

**Cabinet**  
**7 June 2021**  
**Public & Local Member Questions**

<p><b>Agenda item 6</b></p>	<p><b>Public Question Time</b></p>
<p>6.1</p>	<p><b>Question from Cllr Denise Carlo</b></p> <p>In the event of the Wensum Valley within the Study Area being designated as a potential candidate Special Area of Conservation/SSSI owing to the very large presence of barbastelle bats and the environmental impact on biodiversity being reappraised as ‘Very Large Adverse’ , will Norfolk County Council abandon its Preferred Route and develop a sustainable transport strategy based on traffic reduction and shift to sustainable modes of transport?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The project team will continue to consider any new information relevant to the Norwich Western Link as it becomes available and consider any potential implications it could have.</p> <p>Regarding this specific point, section 3.1.4 of the cabinet report states the following: “... in the context of the statements about conservation status which are made in the open letters received (<a href="#">see link here</a>), whilst the Barbastelle bat is a European protected species, unless or until steps are taken by the relevant regulatory bodies to make the relevant designations, their habitat has no status as a Special Area of Conservation or Site of Scientific Special Interest (and accordingly, the legal and policy considerations associated with those designations are not applicable).”</p>
<p>6.2</p>	<p><b>Question from Cecilia Rossi</b></p> <p>According to the draft Outline Business Case for the Norwich Western Link (May 2021) the loss of irreplaceable ancient and veteran trees “will not be factored into BNG calculations” (137). How can biodiversity net gain be achieved when the loss of complex and irreplaceable habitat is being factored out of the calculations?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>We are seeking to achieve biodiversity net gain on all applicable habitats, as set out by Defra. Ancient and veteran trees are not included in Natural England’s biodiversity net gain calculator and our ecologists will develop a separate compensation strategy for any trees identified as ancient or veteran on which the project will have an impact. This strategy will follow the appropriate legislation and policy associated with those habitats.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Cecilia Rossi</b></p> <p>A recent arboriculture report (WSP April 2021) commissioned by WSP for the Norwich Western Link project team suggests that the loss of ancient trees and woodland along the route is a large adverse impact that “will persist for the lifetime of the scheme and beyond” (37). How can environmental mitigation be achieved when the same report suggests that “the loss of high quality arboricultural features can’t be mitigated through replacement planting and other measures”(37)?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p>

	<p>The Norwich Western Link avoids impacts on ancient woodland. As set out in the arboriculture report referenced, any ancient or veteran tree loss as a result of the project will be accounted for through a dedicated compensation strategy. We want to create a positive lasting legacy for wildlife through the project by creating and improving habitats across a wide area to the west of Norwich. Improvements will be tailored to support wildlife that already exists in the area to the west of Norwich, including the barbastelle bats.</p>
6.3	<p><b>Question from Bryan Robinson</b></p> <p>I have been informed by the Head of Planning that his department will carry out a Habitats Regulation Assessment for the NWL when a detailed application is received. Section 63 of the Regulations requires Authorities to carry out an Appropriate Assessment before giving any consent or authorisation to a plan as or project. Government Guidance (February 2021) includes “funding plans” within examples when a proposal is a plan, or change to a plan. The Cabinet is making recommendation to the Council to approve changes to the authorised planned budgets, to incorporate the NWL capital project. Can you give assurance of the validity for this recommendation without undertaking the HRA?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The submission of the OBC and changes to budgets are not considered to be a “plan” in the sense in which that term is used in Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (“Habitats Regulations”), because a decision by the Cabinet to agree to the recommendations put before it would not in its own right prescribe, set the framework for, or otherwise dictate whether any particular type of development or activities will take place within a certain area. Those functions would instead continue to be regulated under the planning regime through the plan making and development management approval processes.</p> <p>The activities (for which Cabinet authorisation is currently sought) are clearly distinct from and do not amount to authorisation or permission to carry out the NWL as a “project” for the purposes of the Habitats Regulations. Where such authorisation or permission were, subsequently, to be sought, the Council’s duties under the Habitats Regulations would be carefully addressed through the planning process.</p> <p><b>Supplementary Question from Bryan Robinson</b></p> <p>If legal confirmation and/or advice have been obtained why is this not publicly available; conversely, if legal advice has not been sought or received should the recommendation to full Council to authorise the construction contract as a budget change be delayed until the legality for consent to changes to a plan without an Appropriate Assessment as required by the Habitats Regulations is clarified?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The Council does not routinely publish the legal advice it receives. For the reasons discussed in response to Mr Robinson’s first query (6.6 above), it is not considered that the matters raised (in relation to Appropriate Assessment under the Habitats Regulations) justify any delay to the decision which the Cabinet and Full Council are being asked to make.</p>

