

Cabinet
6 December 2021
Public & Local Member Questions

Agenda item 6	Public Question Time
6.1	<p>Question from Cavan Stewart In answer to my question to Cabinet in September 2020 I was delighted to learn a speed limit of 20 mph was deemed to be appropriate on Wolfe and Quebec Roads. After contacting Cllr. Wilby, I am pleased to learn that officers are finally actively working on this project and would be grateful for reassurance that no time is lost in its implementation. However, there continues to be safety concerns for schoolchildren, especially at the busy junction of Quebec, St Leonard's and Wolfe Roads. Please could Cabinet consider putting in additional safety measures which might include a pedestrian crossing and/or a lollipop person to mitigate the risk to children?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport I am pleased to report that, now that funding has been confirmed, the delivery of a 20mph speed limit project is being progressed and is going through the statutory Traffic Regulation Order process. Being a legal process, which involves statutory consultation, this typically takes around nine to twelve months but will depend on the feedback received from consultation. The scheme has been funded by the Local Member Fund.</p> <p>In terms of additional measures, this would not be considered until the effectiveness of the 20mph, once implemented, can be determined.</p> <p>Supplementary Question from Cavan Stewart Cabinet should also be aware that there are additional risks to children and parents walking to school on Quebec Road where cars frequently mount the pavement in order to pass each other where cars are parked at the kerb-side. What additional road safety precautions, such as pavement bollards, can be brought in to stop this extremely dangerous and daily occurrence?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport It is acknowledged that on occasions some drivers may choose to mount the footway in order to allow oncoming vehicles to pass. However, with good forward visibility and sufficient areas to stop in both directions, this should facilitate traffic to pass safely without any requirement to mount the footway. Quebec Road currently has an excellent safety record (0 incidents recorded in last 5 years) and therefore would not be a priority to investigate further. It is also worth highlighting that pavement bollards can also restrict accessibility for pedestrians, mobility scooters, pushchairs and wheelchair users, so we would not recommend their use here.</p>
6.2	<p>Question from Jamie Pennington On 21 April 21 Norfolk Foster carers were told that from 1 June 21 they must save £5/week in long term savings for each foster child in their care. This was a new policy. SSW were instructed to enforce it, and foster carers were chased. On 19 Nov 21 I was emailed by the Norfolk Complaints team who explained that no such compulsory savings policy exists. If there was no policy, what authority did Children's Services have to pursue foster carers?</p>

	<p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services Children's Services have not made the expectations within the Looked After Children and Young People's Savings Policy since April 2021 a requirement. However, all Foster Carers have been actively encouraged by Children's Services to adhere to the policy from April 2021 in the best interest of the children and young people in their care. We have been dealing with Mr Pennington's concerns via the Complaints process.</p> <p>Supplementary Question from Jamie Pennington Can the Director of Children's Services please write to apologise to foster carers, repay the money which was taken from them (and replace it in children's savings with council money) and explain why the situation arose?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services We have communicated our approach widely to foster carers, the vast majority have fully understood the rationale and are keen to support this best practice approach on behalf of children in their care, utilising the basic maintenance allowance, which is a specific allowance paid to carers by the Council to meet the needs of children. Carers saving on behalf of children is common practice in LA fostering services nationally, with Norfolk carers seeking for Norfolk to introduce this guidance.</p>
6.3	<p>Question from David Evans An Environmental Hub has been established at Gressenhall to act as a centre for learning about Norfolk County Council environment policy aims, and to empower residents and communities to make positive changes in their own natural environments. Has the Council considered how difficult it is to reach Gressenhall by public transport?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport Located in the centre of the county, and with a range of diverse environmental and built assets including riverside walks, orchards and a working heritage farm, Gressenhall is perfectly placed to operate as the Council's new environmental hub, not least because of its already excellent reputation for learning and access.</p> <p>In terms of public transport, Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse is served by a limited bus service (Konectbus 21/21A) which connect Gressenhall and Beetley villages to Dereham. Beetley and Gressenhall villages are also within easy walking distance of the site.</p> <p>Schools normally use coach travel to visit the site, where there is ample designated coach parking.</p> <p>With regard to Active Travel, Gressenhall is currently located on a National Cycle Route connecting Routes 1 and 13 and there is covered bicycle parking on site.</p> <p>The site currently marks the starting point for both the Wensum Way and Nar Valley Way walking trails. The Wensum Way has a spur linking to Dereham and walkers are welcomed to the site.</p> <p>As part of the Gressenhall Environmental Hub project, it is proposed that an</p>

