



Council
25 September 2018
Questions to cabinet members or chairs of committees

Question 1

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

“The surface of an alleyway between Grosvenor Road and Neville Street has worn away, creating a trip hazard for pedestrians. The City Council Highways Management team confirmed that the alleyway has been in the programme for re-surfacing for ten years but that it is difficult to give a delivery date. The council advises, “We are currently only able to afford to reconstruct about 5 paths a year across the city. Even slurry seal, which is a thin layer applied over existing surfaces to arrest deterioration, is limited to 4 sites this year compared with approximately 30 previously. That compares with 800 sites on our list.” However, it is surely more cost-effective to keep footpaths in good repair than to risk pedestrians tripping up and suffering injury. Will the cabinet member make the case to Norfolk County Council for dedicating a larger share of the Integrated Transport Budget from the DfT for repairing and reconstructing footpaths in Norwich?”

Councillor Stonard, cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth’s reply:

“The amount of funding for reconstruction and resurfacing of footways is set by Norfolk County Council. Whilst I agree that more paths could be treated, the reality is that budgets are extremely limited. Allocations are made on the basis of network length and condition, and as such, Norwich’s allocation is fair.

Of course we would like to see higher investment in maintenance but we also have to acknowledge the wider financial situation. You are probably aware that Norfolk County Council is having to cut its budgets, and has difficult choices to make balancing the needs of social services, children’s services as well as highways and others. The problem is not so much getting a bigger share of the pie, but having a bigger pie to share from. Regardless of cost effectiveness, there just isn’t sufficient money to replace footpaths as people would perhaps like.

Unlike many other paths, the alleyway between Grosvenor Road and Neville Street is not deteriorating. The surface is a bit uneven in places but it is unlikely to get significantly worse or fall apart in the near future. Therefore higher priority is given to other paths.

Paths are maintained to standards in Norfolk County Council's Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP). This provides a risk managed approach to dealing with hazards. Thus, some defects will be repaired more quickly than others depending on severity and location. However, it is not possible to keep every path perfectly smooth. The highways team inspect the network regularly and order repairs in accordance with TAMP."

Question 2

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

"Recent changes to the government framework have included the deletion of National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 173, which stated that 'careful attention to viability and costs' should be taken when making planning decisions, leaving Norwich's Development Management policies and the affordable housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) out of date. Yet the planning committee continues to decide applications and may need to make decisions regarding the viability of specific applications. As updated policies are not yet available to the planning committee or to officers, will the cabinet member action a statement from the Planning Department that outlines the changes and impacts to Norwich policies and the SPD that may be used until the full rewrite can be carried out?"

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

"Thank you for the question which relates to the recent publication of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and our own approach to affordable housing and viability as set out in our local plans and in our affordable housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD).

You may recall that we debated the implications of viability assessment for affordable housing at the council meeting on September 2017 and, among other things, council resolved to ask cabinet to:

- Consider, as part of the review of the Supplementary Planning Document 2015, making viability assessments publicly accessible online and therefore open to public scrutiny throughout the planning consultation process, following the example of councils including Greenwich, Islington, Lambeth and Bristol.
- Introduce, if appropriate, a policy of requiring external, independent scrutiny of all viability assessments by default, to replace the current procedure of subjecting a viability assessment to independent

assessment only when the council 'considers it necessary' (as set out in the council's Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document 2015).

- Clarify, based on evidence, in the forthcoming revised Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document what specifically is meant by 'reasonable profit' for a developer, by stipulating a maximum profit level, if appropriate that recognises developers' financial constraints while also demonstrating the council's refusal to allow developers to profit at the expense of much-needed affordable housing.

Now we have the revised NPPF published we are in a position to take these resolutions forward and only last week Sustainable Development Panel discussed the work programme for planning policy and a report which noted that the review of the "affordable housing SPD is currently underway with anticipated adoption in early 2019. This will take account of the revised NPPF, particularly in relation to development viability".

