



**MINUTES**

**COUNCIL**

**7.30 p.m. – 10.30 p.m.**

**2 March 2010**

**Present:** Councillors Driver (Deputy Lord Mayor in the Chair), Arthur, Banham, Bearman, Blakeway, Blower, Bradford, Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Cannell, Divers, Driver, Dylan, Fairbairn, Fisher, George, Gihawi, Gledhill, Holmes, Hooke, Jago, Jeraj, Lay, Little (A), Little (S), Llewellyn, Lubbock, Morphew, Morrey, Offord, Ramsay, Read, Sands, Stephenson, Waters, Watkins, Wiltshire and Wright

**Apologies:** Councillors Collishaw (Lord Mayor) and Makoff

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations of interest were made –

Councillors Blower, Gihawi, Jeraj, Offord, Ramsay, Read, Waters, Watkins and Wright all declared a personal interest in item 8.

**2. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

**David Sheppard, Academic Officer, Union of UEA Students, to the Leader of the Council:-**

“In what ways does the Leader of the City Council think that Norwich benefits from its large student population?”

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

“There is no doubt that the student population make a huge contribution to Norwich and are invaluable to the future of the city. Both the city and the council benefit enormously from having a large student population.

Our student population has helped to boost the city’s profile in ways which would have been impossible without them. Our students, graduates and educational institutions have helped to secure large amounts of investment in the city. Both

government and private institutions perceive Norwich as a great base. This is due to the large pool of highly qualified potential employees and the cutting edge research and innovation that many of the city's students are involved in. This is shown in the government's decision to base one of its national skills academies in the city.

Norwich's economy benefits enormously on the large number of skilled graduates that the city attracts and who stay in the city after they have graduated. The retention rate of graduates by the University of East Anglia is the highest in the country. Two thirds of those who study at UEA continue to live in the city after graduation means the city is well placed to attract national and international investment. Companies are attracted to Norwich by the large pool of talented alumni who choose to make their names in Norwich.

The economy also benefits from the student pound in more direct ways. Universities contribute £59bn to the UK economy. In addition, to the contribution of students as individual consumers and workers, the HE/FE institutions themselves contribute by:

- providing relatively well paid employment opportunities in the local economy;
- Construction Project expenditure and employment of construction professionals and workers;
- expenditure on goods and services by HE/FE institutions in local economy;
- spin offs into local and national economy of research projects;
- provision of specialist training facilities and high quality residential conference facilities;
- provision of facilities for development of seed bed ideas and their take up;
- attraction for significant numbers of young people with ability into Norwich;
- attraction for significant number of highly qualified academics to Norwich;
- attraction for students and academics from outside of UK into Norfolk;
- important centre of architectural interest –e.g. Lasdun buildings and Sainsbury centre
- availability of major art gallery at Sainsbury Centre with internationally recognised collection and continuously changing exhibitions;
- availability of specialised library and research facility and wide range of specialist courses for part time students and non vocational course provision;
- availability of facilities generally for community events; Sportspark (85% of visits are from members of the local community) and playing fields;
- provision of outreach courses into local community and outreach projects in local schools;
- UEA is the prime venue for music events in Norwich area offering opportunities for local young people to visit the university and raise their aspirations

As well as this Norwich's current bid for the UK City of Culture is based around many of the cultural venues around the city which are dependent on the large numbers of students' visitors they attract every year. The bid will be boosted by the many excellent alumni the educational institutions of the city have produced and how they have enriched the cultural life of the country as a whole. Actor Jack Davenport, novelist Ian McEwan and comedian Paul Whitehouse are all former Norwich students.

The city council also benefits greatly from our student population. Because of this we have done as much as possible to make the city attractive to students. We have

included all full time students over the age of 16 in our Go 4 less card. The Go 4less card is a FREE sport and leisure discount card which allows up to 50 per cent discount at council facilities as well as various sports and leisure attractions.

Working with the government nationally we have also done a great deal for campaigning for better housing for students. We are one of the leading national authorities in bringing empty homes back into use in order to make sure there is sufficient housing in Norwich to accommodate the large number of people studying in the city. Twenty percent of all EDMOs (Empty Dwelling Management Orders) in the country are made in Norwich. The council has been pro-active at using the powers the government has given us in tackling rogue landlords.

