



Council
28 November 2017

Questions to cabinet members or chairs of committees

Question 1

Councillor Lubbock to ask the cabinet member for health and wellbeing the following question:

“I have received numerous criticisms of the Council following the felling of 15 mature Red Horse Chestnut Trees in Eaton Park which formed an important avenue leading up to the Rotunda.

Whilst I was informed ahead of time that these trees would be felled, I was not prepared for the visual impact their felling would have on the park and sympathise with those users of the Park who contacted me.

I have therefore asked officers if in future the following process be followed in order to lessen the loss of so many mature trees in one go.

1. Immediately following felling, the trunks are completely removed including stump grinding.
2. Replace with appropriate trees of adequate size and protection to show planned succession as soon as possible.
3. Give as much information to the public as possible on why the trees are being removed rather than ‘these trees have been inspected and recommended for removal’.
4. Give consideration to the removal of a few trees each year over a few years, rather than 15 in one go, where this is possible.

Whilst I understand that the officers need to make judgements on whether trees are dangerous if diseased or at the end of their lives, consideration must be given to the impact such loss of so many mature trees all in one go has on Park users and the loss of confidence the public has in the council’s tree policies.

Can the cabinet officer please comment on the process given the above?”

Councillor Packer cabinet member for health and wellbeing’s response:

“Can I thank Cllr Lubbock for my first question at council.

The removal of any tree in the city can be very emotive and can have a definite impact on the local environment which is why a decision to remove a tree is not taken lightly. This will be if the tree is dead, dying or diseased or has health and safety implications.

Cllr Lubbock makes a number of good points which I welcome the opportunity to respond to.

Stump grinding is carried out by a sub-contractor and work is accumulated as this is a more cost effective than having multiple visits. Where there is a delay between felling and carrying out the stump grinding the stumps are left high so that they are clearly visible to avoid being a trip hazard. Stump grinding for the trees that were removed in Eaton Park, started on 23 November and was due for completion on 24 November enabling the trees to be replaced in the New Year.

A list of suitable replacement tree species which are known to grow well in Norwich, have wildlife benefits and reach a mature size and shape befitting an avenue in such a prestigious location, was provided to the Friends of Eaton park. The friends groups have selected walnut trees to be purchased for replanting.

The mature height of the walnut trees will be greater than the red chestnuts reaching 25 -35m tall at maturity and they will live much longer than the chestnuts living for around 150 - 200 years.

The trees that will be planted will be approximately 3.0 to 3.5 m in height and a girth of 12-14cm at a metre above ground. This size strikes the best balance of:

- having an immediate impact and thus being able to replace the avenue which I feel is important
- being robust enough to withstand vandalism but young enough to establish quickly
- whilst reducing the amount of 'transplant shock' a tree suffers when being moved and planted. Transplant shock can result in dieback and slow growth for a number of years. They require increased aftercare, increased water use and the need for multiple anchor points for each tree. The anchor points would create a hazard to park visitors, interfere with the yew hedge and be unsightly in the park.

The new trees will be protected by the wooden frames that are used for new tree planting across the city including Eaton Park. The guards will sit well in the formal landscape setting and have proven resistant to all but the most determined acts of vandalism.

In terms of notification, posters were placed on the trees; the portfolio holder and ward councillors were notified at the beginning of October, making them aware of the work.

The notice contained general information and the feedback may indicate the need for notices for trees to be removed which are in prominent locations or which are prominent in size, to contain more detailed information and this will be considered.

Discussions were had with Friends of Eaton Park on the reasons for the tree removal and the tree teams recommended approach that the trees be removed in one go.

Whilst having a significant impact on the park, this bold approach to replacement was recommended as the best approach to reinstate the avenue and so the trees grow evenly. Trees removed in different years would not, at least in the short term achieve this as quickly and the result would be an uneven age of trees and spacing.

Question 2

Councillor Woollard to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:

“I read with concern the Wednesday 8th November front page of the Evening News regarding the fears that the foodbanks in Norwich would soon be empty due to ever increasing demand. Given this increasing problem can the Cabinet member for social inclusion comment on the efforts this council is taking to tackle food poverty?”