With regard to the new NPPF and associated guidance the key aspects with regards to viability are:

- The role for viability assessment is primarily at the plan making stage. Policy requirements, particularly for affordable housing, are required to be set at a level that takes account of affordable housing and infrastructure needs and allows for the planned types of sites and development to be deliverable without the need for further assessment at decision-making stage.
- The NPPF and guidance acknowledge that there are circumstances when viability assessments will be appropriate at planning application stage. Paragraph 57 of the NPPF and PPG paragraph 008 states that it is up to the applicant to demonstrate whether particular circumstances justify the need for a viability assessment at the application stage. The guidance also states that the weight to be given to a viability assessment is a matter for the decision maker, having regard to all the circumstances in the case, including whether the plan and the viability evidence underpinning it is up to date, and any change in site circumstances since the plan was brought into force, and the transparency of assumptions behind evidence submitted as part of the viability assessment.
- Any viability assessment, including any undertaken at the plan-making stage, should reflect the government's recommended approach to standardised inputs as set out in National Planning Guidance, and should be made publicly available.

Whilst you are right to point out there is a tension between the approach being advocated in the NPPF and the approach we currently use, you are wrong to suggest that this renders our current policy framework and associated SPD out of date.

The most relevant policies here are policy 4 of the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) for Broadland, Norwich and South Norfolk (adopted March 2011 with

amendments adopted January 2014) and policy 33 of the City Council's Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (2014).

Neither of these plans have expired, they were both adopted prior to the revised NPPF and whilst the revised NPPF provides no definition of 'up-to-date', paragraph 213 states that *"existing policies should not be considered out-of-date simply because they were adopted or made prior to the publication of this Framework. Due weight should be given to them, according to their degree of consistency with this Framework"*.

Our policies are consistent with the revised NPPF in so far as it provides a framework for the assessment of viability at the decision making stage which is still provided for in the revised NPPF. Officers have therefore advised me that the new NPPF does not render these policies out of date and that weight can still be attached to the current policy framework in reaching planning decisions.

This is important as, you will be aware that, our planning policy framework is one of the tools we use to deliver genuinely affordable housing meeting the growing needs of population of Norwich. As you may recall from the information I provided at the previous council debate that our overall approach is successful with 29% of all housing provision taking place over the preceding 5 years being affordable homes.

Therefore there is no need to panic in reaction to the NPPF. Officers will continue to advise members on the best approach to maximise the delivery of affordable housing on a case by case basis in the light of our policy framework, whilst they continue the process of revising the Affordable Housing SPD in line with the revised national policy.

It is anticipated that the draft revised SPD will be reported to Sustainable Development Panel in November prior to public consultation, so this will be an opportunity for members to comment on the approach and contents of the draft SPD. It is expected that a revised SPD will be reported back to Panel in early 2019, with adoption by Cabinet by March 2019."

Question 3

Councillor Button to ask the deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing the following question:

"I recently learnt that the housing service, following three years of assessment, achieved the prestigious National Practitioner Support Service Gold Standard in delivering housing advice, the Home Options scheme and support for vulnerable people. As the pressures, particularly around housing, become ever more severe will the cabinet member for social housing join me in congratulating the housing service for this significant achievement?"

Councillor Harris, deputy leader and cabinet member for social housing's response:

"As background, the NPSS Gold Standard is designed to set the bar for homelessness services, showcasing the very best services across the country and supporting local authorities to deliver comprehensive services to prevent homelessness.

The Gold Standard begins with local authorities participating in a peer review of their frontline homelessness service. Our housing options service was subject to an on-site peer review by colleagues from Nottingham City Council and Suffolk Coastal District Council and we received not only an excellent score but also some very positive feedback:

'All members of the council, senior managers and front line staff share the same vision in terms of homelessness prevention and its contribution to social inclusion and community cohesion. There is corporate ownership of homelessness issues in terms of driving forward and facing future challenges.'

Authorities scoring well on peer review are then able to apply for each of the ten challenges that make up the Gold Standard. These are ten areas of work highlighted by a ministerial working group on homelessness as key to providing an excellent housing advice service. In achieving an excellent score on peer review and subsequently completing the ten local challenges, we have demonstrated that we meet key commitments to preventing homelessness in our area and provide a comprehensive, professional, person focused service for all customers in housing need.

The NPSS Gold Standard has been awarded to just 14 local authorities nationally, which highlights just what an accolade this is. The award is recognition of this council's ongoing corporate commitment to provide high quality services to vulnerable clients of which we can all be proud."

Question 4

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

"Like many people in our city I take an active role in recycling as much as possible. The recent drive to particularly increase food recycling in Norwich has been very welcome and I learnt in July that this has helped contribute to a stunning 42 per cent increase in food waste collected so far. Can the cabinet member for safe city environment comment further on the impact these changes have made to further improving recycling in the city?"