We have also helped build record numbers of affordable homes in order to help young people to get into the housing market once they graduate. Since the Labour administration took power over 800 affordable homes have been built in the city.

It is clear that the student community are a tremendous asset for us, they make Norwich a competitive place to do business, a more pleasant place to live and they help make this a fine city."

**Denise Carlo, of the Norwich and Norfolk Transport Action Group (NNTAG), to ask the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

"The Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) has made the Joint Core Strategy Submission contingent on the early construction of a NNDR (Norwich Northern Distributor Road) starting with Postwick Hub. What is the GNDP's Plan B if the Postwick Hub, the first stage of a NNDR, is found to be an invalid planning application?

The background to this question is that GO-East took legal advice, obtained by NNTAG, on the validity of Norfolk County Council's planning application to Broadland District Council for Postwick Hub. The advice gives leeway for objectors to seek a judicial review. The Secretary of State also risks a legal challenge if he fails to hold a public inquiry into draft Slip and Side Roads Orders for A47 Postwick Interchange which is intended to implement Postwick Hub planning application. Either way, Postwick Hub is at risk of being legally challenged by objectors in the High Court."

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

"There are a wide variety of potential risks to the Joint Core Strategy and these are all fully considered in the paperwork on the agenda for this meeting.

With regard to the NNDR the paper notes that it has recently gained "Programme Entry", and "As with any significant infrastructure project there is always some uncertainty over the precise delivery on the scheme. The NDR now has greater certainty over funding and is promoted in the County Council's 2nd Local Transport Plan and the Regional Spatial Strategy. There is a clear timetable for the next stage of statutory process. Should the NNDR not proceed, there would need to be a fundamental review of the spatial distribution of growth promoted in the JCS."

Finally the procedural matters concerning a planning application in a neighbouring authority are not issues of direct concern to Norwich City Council. Therefore it would not be appropriate for me to comment except to say that the issues you have raised do not, in my view, change the risk assessment referred to above.”

Denise Carlo asked, as a supplementary question, if the Executive Member accepted that there was a great uncertainty regarding the funding and there would be significant effect on sustainable transport for Norwich in the future if this funding was allocated to the NDR? Councillor Morrey said that funding had been made available from the communities infrastructure fund for the Postwick junction and Norfolk County Council had increased the budgets for the park and ride schemes. Decisions had to be made based on the information available at the time.

### **3. QUESTIONS TO EXECUTIVE MEMBERS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

The Lord Mayor advised members that 11 questions from members of the public to Executive Members and committee chairs had been received at which notice had been given in accordance with the provisions of Appendix 1 of the council's constitution. The questions were as follows:-

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|-------------------|--|
| <b>Question 1</b> | Councillor A Little to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development on potholes.  |
| <b>Question 2</b> | Councillor Wiltshire to the Leader of the Council on preparations to set up the unitary authority.   |
| <b>Question 3</b> | Councillor Ramsay to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development on the recycling of items such as CDs, batteries, mobile phones and ink cartridges etc.   |
| <b>Question 4</b> | Councillor Jeraj to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance on progress towards determining and promoting a living wage in Norwich.  |
| <b>Question 5</b> | Councillor S Little to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development on progress with work with relevant organisations to bring about a change in the way water is used by residents and businesses. |
| <b>Question 6</b> | Councillor Gledhill to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development on waste collection vehicles.   |
| <b>Question 7</b> | Councillor Bearman to the Leader of the Council on progress with the review of the role and functions of the Lord Mayor.   |
| <b>Question 8</b> | Councillor Fairbairn to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development on road drainage.  |
| <b>Question 9</b> | Councillor Fisher to the Executive Member for Residents and Customer Care on the present and future arrangements for dog services.   |

**Question 10** Councillor George to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development on unadopted roads and repairs timetable.

**Question 11** Councillor Lubbock to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance on changes to the council's foyer.

The detailed questions and answers are attached as Appendix A.

