

Cabinet
8 March 2021
Public & Local Member Questions

| Agenda item 6 | Public Question Time |
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| 6.1 | <p>Question from Joanne Thurtle What has the County Councillor for the Gorleston St Andrews Division spent their highways budget on each year for the last four years please?</p> <p>Response by the: Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy (County Councillor for Gorleston St Andrews Division). Thank you for your question and the opportunity to demonstrate the investment I have been able to make in the Gorleston St Andrews Division with my highways budget over the last four years:</p> <p>2020/21 – Traffic Regulation Order to provide waiting restrictions, due to access and obstruction issues to businesses on Faraday Road. In addition, further road markings at the top of High Street / High Road;</p> <p>2019/20 – Traffic Regulation Order for waiting restrictions on Gorleston High Street to resolve obstructions to buses, caused by on street parking. In addition, the installation of white lining on Marine Parade;</p> <p>2018/19 – Installation of wooden highway verge posts at Kennedy Avenue, Recreation Road and various other locations in the area;</p> <p>2017/18 - Kennedy Avenue – installation of wooden highway verge posts at the Bridge Road end. Suffolk Road - the installation of tactile paving to the footway and additional road marking to assist with traffic management near the surgery.</p> <p>A range of other local improvements have also been discussed and agreed with the local Highway Engineer over the same period. These have been delivered for the local community using a range of other funding sources, separate from the Local Member Fund.</p> |
| 6.2 | <p>Question from Paul Neale Waste Recycling. Residents of Norfolk dutifully dispose of their plastic waste in domestic recycling bins, believing that the council will recycle it responsibly, without exacerbating the climate emergency. However, under the heading ‘Plastics What we do with your waste’, your website says: ‘We stopped collecting plastics for recycling at our centres in 2017 because we have not been able to find a market for them. You can put certain types of plastic in your kerbside recycling bin’. A link Visit Recycle for Norfolk for more information opens a page saying ‘page not found’.</p> <p>Will the cabinet member responsible explain what the council does with all the plastic waste collected in Norfolk?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste: The good news is that the plastics bottles, pots, tubs and trays collected from householders in Norfolk are processed for recycling, and useful information about recycling is available on the Norfolk Recycles website at www.norfolkrecycles.com</p> <p>In Norfolk, it is the seven District, City and Borough Councils that collect recycling</p> |

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| | <p>from householders and not the County Council. All the collected material is sorted at a facility near Norwich, which is operated by a County Council owned company, and the separated plastics are then sold as a commodity on the recycling markets, although for some materials at some times, this does come at a cost.</p> <p>That process is entirely separate to the pilot to collect mixed rigid plastics at County Council recycling centres, which included items such as garden furniture and toys, as the market for that mix of material was not sustainable. However, that is a position we continue to monitor and when a sustainable option is available, we will look to introduce it.</p> |
| 6.3 | <p>Question from Cllr Judith Lubbock In the new recycling centre will there be a facility for cleaning and repairing potentially usable goods in partnership with a charity thus providing employment and training opportunities for those in need, similar to that provided by Suffolk County Council?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste: There are actually two new Recycling Centres being delivered in the Norwich area that are due to open by the end of this year. These are the Norwich North Recycling Centre near the airport and the Norwich South Recycling Centre at the Harford Park and Ride site.</p> <p>Both new Recycling Centres will feature a prominent and extensive reuse facility to complement the County Council's wider network of reuse shops and we will look to use the additional space at the two new shops to expand our reuse activities to include repair and function testing of donations, training and upskilling staff employed to work in the shops and making partnerships with third parties where appropriate.</p> <p>The current intention is that although these new reuse facilities will not be managed by a charity, the County Council will maintain its approach to having a charity partner which is currently the East Anglian Air Ambulance. We intend to keep the overall approach under review whilst national waste policy continues to develop around this area.</p> |
| 6.4 | <p>Question from Trudie Hannaway When was the last time Cllr Borrett, cabinet member for ASC met personally (one to one) with a disabled person (or online) to discuss their concerns?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention Thank you for your question. I met with representatives from the DNNG on the 18th February to discuss their concerns.</p> |
| 6.5 | <p>Question from Saul Penfold UK holiday bookings are booming. What is the council doing to ensure Norfolk businesses benefit and can bounce back whilst maintaining safety for local residents and visitors?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy:</p> |