Councillor Maguire, cabinet member for safe city environment's reply:

"The council recognised that the amount of food waste being collected for recycling was not as high as it could be with on average 2,000 tonnes per annum being collected with poor take up of the service from householders

across the city. The council was successful in receiving a grant of £60,000 from the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) to support improvements. With this funding and support from WRAP the “Feed your Caddy” campaign was launched in May to improve performance and encourage residents to use the service.

The campaign included a twitter campaign supported by articles in Citizen magazine and local press. In addition 56,000 properties on Alternate Weekly Collections received the following ‘package’ of interventions during a two week delivery period (14-25 May 2018):

- A roll of 52 PE food waste liners
- A food waste information leaflet
- ‘No food waste please’ stickers to be placed on the lid of the refuse bin.

The results have exceeded all expectations. So far we have had over 10,000 requests for food waste caddies and are still getting them in at a rate of over 20 a day. As Cllr Hampton suggested the amount of food waste collected has gone up by 42% increasing the amount of food waste collected annually by some 800 tonnes. This would have gone for waste disposal, instead it goes to an anaerobic digestion plant run by Biogen in Herefordshire to be recycled. To put it simply, the food waste is put into giant sealed, oxygen-free tanks where it is gradually broken down to produce biogas and biofertilizer. The gas is fed back into the national grid to power our homes and buildings and the fertilizer is used on agricultural farm land to enrich the soil.

Even when compared with other intervention programmes supported by WRAP initial data suggests that the interventions have had a very positive impact on food waste and residual tonnages. In Norwich this has resulted in an additional 15kg per household per year. In previous pilots typically WRAP have seen an increase of 12kg per household per year.”

Question 5

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

“The rising scandal of homelessness rightly shocks all reasonable people and I am particularly pleased that this council, even while enduring vast cuts, has led and invested significantly in the fantastic multi-agency Pathways project. I was therefore particularly pleased to read over the summer that the impact of the Pathways project has already yielded significant reductions in rough sleeping. As winter approaches, can the cabinet member for safe city environment comment further on the importance this project will hopefully make within the city?”

Councillor Maguire, cabinet member for safe city environment's reply:

“As we move into the autumn and winter period, being roofless and sleeping on the street is no place for anyone to be in 2018, but due to impacts of austerity, welfare reform and cuts to public services overlaid by issues of drug and alcohol dependency, mental illness and poor prison discharges, Norwich has seen increases in people sleeping rough.

What I am pleased to see is the impact that the new Pathways service is having not least providing the resource to engage with those people sleeping rough.

As well as the Pathways service, the council is also planning to undertake a number of additional projects this winter to help reduce the numbers of rough sleepers which are identified in our Norwich rough sleeping strategy. These are:

Winter shelter

I can confirm that the council and the Pathways Norwich service is currently in discussion with charity and faith organisations in Norwich to look at the possibility of opening a winter shelter for four months. This service will be coordinated by a new post within the housing options team. This provision will work in tandem with the new services commissioned by Norwich City Council. We hope that by joining this work together that we will provide more options for rough sleepers in Norwich and can encourage people into more secure accommodation.

Dry house accommodation

We are busy recruiting staff for dry house accommodation that will provide housing for rough sleepers who want to live in an alcohol and drug free environment. These staff will soon be in place with two support workers and a specialist drug and alcohol nurse. We are also working closely with the new drug and alcohol service Change Grow Live (CGL) to ensure there is a joined up approach.

Mental health intervention

In partnership with NHS City Reach and Norfolk and Suffolk Foundation Trust we are currently seconding a specialist mental health nurse from the Trust to work alongside the Pathways Norwich service. We hope this post will be in place later this autumn. We want this service to help make more timely interventions to prevent mental health crisis amongst our rough sleeping population.

Young person emergency accommodation

YMCA Norfolk's new emergency bed service for Pathways Norwich is now fully operational. This service has already provided a number of young people

with emergency beds that has prevented them from rough sleeping. We hope through this service that these people will then be able to access other accommodation options.

Resettlement workers

We have now recruited three additional resettlement workers to help free up beds within supported housing in the City. These workers will work alongside providers to help overcome barriers to moving on and provide additional support to people so they can move into independent accommodation. We hope by freeing up additional space in the supported housing system that this will free up more provision for rough sleepers to access accommodation.

All of these projects, in addition to other Pathways Norwich services have been made possible by a successful bid to central government for additional funding for this financial year. We have had confirmation that we will be funded to provide these services in 2019/20. Confirmation of how much funding we will receive is still being finalised.