	<p>improved walking and cycling route is established to connect the site to Dereham, opening up wider access to both the existing and new facilities which Gressenhall offers to Norfolk schools and communities.</p> <p>Supplementary Question from David Evans How do Norfolk County Council plan to communicate their environmental policy and strategy and to engage with their electorate and the community with regard implementation of the strategy and its further development?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste The Council recognises that engaging with our communities in terms of the work which is being done around the Environmental Policy is vital.</p> <p>Engagement to date has included press releases, social media and face to face programmes when Covid-19 restrictions have allowed.</p> <p>Major projects such as the 1 Million Trees for Norfolk have involved work with schools and communities, and this will increase significantly in the New Year.</p> <p>The new Environmental Hub at Gressenhall Farm & Workhouse will give many new and exciting opportunities for engagement with a wide range of Norfolk residents, with new, accessible learning spaces being created in the Union building and new schools' programmes focusing on the environment.</p> <p>The November 8th cabinet report "Natural Norfolk: Progress on Delivering the Environmental Policy" included the recommendation that the Natural Norfolk concept be developed as a public-facing communications vehicle for Environmental Policy work, including as a platform to promote engagement opportunities delivered through the Gressenhall Environmental Hub. Our communications officers are currently assessing different options for the delivery of this platform.</p>
6.4	<p>Question from Aiden Watts Following the return of Highways to NCC from the City, how can City residents be sure that sufficient funding is still available for road safety measures and parking issues within residential streets, without being overlooked due to broader County highways projects?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport The return of highways to the County Council has not affected how funding for road safety measures is allocated. Funding for small scale works is available through the Local Member Fund and the Parish Partnership Fund (which operates with the City Council within Norwich). The Local Member Fund has been increased to £10,000 per member this year and the scope widened to include environmental initiatives such as the installation of electrical vehicle charging points and tree planting. We have also launched the new £1m Road Safety Community Fund for small scale safety schemes over the next four years. This increases the amount of funding available for road safety measures.</p> <p>Supplementary Question from Aiden Watts In light of significant safety concerns on a road full of families, when can the</p>

residents of Christchurch Road expect a consultation on permit parking following the impact of permit parking on the “Welsh” streets in January 2020?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

Extensions to permit parking zones are controversial, and expensive due to the consultation and legal processes involved. The implications of introducing permit parking need to be carefully considered in order to achieve an effective solution that does not create problems elsewhere. For those reasons, we do not introduce them lightly, and we would need to see widespread community support for any changes before proceeding.

In the case of Christchurch Road, an extension of the existing permit zone would allow people from that zone to continue parking there, so parking problems are likely to persist. Such an extension could also just move the problem elsewhere, so a wider permit parking scheme might be necessary. Initial considerations suggest that it would need to cover the area between Christchurch Road, the ring road (Colman Road), Earlham Road and Unthank Road.

Currently, the only funding for extensions to permit parking schemes is through the Local Member Fund. However, the wider scheme suggested would be more than the LMF could afford but we will explore whether other options are available. However, before investigating further, we would need to see that there is widespread support in the area for permit parking.