6.4	<p><b>Question from John Wells</b></p> <p>Why does the proposed route for the Norwich Western Link (immediately after the proposed viaduct) aim directly through the amenity woodland that is owned by at least a dozen different landowners, when this could so easily be avoided. Why can this route not be adjusted to stop this needless destruction?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The proposed route has been designed with consideration to all constraints along the corridor, which have informed the alignment to minimise impact on adjacent landowners and environmental features. Provisions are in place to protect natural assets (for example the scheme has been developed to avoid loss of areas of designated ancient woodland) as much as possible through the design and construction methodology, whilst mitigating impacts where necessary</p>
6.5	<p><b>Question from Gabriella Ditton</b></p> <p>When can we expect the cabinet to prioritise the climate emergency over the economy?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b></p> <p>In response to concerns around climate change, Norfolk County Council adopted an ambitious new Environmental Policy in November 2019. This Policy sets out the goal for Norfolk County Council of achieving 'net zero' carbon emissions on our estates by 2030, and the means by which we will achieve this. Beyond our immediate estate, we also recognise our role within the wider County working with Government, District Councils and other key organisations in both the public and private sectors. Since the adoption of the Policy, significant work has been undertaken across a number of delivery areas including working with partners, communities and landowners to plant one million trees over five planting seasons; working with partners on a major active travel programme including the development of new walking and cycling infrastructure and EV charging points; and further work has successfully been completed on our long-term plans to install LED streetlights across Norfolk.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Gabriella Ditton</b></p> <p>What is the council's plan to protect its residents from the devastating effects a projected 4 - 6° temperature rise (above pre-industrial levels) before the end of the century?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b></p> <p>The Council's approach to tackling climate change is set out in full in the Environmental Policy adopted in November 2019 and available on the County Council website.</p>
6.6	<p><b>Question from Adrian Holmes</b></p> <p>The assertions of carbon reductions are based on projected traffic flows, with the claim that shorter journey times will mean lower CO2 emissions. Can the Cabinet member provide quantified evidence that the NWL will not increase overall traffic flows and therefore increase CO2 emissions more than alternative options?</p>

	<p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The Option Selection Report (OSR) includes a comparison of the CO2 emissions predicted by each of the shortlisted options considered. A number of different factors were taken into account when choosing the preferred option including engineering, traffic, environmental and public consultation.</p> <p>The more recent assessment has been completed to support the Outline Business Case and has only assessed the preferred route.</p> <p>Greenhouse Gases are discussed in the Outline Business Case (OBC) in Section 3.8.27 to Section 3.8.30.</p>
6.7	<p><b>Question from Jonny Benton</b></p> <p>How do the proposals intend to preserve the protected barbestelle bat population within the wensum Valley from habitat destruction, as these are a protected species under the wildlife and countryside act 1981. They only inhabit ancient woodland and cannot relocate to new habitats that do not exist, so new replacement woodland would not protect the woodland, and bat bridges as seen on the NDR have no significant proof of working to protect bats, and also do not replace the habitat lost, and so I would like to know what other options can be considered, as otherwise this area cannot be disturbed.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>There is no loss of designated areas of ancient woodland in order to enable the scheme.</p> <p>Baseline data collected from extensive bat surveys undertaken since 2019 will inform the proposed mitigation and compensation strategy, which will follow the mitigation hierarchy, with an aim to avoid, mitigate and then compensate.</p> <p>Habitat creation will be utilised to create connectivity within the wider landscape, linking mature woodlands and barbastelle habitats. In addition, woodlands will be enhanced for bats (and other protected species), as well as to help achieve the project's Biodiversity Net Gain aims.</p> <p>The green bridges and wildlife underpasses included within our proposals will aim to maintain connectivity within the wider landscape. Bat gantries as seen on the NDR will not be included as part of mitigation strategy for NWL.</p> <p><b>Supplementary question from Jonny Benton</b></p> <p>How can the council justify the destruction of irreplaceable ancient woodland habitats in the wensum valley, as the loss of irreplaceable habitats at a time of climate emergency can surely not be quantified by merely "predicted" economic upturn.</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The scheme has been developed to avoid loss of areas of designated ancient</p>