#### **4. JOINT CORE STRATEGY – SUBMISSION TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE**

Councillor Morphew moved and Councillor Morrey seconded recommendations in the next report –

**RESOLVED**, with 25 voting in favour (Councillors Arthur, Banham, Blakeway, Blower, Bradford, Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Cannell, Divers, Driver, Fairbairn, Fisher, George, Gihawi, Hooke, Lay, Little (A), Lubbock, Morphew, Morrey, Sands, Waters, Watkins, Wright and Wiltshire), and 12 voting against (Councillors Bearman, Dylan, Gledhill, Holmes, Jago, Jeraj, Little (S), Llewellyn, Offord, Ramsay, Read and Stephenson) to –

- (1) agree that the 'Joint Core Strategy for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk: proposed submission document (November 2009)' as amended by the schedule of proposed minor changes is legally compliant and sound;
- (2) submit those documents together with the revisions to previously adopted local plan proposals maps and all necessary supporting documents to the Secretary of State under Regulation 30 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) Regulations, 2004 (as amended).

#### **5. MOTION – GRITTING**

The Deputy Lord Mayor announced that the following amendment to the motion set out on the agenda had been received from the Lib Dem Group and circulated –

Change bullet points as follows:-

- 2(a) after ... create ... add ... 'and then review'; after ... database ... delete ... 'showing' and add 'of' ...; after ... 'the' ... add ... '... location, size and maintenance...';
- 2(b) add the words '...and clarifying their legal position';
- 2(c) after ...residents... delete... 'in making'... and replace with ...'...and working in partnership with them to make...'

Councillor Stephenson indicated she was happy to accept the amendment and, with no other member objecting, the amendment was accepted and became part of the substantive motion.

Councillor Stephenson moved and Councillor Gledhill seconded the motion.

Councillor Morpew moved and Councillor Morrey seconded that the motion be referred to Norwich Highways Agency Committee and it was, unanimously, :-

**RESOLVED** accordingly.

## **6. MOTION – STUDENT DEBT: IMPACT ON STUDENTS, PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS AND THE ECONOMY IN NORWICH**

The Deputy Lord Mayor said that an amendment from the Green Group had been received and circulated. Councillor Sands said that she was unwilling to accept the amendment and the Deputy Lord Mayor announced that this would be dealt with in the usual way after the motion had been moved and seconded.

Councillor Sands moved and Councillor Bremner seconded the motion as detailed on the agenda.

Councillor Ramsay moved and Councillor Offord seconded that the motion be amended by:-

Adding the following words to the end of resolution (2)...’...and calling for the fees to be abolished altogether’

With 18 voting in favour (Councillors Bearman, Divers, Dylan, Fairbairn, Gledhill, Holmes, Hooke, Jago, Jeraj, Little(S), Llewellyn, Lubbock, Offord, Ramsay, Read, Stephenson, Watkins and Wright) and 19 voting against (Councillors Arthur, Banham, Blakeway, Blower, Bradford, Bremner, Brociek-Coulton, Cannell, Driver, Fisher, George, Gihawi, Lay, Little(A), Morpew, Morrey, Sands, Waters and Wiltshire) the amendment was declared lost.

**RESOLVED** that –

Norwich is a university city, with over 14,000 students studying at UEA (University of East Anglia), 1,000 students studying at Norwich University College of the Arts and 3,000 higher education students studying at City College yet the proportion of Norwich sixth formers who go on to university is lower than the national average (source: HEFCE POLAR Participation Report). The average debt students currently incur over the length of studying at UEA is £23,194 (source: Union of UEA students research for 2008/09 cohort),

Council therefore, **RESOLVES** to:-

- (1) support the Union of UEA Students Higher Education funding campaign;
- (2) write to the Higher Education Minister, David Lammy, opposing an increase in, or the deregulation of, tuition fees;

- (3) request scrutiny committee to consider the impact of increasing student debt on the lives of individual students and local businesses.

## **7. MOTION – FACE TO FACE FUNDRAISING IN NORWICH**

The Deputy Lord Mayor said that the following amendment to the motion set out on the agenda had been received from the Labour Group and circulated –

Amend resolution (1) by adding after city centre...‘..if this becomes permissible under legislation such as the implementation of the Charities Act 2006; and...’

Councillor Little(A) indicated he was happy to accept the amendment and, with no other member objecting, it became part of the substantive motion.

Councillor Little (A) moved and Councillor Wiltshire seconded the motion.