**Cabinet
6 December 2021
Local Member Questions**

Agenda item 7	Local Member Issues/Questions
7.1	<p>Question from Alexandra Kemp The price of food is going up. The UK produces only 50% of its food supply. County Farms have a crucial part to play securing the national food supply. But Cabinet wants to declare a County Farm in West Winch, surplus to requirements. The estate is earmarked as green infrastructure and not developable. West Winch is co-located next to King's Lynn, an area of deprivation. Can Cabinet work with NHS partners to turn the estate into Care Farm, to protect food security, and improve health and wellbeing in West Norfolk</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management The site, as Cllr Kemp well knows, is part of a long-term strategic site that will deliver 4,000 homes for the area, which is well supported by local residents and the Local MP and is crucial to the overall scheme. If Cllr Kemp supports the provision of a new road, the wider scheme needs to come forward and withdrawing our site would jeopardise delivery. I'm sure she would not be happy with this outcome. These homes are necessary for the long-term growth of Kings Lynn and I am glad to say that Norfolk County Council has been working closely with colleagues from BKLWN to support this site of regional importance. The site which is allocated in the Local Plan (policy E2.1 – adopted by the inspector back in 2016) – there has been extensive and ongoing consultation.</p> <p>The Norfolk County Council owned land forms part of this overall allocation</p> <p>As Cllr Wilby reported at a recent Cabinet meeting, we are making good progress with the application to DfT for the West Winch Housing Access Road, which will link the Hardwick Roundabout with the A10, this road will only be delivered with the delivery of the housing. What else will it deliver:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two new primary schools and a nursery• Increased secondary education provision• Green infrastructure• A health centre• Sports and community facilities• Habitat creation and allotments <p>All fantastic and strategic outcomes.</p>

	<p>The Councillor asks about Care Farms – can I direct her to the recent County Farms Lettings – six great new ways to get into farming. Ingleborough Farm in West Walton is currently being marketed as an equipped 133 acre Care Farm – providing a fantastic service to this part of the County.</p>
7.2	<p>Question from Cllr Ian Mackie</p> <p>I welcome the NSIDP and the inclusion of the Broadland Business Park station. This would be a fantastic piece public transport infrastructure linking the business park, the park and ride as well as growth areas of housing to the city centre, thereby offering an alternative to car travel, as well as supporting sustainable development and growth.</p> <p>Please could the Cabinet Member reassure me and the community of Thorpe St Andrew that he will do all he can to meet the timescales of starting construction in 2028, if not before. I congratulate the Administration for a excellent report and positive vision for Norfolk</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>The NSIDP pulls together information on the key infrastructure needed to deliver economic growth in Norfolk, setting out the high-level strategic priorities for the next 10 years. This has been compiled in collaboration with stakeholders including the County Council, district councils, utility companies and government agencies. All of the schemes identified in the plan still require funding, and their presence in the plan enables us to co-ordinate implementation, prioritise activity and respond to any funding opportunities.</p> <p>The start dates identified for all the projects including the Broadland Business Park Rail Station are estimated and subject to change depending on the opportunities to progress projects. There are a number of delivery challenges currently affecting the viability of Broadland Business Park Rail Station scheme, and local authority officers will continue to work with Government and the rail industry to explore the potential options to bring this project forward. Its inclusion in the plan recognises it is a priority project which will contribute towards the County's ambition for strategic infrastructure in support of sustainable growth.</p> <p>I am happy to meet and work with the local member on this major piece of infrastructure.</p>
7.3	<p>Question from Cllr Dan Roper</p> <p>There has been media coverage on the possibility of Broadland and South Norfolk District Councils relocating into spare space at County Hall. It is understood that despite ongoing interest the two Councils have since been informed by the leadership of NCC that space will not be available and the option is no longer feasible. Will the cabinet member outline how and why this decision was taken including any representations that were received on the matter?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management</p> <p>As the Cabinet Member for Commercialisation and Assets – I am often asked how can we make the most of the estate and I am pleased to say that we will look to lease and commercialise parts of the estate where they are underutilised and not needed for service delivery. Indeed, this was a focus of the recent Corporate Select Committee.</p>

Currently we share County Hall with a number of partners including colleagues from the Police, health, Passport office and a number of other key partners across the County. We will continue to have discussions with partners around the colocation and use of property – one of the foundations of the very successful Norfolk One Public Estate programme.