	woodland.
6.8	<p><b>Question from Gawain Godwin</b></p> <p>You will be aware that Council have been reported to the Norfolk Police Rural Crime Unit for the 'deliberate disturbance' of a European Protected Species on the NDR. On what basis is the council prepared to spend public money in defending the inevitable legal action which will be taken against them if the NWL is built, and the resulting unavoidable disturbance to wildlife occurs, resulting in heavy fines, payable from the public purse ?"</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The works carried out for the NDR that related to European Protected Species were completed under licence from Natural England (NE). Correct processes were followed by the licence holder with NE throughout the delivery of that project. We are not aware of any reports to the Norfolk Police Rural Crime Unit.</p>
6.9	<p><b>Question from Andrew Cawdron</b></p> <p>This Council is about to commit significant public funds to allow for further surveys and design for the Western Link Road, with some apparent open ended expenditure against Planning Difficulties being experienced. Can this Cabinet assure us that the Contract does not carry any penalty clauses, (as e.g. were triggered on the failed Incinerator contract), in the event that Planning Consent or other "stop" eventualities mean that the dual carriageway works cannot progress ?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The Cabinet report, in section 4.2.4, sets out the stages of the contract and that there are safeguards should the project not proceed to stage 2 (construction). Section 9.2 in the cabinet report discusses risk and states that there are no penalties under the contract.</p>
6.10	<p><b>Question from Catherine Oliver</b></p> <p>On the basis planned development in the North Western Quarter is not dependant on the construction of the Western Link road, and bearing in mind there already exists a viable connection between the Strategic Road Network and Major Road Network ( via Postwick), can the Cabinet member explain how it can be claimed this road can be viewed as "nationally significant"?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>There has not been a claim that the NWL is nationally significant. The planning process for the project is discussed in section 4.3 of the Cabinet report.</p>
6.11	<p><b>Question from Lesley Grahame</b></p> <p>The Climate Change Committee states that a 70% reduction in transport emissions is required by 2050 in order to stay within carbon budgets. The total reduction in emissions projected from this scheme is estimated at 1.55%. How will the council</p>

	<p>assess in the Environmental Impact Assessment alternative proposals that would deliver greater reductions in transport emissions, for example investing more in public transport?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b></p> <p>If the Cabinet agrees to the recommendations which have been put to it, then the Council, in its capacity as the applicant for planning permission for the NWL project, will prepare an Environmental Statement to accompany the planning application. The Environmental Statement will include a description of the reasonable alternatives studied by the Council (as applicant) which are relevant to the NWL and its specific characteristics, and an indication of the main reasons for the option chosen, taking into account the effects of the proposal on the environment.</p>
6.12	<p><b>Question from Gil Murray</b></p> <p>How were the contractor's standards for the environmental work for the Western Link assessed and scored during the procurement?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The tenders from the shortlisted bidders were assessed on the basis of quality (77%) and cost (23%). Environmental standards and approaches are integral to many elements of the project which were assessed within the 'quality' weighting, including construction methodology, engineering design and architectural design. The contractor's scores are commercially sensitive as set out in the Cabinet report.</p>
6.13	<p><b>Question from Adam Green</b></p> <p>The council claims that the Western Link will somehow result in reduced carbon emissions. Please can the cabinet member provide evidence to back this claim up?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The methodology used to calculate that the Norwich Western Link would result in a reduction in carbon emissions from vehicles is set out in the cabinet report at 8.5. Further detail is provided in the Outline Business Case, and within Environmental Impact Report and Economic Appraisal Report, all published with the Cabinet papers.</p>
6.14	<p><b>Question from Hanne Lene Shierff</b></p> <p>On p. 40 in the OBC report objectives of the National Policy Planning Framework, NPPF, which the NWL plans are supposed to sit within, are listed.</p> <p>Please can you explain how the NWL will help to improve biodiversity in the Wensum Valley which is one of the key objective in the NNPF?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The NPPF sets out policies to ascertain that appropriate opportunities are taken for avoiding and mitigating adverse effects and achieving net environmental gains. The impacts on biodiversity will be assessed and reported in the Environmental</p>

