



## **Council**

**31 January 2023**

### **Questions to cabinet members**

#### **Question 1**

**Councillor Matthew Fulton-McAlister to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:**

“I have long been a supporter of rehabilitation for people that offend in our community, with a positive chance provided for them to ‘pay back’ a debt to society in a socially constructive and mutually respectful way. Can the cabinet member for social housing comment on the success of a new partnership with the probation service which has impacted University Ward?”

**Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing’s response:**

“Community Payback is a scheme managed by the Probation Service which allows low-risk offenders to make amends for their crimes by carrying out unpaid work on local projects, such as re-decorating community centres, tidying public spaces and removing litter in their communities. The scheme is a part of a Community Order sentence which is passed by Crown and Magistrates Court in England and Wales. It can also form part of a Suspended Sentence Order. Offenders can be sentenced to between 40 and 300 hours of unpaid work in the community and must carry this out in their spare time.

Community Payback have partnered with Norwich City Council and will provided 3-days’ work per week for the foreseeable future. They have already a completed some estate improvements at Northfields.

Community Payback are currently on-site at the Magdalen Close estate. Our tenancy management team approached tenants to ask if they needed help and assistance with overgrown and unsightly gardens in the close.

Twelve households agreed, and community payback members have completed the following tasks so far:

- Removal of overgrowth, shrubs, weeds, and green waste from 12 tenanted front gardens
- Trimming back of trees in gardens to bring them to a manageable height
- Tidy of communal green spaces, removing waste, cutting back overgrowth, bushes, and clearance of hard standing areas

In total, three large skips of waste and debris have been removed from site so far.

Community Payback will continue on-site for the coming weeks. They are due to lay bark cuttings in the cleared gardens, which will help tenants manage these areas more easily going forwards. To boost greenery in the area, Community Payback will be planting several trees in the communal areas, using saplings from Community Payback's own nursery, which is also managed and maintained by people on probation.

We have received positive feedback from both members of Community Payback scheme, who have gained new skills and work experience, and residents who have been pleased with the results. This scheme operates in addition to the estates improvement programme run by the council all year round."

## Question 2

**Councillor Huntley to ask the deputy leader and social housing of the council the following question:**

“I regularly walk past the site of the former Kings Arms Pub site and am delighted to see that new residents have moved into this new, excellent quality council housing. Across Mile Cross there is both interest and pride in the steps taken by this council to take land from a failing private developer and turn it into something which enhances and helps build a new community, showing the capacity of this council to make real change. Can the cabinet member for social housing comment on the feedback received from new tenants?”

**Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing’s response:**

“Turning this once derelict plot into much-needed family homes is a fantastic outcome for the city and demonstrates our ongoing commitment to social housing.

By acquiring the Kings Arms site through a compulsory purchase order and working with partners to deliver three four-bedroom houses, a five-bedroom house and an adapted two-bedroom bungalow, we have shown our determination not only to address vacant sites and the issues which they attract but also to deliver positive outcomes for local people.

The properties have been built to a high standard, exceeding national space standards and with a ‘fabric first’ approach to reducing energy use, ensuring properties are compliant with emerging standards for low-carbon heating and hot water.

These are modern, high quality homes, designed to save tenants money on heating and hot water with extra insulation, triple glazing and solar panels amid the growing cost of living crisis.

Feedback from the new tenants has been overwhelmingly positive, with residents particularly pleased with the additional space which they now have and the energy efficiency they are able to achieve.

Purchasing the King's Arms site to benefit the community just shows how creative we are when addressing the demand for affordable housing and I am pleased that the positive feedback, from tenants and Mile Cross residents alike, recognises the success of our approach.””

### Question 3

#### **Councillor Mike Sands to ask the leader of the council the following question:**

“Next month will represent the anniversary of the illegal and devastating war unleashed by Russia upon the people of Ukraine. Since the onset of the war, and despite the significant limitations of the government Homes for Ukraine scheme, hundreds of people have now settled within our city society, welcomed by families, organisations, and communities. Can the Leader comment on the work taken by this council to support refugees from Ukraine and whether ongoing support from central government can be secured for its future?”

#### **Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:**

“Since March 2022, our community support team has been working in collaboration with Norfolk County Council and other Norfolk districts to support people fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. In Norwich, we have welcomed 199 Ukrainian guests (138 adults and 61 children) who have been hosted by Norwich residents in their homes.