Norfolk County Council has always been clear that it will discuss with partners where we can co-locate – very often these will be commercially confidential and / or at an early stage of option analysis. This was very much the case with the discussions with South Norfolk District Council (SNDC) / Broadland District Council (BDC) - where any space that could be available was one of several options to be explored by both SNDC / BDC.

Unfortunately, some of the public reports, following on from internal staff briefings to SNDC / BDC were incorrect. In the briefing SNDC / BDC did not say that County Hall was 'where they were moving to' but rather one of several option. As the year progressed - it became clear that the organisations were working to different timescales and that County Hall – for a number of reasons would not be a viable option.

Second Question from Cllr Dan Roper

The Local Government Association are warning that there could be a winter double whammy due to a shortage of gritter drivers and road salt ahead of Christmas, how is Norfolk faring on this?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport?

I am pleased to report that Norfolk County Council has replenished salt stocks over the summer period ready for use this winter season. This equates to 15,000t held across the county and includes a 5,000t salt stock contingency should it be required. In addition, further salt orders have been placed to replace what has already been used this winter. Salt stocks are monitored on a regular and routine basis to ensure that we have sufficient stock and orders placed as required.

The winter service operation is delivered via Norse Highways. The winter service team have daily contact with Norse Highways to review their available resource in order to plan our winter service treatments effectively. Should there be resource challenges, strategies are in place to ensure routes are covered, although so far this winter period, crews have already completed 8 gritting runs given the recent cold weather.

7.4

Question from Cllr Rob Colwell

With insurers raising the alarm about the number of homes being built where owners were at risk of experiencing “traumatic and devastating losses”, and following last weeks Flood Action Week, together with warnings issued by the Environment Agency after Met Office warns of another above average wetter winter, will Councillor Grant join me in expressly opposing any new residential developments on Flood Zone Risk 3 in Norfolk, with Norfolk County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority and in particular the proposed Parkway development of 226 new homes on such land in Gaywood, King's Lynn.

Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

	<p>Norfolk County Council as Lead Local Flood Authority have a role as Statutory Consultee to Planning for major development with surface water drainage. As such we provide advice (in line with our thresholds) on the local flood risk and drainage strategies. We do not comment on strategic flood risk (indicated in the Flood Zone mapping) as these matters are determined by the Local Planning Authority with advice from the Environment Agency, who have been consulted on the Planning Application that you mention.</p>
7.5	<p>Question from Cllr Brian Watkins</p> <p>It is estimated that 1.5 million children and young people will need support for their mental health as a direct result of the pandemic over the next three to five years. It is crucial that early intervention and prevention services such as school counselling are able to help children avoid reaching crisis point in the first place. Can the Cabinet member say how the Council may be able to help assist in the development of these services in Norfolk schools?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>Many thanks for the question. Children's Services continue to work with Norfolk school leaders on a 'Learning Recovery' plan focussed on activities whilst we remain in the pandemic and looking beyond. This plan recognises that individual schools and Multi Academy Trusts are best placed to develop their individual plans with the LA playing a key role in co-ordinating support across our early support teams and those within the CCG. The CAMHS transformation programme which began prior to the pandemic is responding to school requirements that exist now and school leaders have welcomed their new approach. We have supported schools with an enhanced wellbeing programme and have delivered trauma -informed practice sessions across the county to enable schools to identify those children and young people who have been most affected by the pandemic. I have built close relationships with schools in my local area throughout the pandemic and would encourage Cllr Watkins to take the same opportunity.</p> <p>Second Question from Cllr Brian Watkins</p> <p>Many small and medium sized businesses in Norfolk are reeling from the repercussions of Brexit. They are absorbing unwanted costs, paying hidden tariffs, moving operations to within the EU, shedding workers and seeing a big decline in orders. How is the Council working with New Anglia Local Economic Partnership (LEP), other district councils, and organisations representing the business community, to try and mitigate the worst effects of this growing crisis?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Growing the Economy</p> <p>I do not recognise any of the description of business in Norfolk, can Cllr Watkins provide any evidence of his unfounded comments. Businesses in Norfolk are actually hiring at a fast rate, with the number of people claiming support for job seeking in Norfolk falling 29% between March and October this year. This is indicative of the demand-led recovery, with recruitment a primary concern rather than job losses. 73% of Norfolk firms entering the British Chamber of Commerce's Quarterly Economic Survey tried to recruit staff in Q3 2021.</p> <p>Although the number of firms exporting in the region did decrease slightly between 2019 and 2020 (ONS), much of this will be due to the pandemic and subsequent global supply chain disruption.</p> <p>In fact, Norfolk businesses entering the Chamber of Commerce's Quarterly Economic</p>