Latest full street count

I can confirm that the latest full count undertaken on 20/09/18 found 24 rough sleepers on the street. This is 6 persons lower than the annual November count in 2017”

Question 6

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

“Representing a ward which experiences heavy congestion, the importance of reducing carbon and improving air quality is particularly acute. I was pleased to read in the Evening News on 30 August that the per capita CO2 emissions data for Norwich has been released and we compare very favourably with other Norfolk local authorities. Can the safe city environment comment further on this success?”

Councillor Maguire, cabinet member for safe city environment’s reply:

“Thank you for your question. I agree it is wonderful news that CO2 emissions have fallen in Norwich year on year since 2005. This represents an impressive reduction in emissions from travel, industry and domestic energy consumption. So since 2005 our emissions have fallen by nearly 45% (44.9% in total). This reduction is greater than Cambridge 32.8% and Peterborough 37.0%

What is equally impressive is that this reduction in emissions has occurred whilst the UK grew its economy. Therefore the transition towards a low carbon

economy is well underway. In fact clean growth forms an integral part of the UK's new industrial strategy.

Whilst the city council has played its part, reducing its own emissions by over 54%, by significantly reducing energy consumption and purchasing only renewable electricity, we are aware of the significant challenges that lie ahead. What comes next is really hard and many of the easy wins have already been done.

As we refresh our Environmental Strategy for the next 5 years I am confident that the City Council will pay a further part in helping the city and its citizens make this transition. After all urban areas account for nearly three-quarters of humanity's emissions, reaching this goal will depend in large part on our ability to reimagine and reinvent cities in ways that promote economic prosperity, social equity, enhanced quality of life, and climate resilience.”

Question 7

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

“I recently visited the new customer contact centre in city hall with a constituent and was incredibly impressed by the new, modern and accessible facility which has been created. Can the cabinet member for health and wellbeing comment on the impact this new centre will have upon how we further enhance customer care, contact and service?”

Councillor Packer, cabinet member for health and wellbeing' response:

“Our aim was to provide a modern, bright, welcoming and flexible space in which to support the most vulnerable people within our city, through our appointment and self-serve model and that can be used for other functions and activities as well as a central focus point for visiting customers.

This has been delivered if feedback in the first few weeks from our customers is to be a measure of success. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and extremely appreciative of the new space with words like ‘a bright and welcoming space’ with ‘a great calm feel’ being shared with staff.

However, this is just the beginning, and this new environment provides further opportunities which will help us enhance our customer care, contact in general and delivery of services in an efficient manner.

Further development of our online appointment booking system and range of simple online forms together with our self-scanning facility particularly for benefits (but also with opportunities for many other services to use it like our licensing service) will increase the efficiency of many services that we deliver.

The tailored support and space for staff to meet with vulnerable customers, is at the core of our new centre. The centre gives us an opportunity to further explore a 'video meeting' facility for supporting some of our most vulnerable customers who do not use English as their first language.

The 'information space' for current events and specific promotions is now available with greater opportunities to share space with partners who deliver services through a similar customer model. The environment also lends itself to being used outside of core hours for events or conferences or even for delivering the election count in the future.

In the first few weeks of operating we have seen a noticeable change in behaviour from customers who are responding positively to the different meeting areas that are now available. Allowing staff to provide an individual and tailored service approach to enquiries in the new environment to a range of customers with differing needs. Our appointment system and simple self service facilities including the self-scan facility have been well received but with help being provided as necessary by both staff and 'friends' who have come in to support an individual. This helping 'yourself to interact differently' has been encouraging to see and supports the ethos of providing simple easy to use services.

The Universal Credit changes coming in from next month will be supported by the new environment where customers can sit down to use the technology and be helped by our trained digital support staff to make those applications in a calm and welcoming environment.

Digital support is available to all who visit us both within the digital hub in the centre or at other facilities across the city but the ethos of supporting people digitally is at the heart of the new customer model and is a significant cultural behavioural change that is at the heart of the new centre."

Question 8

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

"Next month the government's policy of Universal Credit will be implemented in Norwich. Learning from the disastrous experiences where this ill thought out and poorly funded policy has been already piloted, can the cabinet member for social inclusion comment on our City Council measures which have been developed to respond to this?"