Many of our guests have now successfully moved on from their initial hosting arrangement and are now settled in rental accommodation, have moved away or returned to Ukraine. At the present time Norwich has 66 active hosts supporting 124 Ukrainian guests (84 adults and 40 children).

Supporting guests with these moves can often be complex and sensitive. In addition to this work the team undertake accommodation checks, liaising with hosts, welfare checks, safeguarding checks, resourcing drop-in sessions at community locations such as the Millennium Library, answering any questions or queries. Our Ukrainian speaking welfare officers have been key in breaking down language barriers and supporting guests’ adjustment to living in the UK, and many of our guests settle in quickly with their host families. All our team are on hand to support hosts and guests alike with any concerns, queries or issues throughout the scheme.

We have worked closely with community focused organisations, in particular Norfolk Polonia, to ensure there is a broad level of support for guests and a good infrastructure for conveying accurate information.

Funding for this work has come from central government through Norfolk County Council and on current numbers we have sufficient funding to continue delivering this scheme in 2023/24 with a smaller indicative allocation that would allow us to continue supporting guests and hosts up to the end of 2024/25 when the initial three year visas granted to Ukrainian guests will expire.

At present, we have been given no indication from central government on the scheme and the path to resettlement after 2024/25”

#### Question 4

**Councillor Driver to ask the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion the following question:**

“Late last year the *Guardian* newspaper carried a feature on the Goldsmith Street housing scheme in our city, which when it was completed in 2018 was the UK’s largest social housing estate built to Passivhaus standards – an ultra-low energy approach. Tenants at the 105-home development, which won the Stirling architecture prize in 2019, said they did not need to turn on their heating, even on the coldest day of the year so far. Will the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion comment on this claim and agree that this city and country needs 1,000 more Goldsmith Street’s? ”

**Councillor Hampton, the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion’s response:**

“Thank you for your question.

This council has a proud reputation for delivering highly energy efficient homes and I was delighted to read the article where tenants were expressing the benefits of such homes.

We are well aware that increasing fuel costs are contributing to a cost of living crisis for many people and thanks to the Passivhaus principles adopted on our new-build homes, our residents should see up to 70% savings on their energy bills, due to a fabric first approach and the technology in use – a big help to a significant proportion of residents in Norwich who we know are in fuel poverty.

We have built on the learning from the Goldsmith Street project, and other projects recently developed, to understand the building forms and technologies that will continue to be included in future developments of council homes. The recently completed five homes on the former Kings Arms site and the current development under construction at Three Score have continued to adopt these higher standards, with further projects at Argyle Street and Mile Cross in the pipeline.

In addition we work in partnership with local Registered Providers to learn from each other and to consider future standards to meet the zero carbon ambitions of the City.

I agree with the sentiment that all new homes built in the UK should adopt higher standards, with the costs to residents at the heart of the design, however we must also recognise that new-build is only a small part of the solution to achieving net zero by 2050 and we must also continue work to make our adapting and retro-fitting existing homes warmer and more affordable for residents, which is why we have approved £290m in our Housing Revenue Account business plan to achieve this on our existing stock.

All in all, as a council housing provider, we’re taking bold steps to provide energy efficient, high quality homes to meet housing demand for the people of Norwich and surrounding areas. And that’s something we’re deeply proud of.”

## Question 5

**Councillor Peek to ask the cabinet member for environmental services the following question:**

“The issue of fly-tipping and rubbish has significantly increased since the Conservative controlled Norfolk County Council imposed higher fees for DIY waste at their recycling centres in 2017. The following year fly-tipping had gone up by a quarter and there were nearly 36,000 fewer visits to the recycling centres. Now I read that they intend to close some centres. Despite moving the costs of this fly-tipping to farmers, landowners, and district councils like ours, I am pleased that this council has launched the ‘Love Norwich’ campaign to tackle this problem. Can the cabinet member for environmental services comment on progress with this?”

**Councillor Oliver, the cabinet member for environmental services’ response:**

“Love Norwich – Play Your Part is a targeted, data-driven environmental improvement campaign, that will target environmental anti-social behaviour across Norwich. It is being delivered in partnership with our communities, the Business Innovation District and our key service delivery partners Biffa and NCSL.

