



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

COUNCIL ADDENDUM

4.45PM, THURSDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2008

COUNCIL CHAMBER, BRIGHTON TOWN HALL

ADDENDUM

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WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed for questions submitted by a member of the public who either lives or works in the area of the authority at each ordinary meeting of the Council.

Every question shall be put and answered without discussion, but the person to whom a question has been put may decline to answer. The person who asked the question may ask one relevant supplementary question, which shall be put and answered without discussion.

The following written questions have been received from members of the public.

(a) Mr Brian Simpson

“How does the council ensure that council officers consider major planning applications with due care and diligence before making their recommendations?”

Reply from Councillor Hyde, Chairman of the Planning Committee.

(b) Mr Peter Martin

"Does the Brighton & Hove City Council not agree that it is vitally important that strategic sea, cliff and coastal views are respected and fully protected for current and future generations?"

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

(c) Mr D J Lothian

“How is it possible that T-Mobile is allowed to construct a commercial development on council land with no prior permission, bearing in mind there is a covenant placed on the land restricting such development, which places a massive visual impairment on the locality, increases the perceived health risks and goes against the wishes of the community, is used as a precedent for future developments by other mobile phone companies, enables that company to extend its developments, and make profits from its illegal construction by sub-letting to other companies, whilst having been served notice to remove the original construction in 2005?”

Reply from Councillor Fallon-Khan, Cabinet Member for Central Services.

(d) Mr Christopher Hawtree

"Could Councillor Smith please tell us what proportion of the books published in a year is available at a discount to this authority's library service?"

Reply from Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation & Tourism.

(e) Mrs Victoria Davies

"What is the current Administration's strategy to help to ensure that good quality and affordable family size housing will be available to meet the future needs of young families in this city?"

Reply from Councillor Caulfield, Cabinet Member for Housing.

(f) Mr Kenneth Kirk

"The local PCT is proposing a city-centre GP-led Clinic. Does the Council agree that the PCT hasn't held a public consultation when it is their duty to conduct one. It should include the following:

- (i) A needs assessment to justify it;
- (ii) Understanding the threat it poses to local doctors;
- (iii) Whether, in the long term, only town-centre GP clinics will be left;
- (iv) Whether as salaried employees in a large company, corporate medics will be driven by the same professional ethics as local independent doctors.

I ask the Council to urge the PCT to conduct such a public consultation exercise."

Reply from Councillor Ken Norman, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health.

(g) Mr Nigel Furness

"Could Councillor Theobald please tell us what effect the drop in prices with the recession has so far had upon the city's recycling strategy and what provision this authority will be making for the changing situation?"

Reply from Councillor Geoffrey Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

(h) Ms Valerie Paynter

"With the ending of the King Alfred redevelopment comes thoughts of related issues such as the ending of the need to put indoor bowling on Hove Park's Scrub Nursery.

In the working case file for refused indoor bowls application BH2006/03698, Phil Purvis, on behalf of the Engineerium's owner, conveyed their interest in having that land for The Engineerium & recently Councillor Melanie Davis has asked the Administration why the Engineerium remained closed.

Is there any reason why that now covenant-free plot, could not be used to help get The Engineerium re-opened?"

Reply from Councillor Ted Kemble, Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Employment & Major Projects.

(i) Mrs R Addison

"Will the Council confirm that no part of the cost of the proposed Community Stadium at Falmer will be borne by the Council?"

Reply from Councillor Ted Kemble, Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Employment & Major Projects.

(j) Mr Jim Grozier

"Councillor Mears, in light of the considerable local opposition to the proposed London Road Tesco by developers St. James' Investments, including large car park and inevitable accompanying air quality issues, would you and your colleagues support a master plan for the area that champions our thriving small businesses and community facilities, rather than a "clone town" development at odds with community interest?"

Reply from Councillor Mary Mears, Leader of the Council.

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which one Member of the Council, nominated by the Mayor, may speak in response. It shall then be moved by the Mayor and voted on without discussion that the deputation be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

Notification of two Deputations has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

(a) Deputation concerning Starbucks on St James's Street

Mr Jon Barrenechea (Spokesperson)

"Starbucks has been refused change of use planning permission, but has been trading for over six months now. As part of a campaign against the Starbucks opening, we have delivered through our local Councillor thousands of signatures to a petition that demands Starbucks close, and the Council enforce its own decision. I wish to ask what actions are being taken in light of this disregard for planning law and the express voice in the community against this coffee shop on our street?"

Councillor Hyde, Chairman of the Planning Committee, will respond.

(b) Deputation concerning Kemp Town Heritage

Mr Paul Phillips (Spokesperson)

Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment will respond.