	<p>Statement and Habitat Regulations Assessment that will be produced as part of the planning application submission. This assessment will identify mitigation requirements and the Construction Environmental Management Plan will outline the mitigation.</p> <p>As part of the project's biodiversity net gain aims, we are planning to create new habitats for wildlife and improve existing ones across a wide area to the west of Norwich. Improvements will be tailored to support wildlife that already exists in the area.</p>
6.15	<p><b>Question from Clive Lewis MP</b></p> <p>The UK is a signatory to the United Nation's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Sustainable Development Goals are universal with all signatories expected to contribute to them both internationally and domestically.</p> <p>As such can councillors explain how the Western Link, given its known impact on local biodiversity in the Wensum Valley, can be seen as compatible with goals - 8, 9, 11, 13, 15 and 16?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b></p> <p>It is a well-established principle that it is for national governments to implement commitments arising from international treaties. In England such commitments are usually implemented through planning and related policies. The national, regional and local policies applicable to the NWL scheme are set out in the Outline Business Case (Chapter 2), where sustainable development is discussed in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework.</p>
6.16	<p><b>Question from Karen Davis</b></p> <p>Please can the Cabinet Member explain why there is no Equality Impact Assessment provided with the Outline Business Case for the Western Link Road, and if they agree that the scheme will widen social exclusion because as stated in the papers the scheme has not been designed to address accessibility, and therefore does not address the needs of those without a car or access to a bus service which will disproportionately impact those with a protected characteristic?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The scheme's Equality impact Assessment (EqIA) is addressed within the cabinet report section 8.3 and within the Outline Business Case section 3.5.</p>

**Cabinet  
7 June 2021  
Local Member Questions**

<b>Agenda item 7</b>	<b>Local Member Issues/Questions</b>
7.1	<p><b>Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp</b></p> <p>Norfolk Council unanimously agreed a Motion on Monday 24 May, the first Motion of the new term of office, to write to the Govt for funding for the immediate rebuild of the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in King's Lynn.</p> <p>Councillors heard how the roof is collapsing all over the hospital estate, with a tenfold increase in the past three months of the number of steel props holding up the roof, from 20 to 200, with an increasing safety risk to patients and staff and disruption to services.</p> <p>Has this Council's letter now been sent to the Government?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. Yes.</p>
7.2	<p><b>Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn</b></p> <p>The GHG TAG worksheet acknowledges that there is uncertainty in the calculations due to an absence of data for 2025 - 2040. Given this uncertainty, why has overrun of CO2 emissions not been included in the risk register?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b></p> <p>Linear change in emissions between the years that are represented by the traffic model (2025 and 2040) is a reasonable and standard assumption in the absence of better data.</p>
7.3	<p><b>Question from Cllr Emma Corlett</b></p> <p>Has the Cabinet / Council received a legal opinion or legal advice in writing or during a minuted meeting on planning considerations for the construction and operation of the proposed Western Link Road over and through the Wensum River Special Area of Conservation?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The Council has appointed external legal representatives to provide ongoing legal support in relation to its emerging planning and statutory order proposals for the</p>