The campaign is delivering a programme of activity across the 3 key themes of: engagement; enforcement; and operational and structural improvements.

Since the campaign was launched in November 2022, we have

- Developed high profile branding for the campaign to allow consistency in messaging
- Delivered our first community event, aimed at delivering environmental improvements in one of our environmental ASB hotspots.
- Offered free bulky uplifts to approximately 720 residents there to reduce incidents of fly tipping, and aim to deliver a similar programme of activity next month
- In the city centre, we have been working with businesses, the BID and NCSL to reduce litter and fly tipping, and this has delivered significant improvements to the cleanliness of the city centre

The next phase of the campaign include a review of refuse storage arrangements in our housing estates, opportunities for increased enforcement, particularly in the city centre, and delivering of further community events”

## Question 6

### **Councillor Padda to ask the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth the following question:**

“I remember fondly the pioneering work of this council, and its former Leader Baroness Hollis of Heigham to build the Bowthorpe community in the 1970s onward. In a similar vein the East Norwich Masterplan offers our city the same opportunity with the potential for the 3,500 homes and 6,000 jobs in the city. Can the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth comment on progress since June to ensure the four key sites within the plan will be included in the Greater Norwich Local Plan and hoped opportunities this will bring?”

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

“Since Cabinet endorsed the stage 2 masterplan for East Norwich in June last year work has continued on delivering the masterplan for the largest brownfield redevelopment in the East of England. If delivered in the right way we will not only see and vibrant and sustainable new quarter of the City but something that massively benefits the whole of the city through making accessible a truly remarkable historic legacy, providing infrastructure which massively improves access to green and blue infrastructure, and creates a new interface between the City and the Broads.

Main areas of progress have been:

- promotion of the policy framework for East Norwich through the GNLP examination;
- commencement of stage 3 of the masterplan process, being led by Homes England this is looking at matters related to delivery including financial modelling, detailed viability appraisal and assessment of delivery options. It will report in March; and
- the formation of the East Norwich Delivery Board. This took over from the previous partnership board which oversaw development of the masterplan in October 2022. Its membership is Norwich City Council, Norfolk County Council, South Norfolk Council, the Broads Authority and Homes England and has a clear focus on delivery.

Throughout the master-planning process, landowners, residents, businesses and other interested parties have been closely involved. Further engagement is scheduled to take place in spring 2023.”

## Question 7

### **Councillor Kidman to ask the leader of the council the following question:**

"I note with interest the piece of public art, called a 'Climate Mural for Our Times' which has been displayed in this chamber since our last meeting. Can the Leader comment on it further and the message it hopes to send?"

### **Councillor Waters, the leader's response:**

"There is a growing awareness that climate change and the impacts of global warming is an existential threat. Norwich City Council has made significant progress on reducing carbon emissions, but we know the choices we make as a city now will be vital to securing a sustainable future. By placing a 10-metre wide climate mural in our council chamber, decision makers in Norwich have an ever-present reminder to take urgent action.

2019 saw a step change with the Council's formal declaration of biodiversity and climate emergencies and crucially, recognition of the link between the climate emergencies and the socioeconomic emergency.

The scale and breadth of these tasks and challenges is not something that the local authority, or any one organisation, can or should tackle alone. Many of the solutions lie in local communities, including the vital voice of young people - with the city council using its convening role in bringing people and organisations together and working to create a consensus to enact positive change.

The mural is the outcome of a close collaboration between the artist Gennadiy Ivanov, Norwich City Council, the University of East Anglia Climate Research Unit, the Transitions Art-Science Project, and Global Water Futures, an international research programme whose headquarters are based at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada.

Entitled 'A Climate Mural for Our Times', includes a record of global temperature over time (66 million BC through to the end of the next century) represented by the hues of the sky, and informed by CRU's 'state-of-the-art' climate science.

The mural also features images of the impacts of climate change on the local landscape and its human inhabitants. It is believed that this is the first time that art and leading-edge science have been combined to give such a vivid portrayal of the challenges posed by climate change and its impacts in the past, the present, and the future.

