel were –  
  
“To make an independent assessment of the current Members Allowances Scheme and to make recommendations on amendments to the scheme, if required, to Council”
2. The independent panel was asked to recommend a scheme which it believes fairly recognises the workload and responsibilities of councillors. The question of affordability of the scheme was not a matter for the panel, which understands that it is up to the council to consider if and how to implement the recommended scheme in the light of other priorities and the budget position.

## **Background**

3. The current scheme detailed in Appendix 1 has been in place since 2013 and is indexed linked to pay increases awarded to staff by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services. Regulations limit such indices to run for a maximum of four years and the independent panel was convened to enable the council to consider the allowances scheme before that time period expires.

## **What allowances can be paid?**

9. Under the provisions of the Local Government Act, 2000 and the Local Authorities (Members Allowances)(England) Regulations, 2003 the following allowances can be paid:-

### ***Basic Allowance***

10. Each local authority must make provision in its scheme of allowances for a basic, flat rate allowance payable to all members. The allowance must be the same for each councillor. This is intended to recognise the time commitment of all councillors, including such inevitable calls on their time as meetings with officers and constituents and attendance at political group meetings. It is also intended to cover incidental costs such as the use of their homes and private telephones, faxes, computers, etc.
11. Government guidance suggests that it is important that some element of the work of councillors continues to be voluntary. This must be balanced against the need to ensure that financial loss is not suffered by elected members, and further to ensure that, despite the input required, people are encouraged to come forward as elected members and that their service to the community is retained.

### ***Special Responsibility Allowance***

12. Each local authority may also make provision in its scheme for the payment of special responsibility allowances (SRA) for those councillors who have significant responsibilities. They can also be paid to members of a committee that meets with exceptional frequency or for exceptionally long periods.



13. Where one political group is in control, and where an authority has decided to pay special responsibility allowances, the authority must make provision for the payment of a special responsibility allowance to at least one member of a minority group.

#### ***Dependants' Carers Allowance***

14. A scheme of allowances may also include the payment of dependants' carers allowance to those councillors who incur expenditure for the care of children or other dependants whilst attending Council meetings or other approved duties.

#### ***Travelling and Subsistence Allowance***

15. Travel and subsistence allowances can be paid for attending council meetings or other approved duties. This can include an allowance for those who travel by bicycle or other non-motorised transport.

#### ***Co-optees Allowance***

16. Each local authority may make provision in the scheme for the payment of a co-optees allowance to any co-opted and appointed members of a council's committee or sub-committee.

#### ***Backdating Allowances***

17. When a scheme of allowances is amended an authority may, having regard to the recommendations of the panel, chose to apply the amendment retrospectively to the beginning of the financial year in which the amendment is made.

#### ***Annual Adjustments for Allowance Levels***

18. A scheme of allowances may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances to be ascertained by reference to an index e.g. inflation or increases in staff salary levels. If a panel makes a recommendation that allowance levels should be determined according to an index, it should also make recommendations as to how long the index should run before reconsideration. In any case, an index may not run for more than four years before a further recommendation on it is sought from an independent remuneration panel.

### **The Work of the Panel**

19. The panel received guidance and information from the Democratic services manager including :-
  - Details of what allowances can be paid under the current regulations
  - Comparative data on the allowances paid by other similar local authorities.
  - The Council's current members allowances scheme.

25. The panel noted that all the tiers in the current scheme were increased significantly in 2013 on the advice of the 2012 panel which had taken into account comparator data at the time and the views of councillors from all groups who were interviewed. On the recommendations of the 2012 panel the:-
- a) basic allowance had been increased from £5420 to £6000 p.a.
  - b) SRAs for the Leader and cabinet members were increased significantly because of the volume of work and level of responsibility of those roles.
  - c) number of Tier 4 SRAs that a member could receive was limited to one (before 2013 it had been no more than 3) because the basic allowance should cover the broad range of councillor responsibilities, including attending council meetings)
26. The panel believed that the :-
- a) structure of tiers in the current scheme should be retained including the restrictions on the no of tiers that could be paid
  - b) Travel and Subsistence allowances should continue to be paid at the same level as those to officers.
27. The panel was informed that the Local Government Pensions Scheme (Transitional Provisions, Savings and Amendment) Regulations 2014 removed the eligibility of councillors to have access to the Local Government Pension Scheme so it was no longer necessary for the panel to make a recommendation on this issue.
28. The panel was informed that the group leaders of the three political groups on the council had been consulted on their views and none had suggested that any changes were required to the current scheme. One group commented that as the council progresses its transformation process this could lead to increased roles for councillors. If that happened then allowances might need to be looked at again before any four year index came to an end. The panel noted that if the council did wish to look at the scheme at any time it could do so and the views of an independent panel would be sought at that time.
29. The panel considered that taking into account the comparator data; the significant increases in allowances approved the last time the scheme was reviewed and the fact that the political groups on the council were not asking for any increase, the current scheme should be retained. It noted that the SRAs for cabinet members were slightly low compared to the comparator data and although it was not minded to recommend an increase at this time, this was something a future panel might wish to look at.
30. Panel members believed that the current system of linking future increases to staff salary levels should continue. Staff will receive a 1% increase on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2017 and this would be added to the current allowances and the index should then be applied for the maximum allowable period of four years.