	<p>NWL project. The Council does not routinely publish the legal advice it receives.</p>
7.4	<p><b>Question from Cllr Ben Price</b></p> <p>As the relevant planning authority for the NWL planning application, how will the NCC Planning Department assess the percentage level of carbon emissions reduction that counts as being ‘radical’ and meets the National Planning Policy Framework requirement for the planning system to “shape places in ways that contribute radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions”?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The submission of a planning application is still some way off. What we can say, at this stage, is that the contents of the National Planning Policy Framework will be a material consideration when assessing the proposal and the impact on Green House Gas (GHG) emissions will be a relevant consideration. Any assessment will be robust and use recognised methods. The actual weight that is given to the impact on GHG emissions will be for the decision maker, in this case the planning committee, exercising planning judgement.</p>
7.5	<p><b>Question from Cllr Steve Morphew</b></p> <p>What degree of mitigation to the disturbance and harm to barbastelle bats does the cabinet member believe will be achieved by the planned measures and will be publish the evidence to support his beliefs?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The forthcoming Environmental Statement will detail a suite of mitigation packages aimed at bat populations and specifically barbastelle. The strategy will follow the mitigation hierarchy with an aim to avoid impacts where possible and then mitigate and compensate. The mitigation will be informed by available evidence and with input from nationally recognised bat experts.</p>
7.6	<p><b>Question from Cllr Maxine Webb</b></p> <p>Please can you point us to the quantitative research that proves green bridges and the “landscaping” that is proposed to promote the use of these features by the bats will ensure no significant disturbance, injury and death will be caused to barbastelle bats during construction and operation of the road?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>When designed appropriately, and placed on existing commuting routes, green bridges have been demonstrated to be effective in maintaining an established bat commuting route (Bach, Bach, &amp; Muller-Stie, 2008). A 2014 study (Berthinussen &amp; Altringham, 2015) of one green bridge over a four-lane road in the UK found that the green bridge was used by 97% of bats that crossed the road. Importantly, significantly more bats crossed the road using the green bridge (97% - 121 of 125 bats) than crossed the road below the bridge at traffic height (2.4% - 3 of 125 bats) or above traffic height (0.8% - 1 of 125 bats).</p>

7.7	<p><b>Question from Cllr Alison Birmingham</b></p> <p>Why has the Greenhouse Gases section of the Environmental Impact Report not provided calculations and estimates of greenhouse gas emissions from the construction phase of the project, nor calculations and estimates of greenhouse gas emissions from “Land Use Change” pre-construction and land clearance phase of the project?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b></p> <p>This requires input from the project’s contractor so this can’t be provided until they are appointed.</p>
7.8	<p><b>Question from Cllr Matt Reilly</b></p> <p>When did the cabinet member first become aware that the costs of the NWL had rocketed by £45 million to £198 million?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>Indicative costs were provided in January however these were preliminary figures from all the bidders and were subject to change as the procurement process continued. Due to this, and commercial sensitivity requirements that govern procurement processes, it would not have been appropriate to disclose this publicly at this stage.</p> <p>Final figures were confirmed as part of the briefing process ahead of the cabinet report being published, so in mid-May.</p>
7.9	<p><b>Question from Cllr Colleen Walker</b></p> <p>The Outline Business Case states at paragraph 2.9.8 that the Council “is able to meet anticipated future operating and maintenance costs”. Will the Council receive new money to fund these or will it come out of existing highways budgets?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>The maintenance of the NWL will be included as part of the Council’s Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) - details of this are provided on the Council’s website. Funding for maintenance is provided from several sources as set out in the TAMP.</p>
7.10	<p><b>Question from Cllr Terry Jermy</b></p> <p>Can you confirm what the minimum cost to NCC would be if the council approves the proposals on 7th June but ultimately planning permission is not granted and what the estimated cost to the council is for each month that the project is delayed?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance</b></p> <p>The project costs are detailed in the Cabinet report, in sections 6.2 and 9.2. The costs related to delay are difficult to quantify as it would depend on the timing and overall delay period. The costs related to inflation are included in the costs provided in section 6.2 of the Cabinet report. These would need to be adjusted depending on the extent of any delay.</p>

7.11	<p><b>Question from Cllr Paul Neale</b></p> <p>The Committee on Climate Change estimates that car miles can be reduced by nearly a fifth by 2050 in a balanced pathway. This reduction is a pre-requisite for the 70% reduction in transport emissions required to stay within carbon budgets, according to the CCC. Can the Cabinet member explain how the estimated 3% reduction in vehicle miles that the NWL would deliver contributes to this 70% reduction in total vehicle emissions?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b></p> <p>The Option Selection Report (OSR) set out the reduction in vehicles kilometres travelled with the reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> for each of the shortlisted options in the scheme Opening Year. All shortlisted options reduced the vehicles kilometres travelled and the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions across the transport model study area when compared to the scenario without any of the shortlisted options in the scheme Opening Year.</p> <p>The Outline Business Case (OBC) shows that the current design of the NWL reduces Non-traded CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions (petrol and diesel vehicles) and CO<sub>2</sub>e traded emissions (electric vehicles) over the 60-year appraisal period which will contribute to the target set by the Committee on Climate Change.</p> <p><b>Supplementary Question from Cllr Paul Neale</b></p> <p>The OBC's Monitoring and Evaluation Plan provides no plan for monitoring impacts on biodiversity. Can the Cabinet Member confirm at what stage the impacts on biodiversity will be reported on and explain the process for taking remedial action should the impact on biodiversity be found to be worse than expected?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b></p> <p>The impacts on biodiversity will be assessed and reported in the Environmental Statement and Habitat Regulations Assessment that will be included with the planning application. This assessment will identify mitigation requirements and identify the monitoring requirements. The Construction Environmental Management Plan will outline the mitigation and monitoring requirements that will be adhered to.</p>
7.12	<p><b>Question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby</b></p> <p>Residents in my division are contacting me about recycling. They buy items from a supermarket that says can be recycled, but when they go to supermarket to get the item recycled, they are told to go to the council. They then go to a council recycling depot only be told that this authority does not recycle these items. Does the cabinet member agree with me that there needs to be a more uniformed approach to recycling if we are to save the planet and can he reassure me that none of our recycling ends up abroad polluting the sea or land elsewhere and just helping with our figures on recycling?</p>