J.W. Turner, the 19th Century artist, through his painting, taught people to understand they were living through an industrial revolution. Our climate change mural serves a similar purpose both as a call to act and avoid the worst effects of the climate crisis, but also demonstrating how local people and organisations can coalesce around a local council that is prepared to invest/ lead/ facilitate solutions to the climate and biodiversity crises. We hope that it will not only help focus minds in the council chamber, but also help reach new audiences across Norwich."



## **Question 8**

**Councillor Stutely to ask the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:**

“Public consultation over proposed charges for parking in Eaton Park began last year and I note that some constituents have enquired why this proposed parking fee is indeed necessary. Can the cabinet member for community wellbeing explain why this council must consider such options to generate the income to keep our award-winning parks both open and invested upon?”

**Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for community wellbeing’s response:**

“The Council is having to make a number of tough decisions due to mounting financial pressures and a lack of sufficient sustained investment in local government.

The decision to introduce charges was made as a result of these financial pressures. The move to introduce these charges has the backing of those who responded to the council’s 2022-23 budget consultation in which they gave their support to the council to prioritise increasing fees and charges to protect services.

We have tried to keep the charges low for those who have to pay to park and responded to feedback from the consultation.

The council has purposely kept fees low – with costs starting at £2 for up to four hours and introduced a season ticket option, as it understands the effects the cost of living crisis is having on households. But the council has had to work hard to close the budget gap of more than £6million and this sort of measure is unfortunately necessary if we are to protect vital services for residents and continue to invest in keeping our parks free to use spaces of which we can be justifiably proud.”

## **Question 9**

**Councillor Sue Sands to ask the cabinet member for environmental services the following question:**

“I am proud of the record of this council, over decades, to rightfully prioritise services and support to tackle rough sleeping and homelessness. Can the cabinet member for environmental services comment on the work achieved by the council since the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol measures were instigated last year?”

**Councillor Oliver, the cabinet member for environmental services’ response:**

“This council has a proud record of providing assistance to the most vulnerable and supporting people sleeping rough is a key commitment for us.

We are particularly aware of the need to provide safe, warm accommodation for people sleeping rough during the winter months. This commitment extends beyond the severe weather emergency provision advised by government and, in Norwich, runs continuously from November until March. In addition to beds available through the city’s hostel system, the winter night shelter is offered, which is also supported by our rough sleeping strategy.

The accommodation is provided by two local churches and ensures that nobody has to stay on the streets during the winter months. Accessing the winter shelter is often the first step toward building relationships with these clients and encouraging further engagement with the help and resources we have available.

We take the opportunity to work with the client to understand their needs and wishes and ensure that they have the right support in place to help keep them off the streets.

Our approach is successful. The annual DLUHC (Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities) verified rough sleeper count (November 22) shows a 30 percent decrease in rough sleepers in Norwich since 2021. This is the lowest figure for seven years.”

## **Question 10**

**Councillor Lubbock to ask the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:**

“Please can the cabinet member for community wellbeing explain the rationale of this council’s decision to impose car parking charges into Eaton Park despite there having been a consultation with over 700 responses?”

**Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for community wellbeing’s response:**

“The Council is having to make a number of tough decisions due to mounting financial pressures and a lack of sufficient sustained investment in local government.

The decision to introduce charges was made as a result of these financial pressures. The move to introduce these charges has the backing of those who responded to the council’s 2022-23 budget consultation in which they gave their support to the council to prioritise increasing fees and charges to protect services.

We have tried to keep the charges low for those who have to pay to park and responded to feedback from the consultation.

The council has purposely kept fees low – with costs starting at £2 for up to four hours and introduced a season ticket option, as it understands the effects the cost of living crisis is having on households. But the council has had to work hard to close the budget gap of more than £6million and this sort of measure is unfortunately necessary if we are to protect vital services for residents and continue to invest in keeping our parks free to use spaces of which we can be justifiably proud.”

## Question 11

### **Councillor Bogelein to ask the leader of the council the following question:**

“I have recently dealt with cases where residents have been struggling with a mixture of issues including potential homelessness, difficulties claiming benefits, illness, financial struggles and even suicide in the family. Their rent exceeds the level of benefit they receive, and they are running up debts, but cannot access home options until an eviction notice is served, impacting their mental health in the meantime. In such cases, it would be beneficial to have a multi-disciplinary meeting including different council teams, but this has been declined. I have been informed if a GP refers the individual a meeting would take place. Why is it so hard to get teams in a room together to decide the best way forward, to stop wasting resources and to ensure that highly vulnerable residents feel like someone cares?”