	<p>Survey did not report any change in export sales in first quarter of 2020 (with the UK's exit of the EU taking effect on 31 January 2020), although there was a small decline in export orders reported in that quarter, when the pandemic impact had begun to take effect.</p> <p>The most recent data shows a manufacturing sector in Norfolk that has been strongly increasing its export orders and sales this year (46% rebound growth in Q2 2021, a further 6% in Q3), recovering the ground lost in 2020. The service sector is still reporting weaker export recovery, but the picture has been improving rapidly in 2021.</p> <p>To support further growth, we provide full business support services through New Anglia's Growth Hub, which provides comprehensive guidance and support (https://newanglia.co.uk/eu-exit/) for businesses regarding the exit from the EU; the LEP also leads a regional approach to inward investment. This support complements the work of the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) and Norfolk Chambers of Commerce.</p>
7.6	<p>Question from Cllr Tim Adams</p> <p>The Police will be reporting areas where people feel uncomfortable due to street lights being turned off back to Councils - will the Cabinet member commit to turning them back on where requested?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport</p> <p>To reduce CO2 emissions and save money, we have adopted part night lighting in low crime areas where there are low levels of through traffic. It also complements other actions we have taken such as modernising lights to make them more energy efficient. The process involved consultation with all stakeholders which included residents and Norfolk Police.</p> <p>We will of course review locations if there is a proven safety issue and we liaise closely with Norfolk Constabulary on this. However, this needs to be carefully considered given the negative environmental impact it would have on reducing carbon emissions.</p>
7.7	<p>Question from Cllr Lucy Shires</p> <p>How many families in the rural areas of Norfolk is the Early Childhood and Family service currently reaching?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services</p> <p>Thank you for your question. Norfolk's Early Childhood and Family Service (ECFS) is comprised of 3 distinct but interlocking elements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Targeted early help support for families• Online and digital services and support• Community funding to enable new local early childhood groups to operate <p>At any one time the service provides targeted support to up to 800 families. We know on average that just under 40 % of the families receiving targeted support live in areas defined as 'rural' (not a city or larger town).</p> <p>The online and digital information and advice support has proven very valuable during the last 18 months with thousands of families accessing this resource. Over a</p>

	<p>thousand families who have accessed the digital offer have requested additional support from ECFS, with over 40% coming from rural areas.</p> <p>The community fund, coordinated via our Early Childhood Advisory Boards, has been used to support the development of local networks of support for families within their communities. We are aware of 440 parent and toddler groups currently running across the County, 117 of which have received support via this fund to either start up or expand their offer to families, with approximately 3500 spaces being created. I am happy to follow up with a breakdown of this split across urban and rural areas.</p>
7.8	<p>Question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone What help is given to those applicants who are not computer literate in completing the Blue Badge application process?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships The Blue Badge scheme is a national scheme, using national criteria, run by the Department for Transport. Locally, paper applications are available on request for customers who need them. These can be picked up from a local library or posted on request.</p> <p>Customers can also visit a library and receive assistance to use the online application process.</p> <p>Supplementary Question from Cllr Steffan Aquarone Has there been an analysis of how to make the process easier following difficulties experienced by some people?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Communities and Partnerships Yes. We monitor customer feedback on a regular basis as part of our continuous improvement approach and a full end to end review took place in 2019. Customer feedback suggests the new process implemented as a result of that has been extremely well received. The % of applications completed online is now 86%. Prior to the review it was 67%.</p> <p>The DfT continually review applications and support groups feedback to develop and enhance the scheme.</p>
7.9	<p>Question from Cllr Saul Penfold Following a question on twitter about why County Hall lights are left on overnight, Councillor Peck said “The lights are LED and are automatically switched on and off when staff enter or leave each area. So probably triggered by cleaners or security staff.” Yet the lights on each floor are all on at the same time so can you please provide more details about who these staff are and what they are doing to cause the lights to be on all the time?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management I would draw Cllr Penfold’s attention to the second part of my response on twitter – that “Also, critical staff, social workers and partners work out of the building 24/7”.</p> <p>Put simply the building is used in the evening by a variety of staff. A number of these roles are essential functions serving the people of Norfolk, with County Hall acting as</p>