	<p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b></p> <p>The district, city and borough councils in Norfolk all recycle plastic pots, tubs, trays and bottles in the kerbside bin. These items are commonly recycled across the country and much of the packaging displays the recycling symbol. Less widely recycled materials are often labelled 'check locally for recycling' and are typically plastic films, crisp packets or mixed material packaging. For the local authority to collect a material for recycling, it is important that the market is both environmentally beneficial and financially viable.</p> <p>Around 90% of the materials the district councils collect for recycling in Norfolk are reprocessed in the UK. For the 10% that goes abroad Norse Environmental Waste Services (News) on behalf of the councils provide transparent documentation that ensures its end destination and that it is going to a compliant and suitable licensed facility for recycling.</p> <p>Norfolk County Council has previously trialled a recycling service for rigid plastics, such as garden furniture, at the Recycling Centres. Unfortunately, the market for rigid plastics is unstable and the trial was not able to continue. New markets investigated in 2021 remain volatile. There are current national Government consultations open on deposit return schemes, producer responsibility and recycling consistency. All of which the Norfolk Waste Partnership (made up if the County Council and seven district, city and borough councils) are contributing to.</p>
7.13	<p><b>Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare</b></p> <p>Evidence suggests a loss of at least 50% of insects since 1970 and 41% of all insect species are now "threatened with extinction." With insects including bees essential in the pollination of crops, what targets is the Leader setting for his administration to protect and enhance their natural habitats in Norfolk?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b></p> <p>Norfolk County Council's new Environmental Policy, adopted in November 2019, recognises the importance of Norfolk's rich biodiversity, particularly insect populations. Following the National Pollinator Strategy, Norfolk County Council is committed to delivery against our own local plans which set out our approach across both our estates and transport networks, as well as our work with other key partners within Norfolk and beyond. A full update on this important work, including delivery targets, will be brought to the Infrastructure &amp; Development Committee later in the year. Our Nature Recovery team, will invest time in improving our verges for both pollinators and expanding the herb rich habitats which still exist along our roadside corridors. In line with our emerging 25 Year Environment Plan we intend to set measurable targets for improvement and the first draft will be ready by this autumn.</p>
7.14	<p><b>Question from Cllr Brenda Jones</b></p> <p>How many Covid positive patients were discharged to Norfolk care homes last year?</p>