### **Councillor Waters, the leader's response:**

“Thank you for your question, which allows me to describe what we have in place to support residents who find themselves in dire circumstances.

With regard to the case management for housing options applicants and tenants, through the NEC housing management system staff have visibility of a housing applications status, household debt, and the status of the tenancy, and use this information to co-ordinate their activities and provide support.

There are legislative, policy and evidence based, triggers which determine the points at which staff can and do take action, with staff from different services co-ordinating their activities as appropriate through complex case management meetings.

In a wider context the city council operates an Early Help Hub where council teams meet with representatives from over 30 partner agencies. This provides a forum for professionals to seek advice regarding case management and co-ordinate activities, establishing links to manage high needs and complex cases.”

You know as well as I do that much of what the council does is to mitigate Government policies that have undermined people's financial resilience: the 'bedroom tax'; the two child benefit limit; cuts in working tax credits, five week wait for Universal Credit Payments, pay freezes. You are right to identify the fact that Local Housing Allowance is frozen while private landlords can increase rent levels for their tenants unconstrained. So, if you know any private landlords you might make them aware of that fact – to see if they care. I would correct you on your final point. The Government doesn't care but our council staff do.”

## **Question 12**

**Councillor Carlo to ask the cabinet member for community wellbeing the following question:**

“In December, the Greater Norwich Growth Board approved several 3G sports pitches. 3G artificial pitches consist of synthetic turf, sand infill and rubber infill. The latter generally comes from waste tyres and the rubber granules and microplastics contribute to air, soil and water pollution. The European Commission has proposed banning the supply and sale of products containing intentionally-added microplastics. It has chosen a ban after a transitional period rather than containment of the rubber crumb because infill material used in synthetic turf sport surfaces is the largest contributor in terms of use of microplastics in products at European level. In the light of this, will the cabinet member comment on and agree not to support 3G pitches?”

**Councillor Giles, the cabinet member for community wellbeing’s response:**

“Artificial grass pitches are recognised as a durable, safe, year-round playing surfaces, able to withstand intensive use and all weathers. They mean more people can benefit from the social and health benefits of physical activity. However, Sport England, the Football Foundation, the FA, RFL and England Rugby and several other organisations are aware of the European Chemicals Agency’s proposed restrictions around the use of intentionally added microplastics. The aforementioned are playing an active role in the response to this proposal. Currently, the Football Foundation is proactively limiting the loss of infill. Some of the measures they have introduced are perimeter infill containment barriers, smooth bar industrial grate and recess pits with filters to collect infill, and shock absorption pads to reduce the amount of infill required. The Football Foundation are also conducting research into alternative organic infill. It would therefore seem premature to suggest we would not support 3G pitches when the concerns raised are being addressed.”

### **Question 13**

**Councillor Champion to ask the cabinet member for environmental services the following question:**

“Many councils offer Christmas tree collections in January so local residents can dispose of real Christmas trees in a responsible manner. In Norwich, residents with appropriate transport can take Christmas trees to recycling centres to be disposed of or put them in garden waste bins for collection. Will the cabinet member consider introducing a Christmas tree collection scheme for Norwich or, alternatively, offer advice for anyone who is unable to dispose of a tree and does not want to add to the city’s fly-tipping problem?”

**Councillor Oliver, the cabinet member for environmental services’ response:**

“The council already provides a class leading range of recycling services, although this does not include the collection of Christmas trees.

However, the council’s 15,000 garden waste collection customers can dispose of their unwanted real Christmas trees in their brown bins if they cut it down to size.

Alternatively, real Christmas trees that still have their root ball can be replanted either in a tub or in a garden if available. Replanting Christmas trees is an effective way to reduce your carbon footprint and help our efforts to plant more trees. Alternatively, if residents have a compost bin or heap, a tree can be broken up and added to the compost.

Finally, charities often offer a ‘treecycling’ service. For example, this year, EACH (East Anglia’s Children’s Hospices) offered a Christmas tree collection service in the NR1 – NR8 postcodes for a voluntary donation.”