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The following questions listed on pages 41 – 44 of the agenda have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answer detailed below. The Councillor asking the question may then ask one relevant supplementary question which shall be put and answered without discussion. A second supplementary question may be asked by any other Member of the Council which shall also be put and answered without discussion:

(a) Councillor Morgan

"Can the Cabinet member for Housing say on what dates numbers 68 and 74 Manor Way became vacant, when repair work to return them to use will begin, and how long it will be before new tenants will be able to move in?"

Reply from Councillor Caulfield, Cabinet Member for Housing.

"68 Manor Way is a 3-bedroom house which became empty on 23 December 2007. The previous tenant carried out some DIY alterations to the loft which has rendered the roof structure unstable, and the property unfit for occupation.

74 Manor Way is a 2-bedroom house which became empty on 7 October 2007. The previous tenant undertook unauthorised alterations to amend the internal layout of the property. Walls have been removed in the kitchen and living room to enlarge those areas and the main bedroom has been divided to form an extra bedroom. There have been associated electrical DIY with these alterations, and as a result the mid-floor and staircase have been destabilised.

A programme has now commenced to bring these properties back into use. A structural report on the properties and a subsequent specification and pricing of works is currently being prepared. Following this, work to both these properties will be procured with a view to the properties being brought back into use early in the new financial year."

(b) Councillor Marsh

"Would the Cabinet member for Environment describe what he is doing to promote and ensure that cycle lanes and routes are safe to use throughout the city and especially in my ward?"

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

- "The city council has been awarded Cycling Town status for the second time, which means continued funding for cycle promotion, training and infrastructure over the next three years.

- In terms of safety, officers are working proactively with Sussex Road Traffic Police strategically to tackle cycling safety issues, including where cycle facilities are compromised by other road users. The council is seeking to widen the remit of this partnership to cover the city as a whole.
- **The city council has also trained over 1200 school children this year, through Bikeability cycle training, giving children the experience and the skills they need to cycle responsibly and safely. As of 2009, all cycle training courses delivered in our schools will be to this new national standard.**
- **Officers are developing Travel Plans with both Brighton and Sussex Universities and Southern Water for their students and staff."**

(c) Councillor Alford

"How many of our primary phase schools are now rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted?"

Reply from Councillor Mrs Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People.

"43 of our primary phase schools (76%) are rated as good or outstanding by Ofsted. (Two of these are maintained nursery schools).

13 were judged to be outstanding (23%)

30 were judged to be good (53%)

14 were judged to be satisfactory (24%)

We have no schools in an Ofsted 'category' (0%)"

(d) Councillor Kitcat

"Can Councillor Theobald confirm the timetable for the introduction of communal bins into the city centre and provide details on: The procurement of new bins, including how they will meet accessibility requirements for our older residents; and on preparations for methods to measure and improve recycling rates in bin areas, as agreed at the Environment Committee on 13 September 2007 (recommendation 2.5, as amended)?"

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

"I cannot, at this stage, confirm a timetable, but it is anticipated that a phased roll out will commence in January. I have asked that Ward Councillors are informed of these plans as soon as they have been finalised.

As you know we already have over 200 communal bins in the city and over 90% of residents have found the bins easy to use. For those residents who cannot take their rubbish to a communal bin we offer to collect the refuse from their home.

In February we will be writing to all residents about their new recycling collection days and issuing a calendar of the new dates.

In the early summer we plan to implement a new recycling communications campaign targeting the city centre. This is likely to involve door knocking. Again, Councillors will be informed of the details nearer the time."

(e) Councillor Morgan

"Can the Cabinet Member for Environment reassure the council that there have been no redundancies, and no reduction in crews or rounds, which have contributed to the appalling list of missed refuse collections that residents of my ward and others have had to experience over the past month?"

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

"The reason for the refuse changes as we all know is because the new waste transfer station has opened and our crews no longer need to travel to Beddingham to tip. This saves time and means that we have reduced the number of crews. So, to be clear of the order of this – the waste transfer station was agreed and built and opened – then rounds needed to be changed, then crews were reduced and voluntary redundancies offered.

We have been working very well with the GMB, and agreed a voluntary redundancy package. The officer report published in August that you will have read is a public document which explains all this."

(f) Councillor Morgan

"Will the Cabinet Member for Communities explain what she means when she says that future funding to tackle deprivation and social exclusion will go to "people not places"?"

Reply from Councillor Simson, Cabinet Member for Community Affairs.

"Councillor Morgan is of course referring to the article in the Argus on 21 October reporting on hidden poverty in the city. Using evidence from the Reducing Inequality Review the article presents information that no party can deny – that inequality is spread throughout the city:

- Of the 25,000 people of working-age receiving benefits across the city 16,000 (64%) do not live in the most deprived 20% areas

- Of the 4,000 children living in low income or out of work families across the city nearly 60% do not live in the most deprived areas
- Of the 41,000 adults with no qualification across the city, 75% do not live in the most deprived areas

With this evidence it would be irresponsible of the Administration to continue to maintain a focus solely on place. Otherwise there is a significant risk that some households, families and children will not receive the support they need to improve their opportunities and meet their aspirations – simply for not living in the right area.

