

Cabinet
3 October 2022
Local Member Questions

	Local Member Issues/Questions
7.1	<p>Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp Economic prosperity in West Norfolk and reducing congestion around King's Lynn, demand better bus services. Norfolk has secured £49.55m to improve bus services. £12 million will be spent on new or expanded bus routes and increased service frequencies on key routes. Will Cabinet end the deplorable deterioration of bus services on key corridors of movement into King's Lynn, the A10 and C80 Clenchwarton Road; reverse the reduced frequency of buses in Norfolk from Terrington, Clenchwarton and West Lynn into King's Lynn; and provide earlier and later buses along the A10 to encourage modal shift.</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport We welcome proposals for new or enhanced bus services from Members and other stakeholders. These will be added to a long list of options which will then be scored using a scoring mechanism that determines financial sustainability after the 3 year funding period and where new and enhanced routes would have the most impact in terms of passenger demand and growth. We are currently working on this with the DfT.</p> <p>Second Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp As the local County Councillor, I recently visited local Mobile Library stops - Norfolk's ageing population, isolated village demography, poor transport connectivity, mean the Mobile Library will become more important, to help residents without cars or computers, stay independent, with health information, Assistive Technology, opportunity to socialise. Nursery teachers introduce under-fives to the Library Van, encouraging literacy and GLD. Children of all ages sign up to the Reading Challenge on the Mobile Library and are rewarded with Certificate and Stickers. Does Cabinet agree Norfolk Aspiration and Attainment could increase if the Mobile Library Service is expanded to deprived urban areas?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships As you know, a public consultation on the mobile library service recently closed. We are grateful for the 1,500 residents, including yourself, who took the time to let us know their views. We will now be taking time to consider the findings of the consultation in detail before bringing forward a proposed way forward.</p>
7.2	<p>Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn People have been telling me that this winter they will be skipping meals so that they can feed their children, staying in the library all day because they can't afford heating, and worse. The Conservatives chose this moment to scrap the cap on bankers' bonuses and cut taxes for those on the highest incomes. The result has been a crash in the economy. Some Tory MPs are already submitting letters of no confidence in Liz Truss. This speaks of a country in crisis.</p> <p>What emergency planning does Norfolk have for the winter to respond to the crash in the economy, falling economic confidence and the worsening cost of living crisis?</p>

Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategy and Governance

Cabinet recognises that cost of living pressures are likely to put increasing demand upon many of the vital services that we provide. Therefore, the Council is continuing to work within 2022-23 budgets as we approach the winter season while developing plans for the next financial year, 2023-24, to ensure that these services can continue to be delivered in the context of a robust, balanced local authority budget.

The Council has also worked hard with partners and district council colleagues to continue to provide support for people who find themselves in financial hardship and cannot pay their living costs. We have supported many thousands of families with direct financial support and advice through the Norfolk Assistance Scheme and, working with Norfolk Community Partnership have invested £500,000 in the Nourishing Norfolk programme, 8 food hubs are now operational across Norfolk, with up to 15 planned by the end of 2022.

Using funding from Government topped up by funds from NCC we have, with partners, delivered 2 tranches of the Norfolk Hardship Fund with a third to come shortly.

To help ensure we meet our duties under the Civil Contingencies Act, and to remain as prepared as possible, the Norfolk Resilience Forum (NRF) has in place weekly Risk Intelligence Group (RIG) meetings. This is where emergency planning professionals from across the NRF partnership come together to review the potential risks that the county faces in the short term (next 7 days), medium term (7 days to 2 months) and longer term (beyond 2 months). This process creates an assessment picture that considers the potential impacts, aims to recommend and support mitigations, and, if required, stand up response structures that look to reduce the impacts as far as possible for Norfolk.

The purpose of the RIG meetings is to create a Common Operating Picture risk assessment, which then feeds into the individual partner's strategic and tactical management meetings that help to shape the Norfolk wide preparedness and strategy. The NRF also undertakes specific monthly risk assessment meetings to look at the risks to Norfolk on a rolling basis, to ensure that we are current with our risk profile and planning. In addition, the NRF is also fully engaged at a regional and national level with the Department of Levelling Up Communities and Housing around winter assurance and preparedness for winter.