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| | <p>The tourism sector has been significantly impacted by lockdowns and restrictions brought in to fight COVID-19 over the past year. In response to the pandemic the local authorities and New Anglia LEP set up a Norfolk Strategic Fund worth £6.75m. This included a £2.225m Tourism Sector Support Package which was launched on 30 July 2020 and was the first project to be approved from the Fund.</p> <p>The project, led by Norfolk County Council, in partnership with all seven district councils and Visit East of England, has been helping the tourism sector to recover from the impact of COVID-19. The project aims to make Norfolk as safe as possible for both visitors to the county and residents, helping to create a quality visitor experience whilst maintaining key Public Health messages.</p> <p>Activity to date has included improving the presentation, cleanliness and hygiene of key locations and communication with visitors. A small grants programme has also supported businesses with the costs of adapting their premises. To date, funding has been awarded to over 300 local businesses to enable the purchase of items relating to social distancing and hygiene requirements, including signage, barriers, personal protective equipment, hand sanitiser stations and protective screens. Autumn and Winter Adaptation Grants were also available to enable businesses to extend the seasonal offer throughout autumn and winter where possible.</p> <p>Funding has also been invested by the districts and Visit East of England in a variety of sector support measures, including marketing campaigns to promote Covid-safe visits such as Unexplored England and Escape the Everyday, promotion of the Visit Britain UK-wide industry standard and consumer mark 'We're Good to Go', as well as distribution of information for both tourism businesses and visitors via the Visit East of England website under the banner 'Know Before you Go'.</p> <p>This work has supported the wider Norfolk Recovery Plan and complemented the New Anglia LEP's Visitor Economy Recovery Plan. Norfolk County Council's work with partners also supports the ongoing work being undertaken at a regional and national level with VisitBritain and VisitEngland.</p> |
| 6.6 | <p>Question from Marian Chapman</p> <p>In 2013, Philip Barlow the inner-south London coroner, said primary school pupil Ella Kissi-Debrah's death was caused by acute respiratory failure, severe asthma and air pollution exposure. It is now widely accepted that primary school children are particularly vulnerable to air pollution. Their lungs are still developing, and toxic air can stunt their growth, causing significant health problems in later life.</p> <p>As the council has previously stated that it will be taking the opportunity to consider how to improve air quality around schools, could members tell us what plans are to be put in place to collect data and quantify the problem before taking the necessary vital remedial action?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, infrastructure & Transport:</p> <p>Thank you for raising this important issue.</p> <p>Air pollution is a local, national and international problem. All local authorities in Norfolk review and assess local air quality as part of our statutory duties under Part IV of the Environment Act 1995 and we are encouraging schools to develop a school travel plan and to champion journeys to school by more sustainable forms of transport and support pupil's health, wellbeing and safety.</p> |