Using this evidence I am working hard with all the Directors to look out how we can improve services that support people across the city both in areas where evidence shows that people are experiencing multiple disadvantage but also those in the smaller pockets of deprivation throughout the city.

The future is about ensuring that households and individuals experiencing inequality, wherever they may be in the city, have access to appropriate services and opportunities. This is even more important in the current economic climate.

In this time of financial difficulty this is not an easy task and I urge my colleagues of all parties to work with me and my Cabinet Members on ensuring that services are reaching all those who need them.

This Administration is committed to helping both people and places.”

(g) Councillor Carden

“Would the Cabinet Member for Environment say what this council is doing to stop the abuse of fraudulent blue badge users from parking in disabled bays in Brighton and Hove?”

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

“The city council's Parking Enforcement Team is working with Sussex Police to tackle blue badge abuse in the streets of Brighton & Hove as part of 'Operation Bluebird'.

Operation Bluebird is an ongoing joint exercise, which has resulted in the confiscation of about 40 blue badges so far this year. The council has a good record of prosecuting offenders with fines and costs averaging £600 per offence. Only police officers can legally confiscate a blue badge, which is why we have adopted this joint approach.

Since November 2007 the council's Parking Attendants, now called Civil Enforcement Officers, have used new legal powers to inspect blue badges, and police officers and Civil Enforcement Officers now check blue badges as part of their routine patrols.”

(h) Councillor Meadows

“Could the Cabinet Member for Central Services say what actions the council is undertaking to find a more suitable location for Kingsplan Limited, who have been seeking a more appropriate site?”

Reply from Councillor Fallon-Khan, Cabinet Member for Central Services.

“The city council have provided information on potential sites that could accommodate this business operation together with providing information with regards to the Commercial Property Database that the city council provides in partnership with the local commercial agents.”

(i) Councillor Hamilton

“The Conservative Administration has pledged to keep council tax increases in line with or below inflation, and is working towards a 3.5% increase for 2009-10. If, as now seems possible, inflation drops below 3.5% by the end of the council's financial year, could the Cabinet Member for Finance promise to reduce the council tax increase accordingly?”

Reply from Councillor Young, Cabinet Member for Finance.

“The administration’s budget is being prepared in an unprecedented financial climate which changes daily and is hitting the city and its people hard. Our approach to this budget is based on getting basic services right and improving value for money.

With inflation at 5% in September and 4.2% in October, the council tax rise of 3.5% for next year does meet our pledge. Inflation may go down but it may then also go back up again particularly in such volatile times.

What this administration is absolutely clear about is that the council’s finances are planned sensibly. This means formulating a budget well in advance of the next financial year and taking a view on inflation around this time. The government itself does this for a number of purposes, taking inflation into account in September, which as I have said stood at 5%.

Once we have formulated our budget there is a proper democratic process within the council including the Overview and Scrutiny Commission in February – open and transparent government is something this administration values. Councillors will also be aware that we are consulting with stakeholders about the budget. The administration also needs to give clear political leadership so that officers can prepare in advance for the changes arising from the budget.

For all these reasons it is neither sensible nor practical to keep changing the budget right up to the statutory deadline of 10 March.”

(j) Councillor Simpson

“Could the Cabinet Member for Housing please reconfirm her public commitment to not cut frontline services, especially day centres across the city?”

Reply from Councillor Caulfield, Cabinet Member for Housing.

“As stated at the last Cabinet Member Meeting for Housing, this Administration is absolutely committed to supporting front line services. As a council we have to constantly look at how we use our resources to ensure that we are providing the best possible services for residents in this city and this may mean changes to the way we provide our services but it does not mean cuts.

If you look at the learning disability services we provide you can see that we are actually looking to increase and expand our day services by introducing the day options team while still retaining our day centres.”

(k) Councillor Mitchell

“Following the inspection that was made in East Brighton Park, could the Cabinet Member for Environment tell us what were the results of the inspection and the costs of damage to the cricket pitch?”

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

“Fortunately on this occasion the damage is superficial and out of the cricket season so there are no direct costs. We have, however, reinforced the bunds around the cricket pitch which cost approximately £50.”

(l) Councillor Hawkes

“Could the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People update us on the Council’s progress on the “Adding Up” campaign which agreed to look into ways of easing the impact of school costs on low income families?”

Reply from Councillor Mrs Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People.