Councillor Davis cabinet member for social inclusion’s response:

“As per the report to cabinet on 13 September 2017, the council is working with a range of stakeholders around the complex issue of food poverty in the city. As was outlined in the report, the council has delivered a holiday hunger programme, increased take up of free school meals, and provides in kind support to a range of groups that tackle food issues through provision of allotments and storage space. Council officers are also using an enabling approach to support the diverse network of food poverty related agencies in the city to identify areas of potential collaboration to ensure that use of resource is optimised and the maximum number of residents helped. The council also works with colleagues in the health sector to support initiatives around food literacy such as the Healthy Norwich awareness-raising campaign about the risks of high sugar drinks.

However, as the scrutiny committee heard when it looked at the issue earlier this year, food poverty is also driven by a number of factors, including low income, benefits changes and sanctions. The council is therefore also focussed on addressing these in order to prevent individuals and households experiencing food poverty in the first place. This includes its commitment to the living wage, its continuation of 100% relief on council tax for the most vulnerable, provision and commissioning of advice on benefits, money and housing issues and provision of affordable housing. With the effects of full Universal Credit still to be experienced in the city, it is important that we retain an approach that seeks to address these wider socio-economic issues that drive inequality in the city, rather than simply seeking to pick up the pieces when things have gone wrong.”

Question 3

Councillor Maxwell to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:

“According to the government statistics released earlier this year, the number of rough sleepers in the autumn of 2016 was up by 16% on the same period in 2015. Rough sleeping has risen by 50% in the last two years, and has more than doubled since 2010. Given these shocking figures can the cabinet member for social housing comment on the steps this council is taking to support homeless people in the city despite the appalling supported housing cuts implemented earlier this year?”

Councillor Maguire cabinet member for safe city environment’s response:

“We believe the most effective way to deal with homelessness and rough sleeping is to prevent it from happening and we place great emphasis on this approach through the provision of specialist housing advice and assistance to all those facing homelessness or in housing difficulty in the city.

As well as performing our statutory obligations regarding homelessness, we also recognise Norwich, as a City at the centre of a wide rural area, is a magnet for those facing homelessness or rough sleeping in the region and dedicate significant resources to assist anyone who finds themselves on the street. This includes the employment of a specialist rough-sleeper co-ordinator to provide intensive support and assistance to rough sleepers, provision of Severe Emergency Weather Provision (SWEP) for the sub-region, reconnection to home areas, and provision of outreach support through our partners at St Martins Housing Trust.

We are not complacent however and recognise the challenges ahead. The recent cuts to the supported housing budget by the county council have reduced the options available to us in order to help people to move on from rough-sleeping and we face the challenge of increasing numbers of rough sleepers with complex and multiple needs.

We have been carrying out considerable work with local agencies and statutory bodies following the recent cuts. As a result, we are currently developing options which will incorporate this mutual interest in joint working and funding to achieve an integrated approach to address rough-sleeping and tackling the complex needs that lead to it.”

Question 4

Councillor Peek to ask the deputy leader the following question:

“I saw that the cabinet member for council housing recently had the pleasure of showing the Mayor of Ipswich and our Lord Mayor around the Goldsmith Street development. Can the cabinet member for social housing comment on progress towards completion on this site which will deliver badly needed new council housing?”

Councillor Harris deputy leader's response:

"I was delighted to be able to showcase the Goldsmith Street development of new Passivhaus homes to the Mayor of Ipswich and the Lord Mayor. The development is progressing well with the timber frame now erected for most of the units and brickwork also well underway. Good progress is also being made with the internal fit out and it was very good to see the inside of the various house types to get a feel for what we will be handing over to new tenants; who will hopefully be able to move in during Autumn 2018.

I am particularly pleased that that the council will be offering high quality and spacious homes that meet the highest standards currently available for thermal efficiency. This will drastically reduce fuel bills for our tenants as well as benefitting the environment."

Question 5

Councillor Driver to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:

"I noticed that the excellent Switch and Save scheme launched in the summer, recently finished. Can the cabinet social inclusion comment on the savings once again achieved through this initiative through this latest tranche?"

Councillor Davis cabinet member for social inclusion's response:

"Thank you for highlighting this practical and popular scheme that has helped thousands of Norwich citizens to save money. Through the power of collective purchasing we work to secure the lowest energy prices for our registrants each winter, therefore helping to reduce the cost of energy and offset rising energy prices.