Second Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn

Millions of children who do not qualify for Free School Meals are going hungry, including in Norfolk. Teachers have called for Free School Meals to be extended to all children in all primary schools in England. This has already been done in Scotland. Will the County Council support the NEU's No Child Left Behind campaign and write to the Government to request that FSM are extended to all primary-age children?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Thank you to Cllr Osborn for raising this point in the current context of the rising cost of living creating additional pressures for many individuals and families. Children in reception, year 1 or year 2 are already entitled to free school meals regardless of household income. As a council we support nearly 30,000 children across our primary and secondary schools who are eligible for means tested free school meals, at a

	<p>weekly cost of approximately £450,000. I do not believe free school meals should be extended for all primary school children.</p> <p>As a council we will continue to lobby central government for a fair deal for Norfolk residents. We welcome the additional funding from government to support individuals and families in Norfolk experiencing hardship which is enabling us to provide additional support over the current period including through our cost-of-living voucher scheme for families with children eligible for free school meals, as well as support for other families and older people.</p> <p>The County Council has added an additional £1m to the Norfolk Assistance Scheme to provide financial support to families who are not eligible for other government funded hardship support this winter.</p> <p>For more information about the support that is available for families: Help with living costs - Norfolk County Council</p>
7.3	<p>Question from Cllr Ben Price</p> <p>The Government has said that Norfolk will be one of the areas considered for low-tax, low-investment zone. This comes alongside plans for a rash slashing of planning regulations, which environmental groups have said represents an unprecedented threat to wildlife.</p> <p>If Norfolk applies to be a low-regulation zone, please can the leader set out in detail how this would help to deliver a green economy with carbon reductions and restoration of nature?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy</p> <p>“Our <i>Better Together, for Norfolk</i> strategy outlines our commitment to sustainable growth, stronger communities and greener future. These strategic principles will guide our engagement with the opportunity. When we see the detail of the opportunity for any investment zones we will carefully consider how they fit with our sustainable growth objectives”</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Ben Price</p> <p>Norfolk Car Club members have complained about the new service that is being run by Enterprise. They have highlighted higher prices, long waits for customer service, and a lack of available cars.</p> <p>What steps is the county council taking to ensure a cost guarantee and service quality for car club members in order to retain members of this important part of the Transport for Norwich Strategy?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>We recognise the important role that the car club plays in encouraging more sustainable travel and that it needs to offer a cost-effective option to attract new users and retain existing customers. We are in regular dialogue with Enterprise and will raise these concerns with them.</p> <p>It should be noted that there are a number of offers for Norfolk residents, which include discounted costs for previous members of the Norfolk Car Club as well as for new members. There are also numerous benefits to car club members, which include</p>

	<p>free minutes use of Beryl Bikes, discounted membership of Cycling UK and discounted parking.</p>
7.4	<p>Question from Cllr Paul Neale The County Councils Network, which represents 36 mainly Conservative-run authorities, recently highlighted grave concerns over the increasingly fragile state of social care.</p> <p>The chief executive of the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services estimated that over half a million people are waiting for assessments, care, or reviews and over 165,000 staff vacancies means it will only get worse.</p> <p>In light of the Cabinet Member's analysis that further savage cuts may be needed, does he share his fellow Conservative councillors' concern for the state of social care and their lack of confidence in the new Government to address the crisis?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention Thank you for your question. Norfolk County Council has been engaged with the Government on this issue very closely for a number of years, and the Local Government bodies such as the County Council's Network (CCN) and the Local Government Association (LGA) have been very helpful in that regard. There have been a number of reports to Cabinet highlighting the pressure the system is under due to increasing demand, partly caused by an ageing population and partly by the fallout from Covid 19. We have seen recent welcome announcements from the Government of a further £500m for the sector together with specific grants such as £30m to help with recruitment of staff from overseas and I look forward to a productive relationship in the future.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Paul Neale The County Council has expressed its delight that the Norwich Western Link scheme could proceed outside the planning process. Previously, the Cabinet Member had insisted that all environment impacts would be detailed in the planning application. That planning application could now be skipped.</p> <p>Can Cabinet Member give assurance that the full environmental impacts of the road are published and subjected to scrutiny before any further work on the road?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport The County Council is continuing to follow existing guidance to achieve the necessary approvals for the delivery of the Norwich Western Link. We will review any changes to that guidance when provided by Government</p>
7.5	<p>Question from Cllr Lucy Shires Will the County Council bring back school dentistry?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services, Public Health and Prevention Thank you for your question. Commissioning this is the responsibility of NHS England.</p>