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| | <p>There are also actions we can all do to tackle harmful emissions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car share • Walking and cycling part or all a commute or the school run. • Turning off our engine when stopped. Idling contributes to making air pollution worse. • Don't drive under pressure. Correctly inflated tyres can save fuel and reduce pollution <p>Our travel plans include encouraging people to cycle and where possible use buses or trains noting that COVID restrictions require precautions to be taken when using public transport.</p> |
| 6.7 | <p>Question from Sara Heath</p> <p>The DRE system, highlighted for years as an issue by disabled people and their advocates is inconsistent, unfair, takes too much time, effort. The system is against lower income families, in that for example, you have to be able to afford the utilities in the first place to be in a category to get help and it is paid in arrears. It is not acceptable to disabled Norfolk disabled residents and many fail to access it satisfactorily. The differences between what some attain and others do not, is unfair. There is no explanation of the calculation in detail. When will Cllr. Borrett listen and change NCC DRE system?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention:</p> <p>Thank you for your question. Norfolk County Council regularly looks at the DRE scheme to try and make it is as easy to use as possible, and we encourage people to take it up. The DRE approach is based upon best practice advice and is centred on an individual's personal circumstances. The Council believes the system is fair because it looks at people's declared disability related costs alongside their care plan. This will mean there are differences from person to person because individual circumstances are all different. Service users can have details of their calculations, and many do already ask for and receive them.</p> |
| 6.8 | <p>Question from Ellie Fairfoot</p> <p>How many of the potentially 3000 disabled people who were unlawfully charged for services have - as at 2nd March - received the refund due to them? For clarity I mean that the monies owed to them has been paid into their bank account (not just credited to their direct payment or care account)</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention.</p> <p>Thank you for your question. All of those affected by the changes to the charging policy have been written to setting out their personal position following the recalculation of charges. Those letters contained details of their individual specific circumstances and the process that was being undertaken to ensure all payments are correct. This process includes how to provide bank account details to the Council for those that wish to receive a refund direct in to their own personal account. As at 2nd March, 121 individuals had requested payment in this way, provided the necessary information and received their refunds.</p> |

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| 6.9 | <p>Question 1 from Peter As a person with a Learning Disability, Physical Disabilities and Autism I wish to ask if two bedroom (as support may not be needed 24/7 but is needed from time to time like in a pandemic) bungalows with wet rooms which are on one level suitable for wheelchairs (even if we are not wheelchairs users all the time but need a wheelchair for a time when discharged from hospital) will be built as this also affects our ability to be discharged from hospital in a timely way and is important for our mental health?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention Thank you for your question. Today's report recommends building different types of homes to meet different needs. If Cabinet agree, we will build homes designed to meet the needs of people with physical disabilities, including those who use a wheelchair. Many of the new homes will be designed so that support is available 24 hours a day. This will usually mean that there is space within the building for staff to stay overnight.</p> |
| 6.10 | <p>Question 2 from Peter Will the committee advise what the timeline is for building to be completed and will you be consulting users like me as to what sort of properties we actually need and ensure we are part of the entire process (I would like to be included) from initial planning with builders and housing associations to final roll out and for those not consulted but who wish to follow progress how will you keep us all informed?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention Thank you for your question. Today's recommendation in the cabinet paper is to build 181 homes during the next three years. If the recommendation is agreed, we will hold workshops in May to develop a guide that describes what the new homes should look and feel like. A first draft of this guide was included in the appendices to the cabinet paper and is based on what people have already told us. The workshops will help us improve on this. The times and dates and how to book a place will be advertised after the cabinet decision has been made.</p> |
| 6.11 | <p>Question from Richard Hawker Please give full details of how the £1.024M development funding for the NWL from the Department for Transport has been capitalised into the 2020 - 2021 capital budget, and give a detailed breakdown of how it has been spent this year.</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport The Norwich Western Link Strategic Outline Business Case was approved by the Department for Transport in May 2020 and they included a contribution of £1.024m towards developing the Outline Business Case for the scheme. The approved 2020/21 budget allocated a total of £4.055m for development of the project. This is broken down into procurement (£637,000), design (£931,000), statutory process (£1.94m) and Outline Business Case development (£544,000). There is a degree of overlap between these activities, and the Outline Business Case report is reliant on the design and other elements of the project for its completion. The development of the scheme for the financial year 2020/21 is in line with the budget allocation.</p> |