## Question 14

### **Councillor Price to ask the leader of the council the following question:**

“The climate change mural by Gennadiy Ivanov currently in our chamber is hailed as a mural for our times and Councillor Waters has said that the council is hugely proud to host it and that by ‘placing this impressive, evocative artwork in the centre of City Hall we have an ever-present reminder to take the urgent actions required and that we know the choices we make as a city now will be vital to securing a sustainable future’. Unfortunately, it is not open to the public and there is no booking system to see it. Do you agree that it is important for people to know the truth about climate change and that the council can play a part in that by arranging viewing?”

### **Councillor Waters, the leader’s response:**

“Thank you for your question. Bookings are already in the diary. I attended an event in the council chamber last Friday involving the ‘Kick the Dust’ group from the Castle Museum working with scientists from the Climate Change Unit at UEA and artists to develop their perspective on climate change and report back in March to an event that will be held in city hall. During the Science Festival the council chamber is booked for a session on climate change using the murals as a focal point. Interpretation boards to go with the murals are being completed. Articles are being placed in national scientific journals and in the local government press. Look out for the 9 February issue of the Municipal Journal which will cover the story of the creation of ‘A climate change mural for our times’ and the ambitious environment strategies of the Labour administration. We will be making schools and other education institutions across Norwich aware of the opportunity to come to city hall to see and use the murals for lessons.

If anyone would like to visit the mural arrangements can be made with office facilities, please email ([officefacilities@norwich.gov.uk](mailto:officefacilities@norwich.gov.uk)) with details so that they can make sure the Chamber is not in use at that time

## **Question 15**

**Councillor Young to ask the cabinet member for environmental services the following question:**

“Many Norwich residents living near communal bins are plagued by fly-tipping of furniture; in the last month alone there have been sets of dining chairs, mattresses, sofas, tables, bedside tables, shelving units and more. West Pottergate residents have asked if they can have a garage from the council to store bulky items in as a community, so that items can be shared and reused, and periodically taken to the tip when transport is available. Can the cabinet member commit to exploring this idea through Love Norwich?”

**Councillor Oliver, the cabinet member for environmental services’ response:**

“Love Norwich – Play Your Part is a targeted, data-driven environmental improvement campaign, that will target environmental anti-social behaviour across Norwich. It is being delivered in partnership with our communities, the BID and our key service delivery partners Biffa and NCSL

The next phase of the campaign will include a review refuse storage arrangements in our housing estates. Pilot schemes can be considered that are tailored to the needs of each area. We value ward members’ local knowledge and community networks to help develop these proposals, along with the data and findings of the Scrutiny Task and Finish group. We would be happy to consider the use of vacant garages and lock ups as part of our delivery of the Shared Prosperity Fund programme, and will work with our colleagues in Housing Services and Community Engagement to identify suitable locations.”



## Question 16

### **Councillor Haynes to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:**

“A recent cabinet report stated that 752 homes for social rent have been lost in the past five years and that these losses have significantly increased over the last year. Given the rising demand and the difficulty of building new properties, this is particularly worrying. Will the administration be writing to the government to end this practice and to the leader of the Labour Party and the Shadow Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities who have confirmed that the Labour Party would continue right-to-buy in England and who said, “I agree with Michael Gove that right-to-buy is sustainable”, asking them for a commitment to end the right to buy if they enter government at the next election?”

### **Councillor Harris, the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing’s response:**

“Thank you, Councillor Haynes, for this question.

As you said you were quoting one of the Labour Shadow Front bench MPs, namely Lisa Nandy, I thought that I best contact her office directly for some clarification on the quote within your question.

I am sure that it was not your intention to deliberately misquote, or take a partial quote out of context, but for clarification what Lisa said was that she agreed with Michael Gove when he said Right to Buy is sustainable ONLY when sold homes are replaced like for like. We all recognise that this is not happening.

We know that this Tory government has failed miserably with supporting council house building, has only marginally improved the bureaucracy around the use of retained Right to Buy receipts and that is why Lisa committed at the last Labour Party conference to review the Right to Buy policy once in government.

I would also like to refer you to motion 9e on this agenda, when this Labour Administration as part of that motion is proposing that we should call on this Tory government to “Abolish the Right to Buy in favour of expanding the provision of high-quality energy-efficient and environmentally sustainable social housing stock providing homes for residents and their families.”