“The council is aware of the Citizen’s Advice Bureau campaign which aims to get schools to adopt best practice with regard to supporting needy families with the cost of school trips, uniform, specialist equipment etc. The campaign is also trying to make it compulsory in law for all LA’s to provide uniform grants.

At present the council does not provide funding to support parents with school uniforms or other potential pupil costs. Funding is available in the city to needy families through some charities.

All schools are encouraged to make uniforms as accessible as possible to all families by identifying uniform items that can be purchased cheaply through

supermarkets and their own school shops. Many schools provide second-hand uniform shops. Schools also fulfil the strict criteria related to school trips ensuring that compulsory and essential educational visits are made available to all students regardless of their ability to pay.

I have asked officers to prepare a paper for my Cabinet Member Meeting in the New Year which outlines the potential costs and practicalities of adopting the aims of the CAB Adding Up Campaign.”

(m) Councillor Wells

“Can the Cabinet Member for Central Services tell me what the council is doing to tackle benefit fraud in Brighton & Hove?”

Reply from Councillor Fallon-Khan, Cabinet Member for Central Services.

“The council only administer housing benefit (HB) and council tax benefit (CTB). However, the council’s benefit service acts in conjunction with the Internal Audit section, Job Centre Plus, the Pension Service, the Police and other agencies to tackle fraud across the welfare benefit system and sometimes beyond.

There are two main elements to dealing with benefit fraud; prevention and detection.

In terms of prevention our benefit service adheres to a strict series of guidelines to check the validity of benefit claims, both when a claim is first made and during the lifetime of a claim. Both HB and CTB are means tested benefits so these checks necessarily mean looking closely at proofs of income/capital as well as the validity of tenancies and occupation. This work is done efficiently so genuine claimants are paid promptly. Most customers with fraudulent intent are stopped at this stage without any payment being made.

In addition to the ongoing preventative work the Benefit Service has a team of ten that concentrates solely on fraud detection. As well as investigating tip-offs from the public, staff, Councillors, an increasing proportion of their work follows up on sophisticated computer sweeps that identify potential problems. In conducting their investigations and in conducting visits, surveillances and interviews officers adhere to similar guidelines to the police.

In 2007/2008 the council successfully prosecuted 34 customers and applied 107 other sanctions. These are a very positive set of results that compare well with other councils.”

(n) Councillor Mitchell

"Will Councillor Fallon-Khan please say how much the renting of the 52 concrete blocks placed at the foot of the historic Kemp Town Slopes alongside the existing barrier of wooden posts has cost the council to date?"

Reply from Councillor Fallon-Khan, Cabinet Member for Central Services.

“Concrete barriers were placed alongside the wooden posts to fortify the existing barrier at the Kemp Town slopes to stop illegal incursions that had been previously experienced. The barriers have cost £5,545 to date and this cost includes the installation and the eventual removal of the barriers.

The council was made aware that travellers who were being moved on from other sites in the city might attempt to access the Kemp Town slopes which had been used previously on a number of occasions by travellers. The council took action by laying the barriers which allow for public access to the area whilst also potentially saving on the expenses associated with moving travellers and clearing up the site.

The council is currently investigating a more permanent and appropriately designed solution in the form of iron bollards that match the existing bollards in the area. The estimated cost of this will be in the region of £20,000 to £30,000 and a bid has been made to secure funding for next year.”

(o) Councillor Mitchell

"Will Councillor Geoffrey Theobald please state the cost of the additional crews brought in to remove uncollected refuse since October 6th during the current service disruption."

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

“There is no additional cost on the service budget because it does not include for the reduction in crews in this financial year on the basis that the savings, that have been made thus far, would be needed in the short term to settle in the changes. In the next financial year the savings from these changes (including recycling and communal bins) will be just under £1m per annum.”

(p) Councillor Barnett

“What action is the council and its partners taking to tackle the problem of drugs in our city?”

Reply from Councillor Simson, Cabinet Member for Community Affairs.

“Thank you very much for this question as it is an opportunity to confirm the positive work that is underway across the city led by the council and it’s partners.

Reducing and preventing drug related harm remains both a national and local priority and tackling illicit drugs misuse is one of the priorities identified in the Brighton and Hove Community Safety, Crime Reduction and Drugs Strategy.

As well as the national focus on reducing both the supply of and the demand for illicit drugs, we and our partners have work underway to address the challenges

of protecting communities through robust enforcement; preventing harm to children young people and families; delivering new approaches to drug treatment and social reintegration; and public information campaigns, communication and community engagement.

Whilst all the key actions are detailed in our Strategy, which is extremely comprehensive, I can pick out some areas of focus and challenge for the next three years.

For young people and families there will be a continuing focus on supporting the children of drug misusing parents and carers. We will continue to work with communities through local audits aiming at both assisting local populations to reduce local concerns and providing targeted support.