The 15th edition of the Norwich Big Switch and Save closed today. I'm delighted to report that switchers will save an average of £224 a year per household on dual fuel tariffs. Over the 15 tranches 22,000 people have registered for the Norwich Big Switch and Save. If all homes took up the offered savings a total of at least £5 million would be saved on energy bills.

I'm very pleased to announce that the next tranche of the Big Switch and Save will commence on Tuesday 5 December. I would urge residents to take advantage of the council's energy savings service. They can register either online by visiting www.bigswitchandsave.co.uk or offline by calling the council's contact centre.

Norwich City Council endeavours to engage with fuel poor households regularly to ensure that they are aware of the Switch and Save and other available help. We will continue to work hard to help our residents out of the fuel poverty trap.

So while fuel poverty levels are increasing nationally, we have bucked the trend in Norwich for the fourth consecutive year. Norwich now has 1,126 less families in fuel poverty, not having to make the agonising decision of whether to heat or eat."

Question 6

Councillor Malik to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:

“Can the cabinet member for safe city environment comment on the significant progress made toward achieving the Carbon reduction target and objectives set in the environmental strategy, as reported to cabinet last month?”

Councillor Maguire cabinet member for safe city environment’s response:

“Thank you for your question.

Firstly I’m delighted to report on the excellent progress the council has made towards its target to reduce carbon dioxide emissions from its own operations.

The target of a 40% reduction (against a 2007 baseline) was set in 2014 in the second phase Carbon Management Plan. At this time the council had already achieved a 29% reduction in carbon emissions, only narrowly missing meeting its first target of 30% over the first 5 years of the Carbon Management plan.

The 2014 target of 40% was due to be met by the end of the second phase of the Carbon Management Plan which expires in early 2019. However, progress in reducing the council’s carbon footprint has been excellent and I am therefore delighted to report that the council has exceeded its carbon reduction target of 40% by some considerable margin, achieving an impressive 54.1% reduction in the council’s carbon emissions to date and well ahead of the 2019 deadline.

Officers are currently busy scoping opportunities for further carbon reductions and early indications are that the next carbon reduction target could be set at an ambitious 70% (against a 2007 baseline) which is excellent and far exceeds the targets set at a national level which are for a 57% reduction by 2030 (against a 1990 baseline).

In October 2016 the council signed up to an OFGEM compliant renewable energy tariff with our electricity provider which means that all electricity supplied to city council assets is renewable energy and can included in the carbon footprint as such. In addition a wide range of energy saving projects have been implemented across our assets, including, but not limited to, server virtualisation, LED lighting upgrades, insulation works and boiler management to fleet management, pool bikes and building rationalisation.

I applaud the impressive carbon emissions reduction of 54.1% to date, and recognise it is not the work of a single officer or team, but of many officers and contractors working collaboratively across services to continuously find opportunities to reduce carbon emissions wherever possible.

The environmental strategy team are currently collating the next environmental statement which details progress made against the objectives set in the environmental strategy and gives a flavour of the carbon reduction projects being implemented by the council both on our own assets and across the wider city.”

Question 7

Councillor Sands to ask the leader following question:

“Can the Leader comment on the importance of the 2040 Norwich City Vision consultation and what it hopes to achieve for our city?”

Councillor Waters leader of the council’s reply:

“The city vision conference is part of an important and ongoing dialogue with other key stakeholders in the city that will establish a shared approach to some of the very real challenges that face Norwich, whilst building on the successes and assets of our fine city. It is not a one-off event, but an important milestone alongside focus groups and conversations with members and partners that we are facilitating. As a key champion and voice for the city, we hope it will provide important civic leadership and a steer as to how we develop our role in delivering the shared vision, as well as shaping our approach to partnership working and service delivery over coming years.”

Question 8

Councillor Vivien Thomas to ask the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods the following question:

“Last Saturday (25 November) was White Ribbon Day, part of the campaign to eliminate domestic violence in our city. Can the cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhoods comment on the ongoing work and support offered by this council to support people experiencing this abuse?”

Councillor Herries cabinet member for safer, stronger neighbourhood’s response:

“Norwich has long blazed a trail in the County in relation to supporting victims of domestic abuse – recognised in 2015 by the council receiving White Ribbon Status. On your way in this evening, you will have seen the White Ribbon flag flying from the main flagpole on top of City Hall and the large white ribbon sign on the front of the building proclaiming the council’s proactive approach to help eliminate all domestic abuse. You may also have seen some of the White Ribbon Windows in businesses across the City Centre; where the council’s community engagement officer has been working to raise awareness of domestic abuse with the Norwich business community and their customers.