7.6	<p>Question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone With Norfolk having a high number of people who are digitally excluded, is it the county council's policy no longer to provide stationery to members to support their correspondence with constituents? I write to and on behalf of citizens dozens of times a month and have recently been told I am no longer entitled to use County Council prepaid postage envelopes to do so.</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy In accordance with the Constitution Councillors are provided with the resources and facilities to assist them in carrying out their duties as a councillor including provision of office support and equipment such as phones and computers. Wherever possible we encourage Councillors to use email or telephone when contacting their constituents however we recognise that some residents may not have this level of access and therefore we provide stationery (paper and envelopes) to Members which they can use to contact these residents. Stationery can be requested via Political Assistants for those groups that have one or the Councillor Support team but has never been the policy of the Council to provide pre-paid envelopes and we have not had a request to consider this as an option in the past.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone By how much do interest rates have to rise by to make any further borrowing to pay for the construction of the Norwich Western Link uneconomic?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance Thank you for your question. The Council's ability to borrow, and the cost of such borrowing, is distinct from the assessment of the economic viability or otherwise of individual projects within the capital programme. The Norwich Western Link is one of the Council's top infrastructure priorities, with a high Benefit to Cost Ratio, as reported to Cabinet on 4 July 2022. This remains unchanged.</p> <p>The Full Council will have an opportunity to consider the overall affordability of the Capital Programme when making budget decisions in February 2023. It is worth noting that the additional £14m of borrowing required for the Norwich Western Link would be split across four years, roughly equating to £3.5m per year. This represents under 6% of the annual borrowing planned for the next four years.</p>
7.7	<p>Question from Cllr Tim Adams North Yorkshire County Council's executive have voted for a 100% premium on council tax bills on second homes to be brought in within the next two years. Will you put this forward to this council's Cabinet on the basis that the money raised by this proposal is spent on providing much needed affordable homes across the county?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance Thank you for raising this important issue. It is necessary to recognise that the North Yorkshire decision has been made in the context of a transition to a Unitary Authority in April 2023. By contrast, in Norfolk, decisions about council tax premiums and similar matters rest with the individual District Councils. The County Council has therefore engaged with Districts at officer level in order to encourage them to consider implementing this premium, where possible. The nature of the two-tier structure in Norfolk would result in additional council tax funding flowing to the District, the Police and the County Council, and it would be at the discretion of each of these organisations to determine how their share of additional income would be used. A</p>