Partners are reviewing treatment services in order to deliver more effective and economical treatment and we will be sustaining enforcement activity, looking to make further improvements in intelligence and reporting in local communities.

Illicit drug misuse has a direct impact on the lives of those who use drugs, their families and local communities and we all remain committed to tackling its impact.”

(q) Councillor Steedman

“Earlier this year, Councillor Mears signed up to the Eastern Road Area Charter, personally committing the Administration to working with local councillors, the police, the PCT and local residents to meet certain service standards and to deliver a better quality of life for all, through partnership working. Could Councillor Mears confirm that she and her Administration are still fully committed to meeting the commitments, standards and actions agreed in the Charter?”

Reply from Councillor Mears, Leader of the Council.

“Yes.”

(r) Councillor Steedman

“Could Councillor Geoffrey Theobald confirm that a scheme for a new cycle route between the Pier and the Marina will be put in place at the soonest possible opportunity?”

Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.

“Yes, subject to consultation with the public, including the cycle forum and cycle groups.”

NOTICE OF MOTION

JOINT AMENDMENT FROM THE GREEN AND LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUPS**FALMER ACADEMY**

The amendment is as shown by the text struck out and bold italics:

“This Council believes that all children should have access to a first class education regardless of where they happen to live and that good education provides the most effective route out of poverty for some of the most disadvantaged children in our society. ***Despite all the main teaching unions opposing City Academies,*** ~~Nationally and locally,~~ both Conservative and Labour parties ***nationally and locally*** recognise ~~believe~~ that Academies offer an effective means of achieving this. ~~through a vision and ethos based on success and high expectation.~~

In 2008, the number of pupils gaining five A* - C grade GCSEs increased by 2.9% in Academies compared to an improvement of 0.9% in all schools – ***At the same time over 30% of existing academies were recently described as failing schools by Ed Balls due their low GCSE results.***

There is evidence to suggest that whilst some academies are failing, improvements at others are in part as a result of the changing demographics of the young people who attend them. A survey by Price Waterhouse Coopers shows that between 2002 and 2008 the number of children attending City Academy Schools in receipt of free school meals fell from 45 to 29 per cent. The same report comes to the conclusion that “there is insufficient evidence to make a definitive judgement about the academies as a model for school improvement.” And exclusion rates are much higher at City Academies, leaving local authorities to pick up the pieces for their failures.

Funding for any school is to be welcomed and improving the facilities and physical environment of a school is very likely to have a positive impact on education. However there is evidence to suggest that the vast sums of money spent on city academies could be better spent in other ways such as one-to-one tuition or by giving the money directly to the school to decide how to spend it as happened under the successful ‘Excellence in Cities’ scheme.

The principle of schools only being offered this funding through the City Academies route is unfair and it should be equally available to schools who do not wish to become City Academies. City Academies put the entire responsibility of the running of the school in the hands of a board which is appointed by one person who may not be an educational expert whilst taking the school out of authority control. In other authorities there is a higher turnover of staff and Principals and a lower proportion of qualified teachers at academies compared with other state schools. This has worrying implications.

A significant number of parents who live in the Falmer catchment area have expressed concerns about the appropriateness of the specialisms for their child yet they do not have another local school they can send their child to.

~~Furthermore, this Council welcomes the progress that has been made in developing the proposals for a new state of the art Academy at Falmer and congratulates the council officers whose hard work and dedication has allowed the project to progress so well to date.~~

Falmer High is already an improving school, ***having achieved the second highest value added results in the city last year. Despite our reservations, it is hoped that*** ~~but the proposed Academy will bring enormous additional benefits to the local children and families. and has strong support amongst the wider community. The choice of entrepreneurship and sport as specialisms for the Academy has met with an enthusiastic response from businesses, parents and young people.~~

~~Therefore, this Council supports continued close working with the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Aldridge Foundation, governors, parents and the wider community to ensure that the proposed Academy makes a successful and enduring contribution to secondary education in Brighton & Hove."~~

This Council therefore

- ***Expresses its concern about the unfairness of the funding support for the city academy as opposed to maintained schools and requests the Chief Executive to convey its views to the Secretary of State;***
- ***Expresses its best wishes for the future success of the Falmer Academy."***

Proposed by: Cllr Rachel Fryer

Seconded by: Cllr Paul Elgood

NOTICE OF MOTION

AMENDMENT FROM THE LABOUR GROUP

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

Add third point at the end of the NoM shown in bold italics:

"Families surviving on small budgets face many and increasing financial pressures, and while expenditure on rent, heating bills and council tax are fixed, the amount spent on food is in the flexible budget category. The high cost of healthy food is a major obstacle for many parents wanting to provide healthy food for their children.