**Cabinet
8 March 2021
Local Member Questions**

| Agenda item 7 | Local Member Issues/Questions |
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| 7.1 | <p>Question from Cllr Alexandra Kemp West Winch Bypass Can Cabinet change the bypass application to state the truth: the A10 cannot support more development in West Winch until the bypass opens?</p> <p>Highways England have a holding objection on the whole Hardwick Green Development because there is no highways capacity. West Winch Parish Council's own highways consultant report says :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NCC's report puts number of HGV's at 0% instead of at least 10% on the proposed roundabout• detrimental impact of 350 new homes would be significant strain on the A10 at peak times, more queues and more accidents. <p>The A10 here is rural road with extensive field frontage and homes and a high accident rate.</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport</p> <p>NCC's report is factual and truthful.</p> |
| 7.2 | <p>Question from Cllr Tim Adams In December it was promised that repayments would be made following the High Court decision that the MIG charges were discriminatory yet members of the public tell us that the calculations promised for the week of 8th Feb are yet to start. Why is this?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention: Thank you for your question. Everyone affected has been written to as promised and has been given the calculation of their own personal position.</p> |
| 7.3 | <p>Question from Cllr Steff Aquarone How many external consultants has the council employed during the last two years and how much has this cost the council?</p> <p>Response by the Leader Thank you for your question. The Council makes use of external consultants where appropriate including to deliver specific projects and in particular when it is not cost effective to employ staff with specific skills "in house".</p> <p>The Council publishes spend data which broadly categorises spend relating to</p> |

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| | <p>"consultancy". In 2019 and 2020 this spend totalled £1.089m with 55 suppliers.</p> |
| 7.4 | <p>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins How many insurance Claims for accidents caused by defects on the highway has the council had in the last two years and how much has it had to pay out as a result of these claims?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport: 196 claims have been upheld. This is against a total of 841 claims received citing defects on the highway (including winter maintenance and tree related claims) in the two-year period between the 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2020.</p> <p>In that period, a total of £162,864 has been paid.</p> |
| 7.5 | <p>Question from Cllr Dan Roper What is the latest data on the level of Care Home Deaths from Covid in Norfolk and how does this compare with the trends across the East of England and England overall?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention Care home deaths are declining across the country, region and county. According to the latest data reported to the Care Quality Commission, the number of deaths in Norfolk care homes was 13 in the week of 20th-26th Feb. In the week of 20th-26th Feb, 29% of all care home deaths in Norfolk involved Covid-19, compared to a figure of 25% for the East of England, and 19% for England.</p> |
| 7.6 | <p>Question 1 from Cllr David Harrison The Eastern Daily Press reported on 23 February 2021 that there were 15 areas where the infection rate was growing (bucking the overall trend in Norfolk). Do you have any explanation as to why this is?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention: Thank you for your question. The key context here is that case numbers are low across the county. The EDP report at the level of Middle Super Output Area or MSOA, which typically have populations of 5,000-10,000 people. In the week from 21st-28th February, the largest number of total cases for any single MSOA in Norfolk was 16, and most had fewer than 10 cases. Viewed in this context, it can be seen how a single outbreak in a workplace or large household could result in a temporary increase in the overall rate at the MSOA scale. This leads to variances across the county.</p> |
| 7.7 | <p>Question 2 from Cllr David Harrison Why is the rate of Covid infections lower in Suffolk than Norfolk?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Prevention: Thank you for your question. The current infection rate in Norfolk is only marginally higher than Suffolk, with a difference of less than 10 cases per 100,000 people</p> |