	<p>common view by lower tier councils to consider the way forward would be useful. However, it should also be noted that the 100 per cent council tax premiums on second homes could not be introduced until 1 April 2024 at the earliest, and in any event these powers are currently subject to Government proposals within the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, published in May 2022, becoming law. I would also particularly welcome Cllr Adams' views on the appetite to consider a Unitary Council for Norfolk, which would streamline many of these types of decision.</p>
7.8	<p>Question from Cllr Sharon Blundell</p> <p>The report to the Cabinet meeting in September said "Whilst the pandemic is officially over, there are on-going impacts on service provision and demand for support from Council services. The council has carried forward £31.125m grant funding received from central government in 2021-22 to mitigate any on-going risks and cost pressures associated with addressing the service needs arising from COVID-19." If you think that the pandemic is over shouldn't this money be going back to the Government?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance</p> <p>Thank you for your question. The statement made in the Finance Monitoring Report 2022-23 to September Cabinet reflects the fact that no additional funding support in relation to the COVID pandemic is expected from central Government in 2022-23. However, as the report also makes clear "there are on-going impacts on service provision and demand for support from Council services." In recognition of this, the County Council's 2022-23 budget included a carry-forward of COVID grant funding to support and mitigate these ongoing impacts, within the conditions of the grant(s) as set out by the relevant Government departments which provided them. The current forecast includes the use of £28m on vaccinations, infection control and preventative measures to protect Norfolk's residents. The Council has complied with all grant conditions to date, and will continue to do so.</p>
7.9	<p>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins</p> <p>Isle of Wight Council in their Ryde Esplanade development scheme funded by Transforming Cities funding, are now taking out their sawtooth bays as they have found them to be ineffective. As this council has spent almost £6m on the St Stephens bus schemes, how long do you think it will be before they are taken out here as well?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>Thank you for your question. We don't know the specific details surrounding the decision of another local authority amending their bus stop infrastructure. However, we are confident that the sawtooth bus stop design in St Stephens Street will enable buses to access bus stops much more effectively than before, reducing congestion and enabling easier access for all bus users. Successful trial runs of this design were undertaken using buses before the works commenced and there has been close collaboration with bus operators throughout the design and construction.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Brian Watkins</p> <p>It is clearly in the Council's interests that our corporate parenting board shows a determined vision for wanting the best outcomes for Norfolk's cared for young people. Does the Cabinet member believe that children's voices are properly heard and expressed within the board including how it is working with other partners to create more employment opportunities for care leavers?</p>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services Children’s voices are being heard at Corporate Parenting Board in a number of ways. Their feedback is presented by young people at each formal Board meeting, including the views of the wider In Care Council including Young People’s forums – this is on a variety of areas, in particular the ongoing work completed by the Corporate Parenting Priority Subgroups but also in respect of social care services for young people. In addition, young people’s views are regularly sought in respect of their own care planning and the wider service and these themes are often shared at Board. Further to this, a quarterly report ‘voice of the child’ which provides details and evidence of the voice of the child from a variety of participation and feedback sources. This report is shared with Corporate Parenting Board, the first report was discussed at July’s meeting.</p>
7.10	<p>Question from Cllr Saul Penfold Incidents of fly-tipping during the pandemic increased in Norfolk with over 11,00 incidents of fly-tipping recorded across the county in 2020/21. For example, 100 or so tyres were recently dumped in Scottow, very near the Badersfield residential area. Councils in Norfolk spent £87,530 just on clearing instances of large-scale fly-tipping. With the recycling rates not significantly improving either in Norfolk what do you say to those people who think the council has a waste problem?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Fly-tipping is a waste crime that the County Council is fighting together with all Councils in the Norfolk Waste Partnership.</p> <p>The most recent figures for fly-tipping show a sharp 4.5% reduction in 2021/22 to around the lowest levels seen in several years, and the aim is to drive levels even lower with the Scrap fly-tipping campaign and the co-ordinated work of the Norfolk Waste Partnership.</p> <p>And in relation to recycling levels, the pre-audit figures for 2021/22 indicate an increase of around 2% on the previous year to 44.2%, bouncing back up to offset the effects of changes to consumer behaviours and household habits, (such as an increase in work from home practices) caused by Covid-19 restrictions.</p>
7.11	<p>Question from Cllr Rob Colwell With long queues on the days of the Hazardous Waste amenity days what consideration will you give to running more of them and being more widely spaced so that people do not give up because the queues are so long?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste Hazardous waste days are popular with our customers and we thank them for their patience in using the service on the days when it is busy. We know that this approach is an efficient way of providing a free service and each year the approach and feedback is reviewed to identify any changes and refinements that can be made.</p>
7.12	<p>Question from Cllr Brenda Jones The national minimum wage is £9.50 per hour. Lidl have increased their entry level pay rates to £10.90 per hour. Bringing care workers’ rates of pay to at least those of Lidl workers is necessary to deal with the staffing crisis in the care sector and will cost more than £30 million.</p>