In 1974, Norwich City Council allocated to a newly established domestic abuse support service – Leeway - a three bedroomed property to establish its first women’s refuge in the city, along with a small establishment grant.

The council’s relationship with Leeway has remained and developed further over the years: We currently commission Leeway to provide refuge services to women presenting to the council as experiencing abuse and we offer ‘in kind’ support to Leeway with outreach housing advice for people in Norwich refuges. Norwich City

council also offers 'in kind' outreach housing advice to people using the services of Norfolk community law service – a voluntary sector organisation offering pro bono legal advice and information to marginalised groups and people on low income in Norwich and Norfolk.

Norwich City Council's Home Options team has recently recruited a Domestic abuse advisor – an officer with specific skills and experience to undertake Domestic abuse, stalking and harassment (DASH) risk assessments and to work with Norwich residents experiencing abuse on safety planning. This officer attends daily risk assessment conferences for those residents assessed as high risk, refers and signposts to other relevant support organisations and coordinates the work of the council's network of 16 domestic abuse champions – across all relevant service areas.

Last year, the council was successful in a partnership bid with Leeway to DCLG, to obtain funding for a new Safe House in Norwich – which increases refuge provision in Norwich and allocates dedicated space for domestic abuse victims that have no recourse to public funds - a first in the County. This project also provides a dedicated support worker for Leeway clients that, as a result of the abuse they have experienced, have additional needs in relation to mental health and / or substance misuse.

The council's Specialist support team provides intensive support and advocacy for tenants with complex needs – including those with current or historic experience of domestic abuse - to develop a programme of direct and indirect support, including signposting and referral to other relevant organisations, to build resilience and help ensure retention of a healthy tenancy.

This work is coordinated by making full use of the Norwich early help hub – hosted here at City Hall by the council – which is attended by a range of public and voluntary sector organisations offering support to individuals and families in Norwich – including those experiencing domestic abuse; to help ensure victims have all information on options available to them, that they are safe and that they remain so.

In response to developing needs, the council is currently piloting a scheme with Leeway to help identify the need in relation to male victims of domestic abuse. The council is providing temporary accommodation to male victims through Leeway, where victims identify a need, to help inform Leeway's future service provision.

We know that Norfolk police receive most reports of domestic abuse from residents in Norwich. Of the 17,000 reported domestic abuse incidents last year, 25% of them were in relation to Norwich residents.

We also know that reports of domestic abuse have increased year on year for the last three years. However, we see this as a success of our ongoing campaigning to raise awareness of domestic abuse; what it is, what support is available – and ultimately to reduce the stigma and encourage more people to seek help earlier. This is what will keep them and their families safe.

However, we also know that there are some gaps in local domestic abuse provision:

- Primarily in provision for perpetrators of abuse; work to change behaviours to reduce people suffering the impact of abuse.
- Also in relation to specific support for children and young people as witnesses, victims and as perpetrators of abuse
- There is a lack of services for people coming out of an abusive relationship. We know that domestic abuse victims return to their abuser an average of 14 times before they leave the relationship for good. The biggest risk to returning to an abusive relationship is when the outreach service following refuge services ceases. There is a requirement for ongoing support albeit at a lesser level.
- We also know that people experiencing abuse don't want to have to tell their story to the various services available for the complex and varied support required. Therefore, we all need to get better at sharing information safely and at the right time, so that victims can tell any public or voluntary sector provider and need only tell their story once, should they wish.

Norwich City Council is excited to be part of an innovative new domestic abuse support programme called Connect that will wrap around the current support services and address all of those current gaps in service.

This holistic support programme for domestic abuse victims, perpetrators and their families is part funded by SafeLives, a national domestic abuse organisation and match funded by six local funders, of which Norwich City Council is one. Other funders include:

- Norfolk County Council – incorporating public health, children's services and adult services
- Norfolk Police and crime commissioner
- Norfolk Police

Connect is a SafeLives pilot programme that will be delivering services totalling £1.67million in Norwich from July 2018, for three full years. During this period, as well as delivering direct services, the programme will be upskilling officers from mainstream services to help ensure the sustainability of the work, where possible, beyond 2022.