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| | <p>according to data on 3rd March. This difference arose in January following the lockdown, before which case rates were almost identical. Rates of decrease from mid-January to mid-February have been similar in Norfolk and Suffolk, however rates of decrease have been higher in Norfolk compared to Suffolk since mid-February. It is also the case that while North Norfolk has had the lowest average case rates of all local authorities in the two counties throughout the second wave, low case rates have also been seen in the rural local authorities of Mid, East and West Suffolk, bringing down the average for Suffolk. Ipswich has seen rates of infection comparable to Norwich throughout the second wave.</p> |
| 7.8 | <p>Question 1 from Cllr Terry Jermy The data used to produce the Thetford Network Improvement Strategy was collected in the 2017 and the final report published some years later. It is in danger of becoming out of date before it is actioned. Could the Cabinet Member for Highways confirm what recommendations from the report have thus far been implemented and what the timetable is for further implementation?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport: Since adoption of the Thetford market town network improvement strategy in April 2020, the council has been taking forward implementation of the action plan. We have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commissioned a study looking at how to address traffic impacts through the town and on the A11, using information from the traffic data collected. This study will report shortly following conclusion of discussions with Suffolk County Council and Highways England on interim findings • Started a review of the Walking and Cycling Strategy, which will underpin the development of networks across market towns including Thetford. This work is vital as a prerequisite to drawing down funding from government for scheme delivery • Commenced on site with delivery of the Croxton Road cycleway. We were successful in finding funding for this scheme from the New Anglia LEP Growth Deal. We were able to use funding earmarked for delivery of the Thetford Enterprise Park roundabout following its successful delivery in 2019 <p>Further delivery of the action plan depends on funding being accessed and, in most cases, we are waiting to see details of opportunities. I had a useful conversation with the Greater Thetford Partnership Manager last week where we discussed delivery of the network improvement strategy action plan and how these projects might be taken forward with the partnership. This was a very positive discussion and reflects progress being made within the town by the various partners involved.</p> |
| 7.9 | <p>Question 2 from Cllr Terry Jermy Thetford residents are deeply concerned about proposals for a new quarry at Barnham, just over the border in Suffolk. The transport plan for the application will see dozens of additional HGV movements through Thetford as a result. This application has been objected to by Barnham Parish Council, Thetford Town Council and Norfolk County Council. Could the Cabinet Member for Highways confirm whether Norfolk County Council supports this planning application and resulting additional HGV movements through Thetford?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport: Whilst the County Council was not initially consulted by Suffolk County Council, through their role as Planning Authority, the proposals have now been considered</p> |

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| | <p>by Council officers and a formal response subsequently issued.</p> <p>The HGV movements accessing the site will do so via a one way system, with traffic entering the site from the A11 via connecting roads (which are all within Suffolk) and then leaving via roads (within Suffolk) before connecting to the A134 in Suffolk. At which point some of the traffic heads north along the A134 into Norfolk (Thetford) and then some traffic continues south on the A134 within Suffolk itself.</p> <p>The submitted Transport Assessment indicates that there will be approximately 3-4 loads per hour (i.e. 6-8 HGV movements). Given the traffic will be dispersed in both directions when it reaches the A134, and the modest hourly HGV movements involved, particularly when compared to the existing flows on the A134, the Council could not substantiate a highway related objection to the proposals on the Norfolk network.</p> |
| 7.10 | <p>Question from Cllr Brenda Jones</p> <p>It seems from the budget last Wednesday that the government hasn't listened to this administration's pleas for additional long term funding for adult social care and services more generally. Will the cabinet member tell me what he asked from the government and what responses he received?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Finance</p> <p>Thank you for your question. The Council supports the Local Government Association submission made ahead of the 2021 Budget which called for "a clear timescale with specific deadlines for how reforms to adult social care provision, eligibility and funding will be introduced."</p> <p>https://www.local.gov.uk/parliament/briefings-and-responses/lga-march-2021-budget-submission#adult-social-care-reform. The Council itself engages regularly with Government to make representations around a wide range of issues including long term funding for social care and other services. However, the Council does not as a rule make submissions to the Treasury in respect of the Budget, as these tend to have a different focus and in general there are other, more relevant opportunities to communicate with Government on these matters. As the question identifies, this has indeed proven to be the case in the Spring 2021 Budget which included limited coverage of social care. At this point it appears unlikely that reform of Adult Social Care funding will be progressed imminently, as a recent Government response to the House of Lords report on lessons from COVID-19 stated that "<i>In the longer term, the Government is committed to sustainable improvement of the adult social care system and will bring forward proposals next year [2022].</i>"</p> <p>https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/4915/documents/49199/default/).</p> <p>Recent examples of the Council's direct engagement with Government on the issue of Adult Social Care and long term funding include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The submission to the Spending Review 2020, which called for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>"Recognising the importance of and adequately fund Social Care</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>Plans should be published to outline how the government intends to fundamentally reform the funding of children's and adults social care on an ongoing, permanent basis, to provide stability to the safeguarding and care sector and certainty for vulnerable people needing care.</i> ○ <i>Although welcome, the confirmation that the additional £1bn of</i> |