**RESOLVED**, unanimously, that –

To address the concerns raised by residents and businesses at the recent city centre safer neighbourhood panel meeting, this council –

**RESOLVES** to request that the licensing committee works with the head of legal, regulatory and democratic services, the Public Fundraising Regulatory Association and other interested parties to –

- (1) produce a regulatory framework for ‘face to face fundraising’ in the city centre if this becomes permissible under legislation such as the implementation of the Charities Act 2006; and
- (2) consider the experience of Nottingham City Council and other authorities which have successfully addressed this issue as a partnership.

## **8. MOTION – GENERAL ELECTION NIGHT**

Councillor Little (A) moved and Councillor Wiltshire seconded the motion as set out on the agenda.

**RESOLVED**, with 25 voting in favour, 7 against and 4 abstentions, that –

In light of the stated position by the returning officer for the Norwich North parliamentary constituency (which includes city voters from four electoral wards), that he intends to start the count of votes on the morning after the day of the poll for the next General Election, council –

**RESOLVED** to –

- (1) thank the returning officer for the Norwich South parliamentary constituency for announcing that the counting of votes for this constituency is to start on the night of the Election following close of the poll; and

- (2) write to the returning officer for the Norwich North parliamentary constituency requesting that voters from across Norwich should have the same treatment in the counting of their votes by starting the count for the General Election on the night of the Election following close of the poll and concluding the count as soon as reasonably practicable.

CHAIR



## Question 1

### **Councillor Antony Little to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

“How many pot holes were reported to Norwich City Council in the last financial year, what is the target in length of time to fill pot holes and what percentage of those reported were filled in this time? How many pot holes were "repeat fillers"; those which has been filled and had to be re-done later in that year?”

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

“Current monitoring is unable to detail how many pot holes have been reported; Comino logs such reports as requests for service or general correspondence along with a wide range of other reports and requests.

Likewise, contract reporting systems don't specifically say how many potholes have been filled, although they do give information on response times which I'll come to shortly.

The response time to fill potholes following discovery or notification depends on the depth and location of the hole. A pothole of say 80mm depth on a major road will be treated as an emergency to be repaired within 2 hours while a shallow pothole in the quieter streets could be repaired within a month. The response times are set out in Norfolk County Council's Transport Asset Management Plan.

I can say that of:

- 463 emergency orders to CityCare, 99.2% were attended to within one hour of the order being placed;
- 432 urgent orders, 99.4% were attended to within 24 hours;
- 950 less urgent orders, 95.7% were attended to within 5 days.

Reporting limitations mean that these figures include other works such as missing gully grates, oil spills and so on, but you can see that responsiveness is very good.

I am not aware of any “repeat fillers”. However, from time to time and to preserve response times, the repair is made with a temporary material to make the road safe pending a more permanent repair which may take longer to plan and carry out. There are also cases where a pothole has been repaired but the adjacent road fails at a future date. Such failures are identified either by the routine highway inspections or by calls from the public and area dealt with accordingly.”

**Councillor Antony Little** said that residents were reporting that temporary fillings did not last and asked, as a supplementary question, if the Executive member knew whether this meant that costs were ultimately higher than doing the job properly in the first place. **Councillor Brian Morrey** said that Norfolk County Council had looked into this and confirmed that emergency repairs do not last very long.

However, it was a question for Norfolk County Council how to deal with this and to provide more funding if it was required.

## **Question 2**

### **Councillor Andrew Wiltshire to the Leader of the Council:-**

"Since the announcement by the Secretary of State that Norwich City Council will become a unitary authority, the Executive has announced its intention to set up its own Adult Social Services and Children's Services Departments. Would the Executive Members for these two departments give their reassurance they will take on board the very real need to invest in preventative services, despite the initial increased costs, and could they clarify what it is they will do to address the very real problem of neglect that faces many children and older people within the City?"

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

"I am not sure whether to be disappointed or annoyed at the question which clearly seems to demonstrate that whilst the Conservative group have been vociferous in their opposition to the bid for a new council they, or Councillor Wiltshire at least, has clearly not even read the bid submitted in January 2007. That clearly sets out the intention to create a people hub with directorates for 'Children, Families and Education' and 'Adult Services, Health and Wellbeing'. Even the titles provide a clue to the philosophy that underpins the bid – the chance to provide better services by a more integrated approach that takes account of the needs of the whole person in their individual and community context.