The Connect programme is designed to work alongside current support services – not duplicate them, to have a real and lasting impact on domestic abuse in Norwich. It will provide evaluation information throughout the programme, to inform the development of the service and future commissioning in relation to domestic abuse. We are thrilled that Norwich was selected for this pilot programme and look forward to seeing a very real difference on the ground for people experiencing abuse.”

Question 9

Councillor Brociek-Coulton to ask the cabinet member for social inclusion the following question:

“As part of the Cosy City Initiative I was pleased to be able to secure a Winter Wellbeing pack for an elderly constituent suffering from fuel poverty. Can the cabinet member for social inclusion comment on the success of these packs and how they can be provided to constituents in need?”

Councillor Davis cabinet member for social inclusion’s response:

“As the cold weather approaches we are aware that many elderly residents may be suffering from fuel poverty and illness due to cold. As part of our strategy to reduce fuel poverty and excess winter deaths in Norwich we are providing ‘Winter Wellbeing’ packs which include thermal gloves, thermal socks, thermal hats, soup, microwavable soup mugs and blankets to vulnerable residents free of charge.

We are working with a range of partners such as Gasway, Age UK, Norfolk Social Services and Community Nursing as well as a range of city council teams in order to make sure these packs reach those in real need. We hope to provide almost 150 of these packs to vulnerable residents over the next month.”

Question 10

Councillor Ackroyd to ask the cabinet member for health and wellbeing the following question:

“Eaton Councillors have successfully raised funds for 2 Defibrillators in Eaton, one outside Waitrose and the other in Eaton Park.

Both are sited where a lot of people are gathered together and both have been deployed.

It started me thinking ‘where are the Defibrillators in Norwich city centre?’

Please could the Cabinet member for Health and Wellbeing consider what the city council in conjunction with the Business Improvement District (BID) could do to raise awareness of Defibrillators in the city centre and their use?”

Councillor Packer cabinet member for health and wellbeing’s response:

“Thank you for your question. May I offer my congratulations on the fund raising efforts of the Eaton community which I understand saw a defibrillator installed in Eaton Park for the first time in its history. I will ask officers to liaise with our partners at the Business improvement District and see how we can work together to raise awareness in the city centre of these important public assets.”

Question 11

Councillor Schmierer to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:

“Over the last few months, an increasing number of my constituents have reported that they are suffering from ever more antisocial behaviour, particularly linked to people drinking alcohol, especially super strength alcohol in public spaces near residential areas around the city. I would like to ask the cabinet member what actions the council is taking to tackle this issue, in particular around Quayside, New Mills Yard, Elm Hill and the city centre, and how effective the cabinet member believes they will be?”

Councillor Maguire cabinet member for safe city environment’s response:

“Councillor Schmierer will be aware that the council declared two designated public place orders (DPPO) under the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 at the request of the Norfolk Constabulary. These set out to prevent public drunkenness and associated antisocial behaviour from the drinking of alcohol in public places and enables a Police Constable to require a person to stop drinking alcohol in a designated place and allows a Police Constable to seize any opened container of alcohol. The new powers therefore assist the Police in taking a pro-active role to avoid public anti-social behaviour where it is alcohol related.

The two areas cover the city centre, incorporating the Gas Hill area, Riverside and King Street; with a further area covering Jenny Lind Park, Vauxhall Street across to Old Palace Road.

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, introduced Public Space Protection Orders which set out to counter unreasonable and persistent behaviour that affects the quality of life of its residents.

Government guidance is that any DPPO in force at 20 October 2017 will be automatically treated as if they were provisions of a PSPO from that date.

In recent months the council and police have reviewed the current DPPOs including the levels of crime and anti-social behaviour reported to the police that relate to street drinking to understand if the designation remains valid and also to consider if other types of behaviour should be included.

The police have investigated street drinking and drunken behaviour in Norwich and have recorded 409 drunken behaviour incidents and 323 drunken behaviour crimes in the year to July 2017. These figures are specifically related to drinking and drunkenness on the street but exclude incidents and crimes at licensed premises. On this basis it is considered that the order, which now becomes a PSPO remains valid.