Healthy school meals can play an important role in tackling health and social disadvantages, but uptake in Brighton and Hove is limited. Uptake can be increased by providing the right eating environment: a 'whole school approach' which sees pupils engage with food throughout their school day, being involved with growing and preparing their food, as well as given the time and space to enjoy eating healthy food together calmly as a social activity. But the cost of school meals can also be a barrier to uptake. Even where young people are eligible for Free School Meals, they don't always take this up as there can be a stigma attached to this entitlement.

This council notes that:

- A 3 year experiment by Hull Council which saw free school meals provided to all primary school children led to Heads and teachers reporting that children were 'more relaxed and better behaved', and 30 per cent of parents said they were trying healthier food at home as a result of the trial.
- The Child Poverty Action Group has called for universal free school meals.
- The Government recently announced a two-year pilot programme which will see free school meals given to all pupils aged four to 11 in two areas over two years, to measure the impact of healthy eating on health, behavior and academic results.

This council notes with concern that:

- 13.5 per cent of children in Brighton & Hove are already obese in the year they start school.
- Less than a third of children aged 10 – 15 in the city eat five or more portions of fruit or vegetables a day.
- A third of Brighton & Hove children are obese by year 6.

- Take up of school meals is around 43 per cent in primary schools and around 34 per cent in secondary schools in Brighton & Hove. More than a third of those entitled to them do not take-up free school meals at primary school, and around half of those entitled to them do not take-up free school meals at secondary school.

This council therefore requests that the Chief Executive writes to the Secretary of State requesting:

1. Funding for pilot schemes similar to that in Hull which will provide all young people at both primary and secondary schools with free school meals.
2. In the event of successful trials, the rollout of a nationally-funded free school meal programme for all primary and secondary students across the country.”

And also:

This council expresses its support for local schools, where they can, to take advantage of European and National programmes that fund free fruit and vegetables in schools and continue to work with all schools to promote healthy lifestyles and healthy eating.”

Proposed by: Cllr Anne Meadows

Seconded by Cllr Pat Hawkes

NOTICE OF MOTION

AMENDMENT FROM THE CONSERVATIVE GROUP

FREE SCHOOL MEALS

“Families surviving on small budgets face many and increasing financial pressures, and while expenditure on rent, heating bills and council tax are fixed, the amount spent on food is in the flexible budget category. The high cost of healthy food is a major obstacle for many parents wanting to provide healthy food for their children.

Healthy school meals can play an important role in tackling health and social disadvantages, but uptake in Brighton and Hove is limited, **as it is nationally**. Uptake can be increased by providing the right eating environment: a 'whole school approach' which sees pupils engage with food throughout their school day, being involved with growing and preparing their food, as well as given the time and space to enjoy eating healthy food together calmly as a social activity. But the cost of school meals can also be a barrier to uptake. Even where young people are eligible for Free School Meals, they don't always take this up as there can be a stigma attached to this entitlement.

This council notes that:

- A 3 year experiment by Hull Council which saw free school meals provided to all primary school children led to Heads and teachers reporting that children were 'more relaxed and better behaved', and 30 per cent of parents said they were trying healthier food at home as a result of the trial.
- The Child Poverty Action Group has called for ~~universal free school meals~~ **entitlement to free school meals to be extended to all children who live in poverty.**
- The Government recently announced a two-year pilot programme which will see free school meals given to all pupils aged four to 11 in two areas over two years, to measure the impact of ~~healthy eating~~ **school meals** on health, behavior and academic results. **However this council notes that Government funding will only cover half of the costs of running the pilots, leaving local authorities and local Primary Care Trusts to make up the shortfall (estimated to be around £5m each).**
- **All schools in Brighton & Hove have achieved the Government's healthy schools status.**

This council **also** notes ~~with concern~~ that:

- **The proportion of children in Brighton & Hove who are obese or overweight in the year they start school (13.5%) is significantly lower**

than other local authorities in South East England. 13.5 per cent of children in Brighton & Hove are already obese in the year they start school.

- Less than a third of children aged 10 – 15 in the city eat five or more portions of fruit or vegetables a day.
- **The proportion of children in Brighton & Hove who are obese or overweight by year 6 is lower than the average for local authorities in South East England. A third of Brighton & Hove children are obese by year 6.**
- Take up of school meals is around 43 per cent in primary schools and around 34 per cent in secondary schools in Brighton & Hove. More than a third of those entitled to them do not take-up free school meals at primary school, and around half of those entitled to them do not take-up free school meals at secondary school.