It provides a huge opportunity to move away from stale distinctions like those in his question and instead means we can design support and services that genuinely improve life chances from pre birth to end of life care.

There is a mass of papers associated with our unitary case he would do well to read and encourage his colleagues to read and take note of despite the possibility the facts might not sit comfortably besides the anti unitary propaganda."

## **Question 3**

### **Councillor Adrian Ramsay to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

"A private company is offering to supply units in the City Centre for recycling of items such as CDs, batteries, mobile phones and ink cartridges. The company is offering to organise and pay for the units and collections. This would mean residents would have access to much needed recycling facilities at no cost to the Council. I attended a recent presentation by the company at which Councillor Morrey said he supported the scheme in principle and agreed to investigate how best to take it forward. Could the Executive member give Councillors an update on when this scheme is likely to be introduced?"

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

"Officers are aware of this scheme and of other opportunities to promote and expand 'recycling-on-the-go'. However, during the last few months all of the Council's waste and recycling resources have been directed at managing our existing services and planning for the implementation of the new contract.

The Council already has a network of Mini-Recycling Banks (MRB's) in the city centre and these have proved to be very popular with both visitors and residents. Whilst new facilities and new opportunities are welcomed, the Council needs to be certain that the provision of such facilities does not create any confusion which might impact on existing services.

The Council is committed to increasing the level of recycling and a proposal of this nature is worthy of consideration. As members will appreciate there are a number of issues that would need to be considered alongside the benefit of increasing the opportunity for recycling and these include the potential impact on the local amenity, and how the scheme is to be promoted, managed and regulated. I am discussing with officers how the Council can consider this type of initiative and will report back to the Waste Management Working Party as soon as possible".

**Councillor Adrian Ramsay** said he appreciated the Executive Member's support for this issue but the company had been waiting for an answer and asked, as a supplementary question, if he could ensure that the Waste Management Working Party consider the issue by the end of March 2010. **Councillor Brian Morrey** said that he would do his best.

**Question 4**

**Councillor Samir Jeraj to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance:-**

"Could the Executive member provide an update on progress towards determining and promoting a Living Wage in Norwich?"

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

"I will start by setting the context within which the issues around promoting a 'Living Wage' in Norwich are framed. Firstly it is important to recognise that the 'Living Wage' is just one of a number of different strands that inform our financial inclusion strategy designed to help sustain people, and the local economy through difficult times.

The Executive allocated in excess of £175,000 to the short term actions in the Financial Inclusion Strategy covering five key themes of:

- Working more collaboratively;
- Income maximisation;
- Access to free money advice;
- Increase access to financial products and services;

- Improve the way people manage their money;
- Increase access to affordable credit.

The recession has changed the profile of people experiencing financial exclusion. Along side the many individuals who have long been identified as financially excluded, there are many people experiencing debt problems and / or unemployment for the first time. The focus during the past 12 months has been to support those people in need of debt advice, help with budgeting and managing payments to creditors, developing the capacity of the credit unions in Norwich and training front line staff and those from voluntary and statutory agencies to improve the level of advice at the first contact.

We have also held a number of money fairs in the neighbourhoods and combining these with targeted benefit campaigns made sure that information has been made available to ensure residents access the money they are entitled to. These events and outreach advice has been provided to residents where they live as we know that travelling into the city centre for advice is not an option for some people.

The Executive has also identified the issues of in-work poverty and the problems that exist for the many low paid workers in the City.

The last time I was asked this question, the Executive recognised that the recession was impacting on businesses and developing activity on the living wage had to be timely if we wanted to have an opportunity to make it a reality.

Officers are and continue to keep abreast of best practice and some resource has been identified to develop a living wage programme that could be tested with key employers. The next step will be to talk to those national and international organisations represented in Norwich who have introduced a 'living wage' and to find out what has been the impact of doing so. This will be followed by a range of informal discussions to both test and inform opinion about the possible benefits of a living wage strategy to tackle in-work poverty, strengthen business productivity and create more demand in the local economy. The objective is to achieve a 'win-win' situation. Introducing a 'living wage' is a decision that can only be taken by individual employers whether in the public, private or third sectors. It requires willing partners to make progress. The opportunity to debate the issues around the living wage is one of the ways in which we as a community can respond to the problem of poverty and deprivation in the city and the impact of the recession on the local economy.