*funding nationally will be maintained for the next five years fails to recognise that **additional pressures are being experienced and are forecast to continue across social care budgets every year.***

- ***Adult social care must be placed on a sustainable financial footing.** Very severe pressures are faced across adult social care including as a result of population growth and increasingly complex demand. Proposals to reform social care funding (the long delayed green paper) should be published as soon as possible.”*

- The response to the consultation on the 2021-22 Provisional Settlement, which called for:

“Long-term funding allocations and quantum of funding

The Council understands the pressures on central Government capacity and resources which have been caused by COVID-19 and recognises why this has led to a one-year Spending Review and Settlement announcement. In this context, the early indications provided at the Spending Review were welcome, and the Council is grateful for the additional financial support for COVID-19 pressures which is being provided through 2020-21 and into 2021-22. However, the fundamental principle remains that longer term certainty and funding allocations are key to enabling robust decision-making and the financial stability of local authorities. It is notable that the Government has provided the NHS with a funding commitment to 2023-24 and it is disappointing that local government has not been afforded the same level of priority.

The Council would strongly endorse the call from the Society of County Treasurers (SCT) that it is critical for there to be a return as soon as possible to multi-year settlements to improve certainty, and that future Settlements are in line with the Hudson Review recommendations regarding timings.

More broadly, a major concern for the Council is that the overall quantum of funding for local government is not sufficient and this needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency. Putting aside the short-term funding support for COVID-19, and the assumptions being made around levels of council tax, the Settlement Funding Assessment includes only a minimal increase for Norfolk County Council (0.1%). This lack of any material increase in the core settlement is a major issue for the long-term sustainability of the Council and it will not be viable for a similar approach to be adopted at future settlements.

The fact that increases in core spending power are predicated on increases in council tax are a critical issue as they place the burden of funding on hard pressed local taxpayers and make assumptions about increases in the tax base which may not be realised. Even if the full increase in council tax were to be achieved, the additional resources from council tax are not adequate to meet funding pressures, or to recover the historic reductions in government funding which have been experienced since 2010-11. Local government has absorbed the impact of these significant funding reductions, delivering efficiency savings while maintaining vital local services. However, the ability to continue to do this has now been almost completely exhausted and

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| | <p><i>therefore opportunities to reprioritise and deliver further savings will be limited, unless the quantum of funding is increased, or the responsibilities of local government are reviewed. Any future savings requirements are therefore likely to have an impact on service delivery.</i></p> <p>Reform of local government funding</p> <p><i>Although sympathetic to the pressures central Government currently faces, the Council is disappointed that long overdue reforms to local government finance appear to be low on the Government's list of priorities. There is an urgent need to progress a range of reforms including the Fair Funding Review, Business Rates reform and localisation, addressing High Needs Block funding, and developing a robust and sustainable funding model for social care. Plans should be brought forward at the earliest opportunity to outline how the Government intends to fundamentally reform the funding of children's and adults social care on an ongoing, permanent basis. It is vital this review is prioritised to provide long term stability to the safeguarding and care sector, and certainty for vulnerable people needing care."</i></p> <p>It should be noted that the Government rarely responds directly as part of these engagement processes.</p> |
| 7.11 | <p>Question from Cllr David Rowntree Now the Norwich Western Link Outline Business Case has been delayed again until June will the cabinet member take the time to reflect on alternatives that could alleviate the rat running in Weston Longville, Ringland and other communities so they can get relief now rather than risk everything on an increasingly expensive and unpopular road scheme?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport: We went through a very thorough options assessment to determine the best solution to the traffic problems to the west of Norwich, as well as a public consultation on what people thought the main issues were, and the solutions they wanted us to consider. Both of these gave us a very strong basis for pursuing creating a link road between Broadland Northway and the A47 and the documents that evidence this are available to view on the County Council website. I speak regularly to local parish councils in the area to the west of Norwich, who have a very good understanding of the day-to-day issues their communities face, and the overwhelming message I get from them is that they want us to get on and build the Norwich Western Link as soon as possible.</p> |
| 7.12 | <p>Question from Cllr Emma Corlett Commercial confidentiality is being used withhold details of why the award of a contract for the NWL has been delayed. It is in the public interest and does not compromise any party if the cabinet member tells us whether the reason for the delay is that the cost of the scheme is likely to exceed to £153m. Has the likely cost of the NWL now exceeded £153m?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport: Commercial confidentiality is an accepted requirement of any procurement process. This is to ensure that no party is given an unfair advantage or disadvantage. While</p> |