Whilst this work continues regarding other street offences, the views of residents and businesses will be sought if any additional powers are required. In the meantime, Cllr Schmierer can be reassured that the powers which allow the police to continue to confiscate alcohol from individuals who are causing antisocial behaviour from the

drinking of alcohol in public places remain in place and will be actioned as they are required.”

Question 12

Councillor Jackson to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:

“Over the last six months I have received a disturbing increase in the number of reports of graffiti in the area I represent, particularly in the city centre. A number of residents’ premises have been continually defaced and the repeated costs for these individuals can be considerable. Does the cabinet member agree that this imposes an unfair burden on the residents concerned, and if so what will the council do to address this?”

Councillor Maguire cabinet member for safe city environment’s response:

“Nobody likes graffiti, especially on their own property, and so I understand something of how your constituents feel when they experience it. When the council receives a report of graffiti, it will remove it where it is on public land and/or if it is offensive. If offensive and on private land then the council will, with the landowners involvement, remove the graffiti.

Where possible, the council will remove graffiti on public buildings and property within 24 hours if it is offensive or within 14 days for all other graffiti.

This council's general graffiti removal service does not extend to privately owned buildings, which is quite common in local authorities, and these remain the responsibility of the land owner.

Where private residents or local businesses require a graffiti removal service these can be found via the internet. In circumstances where residential or private buildings are being targeted, the council’s area management team will provide advice on how this can be resolved including working jointly with the police.

The head of citywide services recently discussed the increased levels of graffiti in some parts of the city centre with police colleagues and some problem locations will be targeted jointly to prevent and remove the graffiti.

Residents, members and officers are reminded that they can report incidents of graffiti they come across using the easy to complete web form on the council’s website.”

Question 13

Councillor Raby to ask the chair of licensing the following question:

“The council’s Gambling Statement of Principles was last updated in 2007. As the council has a statutory duty to update this statement every three years, it is now

seven years out of date. With a large new gambling venue having recently been granted a licence, this is particularly important if councillors are to limit the proliferation of gambling premises across the city, in particular in the most deprived communities. When will the out-of-date Gambling Statement of Principles be updated in line with the council's legal obligation?"

Councillor Button the chair of licensing's response:

"Thank you for your question. I have requested that the council's gambling statement of principles be updated as a priority.

The process to update the statement will include the development of a local area profile to include with the policy. This profile, whilst not a statutory requirement, is considered important as it will increase awareness of local risks in addition to improved information sharing, that will support engagement with licensees, a more coordinated response to local risks, and particularly help to inform specific risks that operators will need to address in their risk assessment.

An effective local area profile is likely to take account of a wide range of factors and require proactive engagement with responsible authorities and other organisations in the area that help identify local risks in their area. These are likely to include public health, mental health, housing, education, community welfare groups and the Constabulary.

I have asked officers to provide me with a timetable for when the new statement of principles will be completed during 2018. Given the requirement to engage these and other organisations in the development of the local area profile, which is a key element, as well as to undertake a consultation on the revised statement, officers will need to discuss with partners their ability to contribute to this important piece of work.

Discussions have taken place with Nplaw about the requirements to undertake this revision and I will update members in due course on progress."

Question 14

Councillor Carlo to ask the leader following question:

"The latest national statistics for local carbon emissions show that Norwich's per capita emissions have been falling. However, they do not reflect the fact that many of Norwich's residents travel by car to employment and facilities which have been located outside the city boundary such as the N and N Hospital.

Emissions from transport in Broadland and South Norfolk increased in 2015, sharply so in the case of South Norfolk. A11 dualling, further development on the city periphery and related traffic growth have undoubtedly contributed to the increase. Future year-on-year increases in CO2 emissions can be anticipated from new traffic generated by the Postwick Hub, the NDR, airport expansion and increased flights, A47 dualling, A11/Thickthorn junction improvements and further

planned major urban expansion of Norwich. Development of bus rapid transit, walking and cycling were factored into the NDR modelling and so they will not make a great deal of difference to projected carbon emissions unless local transport policy is changed to encourage a massive modal shift and traffic reduction.

Norwich City Council cooperates with South Norfolk and Broadland through bodies such as the Greater Norwich Development Partnership, which have facilitated carbon-generating development around the edge of on the city. Norwich therefore shares responsibility for the associated greenhouse gas emissions. What policies will the leader of the council be proposing to reduce (and not simply minimise) emissions from existing transport and development and future growth on the outskirts of Norwich in order to help meet the Paris Agreement, in particular through the emerging Greater Norwich Local Plan?"