The Executive has been clear on its priorities over the past year and has invited Scrutiny Committee to review progress on the implementation of the financial inclusion strategy at its meeting on the 11 March 2010. Any recommendations on medium term actions which will be considered by the Executive on 24 March 2010 when it agrees its financial inclusion action plan for 2010/2011."

**Councillor Samir Jeraj** asked, as a supplementary question, what the council was doing in its leadership role to promote a living wage in the city and would it progress this for staff and contractors as a start. **Councillor Alan Waters** said that the council had had a low pay supplement for 20 years before the living wage campaign started. The council has in the process of finalising new contracts and as part of that had told contractors of the council's interest in terms of employment. The council

would continue to discuss the issue with other partners and pointed out that councillors had opportunities to discuss such issues at scrutiny committee.

## **Question 5**

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

“Given the uncertainties about water provision for the Rackheath eco-town it is becoming increasingly clear that, if housing growth is to happen, measures must be taken to reduce water usage in existing houses and businesses. Could the Council be updated on progress regarding point 2 of the 'World Water Day' motion passed in March 2008 which calls on the executive to 'Work with relevant organisations to set up campaigns and actions to bring about a change in the way water is used by its residents and businesses?’”

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

“Regionally, the Council has been a key partner working with Waterwise East to produce practical tools for planners and developers to support them in delivering water efficient developments. The partnership also produced practical guidance on how to improve the water efficiency of existing properties (mainly housing). Council officers are also engaged in producing national guidance on water and planning.

The Greater Norwich Development Partnership (GNDP) has received and considered a final report on its water cycle study, which looks at water supply, water quality, sewerage and flood risk management issues to make sure the growth planned in greater Norwich to 2026 and beyond makes best use of infrastructure. The amount of change in the area means that the GNDP and its partners have been working to develop a strategy for using existing and improved water infrastructure in the future. The water cycle study shows that while there are sufficient water resources available to meet the needs to the growth that is being planned in the short to medium term, careful planning is needed to protect the quality of the water environment. Policy initiatives at a regional and a national level are also needed to verify the approach to water supply and water quality that is needed to plan for the minimum levels of growth that are required in growth areas such as greater Norwich.

The water cycle study has provided the evidence for the GNDP to develop policies which demand high water quality and efficiency standards from new developments. These high standards are needed to enable development in a region that suffers from water stress.

The vision and objectives of the Joint Core Strategy promote water efficiency and the protection of water quality. These are taken forward through policy 1 (requirements for sustainability and protecting water quality) and policy 3 (water efficiency in new development). Implementing these in full will protect sensitive areas such as internationally significant sites, including the River Wensum and the Broads, and enable best use of water resources.

In terms of the Council’s own stock we are actively seeking products/different ways of working that will contribute to water conservation, and discussions will take place

with the new service provider for repairs and upgrades to identify products that can be used to deliver water savings. In addition to this Housing Property Services will have water conservation measures as a priority within their service plan for 2010/2011."

**Councillor Stephen Little** asked, as a supplementary question, when the council would look at other related issues such as rainwater harvesting and business water. **Councillor Brian Morrey** said that the council was already looking at these issues at Bowthorpe.

## **Question 6**

### **Councillor Bob Gledhill to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

"I am aware of a number of narrow streets around the city through which recycling and waste collection vehicles have difficulty gaining access. Green Councillors have requested on a number of occasions that the new contract for waste collection should include provision for smaller collection vehicles. Could the Executive Member please inform me of whether this is included in the new contract?"

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

"The specification for the new refuse and recycling service clearly noted this issue and instructed that all tenders should address it. The specification states:

'The Contractor shall familiarise itself with the layout and width of roads and streets to be covered by the Services and the customary daytime parking practices and shall provide vehicles appropriate to the circumstances.'

Both the Council and the new contractor have recognised that different vehicles may be required for certain routes and some trials have already been conducted in Norwich to assess the suitability of different vehicle designs. Further vehicle trials will be conducted and other options are also being considered, such as amendments to existing production chassis. Officers and the contractor are also assessing the suitability of collection practices in other cities with similar street layouts to Norwich."