	<p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. As reported to Scrutiny Committee last year we do not have this data, testing by the NHS on discharge was not usually available early on in the first wave of the pandemic. Like all councils, we followed the National Discharge Guidance agreed in March 2020. We did however put in place our own enhanced discharge criteria to minimise risks to residents, in collaboration with care homes and the NHS. This drew on the best practice in infection control, making use of community hospitals and other NHS premises to create safe areas. This included North Walsham Hospital as a designated setting, and Cawston Park as a discharge facility. We continued to change and adapt our processes in line with national changes in guidance about infection control, testing and visiting. We took the decision to support care providers and to do everything we could to minimise the impact of the pandemic. Cawston Park was brought on line to safely cohort patients discharged from hospital in the first wave. Though it was not needed in the first wave, it was used in the second wave. The concept of a "Nightingale" care home was held up as a potential model for other areas to follow.</p>
7.15	<p><b>Question from Cllr Mike Sands</b></p> <p>Is the cabinet member aware of the increasing practice of patients being discharged from acute mental health admissions to hotel / b&amp;b accommodation and how many mental health service users have been discharged in this manner?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. Norfolk County Council does not collect this information directly and I would recommend asking NSFT who would be the source of information about hospital discharge 'destination' of people. The NCC Discharge Team at Hellesdon Hospital only supports people to be discharged in cases where the person has eligible social care needs and in most cases the patient is returned to their original accommodation. We continue to work closely with NFST and District Council colleagues to help those residents needing support.</p>
7.16	<p><b>Question from Cllr Steff Aquarone</b></p> <p>Could you please explain how a constituent who lives in Melton Constable and has recently secured a job in the recovering hospitality sector in Fakenham, can use clean, green public transport to get to and from work?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>Sanders provide the service 9 from Melton Constable to Fakenham Monday to Saturday, with 8 return journeys Monday to Friday and 5 return journeys on a Saturday.</p> <p><b>Supplementary Question from Cllr Steff Aquarone</b></p> <p>Do you believe that footpaths and cycleways are a key part of Norfolk's future, as they provide a low carbon, healthy infrastructure, and if so, how can residents in the</p>

	<p>Melton Constable division create new walk and cycle paths along routes that they have identified as viable?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure</b></p> <p>Norfolk County Council recognises that walking and cycling infrastructure are a key part of Norfolk's future. The local highway member fund can be used to create new footpaths and cycle paths along routes that are determined as suitable by the highway engineer, as well as to deliver improvements to existing Public Rights of Way. Alternatively, the parish partnership scheme has been in operation for over ten years and has been used to deliver such schemes locally. If the route is not on an existing highway or established public right of way <i>and frequent and established use of the route is demonstrated, there is a 'claim' process whereby an individual or Parish Council can make an application to the County Council to determine whether sufficient rights have been accrued to have the route recorded on the legal document as a Public Right of Way. The details of how this process works can be found on the NCC website under the section entitled "Unrecorded Public Rights of Way".</i></p>
7.17	<p><b>Question from Cllr Lucy Shires</b></p> <p>The Council's 2016-2020 Public Health Strategy committed to Protect communities and individuals from harm by focusing tobacco control and stop smoking services on reducing smoking rates in key vulnerable groups. Norfolk has the highest proportion of mothers who are still smoking at the time of delivery, in the region and this is higher than the national average. Why has this council failed to create significant change for this group, and what was the strategy to target this specific group?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. As you are aware Norfolk has a higher proportion of pregnant mothers who smoke at the time of delivery compared to the England average. Given this is of concern, over the last 5 years the Norfolk and Waveney Local Maternity and Neonatal System (LMNS) has overseen The Norfolk and Waveney Healthy Pregnancy Plan which describes how the LMNS and partners (including Public Health) are working to deliver a whole system approach to reducing the problem. Over the last 5 years the quality of data collection and recording has been improved, which has enabled those requiring support during pregnancy to be targeted with more specialist smoking cessation services. In addition, specialist smoking midwives have been employed providing interventions and maternity staff have been trained in specialist stopping smoking techniques and advice. There are now CO monitors for all midwives which is a key tool in testing and screening and in turn enables bespoke interventions for support to stop smoking.</p> <p>Direct stopping smoking support can also be accessed through a further number of different routes, which include online digital support and advice on the Just One Norfolk pregnancy webpages in collaboration with the Healthy Child Programme for Norfolk. An enhanced Smokefree Norfolk offer for pregnant women is a key feature</p>

of a transformational plan being implemented, alongside tailored and targeted social media campaigns. The issue remains a significant one and the focus remains on supporting the small number of people who find it hardest to quit smoking.

### **Supplementary question from Cllr Lucy Shires**

In the most recent data, the numbers of people killed or seriously injured on Norfolk's roads was at a 7 year high with a higher than regional and national number of deaths and serious injuries of secondary school children in road traffic accidents. The Council continues to fail to meet its targets to reduce these numbers so when will we see the impacts of the overdue new road safety strategy and how much longer do Norfolk residents have to wait for improvements in road safety?

### **Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure**

There are multiple variables which affect both the number and rate of those killed and seriously injured each year on public roads.

Road casualties in Norfolk have risen in the years through to 2019, a regrettable trend that is reflected in both East of England and national data.