I am hoping that there will be support right across this council for that motion and I will be sending a copy to Lisa Nandy to show this council’s commitment to good housing across all tenures in this Fine City.

If there is indeed any need for a supplementary question I trust that Councillor Haynes will be acknowledging that the inaccurate quote within her original question was to say the least misleading.”

## **Question 17**

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

“I understand that Weston Homes may be exempted from CIL for the Anglia Square development, exempting them from paying £9m towards the local community. Yet last year Weston Homes’ pre-tax profit increased six-fold, and their revenue also grew despite building fewer homes. For the Anglia Square development, they have budgeted £23m for professional fees alone. Can the cabinet member comment on whether it is fair to allow Weston Homes to be exempted from CIL when the CIL represents only a very small part of the cost of development of Anglia Square, and would make little dent in the growing profits of this company?”

**Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth’s response:**

“The Council has adopted a Community Infrastructure Levy exceptional circumstances relief policy. Under the policy developers can apply for CIL relief.

Since its introduction no applications for CIL relief have been submitted. This is because of the rigorous process required which includes an assessment of viability carried out by an independent person and demonstration of wider community and regeneration benefits including the delivery of affordable homes and community facilities.

Weston Homes have indicated in their planning application that they intend to apply for this relief in relation to Anglia Square. They will only be able to apply for the relief should they obtain planning consent for the development and the determination of any application will fall to Planning Applications Committee.

I will leave the Committee to determine any application should it be submitted although would point out the level of profits the applicant has obtained from development of other sites won’t be relevant to any decision.”

## Question 18

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

*“Secretary of State, Michael Gove, wrote to MPs saying he would “give local communities a greater say in what is built in their neighbourhood” and “local authorities will not be expected to build developments at densities that would be wholly out of character with existing areas or which would lead to a significant change of character, for example, new blocks of high-rise flats which are entirely inappropriate in a low-rise neighbourhood.” He concluded: “these reforms will help to deliver enough of the right homes in the right places and will do that by promoting development that is beautiful, that comes with the right infrastructure, that is done democratically with local communities rather than to them, that protects and improves our environment.”*

Could the cabinet member confirm this council will adhere to these principles and update us changes for larger planning applications, especially the proposed redevelopment of Anglia Square, please?”

**Councillor Stonard, the cabinet member for inclusive and sustainable growth’s response:**

“No, I think it is more appropriate for me to leave the decisions on planning applications to the Planning Applications Committee as it will up to them to assess how they wish to take the latest in a long line of ministerial announcements about the planning system into account in relation to the determination of applications.

The Council, through its local plan policies and conservation area appraisals, already has considerable policy and guidance in place to support decision making which protects and enhances the character of our City whilst delivering much needed new homes.”

## **Question 19**

**Councillor Grahame to ask the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods the following question:**

“I have been working on cases where residents have made reports to Environmental Health and expected to be visited by an Environmental Health officer. Sometimes, visits are finally made after several months, and sometimes they don't happen at all. Residents' situations are unlikely to improve until an expert such as an acoustic consultant visits and measures the problem. Therefore, are there plans to introduce recording and monitoring of environmental health visit response times?”

**Councillor Jones, the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods' response:**

“The council's environmental protection team deal with noise from commercial premises affecting residential properties. In order for the team to prioritise the work, complainants are requested to complete noise logs with the date, time and type of noise disturbance that they are experiencing and send them back to the Environmental Protection Team. If no logs are returned within one month then the officer will close the case. Once the logs are returned an officer will examine them and then determine what further action, if any, is required, this could range from, onsite visits to the premises causing the disturbance, to installing noise equipment in the complainant's house. Not all cases will require the installation of noise equipment.

With regard to the recording and monitoring of response times, a review of the digital systems used within the team is currently underway as part of a service wide project. Once complete it is anticipated service level performance targets will be introduced.”