This council therefore **states its support to: requests that the** Chief Executive ~~writes to the Secretary of State requesting:~~

~~1. Funding for pilot schemes similar to that in Hull which will provide all young people at both primary and secondary schools with free school meals.~~

~~2. In the event of successful trials, the rollout of a nationally funded free school meal programme for all primary and secondary students across the country."~~

- **Continue to promote the uptake of free school meals amongst those who are eligible**
- **Continue to promote and publicise the school meals service and to work with the contractor, and schools not covered by the contract, to improve the quality and choice on offer.**
- **Monitor the outcomes of the two-year Government pilot to establish whether eating school meals has any substantial impact on health, behaviour and academic results of school children.**

Proposed by: Cllr. Vanessa Brown

Seconded by: Cllr. Trevor Alford

NOTICE OF MOTION

AMENDMENT FROM THE GREEN GROUP

CREDIT CRUCNH

Amend the motion by striking out text and inserting new text as shown in bold italics:

“This Council:

Recognises that the world economy is entering a period of significant downturn and Britain, and more particularly Brighton & Hove, is likely to feel the effects of the difficult financial times. Independent forecasts from the IMF and European Commission predict that Britain’s economy is very poorly positioned to weather the economic storm, despite Government claims to the contrary.

Believes that local business and jobs are vital to the continued prosperity of Brighton & Hove and the Council has a duty to support the local economy ***protect and enhance the city’s social, environmental and economic well being***. This Council is therefore delighted to be taking prompt action by offering local businesses a ‘recession relief’ package which includes a range of measures designed to help hundreds of businesses with cash flow as the credit crunch tightens. These measures have been widely welcomed.

Recognises the importance of continued publicity of help available to city businesses from local and central government.

Welcomes the agreement by utility companies to match the council’s decision to cease all major city centre roadworks from 5 December until the end of the Christmas period; this will have a positive impact on local businesses as access the city centre will be improved for Christmas shoppers.

Notes with concern that one of the most serious consequences of the credit crunch has been its damaging impact on the housing market and homeowners. Some people in Brighton & Hove may struggle to make mortgage repayments and risk being evicted from their own homes, which would create a demand on many of the council’s services, particularly the homelessness services.

Acknowledges and welcomes the investigatory work already being undertaken by the Council’s Administration to consider the feasibility of a local scheme to help homeowners deal with the effects of the serious economic downturn.

Despite having taken a number of steps to support the economy of Brighton & Hove, the Council continues to investigate what more it can do. ***In particular this Council will welcome consideration of development initiatives that create employment and increase social capacity while seeking to reduce the negative effects of the economic downturn, rising energy costs and rising carbon dioxide emissions. In consideration of such initiatives the Council’s possible role as an enabler***

COUNCIL

4 December 2008

Agenda Item 40(e)

Brighton & Hove City Council

should be remembered while it is recognised ~~but recognises~~ that its powers are limited by the Government.

Therefore, this Council resolves to instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to ask her to give councils more discretion to set business rates locally, as suggested by the Local Government Association.”

Proposed by: Cllr Keith Taylor

Seconded by: Cllr Amy Kennedy

NOTICE OF MOTION

AMENDMENT FROM THE LABOUR GROUP

CREDIT CRUNCH

To remove the last sentence of the first paragraph and to replace the last paragraph with a new recommendation as shown with text struck out and bold italics:

“This Council:

Recognises that the world economy is entering a period of significant downturn and Britain, and more particularly Brighton & Hove, is likely to feel the effects of the difficult financial times. ~~Independent forecasts from the IMF and European Commission predict that Britain's economy is very poorly positioned to weather the economic storm, despite Government claims to the contrary.~~

Believes that local business and jobs are vital to the continued prosperity of Brighton & Hove and the Council has a duty to support the local economy. This Council is therefore delighted to be taking prompt action by offering local businesses a ‘recession relief’ package which includes a range of measures designed to help hundreds of businesses with cash flow as the credit crunch tightens. These measures have been widely welcomed.

Recognises the importance of continued publicity of help available to city businesses from local and central government.

Welcomes the agreement by utility companies to match the council's decision to cease all major city centre roadworks from 5 December until the end of the Christmas period; this will have a positive impact on local businesses as access the city centre will be improved for Christmas shoppers.

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Acknowledges and welcomes the investigatory work already being undertaken by the Council's Administration to consider the feasibility of a local scheme to help homeowners deal with the effects of the serious economic downturn.

Despite having taken a number of steps to support the economy of Brighton & Hove, the Council continues to investigate what more it can do, but recognises that its powers are limited by the Government.