Norfolk's Road Safety Partnership has adopted the Safe Systems approach, which reflects the national strategic direction. The ambition is to implement a step change in how we address road safety, acknowledging that the road system should be designed; built; and used in a way which considers the human-factor in real-life use, and focussing on protecting lives.

There are five key pillars to this approach: safe road users; safe speeds; safe vehicles; safe roads; and post-crash care. The Road Safety partners take a multiagency approach, using expertise within different areas to address these five pillars.

Norfolk County Council Road Safety team has several interventions that focus on educating road users, creating a continuum of learning and options for Norfolk residents to learn and apply skills and knowledge.

With progress disrupted by the impact of COVID-19 both on school attendance and the ability to utilise school environments in a COVID-secure fashion, the County Councils road safety team has now begun delivery of an online pedestrian training intervention to secondary schools, which covers the green cross code; safe places to cross; and the perspectives of other road users.

The team has also been developing a new intervention Over to You – Your Choice. The session allows pupils to make decisions in a safe environment applying their knowledge to a scenario they may encounter. This intervention links into the FATAL 4 intervention delivered by Norfolk Constabulary.

7.18	<p><b>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins</b></p> <p>How many Electric Vehicle Charging Points are there now across Norfolk and how many are planned for the next 4 years. What plans are there to ensure that the installation of these points will match with the increasing demand for their usage?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste</b></p> <p>Currently there are 198 publicly accessible EV charging points across Norfolk, which are a mix of rapid and fast. This breaks down within the districts as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Breckland - 18</li><li>• Broadland – 15</li><li>• Gt Yarmouth – 20</li><li>• KLWN – 37</li><li>• North Norfolk – 41</li><li>• Norwich – 44</li><li>• South Norfolk – 23</li></ul> <p>Although not a local Authority responsibility the County Council and Norwich City Council are jointly working with UK Power Networks to install circa 50 on-street charge points, which will be a mix of fast and rapid chargers within Norwich. This work is currently ongoing with the expectation that installation will be underway in 2022. In addition, the County Council has commissioned a county-wide EV strategy, which is currently being finalised.</p> <p>Private sector work also happening. For example, the company Gridserve are aiming to install in Broadland District an EV Charging Hub that will be a facsimile of their other developments already in place in the UK, for example, the one they have in the region at Braintree - <a href="https://www.gridserve.com/braintree-overview/">https://www.gridserve.com/braintree-overview/</a></p>
7.19	<p><b>Question from Cllr Tim Adams</b></p> <p>The County Council is yet again in Private Eye about how it has treated people with disabilities following the Minimum Income Guarantee High Court Ruling. Isn't it time to do the right thing and remove the barriers that you have put in place so that the people affected can get the money that they are owed?</p> <p><b>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</b></p> <p>Thank you for your question. I respectfully refer you back to my email sent to you, all Members and Norfolk's MPs on 28th April (forwarded by Tracey Howard) which fully responds to your question. I am happy to reiterate that the Council did not put barriers in place to stop residents receiving their money.</p>
7.20	<p><b>Question from Cllr Dan Roper</b></p> <p>The State of Nature report is grim reading with the UK appearing to be one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. According to another study published in May, road verges makes up 1.2% of land in the UK and support half of wildflower species. Plant Life, The Wild Plant Conservation Charity, advises that Councils</p>



should be cutting grass, besides essential vision splays and overgrowth, between Mid-July and September and one additional cut before Christmas. Why is it that this Council chooses to instead cut grass verges at the time the majority of wildflower plants are in flower during May and June?

**Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste**

Norfolk County Council's new Environmental Policy, adopted in November 2019, recognises the importance of Norfolk's rich biodiversity, particularly insect populations. Following the National Pollinator Strategy, Norfolk County Council is committed to delivery against our own local plans which set out our approach across both our estates and transport networks, as well as our work with other key partners within Norfolk and beyond. A full update on this important work, including our approach to the management of highways' verges, will be brought to the Infrastructure & Development Committee later in the year. Our Nature Recovery team, will invest time in improving our verges for both pollinators and expanding the herb rich habitats which still exist along our roadside corridors. In line with our emerging 25 Year Environment Plan we intend to set measurable targets for improvement and the first draft will be ready by this autumn.