	<p>their base often providing cover and support for vulnerable people.</p> <p>I am more than welcome for him to come to County Hall one evening to see how the PIR system works and how the lights will turn off when people are not present on the floors.</p> <p>To be frank, the operation of low energy use LED lights controlled by movement sensors at County Hall, supporting for staff who are working in the evenings is a minor issue. Instead we should note that since the Conservatives took over in 2016/17 – we have reduced the carbon footprint of our built estate by 68% and we've reduced carbon emissions from water consumption by 52%.</p>
7.10	<p>Question from Cllr Ben Price The county council leader has called Norfolk “car county”. Can the Cabinet Member for Highways give me a straight yes or no answer – does he accept that carbon emissions from transport are rising in Norfolk and that this correlates with the continued dominance of cars as the main mode of transport?</p> <p>Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy Thank you for the question. Norfolk’s rural nature means that cars are an essential part of our transport mix- allowing those in the most rural settings to travel and work throughout our county and beyond. That is why I referred to Norfolk as a Car County and we must support those who need to use this method of transport. At the same time we will continue to strive to improve our bus services to provide alternative, more environmentally friendly options. For many in our county we must recognise that cars will be their only viable transport option. We all expect to see the change to using electric or other power means in the near future which will contribute to our carbon reduction ambitions.</p> <p>According to the latest carbon emissions data from BEIS (2005-2019) on local authorities; it shows a reduction in emissions in transport in the two years leading up to 2019 for road transport. Within the county as whole over all roads, there is wide variability, with some districts remaining relatively consistent over this period with regard to road transport. Road transport emissions in Norwich are significantly below its 2005 levels – 18%. So, the data shows relatively consistent levels over the 15 years covered in the latest report; with the last few years showing slight year on year reductions.</p> <p>Second Question from Cllr Ben Price The draft Transport for Norwich Strategy refers to the promise in the Joint Core Strategy (JCS) of a bus rapid transit network for Norwich, but nowhere else does it commit to the creation of such a network. Will the Cabinet Member for Highways and Infrastructure commit to the creation of a bus rapid transit network for Norwich?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport The proposed Transport for Norwich (TfN) strategy, due to be considered by Cabinet on 6 December, gives strong policy backing for public transport with the relevant policy setting out that it will continue to be a vitally important transport solution, and that the council will work in partnership with operators to deliver services that meet people’s travel needs. The key action associated with the policy is that, through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), we will continue to work in partnership with</p>