## Recommendations

To recommend Council to retain the current scheme of members allowances and implement, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2017 the following allowances, to be increased annually on 1<sup>st</sup> April, indexed linked up to 31 March, 2021 to pay increases awarded to staff by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services :-

	£
1) <b>BASIC ALLOWANCES</b> (Payable to all councillors)	6255
2) <b>SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES</b>	
<b>Tier 1</b> Leader of the Council	10425
<b>Tier 2</b> Cabinet members & the Leader of the major minority group	5213
<b>Tier 3</b> Chairs of Audit, Licensing, Planning Applications and Scrutiny committees and the Leader of any minority group that comprises minimum of 10% of the Council	2607
<b>Tier 4</b> Members of Audit, Licensing, Planning Applications and Scrutiny committees	1563
<b>Tier 5</b> Co-opted members of Standards committee	366
▪ <b>Only one SRA to be paid from Tiers 1, 2 and 3</b>	
▪ <b>Only one SRA to be paid from Tier 4</b>	
▪ <b>A councillor shall not receive a Tier 3 as chair as well as a Tier 4 as a member of the same committee</b>	
3) <b>TRAVEL AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES</b>	
to be paid at the same rates as Norwich City Council employees and be subject to the same requirements for claims and payments	
4) <b>CHILDCARE AND DEPENDENT CARERS' ALLOWANCES</b>	
To be paid at the rate of £10 per hour per child/dependant etc. (The Director of business services to be authorised to make additional payment in cases where specialist care is required)	

**Graham Creelman**

Chair of the independent panel

## CURRENT MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME

With effect from 1 April 2013 the following scheme of members allowances will be increased annually on 1<sup>st</sup> April, indexed linked to the pay increase awarded to staff by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services

	£
<b>BASIC ALLOWANCES</b> (Payable to all councillors)	6193
<b>SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES</b>	
Tier 1    Leader of the Council	10322
Tier 2    Executive Members & Leader of the major minority group	5161
Tier 3    Chairs of Audit, Licensing, Planning Applications and Scrutiny committees and the Leader of any minority group that comprises minimum of 10% of the Council	2581
Tier 4    Members of Audit, Licensing, Planning Applications and Scrutiny committees	1548
Tier 5    Co-opted members of Standards committee	362

- **Only one SRA to be paid from Tiers 1, 2 and 3**
- **Only one SRA to be paid from Tier 4**
- **A councillor shall not receive a Tier 3 as chair as well as a Tier 4 as a member of the same committee**

### Travel and Subsistence Allowances

To be paid at the same rates as Norwich City Council employees and be subject to the same requirements for claims and payments. The current levels are:-

#### ***Travel Allowances***

All vehicles – 46.9 per mile

Travel outside Norwich – Cheapest public transport option to be used booked through T.I.C. When own vehicle used with prior agreement of Democratic services manager, reimbursement based on equivalent to cheapest public transport option.

### ***Subsistence Allowances***

Breakfast	£7.74 (£6.45 with non VAT receipt)
Lunch	£10.69 (£8.91 with non VAT receipt)
Tea	£4.22 (£3.52 with non VAT receipt)
Evening Meal	£13.24 (£11.03 with non VAT receipt)

### ***Personal incidental expenses***

(For personal incidental expenses when staying overnight – receipts not required)

Per Night	£4.59
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### ***Overnight Subsistence***

Hotels to be booked by T.I.C on basis of best deal available taking into account the needs of the councillor and the event attended.

### **Childcare and Dependant carers allowance**

To be paid at the rate of £10 per hour per child/dependant etc.

(The Director of business services to be authorised to make additional payment in cases where specialist care is required)

### **Membership of the Local Government Pension Scheme is not available as part of this Members Allowances Scheme**

**The Independent Panel to be reconvened no later than 4 years after the implementation of the scheme.**