Councillor Davis, cabinet member for social inclusion's response:

"The city council as a local authority has a formal role in the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) 'Universal Support' which seeks to address the

cultural change and behavioural shift for claimants that is required under Universal Credit (UC), known as 'Universal Support'.

In Norwich the council provides support to residents (not just tenants) to enable them to make and manage their online claim including accessing online services. This support is provided by our digital champions (from across the organisation), and volunteers (Voluntary Norfolk). Full budgeting support is provided by 6 advisers within our housing income team. This includes telephone and face-to-face support and eventually support within the local jobcentre.

As well as its role in 'Universal Support' the council has also sought to play an active role in mitigating the risks to tenants and residents in the transition, as well as to itself as a council and landlord. The approach that the city council has sought to take thus far has been to work collaboratively, both internally and externally, to understand the issues and to plan accordingly. Whilst UC is a DWP initiative, we have looked to work constructively with a range of stakeholders to ensure that the transition is as smooth as possible. This starts from a recognition that this is not simply a benefits issue but affects a range of services that the council provides. Key activities have included:

- Cross-council co-ordination through project board and UC team leader
- Identifying operational impact and trouble-shooting issues as they arise
- Communication with residents and tenants around key messages (e.g. get online, learn to budget, get a bank account)
- Stakeholder engagement (Anglia Revenue Partnership, advice and support agencies, social landlords, other councils etc.)
- DWP liaison and providing statistics

The benefits team have made specific preparations for the advent of UC including:

- Establishing a small team of advisers to handle UC work which will be scaled up across the team as we move to full service
- Working to automate large scale of Housing Benefit (HB) stop notifications received through DWP 'Data Hub'
- Automation of UC Discretionary Housing Payment applications into Academy to mitigate risk
- Encouraging take up of Council Tax Reduction (CTR) claims for UC customers

The housing income team have made specific preparations for the advent of UC including:

- Developing early identification of tenants who have made a claim for UC, so that they can be flagged and closely monitored
- Pro-actively identifying need for budgeting support rather than waiting for referrals
- Intensive management of rent payments, taking account of technical arrears that ensue from method of UC payment (monthly in arrears)

Wider activities that are supporting the transition to Universal Credit include:

- Social welfare commissioning: The council is continuing its commitment to the advice sector in the city and providing resources to allow free access to specialist advice on a range of Social Welfare issues. One of the key target groups for this is residents who are affected by the introduction of Universal Credit and other changes to Social Welfare law.
- Betteroff Norwich is a software package purchased by the council which is aimed at helping people check their own entitlements to benefit, and where there is a potential shortfall, assist them in applying for it directly and online. While the software is geared towards helping people to self-help, it can also be used by agencies advising their clients. Within the package there are also various budgeting and debt tools that can help people take control of their finances.
- The refurbishment of the contact centre has enabled the introduction of self-serve tablets, a scanning station, and floorwalkers to ensure there will be adequate support where it is needed most. This will enable those customers who can self-serve to do so, whilst freeing up officer time to help customers who need their support.

While some of the measures above are about empowering people to self-help regarding claiming and budgeting, the city council recognises that there will always be a need to provide individual help for some people in some cases. The work above is designed to allow staff the time and space to provide that intensive help where needed to the most vulnerable of people.

We believe that we are as prepared as we can be for the advent of the full UC service, but will continue to work with a range of stakeholders to evolve our approach. Notwithstanding this preparedness, we still have concerns about the impact of UC on particularly vulnerable residents in the context of the wider pressures of welfare reform. Research by Sheffield Hallam University in 2016 indicates that the financial loss per working age adult in Norwich due to welfare reform by 2021 is £730, making a total loss in Norwich of £68m. This represents a major risk that will be at a time where we are already seeing rising household debt, homelessness and poverty."

Question 9

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

"Representing a ward which borders the busy Earlham Road, I have been a keen supporter of the two proposed projects to significantly improve safety for cyclists, as part of the Cycle City Ambition. The additional £1.7m, on top of the £12m investment in the Norwich cycle network along the pink, blue and yellow pedalways, is excellent news. Now that the consultation has closed and officers have analysed the feedback, can the cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth comment on the benefits the final, approved scheme will now deliver for both the community and city?"

Councillor Stonard, the deputy leader and cabinet member for sustainable and inclusive growth's response:

"It is particularly pleasing that this significant investment has been achieved as a direct result of the successful implementation of the City Cycle Ambition schemes and I am a keen supporter of these proposals. With the population of the city and the surrounding areas growing quickly, it is imperative that we find sustainable ways to travel around.