	<p>operators to develop bus services that meet people’s requirements.</p> <p>Whilst the BSIP doesn’t specially mention bus rapid transit (BRT) as a concept, the proposals within it aim to deliver the component elements that form the basis of this, namely high frequency, accessible bus services utilising extensive bus priority infrastructure, providing quick and reliable bus journey times, complemented by high quality passenger information and convenient, competitive fares.</p> <p>Once we know the funding settlement from the BSIP we will commence work on identifying the specific improvements on the key public transport corridors., rolling out the approach that is in the TfN strategy and the BSIP, the latter of which sets out the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The County Council will conduct a Bus Network Review Study and a Bus Priority Study for the county between April 2022 and October 2022, in readiness to identify, design and mobilise delivery of the interventions and measures where bus priority should be delivered • More buses on time/faster journey times will be delivered by our bus priority programme, which will build on the investment already happening in Norwich through the Transforming Cities Fund and expanded to address bus delays across the whole county • In Norwich, we have bus lanes that run into Norwich along key corridors – Newmarket Road, Dereham Road and Sprowston Road – totalling 4.5 miles. As part of our Transforming Cities Fund, we will be introducing an additional 3 miles of bus lane. • Traffic light priority will be introduced in Norwich as part of the Transforming Cities Fund programme, and then also rolled out to King’s Lynn and Great Yarmouth, Norfolk’s other two urban centres. We are working on an approach that provides a green signal to buses irrespective of whether they are running early, on time or late, but is tailored to each individual junction. We are currently working with operators to ensure that the respective technologies are able to communicate seamlessly. • To ensure free flowing bus services on key routes at peak times we have identified, as part of our Permit Scheme for the authorisation of works on the highway, a network of Traffic Sensitive Streets. On these roads, limitations are applied to carrying out works on the highway so that, apart from emergencies, they have to be carried out outside traffic sensitive hours (i.e., between 0930-1600) • We work closely with the District Councils to ensure that off-street parking is monitored and controlled and will be applying for moving traffic offence enforcement powers to improve bus punctuality • The county council also collects data through the GPS functionality of operators’ ticket machines. This data includes dwell time on stops, average vehicle speed, journey time between stops, all of which we can use to assess where bus priority measures could be successfully deployed to optimise congestion relief for buses • On specified corridors where bus priority and bus vehicle investment is made during the lifetime of this BSIP, we will ensure that average journey times for buses between specified points are decreased compared to before the measures were implemented. Location specific targets will be agreed in Enhanced Partnership Schemes on a corridor by corridor basis, based on bus operator bus tracking data
7.11	<p>Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn The River Wensum SAC could have serious planning implications for the Norwich</p>

Western Link, and details of this should be on the risk register. Opposition councillors have repeatedly asked for assurance regarding the legal advice sought by the council on the implications of the SAC, but have not received it. Can the Cabinet Member please provide details of the legal opinion obtained by the council, via a private email if it is impossible for this to be made public?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Environment and Waste

The Council has appointed external legal representatives to provide ongoing legal support in relation to its emerging planning and statutory order proposals for the NWL project. The Council does not routinely publish the legal advice it receives.

Second Question from Cllr Jamie Osborn

The Norfolk Strategic Infrastructure Development Plan discussed by the Infrastructure and Development Committee in November includes a number of major road projects, including the Norwich Western Link. Yet the report does not mention the carbon impact of these roads at all. Does the Cabinet Member agree that it is a major omission to discuss an infrastructure plan to build more roads without considering the carbon impact?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Highways, Infrastructure and Transport

The Norfolk Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan recognises the importance of and supports the transition to Net Zero. There is a dedicated section detailing sustainability projects, and the work to accelerate the roll out of Electric vehicles. There are a number of sustainable projects included such as Weavers Way and the Green Loop, and schemes to promote active travel are also mentioned in the Up-and-Coming projects section of the plan.

Norfolk currently has an infrastructure “deficit” and the projects within the plan are aiming to bring Norfolk up to the level of infrastructure investment seen across the rest of the Country. Much of the emphasis of the NSIDP is around the transport infrastructure needed to support the planned growth across the county and projects will contribute towards active travel and improving public transport provision.

The NSIDP outlines the current stage and next stage of each project, and as each project progresses towards delivery it will be subject to necessary assessments, where environmental matters including carbon emissions will be thoroughly considered. Future iterations of the NSIDP will be reviewed and developed to place greater emphasis on projects that would enable reduction of carbon emissions and sustainability that would facilitate transition to Net Zero.