Councillor Waters leader of the council's reply:

"Thank you for drawing attention to the success of Norwich in reducing its per capita transport emissions over time. These are indeed a success story and arise both because of actions the council take (such as its investment in the standard of our housing stock and the promotion of cycling), and due to broader changes in society (such as the changing nature of industry in the city and the increasing proportion of people employed in the hi tech and low carbon sectors).

We continue to make efforts to address climate change across all Council activities and not just by focusing on a single document such as the Greater Norwich Local Plan. However, in the case of the Greater Norwich Local Plan we will not be able to commit to an absolute reduction in carbon emissions, all we will be able to do is to work with our partners to seek that the choices made in the formulation of the document promote the growth options that are genuinely sustainable when considered against all the other reasonable alternative options identified.

It should be remembered that following the preparation of the Joint Core Strategy and signing of the City Deal the City is committed to deliver a major and sustained period of growth involving significant numbers of new homes, jobs and supporting infrastructure and the government has not ascribed carbon targets down to local areas in order to deliver its commitments made in the Paris agreement.

I can assure you that the Council is determined to do what it can to address climate change, both through mitigating our contribution to it and adapting to the inevitable impacts that a changed climate will have on our society."

Question 15

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

"I submitted an enquiry through the council system in May about making planning applications easier for the public to navigate and understand. I have since resubmitted this, but have still received no response. Could the cabinet member

please update me on whether any changes have been made, or are planned, in relation to any of the following concerns raised in my original enquiry?

- 1) Very cryptic headings of planning applications. When searching for planning applications it is often very difficult to determine from the headlines what these applications are concerned with, as they are often updates on previous applications and list a number of references and technical terms. I understand that it may be a legal requirement to list the applications in such a way, but am wondering if search results could include a laymans version of the application/changes.
- 2) Complicated process to receive updates on search results. To receive updates one needs to save a search, which means that often one receives updates about other applications in the area/ the street. Would it not be possible to have a simple tick box next to the application, where one can opt into receiving updates about this specific application.
- 3) Documents related to an application. It is very difficult to find specific documents related to the application in the current online system, as these documents are not labelled and at times not retrievable. Would it be possible to have a better labelled system?
- 4) Announcement of planning committee dates to objectors. If an objector wants to speak on an application they have to look up themselves when the planning application is coming to committee. This is quite a difficult thing to navigate and remember. Would it not be possible to at least send an automated email with the committee date to objectors (and in fact all those that have saved the application to receive updates, as the next update is only on whether it is approved or not)."

Councillor Stonard cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth's response:

"Thank you for your question. Firstly, please accept my apologies for our failure to respond to the questions you raised. This was due to an oversight on the part of the officer dealing with the matter.

The questions you raise deal with how the public access system works to allow the public to view and comment on planning proposals. Overall the public access system is a valuable and well used tool allowing the public to fully engage with the planning system, however, we do recognise that the system is not as user friendly as it might be and we do intend to improve this as part of our efforts to increase the efficiency of the Council.

Instead of dealing with the detail of the matters raised in this forum I suggest it would be appropriate for you to sit down with officers in the planning service who will be able to discuss the issues you raise in more detail. But in summary you may wish to note that:

- (1) There are restrictions on the description of the proposals that appear on the website as these descriptions are those that will ultimately appear on the

- decision notice when the application is determined so they do need to be technically correct to accord with legislation;
- (2) Officers will be able to explain this matter to you in more detail when you meet but the public system access does give the functionality you seek;
 - (3) The labelling of documents is restricted somewhat by the need for public access to draw documents from a different document management system. It is hoped to address this matter in due course alongside other improvements to the system;
 - (4) Although presently the system cannot notify respondents of committee dates we do hope to be able to introduce this feature to the application tracking function in due course."

Question 16

Councillor Price to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:

"Norwich has ongoing problems with air quality, as revealed most recently in a report in the Lancet which listed the city among 41 places in the UK that are above recommended limits for particulate pollution.

Norwich City Council has a duty to review and assess air quality and to submit an annual status report to the government by 30th April each year. Annual figures are usually made available to councillors in provisional form on request, with adjusted figures following in March or April. However, the 2016 figures have still not been published, and despite repeated requests from me and my Green group colleagues, dating back to March, we have not received this data in any form.