The section of Earlham Road that is to receive attention has a significant accident record, with both pedestrians and cyclists at risk. The scheme has been specifically designed to improve road safety across a wide area for all road users. A significant section of Earlham Road and many of the adjacent side streets are to become 20mph Zones and there will be new and improved crossing points both for pedestrians and cyclists. This will make the area both more pleasant to live in and to get around. The Norwich Highways Agency Committee agreed to progress with this project last week, and also to consult on extending traffic calming works and the extent of the 20mph zone such that the 20mph zone on Earlham Road would extend from Heigham Road as far as the ring road.

The work will also significantly improve sustainable access between the City Centre UEA and on to the research park thus also supporting the economic wellbeing of the City."

Question 10

Councillor Brociek-Coulton to ask the cabinet member for safe city environment the following question:

"I was pleased to read the strong letter of objection from the cabinet member for safe city environment against the latest attempt by the Tory Police and Crime Commissioner to grab the Norfolk Fire Service. Can he confirm this council's ongoing opposition to the change and support the Fire Brigade Union in their campaign around this?"

Councillor Maguire, cabinet member for safe city environment's reply:

"When this matter first came to the eyes of the citizens of both the city and the county, there was little enthusiasm. As details emerge, there is even less enthusiasm. The city challenged the first report which introduced the idea and I asked the Police and Crime Commissioner for Norfolk (PCC) three questions. I was told that they would be answered should the PCC decide to go to a second phase; more detailed report.

Those questions were not answered in the second report so, at the subsequent meeting, I asked the three questions again plus three more. They

were, therefore, incorporated into the response that the City Council made to his consultation.

There are a number of principled objections to the PCC taking over Norfolk's Fire and Rescue Service (FRS), as well as straightforward operational matters. At the head of these is the role of the FRS in the community which has always been humanitarian, neutral, and life-saving. This has enabled the women and the men in the FRS access and a welcome from citizens not always available to the Police Service (this is not a criticism of the work (including the life-saving work) done by the police). This is why I fear the possible use of front-line members of the FRS being used to do PCSO type work.

At an operational level, there is little detail as to how the 'savings' will be made and yet much of the PCC's plan builds on this premise. There is no clear argument given as to why collaboration under the PCC will be better than the existing and growing collaboration between emergency services.

Why the PCC is so keen to take over the FRS is not clear and yet so much of this points to a power grab. There is no appetite among Norfolk County Council for the proposal.

In summary, the City Council made objections to the proposed take-over of the Fire and Rescue Service: joint working is happening already; continued collaboration can achieve many of the benefits proposed by the PCC through the development of a strategic vision and plan for this work between Norfolk County Council and Norfolk PCC; the work to combine governance would be a distraction at a time of public service transformation.

For these reasons, Norwich City Council object and stand in solidarity with the Fire Brigade Union and support their campaign."

Question 11

Councillor Malik to ask the leader the following question:

"Like many councillors on this side of the chamber, I have been proud to support fellow trade unionists throughout this year, fighting for their jobs, whether on the RMT, FBU or GMB picket. Earlier this month I joined colleagues in protesting with GMB Britvic workers outside the Forum as they campaign for better redundancy settlements from their employer. Can the leader comment on his ongoing work with Britvic and Unilever to secure not only the best possible terms for their employers but also the future of this important site for the city?"

Councillor Waters, leader's reply:

"Thank you Cllr Malik for highlighting these important matters.

Since my last update to council in [January 2018](#), and my cabinet colleague Cllr Stonard's update to council in [July 2018](#), I have been in regular dialogue with officials from Britvic and Unilever. We have held two partnership meetings involving Norfolk County Council and New Anglia Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and senior managers from both companies in June and August 2018. The meetings have focused on two main issues, firstly to lobby both companies to provide the maximum support for the future welfare of the workforce during the planned closure programme, including good redundancy packages and help to find quality employment opportunities. Both Britvic and Unilever have confirmed that they are progressing their plans to vacate the site by the end of 2019.

Secondly the city council and its partners continue to work proactively to secure a positive future for the site particularly focussing on the importance of securing future employment generation to try and offset the loss of over 300 jobs that will result from the closure of the food and drink production facilities. To reinforce this issue, I signed a joint letter with the leader of the county council to the UK CEO's of both companies in July 2018, to make clear our commitment to secure a positive future for the site and to seek a commitment from both companies to leave a lasting legacy from the redevelopment of the site that would benefit local communities in Norwich.