**Councillor Bob Gledhill** asked, as a supplementary question, when the vehicles for the new contracts would be ready. **Councillor Brian Morrey** said that there was a six month lead in time and no changes would be made in collection arrangements for three months.

## **Question 7**

### **Councillor Janet Bearman to the Leader of the Council:-**

"Bearing in mind that we are now over half way through the period during which the Leader of the Council was requested to "initiate a review of the role and functions of the Lord Mayor", could the Leader please inform us of what form this review is taking and how it is progressing?"

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

"The review is progressing well. I have been gathering information on current practices and identifying some options to suggest as a way forward. Once I have done this I will circulate an outline to group leaders and officers for comment and so they can take their own soundings. I anticipate the report will be at quite a high level and will propose areas where more detailed work will be needed. For instance I anticipate there will be proposals for different priorities for different types of civic engagements and I anticipate outline criteria will form part of the report. However I don't propose to set out a detailed list but rather to propose that a detailed list be prepared as a subsequent stage of the work that can be done by officers in accordance with the decisions of council.

The complicating factor is the unitary decision which we were unsure about when council made the decision. I think we need to continue this review, but it is clear that for future years with a new unitary council the role will need further consideration in terms of scope and resources. I will add something on this to the report depending on what we know at the time the report is circulated and will update when it comes to council at the end of March.

Meanwhile the name of the Lord Mayor for the next civic year is usually agreed at this meeting every year for confirmation at the Annual meeting and I look forward to learning who will be nominated in accordance with the formula agreed by Council."

### **Question 8**

#### **Councillor David Fairbairn to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

"It is noticeable that a great many street gulleys do not carry water away when it rains. Large puddles form which slosh around due to passing cars, to the detriment of any pedestrians nearby. This surface water cannot be beneficial for the road surface under normal temperatures, and even less so with freezing temperatures. Does the Executive Member accept that poor drainage has contributed to the breaking up of the road surface by frost damage?"

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

"Gulley cleaning forms part of the CityCare contract and if a councillor or member of the public notices that a gulley is not free draining, I would encourage them to contact the Customer Contact Team so that action can be taken accordingly.

It is true that standing water is not good for the road surface and less so when temperatures are freezing. It is also true that road surfaces in the city have suffered greatly during the recent cold period but this is true for the whole country. However, evidence so far is that the damage is due to a combination of more general freeze/thaw action associated with a road surface that is already beginning to fail, rather than due to standing water.

Due to the cold weather, a maintenance back log has built up and whilst urgent repairs to make roads safe are being attended to, it will take time before the back log

is resolved. Officers are in discussion with their County Council colleagues to resource this work, although you will appreciate that such problems are found across Norfolk – not just in Norwich – and maintenance budgets are limited.

Whilst there is no evidence that poor drainage is contributing to the breaking up of road surfaces, there is every reason that blocked gulleys should be attended to in a timely way. For example, standing water poses a potential safety hazard and at very least is inconvenient for pedestrians. From 1 April, gulley cleaning will be delivered by the Norfolk County Council partnership (May Gurney)."

**Councillor David Fairbairn** asked, as a supplementary question, if contractors could be asked to undertake a more responsive approach to clearing gulleys as and when problems occurred rather than doing it to a schedule. **Councillor Brian Morrey** said that he had already answered this. If an problem was reported it would be dealt with.

### **Question 9**

**Councillor John Fisher to the Executive Member for Residents and Customer Care:-**

"In view of recent communications from residents regarding issues of dog fouling and stray dogs in Catton Grove area please can the Executive member confirm what the current arrangements are for dog services covering both stray dogs and education/prosecution regarding dog fouling in public areas. Could details also be given as to what the service will be after April 2010?"

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

"Dog fouling is a street cleansing issue which should be reported directly to the Council by calling the Contact Team. In this way the issue can be quickly and effectively resolved.