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| | <p>this process is still active, I cannot give any further details for the reason for the delay.</p> |
| 7.13 | <p>Question from Cllr Danny Douglas The Governance review of major projects by Local Partnerships excluded any investigation or explanation of the £25m overspend on the Northern Distributor Road. Will the cabinet member now explain why that overspend happened without council approval being sought before the spending was committed?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport: The review completed by Local Partnerships was in response to the recommendation agreed by Cabinet in December 2019. Reports reviewing the construction phase of the Broadland Northway and lessons learnt were considered by Scrutiny Committee in 2019. These reports have also been published on the County Council's website. The Lessons Learnt report sets out the various project spending reports and approvals.</p> |
| 7.14 | <p>Question from Cllr Colleen Walker In response to my question last month about how many first time buyers has the Council helped to get a foot on the property ladder through the new homes that have been built on surplus Council property since 2017 you said this was not a metric that the Council collects. In 2017 the Conservative manifesto pledged 'to help first time buyers get a foot on the property ladder by building new homes on surplus council land'. How many first time buyers you pledged to help have bought properties developed on surplus council land since 2017?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services & Asset Management: As Cllr Walker notes in her own question, it is not a metric that is collected. Therefore it is not clear why she has asked a question, which she already knows the answer to.</p> <p>I have for reference included my response to the previous question below</p> <p>Repton is getting it right in terms of a balanced strategy. A good mix of market housing, alongside affordable, and shared equity products of different sizes. Cllr Walker has also continued to ignore the affordable housing that Repton is building across their schemes.</p> <p>Is it Labour's policy not to build either affordable rental properties or shared ownership properties, the latter of which will of course particularly appeal to first time buyers? We have some Labour members asking for more social rent, some for more affordable rent and Cllr Walker for private sale.</p> <p>This Administration is clearly delivering on its 2017 Manifesto pledges to help first time buyers get a foot on the housing ladder, I would draw Cllr Walker's attention to Acle where Repton is exceeding the number of affordable units and Attleborough, where we have just submitted a planning application for a mixed scheme of exclusively affordable and shared equity units.</p> <p>----- <i>Response to previous Cabinet Question:</i></p> |