In response both companies have confirmed that they have instructed a single property agent to look after the marketing and sale of the site and are planning to bring this to market in October 2018.

We will continue with our discussions to secure the future redevelopment of the site and officers are due to meet with Homes England to explore the potential to attract regeneration funding to assist this process.”

Question 12

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

“Does the cabinet member support the use of community ‘Pay Back’ schemes?”

Councillor Maguire, cabinet member for safe city environment's reply:

“In a word, yes. Community pay back schemes can provide a useful mechanism for low risk offenders to give back to society rather than being given a custodial sentence which often doesn't provide a solution when these are short term in nature. It is some years since the council provided project work to community pay back scheme but it must be remembered that whilst the labour is low cost – there is a charge levied - and can provide useful work and personal development experience to the individuals, involving community pay back does require resourcing from the client in terms of supervision and

for example the individuals having access to washing and toilet facilities which can be tricky if it is a project in a park or open space. It must also be remembered that community pay back schemes must not take work away from those already in employment and project work in the past has been developed on this basis.

However, if the right projects can be identified this is something that can be considered once again.”

Question 13

Councillor Ackroyd to ask the leader the following question:

“In response to a councillor question in June 2017, the leader of the council confirmed the council's support for the WASPI Women Campaign and confirmed that the council "will join the campaign".

Given that the most up to date list on the Women Against State Pension Inequality, WASPI Campaign website does not show Norwich City Council as a supportive council, could the leader of the council please confirm when formal support was given following on from the June 2017 question?”

Councillor Waters, leader's reply:

“I was surprised to learn that Norwich City Council was not listed, particularly following the question last year whereupon we agreed to register. For ease of reference I repeat my answer below which hopefully, clearly affirms our support for this vitally important campaign.

‘I can confirm that the council has received a request from Gill Lemmon on behalf of Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) to support the WASPI campaign and join other local authorities to lobby government on this injustice.

The Pensions Act 1995 brought in changes to the State Pension Age (SPA) for women born after April 1951. At that time, the changes were to be implemented from April 2010 and would take ten years to complete. By 6 April 2020 the women's state pension age would have been 65 and equal to that of men. To add to this women were not notified of the changes until 14 years after the 1995 Pensions Act.

The Pensions Act of 2011 increased the state pension age for men and women to 66 by 2020; this had the effect of speeding up the changes for women and effectively moving the date they could draw their pension to later.

These changes by central government affect 2.6 million women and could have a big impact on a considerable number of our residents. We are concerned that the changes may have been brought in so quickly that those

affected have left little time to make changes to retirement plans or make alternative financial provision. These changes to the state pension age for women and the delay in notifying them of the change has, without a doubt, resulted in women born on or after 6 April 1951 facing hardship in retirement

In 2011 the then Work and Pensions Secretary committed to looking at transitional provisions to help the women who have been hit hardest by the changes but he has failed to do so. There have been a number of Parliamentary debates on this issue in recent months, including a Westminster Hall debate in November 2016, where the Shadow Frontbench urged the Government to take appropriate action. Given the mishandling of the acceleration of the pension age for women born in the 1950s, which has already caused huge financial worries for 2.6million women across the country, I believe that the Government should take action as a matter of urgency. My colleagues and I, working with local MP's who are supportive of this campaign, will continue to support efforts to press the Government to introduce transitional protections to help the women who have been disadvantaged

This is why I can confirm that Norwich City Council will join the campaign to help women in the area who are affected. The council will be urging the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to ensure that women affected are treated fairly and transitional arrangements are in place where the changes have been accelerated without sufficient notice for them to make alternative plans.'

I have contacted WASPI to re-state our support and ask specifically that we are listed on their website, which was last updated in March this year.

More widely, I was pleased that Jeremy Corbyn reaffirmed his support for the WASPI Campaign at a mass rally held in Mansfield on 16 August 2018. The WASPI Finance Director Angela Madden spoke particularly eloquently about the election promise Labour made to WASPI women. I am aware that Jeremy will meet the WASPI Board during the coming parliamentary session to discuss the most effective way forward to achieve his election promise to WASPI women and I will ask for an update around this.

In the meantime, I would like to thank Cllr Ackroyd for spotting this omission and bringing it to my attention."