7.12

Question from Cllr Paul Neale

At the recent meeting of the People & Communities Select Committee we had some non-residential personal care representatives speaking regarding the handling of the charging policy that had discriminated against those that were in their care. Apart from the anguish of this affair, they were very annoyed that the Cabinet Member for Adult Services had been invited but not attended any of their meetings during this long running issue. With the assistance of the Director of Adult Services some Members will now be attending some of their meetings so we can understand first hand issues that affect them. Will the Cabinet Member now also meet with these groups and listen?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention

Thank you for your question. As you will be aware this project is led independently and designed by people who use the services and not the Officers or Members. I have asked Cllr Shelagh Gurney the Deputy Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care to be the lead Member for this very important area of work. She has been working with Cllr Tony White, the Member Champion for Disability and has regularly met with the representatives. You will of course know that she was present at the meeting of the Peoples and Communities Select Committee and explained her role there as well. This teamwork ensures the department has good links into the work and feedback from it. As you would expect the Council remains active in lobbying central Government for more fundamental changes in line with the ambitions of this project.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Paul Neale

The Integrated Care System (ICS) will be one of the largest public spenders in Norfolk and Waveney. If the ICS agrees to improve social value in its procurement and pay the Real Living Wage of £9.90 an hour, there could be a significant boost to Norfolk's economy and living standards. Will the Council commit to working towards that goal of paying a Real Living Wage and ensuring improved conditions?

Response from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Prevention

Thank you for your question. As you are already aware Norfolk County Council is one of many partners in the Integrated Care System (ICS) for Norfolk and Waveney. We will be working closely with all the organisations to help ensure that the aims and objectives of the ICS can best support the people of Norfolk and Waveney. The Council's own strategy "Better Together for Norfolk" sets out our vision and what we want to do to support levelling up for people in Norfolk across all services, partnerships and businesses. The way we procure services is just one part of this. We are committed to ensuring that we pay fair prices for the services that we commission. Our Health Partners are of course part of our review of prices that we collectively pay for care. We make sure that everyone pays at least the National Living Wage. Every 1p rise in the pay rates for Adult Social Care provision costs the Council an extra £200,000. So this years 40p proposed rise in the National Living Wage equates to an additional £8m. The Council fully recognises the value of the social care sector for Norfolk people, its economy and for the wider health system and the need as part of this to ensure that social care staff are appropriately paid.

7.13

Question from Cllr Webb

At full council last week the Leader said there was no need to include a passage in the Better Together for Norfolk seeking a whole system review of the pandemic in Norfolk because it was already happening. Will he tell us who is leading and carrying out the whole system review, what it's terms of reference are, and when it will report?

Response from the Leader and Cabinet Member for Governance and Strategy

Thank you for your question. As Cllr Webb will be aware Government have announced that there will be a National review of the response to the pandemic and all partner organisations will be contributing to this. We would anticipate that this review would have a focus particularly on vulnerable people and how the response has affected them.

	<p>The Local Resilience Forum (NRF) and Public Health teams constantly review how the local system is responding to the Pandemic here in Norfolk to ensure we are taking the right action at the right time.</p>
7.14	<p>Question from Cllr Alison Birmingham At council last week Cllr Peck said he had information on the future letting of County Hall he would share when we reached the motion on the agenda. Unfortunately council ran out of time so will Cllr Peck share that information now including how it was that offers of use of county hall to be the headquarters of other councils were made without prior consultation with the county council?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management Please see response to question 7.3, above.</p>
7.15	<p>Question from Cllr Brenda Jones Has Cllr Peck the number of vehicles that have used the newly constructed car park at County Hall since it opened, and will he tell us what they are?</p> <p>Response from the Cabinet Member for Commercial Services and Asset Management The number of vehicles using the County Hall car park varies each day – we do not record on a daily basis the use of specific parts of the County Hall car-park.</p> <p>However as Cllr Jones is fully aware, the occupation of County Hall is low at the moment, as we continue to keep a number of social distancing measures in place. As we continue to consolidate staff, partners and functions onto County Hall and occupation returns to pre-pandemic levels – there is a need – as was very clearly demonstrated within the planning application to provide sufficient parking, particularly for staff who need access to their vehicle as part of their job.</p>