	<p>Can the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention clarify where we will find cabinet proposals to find the £30 million extra to begin to deal with the staffing element of the care crisis?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for your question. As you are already aware the Council's current usual rates are above the national living wage and previously above the Living Wage Foundation's assessment of the living wage. The Living Wage Foundation last week increased its assessment to £10.90 per hour to reflect cost of living rises. As with all councils, we have been undertaking a fair cost of care exercise. This is part of the preparations towards Social Care Reform. The Government will receive the information from these submissions this month ahead of national considerations of local government finance settlements. As with the previous cost of care exercises that this Council has regularly undertaken, this will also inform our budget planning process for 2023-24 and beyond.</p>
7.13	<p>Question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby</p> <p>Cabinet is not scheduled to consider winter pressures until December 2022. Can the Leader confirm when Norfolk will learn what emergency measures are planned by the administration to support them in the event of a hard winter, inflation, COVID and flu, and possible shortages?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention</p> <p>Thank you for this question. In relation to Adult Social Care, due to the ongoing challenges caused as a result of Covid 19 that are being experienced across the wider Health and Social Care System, planning measures were started months earlier than in a typical year. Adult Social Care has been continuing to work with health colleagues to identify a range of measures to mitigate risks and support continuity of services. Specific measures include increasing recruitment campaigns like targeted actions to recruit to Norfolk First Response, building resilience for the Provider of Last Resort role working to secure additional agency staff resource, recruitment and retention actions for the wider care market, supporting international recruitment including working with the NHS, targeted commissioning actions to secure more capacity where there are the greatest challenges, a package of incentives to support care placements and actions with the ICB to use health funding to bolster intermediate care services. Winter resilience planning has also been increased across the Integrated Care System, which will include Adult Social Care actions. These will also be reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board in November.</p> <p>Please also refer to the answer to Cllr Osborn's question in relation to wider measures.</p>
7.14	<p>Question from Cllr Emma Corlett</p> <p>The recently announced increases in the cost of the Norwich Western Link showed that it had been increasing by £100 per minute.</p> <p>With soaring inflation, the slump in the pound that will drive up the cost of raw materials and increasing interest rates, can the Cabinet Member for Finance confirm how much per minute is the Norwich Western Link going up now?</p>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Finance</p> <p>The budget forecast reported within the Norwich Western Link Update to Cabinet on 4 July 2022 included a significant allocation of over £82m of the total £251m budget as an allowance for inflation and risk (c.33%). The Council is aware of the significant uncertainty within the wider economy but notes also the level of volatility which may see some costs dropping back in the medium to longer term. Project costs are kept under continuous review but it would not be appropriate to provide a running commentary on costings. The latest available forecasts will be reported to Members at relevant stages of the delivery of the project.</p>
7.15	<p>Question from Cllr Maxine Webb</p> <p>There is still no sign of the 4th special school promised four years ago or the increase in SEND support and resources in mainstream schools required to tackle the serious and consistently poor outcomes for children and young people in Norfolk. The percentage of EHCPs completed on time has plummeted to 46% while demand rises.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member for Children's Services confirm how much longer do Norfolk families have to wait for services that meet the needs of their children and young people?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>We have already delivered on our promise of building 2 new special schools and a 3rd, being built by the DfE, will open in Spring 2023. This was our promise 4 years ago when we secured investment of £120million to build new special schools and specialist resource bases. At that time we set out that we may build a 4th school but that we would determine this based upon need once we had completed the first phase of our special schools and specialist resource bases. That first phase is now complete and we are submitting a bid for a 4th and 5th new special school to the DfE on 10th October as we must try to secure central government funding when this is available rather than using council investment that could be used in other ways. Also, it should be noted that we have delivered the current new schools on time and on budget, however, it should be acknowledge that these building schemes are complex to achieve including securing land in the right location.</p> <p>The latest EHCP performance, as measured by the DfE, is actually 52% for the calendar year to date (cumulative) and for the last complete month (August) the team achieved 59%. We do not recognise the figure stated in the question by Cllr Webb. However, we are not complacent as we try to move the performance onwards beyond 60% to achieve above national average.</p> <p>We have improved SEND services significantly over the past 2 years and we would hope that these achievements could be celebrated by everyone with an interest in SEND across the county whilst we all collectively acknowledge the need to work together on the 2nd phase of SEND Strategic Improvement programme. As Cabinet Member I will be leading in this, as I am firmly committed to securing more specialist provision within the next stage of our plan.</p>
7.16	<p>Question from Cllr Mike Sands</p> <p>What is the cabinet member for Children's Services doing to ensure that literacy and numeracy achievement rates improve across Norfolk's schools?</p>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services Average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics in primary schools is unacceptably low and has been for too long. There has been a national dip in standards due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Norfolk’s results in writing and mathematics declined by more than they did nationally. We have written to all schools at the start of the new year to reflect our concern about the outcomes at Key Stage 2 and outline our collective priorities for the year ahead. We have written to the Regional Director and met with his team to discuss outcomes in MATs and LA maintained schools. We will be working closely with schools through the DfE Education Investment Area and the Norfolk Learning Board to focus on raising standards. We no longer have a role to deliver school improvement directly, but KS2 results will be a focus of our conversations with local authority school leaders and governors, and with MAT CEOs. In addition we will work with the local Teaching School Hubs to provide any support that we can to enable their work in supporting schools to improve outcomes.</p> <p>Supplementary question from Cllr Mikes Sands Can the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services identify how many former/LAC are currently NEET across Norfolk 16-19?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services Currently we have 597 young people in care or care experienced. Of this number we have 191 (33%) not currently in Education, Employment or Training. However, many courses do not start until October for this age group so we expect to see the number in Education, Employment or Training increase substantially over the next 4 – 6 weeks.</p>
7.17	<p>Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare Can the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships confirm what role the community plays on the Cabinet’s proposed Youth Justice Policy?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services Whilst we are restricted in completing the annual Youth Justice Plan to a national template, this does not detract from the importance and focus placed on the context in which youth justice work takes place and our broader work with networks and communities.</p> <p>To this end we are;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identifying community-based organisations to support our work around girls and help with exit strategies/pathways away from the criminal justice system.• Gathering feedback from members of the community including victims, families and children to ensure their voice is heard and we improve our services.• Embracing a community element to the development of the newly created Serious Violence Duty Group.• Looking to identify a community organisation to sit on our local Youth Justice Board in the future.• Ensuring a contextual safeguarding and place-based approach to our interventions (using shared agency oversight and data) in working with children at risk of exploitation.• Undertaking specific multi-agency work in the east of the County with monies from the national Youth Endowment Fund to reduce serious youth violence by