## Question 20

### **Councillor Galvin to ask the leader of the council's the following question:**

"I was concerned that in the last scrutiny meeting, officers explained that the work on the RITAs (Reducing Inequality Target Areas) has no clear success indicators. I have been concerned about the lack of impact assessment for big interventions that cost a lot of taxpayers money for a while, however officers said that they conduct logic mapping for such interventions. Now it seems that this is not the case. Can you please explain whether policy interventions like the RITAs or the community connectors are thought through using logic mapping which should result in a clear set of predefined success measures and a pre-planned impact assessment, all characteristics of good, evidence-based policy making?"

### **Councillor Waters, the leader's response:**

"The work on the Reducing Inequalities Target Areas aims to tackle the root causes of inequality in Norwich, which are complex and embedded across deprivation, social, health, employment and education. Reducing inequality is an ongoing challenge that requires statutory bodies, VCSE groups and communities to come together.

We use large datasets with numerous indicators to establish the areas where inequality is greatest. A NODA (the Norfolk Office of Data and Analytics) report for us in October 2022 updated our original analysis following the impacts of covid and the cost of living crisis. Datasets were chosen that are published regularly and it will be these indicators which we track over time to establish the overall impact on inequality; the desired short and medium term outcomes we are seeking have been identified within the project.

However, reducing inequality is a generational challenge. We do not expect to see significant movement in these indicators in the immediate future and have to rely on analysis of particular interventions with strong theories of change. One such piece of work is that of the community connectors. The aims of this piece of work are to provide intelligence as to what is of value to people in communities and to build trust to point people towards the right support. There is a strong theory of change behind this work which links to the short and long term impact it will have on communities. We monitor these interventions on an ongoing basis through data collection and analysis of conversations. Further evaluation is undertaken through recognised methodologies such as ripple effect mapping and collecting impact stories.

The forth coming Equality Diversity and Inclusion strategy will build on our long-held commitment to tackling inequality, with our partners, not just because it is our legal duty but because doing so helps create a more successful and inclusive city"

**Please note that the following questions are second questions from members and will only be taken if the time taken by questions has not exceeded thirty minutes. This is in line with paragraph 53 of Part 3 of the council's constitution.**

**Question 21**

**Councillor Galvin to ask the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods the following question:**

“Air quality was raised as a topic at scrutiny last year and yet the council has done little beyond a few tweets to make residents aware of the issues with wood burning, for example even ‘ecodesign’ wood burning stoves produce 450 times more toxic air pollution than gas central heating. Other councils have full communications campaigns on this issue. Will the cabinet member commit to a communications campaign on this topic in order to protect residents?”

**Councillor Jones, the cabinet member for safe, strong and inclusive neighbourhoods' response:**

“At the scrutiny meeting held in September 2021, two resolutions regarding air pollution from woodburning were ratified and brought forward to cabinet in November 2021. They were:

- Prepare a communications strategy for residents
- Discourage the use of bonfires across the whole of the city and encourage people to use their brown bins and composting

These were taken forward and delivered using a number of different and far reaching communications approaches, including an article in the winter 2021 issue of Citizen magazine, distributed to about 67,000 homes, around the new laws on wood burning, information on the ‘ready to burn’ logo and tips on how to reduce pollutants caused by wood burning in homes. A similar article was published in the spring issue of our tenants’ and leaseholders’ magazine, TLC - distributed to approximately 14,500 homes. The 2022 spring issue of Citizen magazine also carried messaging about discouraging the need to light bonfires and promoted the use of brown bins for composting.

Delivery of the communications plan also included using our official social media channels to post messaging which supported the resolutions agreed by cabinet.

We will continue to work across the council to agree any future communications actions concerning the wider issues that make an impact on the city's air quality”

## **Question 22**

**Councillor Schmierer to ask the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion the following question:**

“The government recently announced that there would be a ban on some single-use plastics that will come into effect in England from October. From then, takeaways, restaurants and cafes must stop using single-use plastic cutlery, plates and bowls. Full council in 2016 and again in 2019, committed us to moving towards a single-use plastic free future. Could the cabinet member please commit to phasing out single-use plastics entirely, so that from October 2023 no single-use plastic items will be allowed at any council premises or events?”

**Councillor Hampton, the cabinet member for climate change and digital inclusion’s response:**

“The phasing out of single use plastics in council operations is included as a proposal in the Environmental Action Plan, details of which are coming to the Climate and Environmental Emergency Executive Panel in February. The Environmental Action plan will be finalised, consulted upon and adopted during the course of 2023”