Identifying irresponsible dog owners who do not clear their own dog's fouling often depends on information provided by the public. Traditionally many dog walkers do so early in the morning or later in the evening and it is not an effective use of Council resources to have officers patrolling the streets in the hope of occasionally spotting a dog fouling issue. But where reports are received it is possible that an officer can attend to a particular location at a particular time. If a problem is identified then our response is to offer advice and education. Our experience is that this approach is successful, in part because it appears to embarrass people into taking responsibility for their dog.

From April 2010 any enforcement action that may be required on dog fouling will be undertaken by the newly formed Corporate Enforcement Team. Stray dogs that are reported to the Council are collected by officers and every attempt is made to reunite the animals with their owners. Where this is achieved owners are required to pay for the costs of providing this service – such as any kennelling or vets fees. The current restructuring process is ongoing and some operational details are yet to be concluded, however, I can confirm that a stray dog collection service will continue to be operated from April 2010."



## **Question 10**

### **Councillor Niki George to the Executive Member for Sustainable City Development:-**

"The uncommonly cold weather we have had this winter, the coldest we have had for 31 years, has had a devastating impact on our roads. The Executive Member will also appreciate the frustration of many residents living on unadopted roads who will need to make arrangements for the private repair of their roads. Please could the Executive Member:

- (i) provide all Members of the Council with a complete list of unadopted roads;
- (ii) tell Members of the Council what additional work will be undertaken to repair our roads & the likely timetable for this."

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

"Presently, there are some 30 sites awaiting adoption. These range from locations where development work has only just started to locations where the road will be adopted shortly subject to the satisfactory resolution of minor defects. In Councillor George's ward there are 8 sites awaiting adoption.

I will ask officers to prepare a detailed schedule of roads awaiting adoption, indicating their status, to circulate to members as Councillor George suggests.

In answer to Councillor George's second point, I am not sure if he is referring to roads which are awaiting adoption or those that have been adopted.

The latter make up the vast majority in the city and as pointed out in this and other questions they have suffered in the recent poor weather. A maintenance back log has built up and whilst urgent repairs to make roads safe are being attended to, it will take time before the back log is resolved. Officers are in discussion with their County Council colleagues to resource this work, although you will appreciate that such problems are found across Norfolk, not just in Norwich, and maintenance budgets are limited. I presume Councillor George knows that the City Council at the moment is not the Highways Authority it is the Conservative controlled County Council. We only do the work on behalf of the County and can only do that work that the county will fund. If Councillor George believes more money should be spent on this work perhaps he will join me and officers in making the argument to the County that the City needs more funds because of the state of our roads. You and your colleagues could also spend time supporting a New Unitary City Council so that in the future we do not have to go to the County Council with a begging bowl for funds that enable us to look after our city. We should be able to decide without interference from the County on how our city should be looked after.

In connection with roads awaiting adoption, the council is not proposing any additional repair work. Whilst unadopted they are the developer's responsibility and we will only accept their future maintenance, i.e. adopt them, once we are satisfied that they have been constructed to a satisfactory standard. To do otherwise, would present major financial liabilities to the Council and hence also the public purse."

**Councillor Niki George** asked, as a supplementary question, if it was possible for a list of roads earmarked for adoption to be available on the council's website.

**Councillor Brian Morrey** said that he would ask officers to investigate and progress this if possible.

#### **Question 11**

**Councillor Judith Lubbock to the Executive Member for Corporate Resources and Governance:-**

"Can the Portfolio Holder tell me how much it cost to make the adaptations to the reception desk in the Council's foyer?"

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

"Essential refurbishment has been carried out to the main reception desk at City Hall at a cost of £10,855. The work was necessary to improve the safety and security of the reception staff and to meet the Council's Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) responsibilities. The new low level counter now serves the needs of our wheelchair users' customers. City Hall's main reception desk now meets DDA requirements.

From the safety and security perspective a new rear lockable door was installed and the inner door lock repaired to create a 'temporary refuge' for staff if they feel threatened by a customer. The desk front was widened to create additional distance between customers and staff thereby reducing the risk of physical assault on staff.

The work also included new storage to improve the image of the reception area and the opportunity was taken to renew old electrical power and network cabling."

**Councillor Judith Lubbock** asked, as a supplementary question, why the changes to the reception desk did not fit in with the surrounding foyer area.

**Councillor Alan Waters** said that this was a matter of aesthetics and others might disagree with that suggestion.