We have requested this data numerous times by email, phone and through the councillor enquiry system, including on 14th February (when the response was that figures were "better than last year" but were yet to be adjusted), 18th March, 23rd March and 17th October.

Will the cabinet member please ensure that this data is published as a matter of urgency, in accordance with the council's statutory obligations?"

Councillor Maguire cabinet member for safe city environment's response:

"Air quality is reported on an annual basis, incorporating the data for a full calendar year. The Norwich report for the most recent full year Jan-Dec 2016 has been submitted to DeFRA and is with them for appraisal. Once the report is verified by DeFRA it will be published."

Question 17

Councillor Tim Jones to ask the leader following question:

“The council is currently consulting on what kind of city and what kind of council people want to see in the future. This has included the recent Future of Norwich conference as well as various focus groups. However, backbench councillors were not invited to the conference; nor were we informed about the focus groups and related activities; nor have we at any point been asked for our views on the future of the city and the neighbourhoods we were elected to represent.

This is a matter both of democratic representation and of making sensible use of the considerable skills and knowledge councillors have.

Can the cabinet member comment on why Norwich City Council is sidelining its own elected councillors in the debate on the future of our city?”

Councillor Waters leader of the council’s reply:

“The councillor is correct to say that we are undertaking a wide-ranging piece of engagement to establish a shared vision for the city over coming years. Although the city council is a key player in facilitating this and has a central role in delivering any vision, it is by no means the only voice that needs to be heard. We have taken a collegiate approach to include a diverse range of organisations and individuals in this process, and, whilst all city council political groups are attending the conference alongside cabinet members, it would be disproportionate to dominate the attendance with all council members. The conference is not a decision-making exercise, but is simply providing an opportunity to establish a level of consensus within which decisions can be made in the fit and proper democratic space.

Furthermore, as has been agreed with all group leaders, there will be all-member focus groups to enable all elected councillors to contribute to the process and ongoing engagement with the council’s scrutiny committee who were informed about the approach we are taking in September.”

Question 18

Councillor Grahame to ask the cabinet member for resources the following question:

“As will be discussed in two other items on this evening’s agenda, the council is increasingly investing in commercial property in order to generate income. However, the council’s choices about where to invest have an impact on the city it exists to serve. We could benefit Norwich by investing locally; but if this is not written into the council’s investment policy, its money is likely to be invested elsewhere.

The council has recently adopted a ‘social value in procurement’ framework. Building on this excellent work, will the cabinet member support a proposal to update our investment policy to require the council to factor in social and environmental costs and benefits to the local area when seeking to acquire new income-generating assets?”

Councillor Kendrick cabinet member for resources' response:

“Thank you for your question.

In April this year cabinet agreed a criteria based approach to rationalising its commercial property, which will result in disposal of those properties that perform badly in financial terms or are associated with either high maintenance or management costs.

Alongside this cabinet agreed a complimentary strategy for acquiring new commercial property. This is to ensure that the council's property portfolio is put onto a financially sustainable and self-sufficient footing and to contribute to the council's income more generally and thereby help support services.

The key driver to these acquisitions is therefore to generate a financial return and it relies on purchasing property that is already tenanted – for a minimum of 3 years - and with good prospects of re-letting. Also the tenants need to have very good financial standing – as we would not least prefer the tenant renews their lease on expiry to ensure a continued income stream and no void costs. For sound risk management reasons such investments are not also limited to Norwich.

It is important to understand that commercial properties of this nature are attractive to a wide range of investors including pension schemes, property funds and other local authorities for example. If the council is unsuccessful in securing such a property it is only because another party has been successful. However, as the property is already tenanted with such tenants having protection under the Landlord and Tenant Act their business will continue whether the council owns the property or some other party. It also follows that because the tenant is already trading in an established way and in accordance with the lease already in place it is not possible, at the time of purchase, to also secure social value outcomes in the same way that a procurement exercise potentially can.

Where the council may have an opportunity to consider social outcomes is at the end of a tenant's lease, assuming the existing tenant does not want to renew. Here, if there is a choice to be made between new tenants which would otherwise achieve the same financial outcome, then application of the principles embodied in the council's social value in procurement could be a useful means of informing the eventual decision. I will ask officers to develop a suitable framework for consideration by cabinet.”