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| | <p><i>“ This is not a metric that the Council collects and we are not aware of any other authority that collates this information around their own land. Unless a first-time buyer is clearly identifiable (for example through participation in a Government scheme) this information is not something that can be easily collected.</i></p> <p><i>Land sold (especially prior to 2017) may have or passed through several owners before coming forward for development. Local planning policy will determine the tenure of any new homes that are built in an areas – on any land – and will reflect the local need, as determined by the Local Planning Authority, based upon their assessment of the housing market in each District. They will record these numbers for all land where planning is received and where development starts. It may not always be possible to identify whether a purchaser is a first-time buyer or not.</i></p> <p><i>Where the Council is developing homes through its housing company Repton – there are a variety of products that will appeal to first time buyers, including shared ownership products. These will provide high quality homes at an accessible price. At Acle, the first development where Repton is on site, we have exceeded the ‘policy compliant’ amount of affordable housing - supporting another key part of our housing market.</i></p> |
| 7.15 | <p>Question from Cllr David Collis</p> <p>In response to my question last month about work the Council has undertaken with the Environment Agency and local landowners to ensure ditches, dykes, and drains are well maintained and kept clear over the last four years he replied Council takes a risk-based approach to formal enforcement action and works with local landowners where issues are identified. However in the 2017 Conservative manifesto was a pledge to reduce the risk of flooding by working with the Environment Agency and local landowners to ensure ditches, dykes and rains are well maintained and kept clear. That clearly didn’t happen. Why not?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Environment & Waste:</p> <p>As explained in the previous response, the County Council has proactively worked with all agencies and landowners over the last four years, to drive forward the maintenance and improvement of drainage assets, which are owned and maintained by a variety of private individuals and public bodies.</p> <p>In terms of the most recent event, Council officers are continuing their investigations into the flooding that occurred in late December 2020. While the causes of flooding can be complex, early findings show that up to 50mm of rain fell on saturated ground following three months of wet weather in the autumn. This led to drainage systems becoming inundated with floodwater and watercourses overtopping.</p> <p>Following the flooding, in January 2021 Cabinet agreed to convene a series of meetings with strategic partners across Norfolk, including District Councils, the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and Internal Drainage Boards amongst others to help mitigate these increasingly common extreme weather events and ensure even closer working together. The first meeting of this Norfolk Strategic Flood Alliance has been held, chaired by Lord Dannatt, and further meetings are planned.</p> <p>Additionally, the Council has allocated an extra £650,000 capital and revenue funding, which will be invested to enable faster repairs to the road network and</p> |

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| | <p>existing drainage systems and enable the large number of Flood Investigation Reports to be completed as soon as possible.</p> <p>A further £1.5m has been allocated by the County Council in 2021/22 for a Flood Reserve to assist with flood related issues.</p> |
| 7.16 | <p>Question from Cllr Mike Smith-Clare</p> <p>The 2017 Conservative manifesto pledged to increase Parish Partnership funding to £1m. It hasn't happened and he along with other cabinet members and Conservative councillors voted against it at full council. Will he explain why this manifesto pledge has been broken?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure & Transport:</p> <p>Highway maintenance has also been a priority over the four years of this administration. I am proud to say that this has helped to maintain our high public satisfaction levels with the Highways service as demonstrated in the 2020 National Highways & Transportation (NHT) customer satisfaction results. These details are also contained in the Highway Capital Programme Report on today's agenda.</p> <p>It is also worth highlighting that the value of parish partnership schemes is also driven by demand from parishes. The last few years have been challenging for all financial budgets, and parish councils are no exception. Despite these challenging circumstances, we have been able to boost the Parish Partnership by £50,000 per year to £350,000 which has been additionally enhanced by the Safety Camera Partnership. In 2021/22 the Parish Partnership programme will support the delivery of schemes totalling £715,489. These details are also contained within the Parish Partnership Report on today's agenda.</p> |
| 7.17 | <p>Question from Cllr Chrissie Rumsby</p> <p>I have been contacted by some residents who have been told that they must return the device they have been provided with for remote learning when their child returns to school this week. The potential for self-isolation and home learning will still be a factor for many of our learners, as will be their household's limited access to digital equipment. How many of the laptops that have been purchased by Norfolk County Council and distributed to schools are parents expected to return to their school?</p> <p>Response by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services:</p> <p>Many thanks Cllr. Rumsby for your question. As children return to the school classroom many schools will ask parents to return laptops so that they can use them throughout the school day. Schools will want to make use of them in an approach to teaching and learning that builds on the experiences that children have acquired whilst learning remotely at home. Schools may also want to adapt and develop the software in order to reflect the school-based curriculum, now that children are working face to face in school. At any point, where a child is required to isolate at home devices would once again be provided to enable remote learning.</p> <p>Schools own the devices, including those provided by NCC, and we do not require them to be returned to the council. We do support schools in wanting to make the most effective use of devices in their school day, as they will need to maintain and</p> |

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| | service equipment, ensure it remains fit for purpose and utilise them fully across the school day. |
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