	<p>co-designing solutions with the community, which would like to scale up the learning from in 2023.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Considering plans in relation to an award to the County from the Youth Improvement Fund to invest in community facilities for young people. <p>Finally, in the wider prevention space, a broad range of services and support are available in Norfolk from commissioned services, community organisations, digital signposting, and voluntary groups. Our Community and Partnerships Service support partners and families to consider and identify the most appropriate early help response</p>
7.18	<p>Question from Cllr Terry Jermy Investment in bus services and bus infrastructure is indeed very welcome, although long overdue. I note however with disappointment that there are no specific proposals for anything in Thetford, or indeed the whole of the Breckland District. Could the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport reassure these residents that they will not be left behind with these improvements?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport There are still several aspects of the Bus Service Improvement Plan that we have not yet fully determined, using the funding provided. For example new or enhanced bus routes, improved infrastructure and real-time information. We will be taking any and all requests into consideration so that the funding can be used across the county to benefit as many residents as possible.</p> <p>Second question from Cllr Terry Jermy The Thetford Bus Interchange has been left in an appalling condition this year with various organisations arguing as to who is responsible for its maintenance and cleanliness. Shrub beds have been left unkempt, pathways blocked and weeds coming through the bus shelters and bays. Can the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport confirm just who is responsible for this space?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport Officers have visited the site recently and agree that it is in need of some attention and maintenance. When the Bus Interchange was built an agreement was made with Thetford Town Council that they would undertake general maintenance and cleaning of the site and the toilets and the County Council would maintain the bus related infrastructure and replace any capital items when needed.</p>