~~Therefore, this Council resolves to instruct the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to ask her to give councils more discretion to set business rates locally, as suggested by the Local Government Association.”~~

“That this council also welcomes the support package that has been made available to local businesses, by the Chancellor and notes its particular importance for small and new businesses in Brighton and Hove, which includes;

- ***Temporary reduction in VAT by 2.5% to 15%, from 1st Dec to 31st Dec 09.***
- ***Create a £1bn Small Business Guarantee Facility to enable new Government-supported lending by banks for sums between £1,000 and £1m, at cheaper rates and for longer periods.***
- ***Create a £1bn Export Credit Guarantee scheme with the banks to support smaller exporters with short-term working capital and trade finance.***
- ***Provide more generous temporary tax relief for businesses suffering losses – with up to £50,000 of new losses set against taxable profits from the last three years.***
- ***Introduce a new HMRC Business Payment Support service to help with temporary difficulty in paying bills. Paying VAT, corporation tax, income tax and NICs on a timetable businesses can afford.***
- ***Create a transition fund, brokered by (Regional Development Agency) to secure private sector funding for viable businesses with short-term funding issues. In addition, a national £50m capital fund targeted on highly leveraged but viable small businesses.***
- ***Exempt some properties from business rates. From 09-10 – empty commercial properties with a rateable value below £15,000 will be exempt from business rates, this covers 70% of all empty properties.***
- ***£25 million investment fund for women-led businesses.”***

Proposed by Cllr Les Hamilton

Seconded by Cllr Gill Mitchell

NOTICE OF MOTION

AMENDMENT FROM THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP

FUEL POVERTY

Insert a final bullet point as shown in bold italics:

“This Council notes with concern that in 2008, millions of people still struggle to heat their homes properly because of their inability to pay their fuel bills; which are on average more than £1000 annually. The Government’s own figures estimate that the number of ‘fuel poor’ households in England is now higher than at any time recorded since Labour came to power.

In 2000, the Government introduced a Fuel Poverty Strategy and the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act and committed itself to ending the fuel poverty of vulnerable people by 2010, and to end fuel poverty for everyone by 2016. However since 2004, the number of English households in fuel poverty is estimated to have risen almost three-fold, when it stood at 1.2 million. Even the Government now accepts that it will fail to meet its legal duty to reduce fuel poverty in the time frame that it created.

This Council notes with concern that the package the Government announced in September was inadequate and is likely to result in energy companies passing on £910 million in extra charges to consumers.

This Council recognises that local authorities are doing what they can to protect people from fuel poverty. Last month, Brighton & Hove City Council began a programme of works to establish how it could cut the fuel bills of council tenants and increase the energy efficiency of their homes.

However local authorities can only do so much, therefore this Council calls on the Government to fulfil its responsibilities to help the residents of Brighton & Hove who are struggling to pay their energy bills and as a result face a bleak, cold winter.

This Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change to ask him to:

- Take more effective practical steps to help homeowners reduce their energy bills, ensuring additional costs are not passed on to consumers.
- Use OfGem’s powers more effectively to ensure energy companies give customers a better deal.

- ***Take urgent steps with the Chancellor of the Exchequer to extend the Winter Fuel Payment to severely disabled people who are in receipt of the Disability Living Allowance.***

Proposed by: Cllr Paul Elgood

Seconded by: Cllr David Watkins

NOTICE OF MOTION

AMENDMENT FROM THE LABOUR GROUP

FUEL POVERTY

Remove paragraph three and add the recommendation to the end of the NoM as shown with text struck out and bold italics:

“This Council notes with concern that in 2008, millions of people still struggle to heat their homes properly because of their inability to pay their fuel bills; which are on average more than £1000 annually. The Government’s own figures estimate that the number of ‘fuel poor’ households in England is now higher than at any time recorded since Labour came to power.

In 2000, the Government introduced a Fuel Poverty Strategy and the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act and committed itself to ending the fuel poverty of vulnerable people by 2010, and to end fuel poverty for everyone by 2016. However since 2004, the number of English households in fuel poverty is estimated to have risen almost three-fold, when it stood at 1.2 million. Even the Government now accepts that it will fail to meet its legal duty to reduce fuel poverty in the time frame that it created.

~~This Council notes with concern that the package the Government announced in September was inadequate and is likely to result in energy companies passing on £910 million in extra charges to consumers.~~

This Council recognises that local authorities are doing what they can to protect people from fuel poverty. Last month, Brighton & Hove City Council began a programme of works to establish how it could cut the fuel bills of council tenants and increase the energy efficiency of their homes.

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This Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change to ask him to:

- Take more effective practical steps to help homeowners reduce their energy bills, ensuring additional costs are not passed on to consumers.
- Use OfGem’s powers more effectively to ensure energy companies give customers a better deal.

This council welcomes government, charity and energy provider services that offer information and help to lower fuel costs as well as providing practical advice for people that are finding it difficult to pay bills. This council also notes the importance of getting timely information to residents when fighting fuel poverty and encourages greater awareness of the following points;

- *The Winter Fuel Allowance with over 60's households receiving £250 and the over 80's getting £400, paid directly to them.*
- *Those that own or rent their homes privately and receive benefits can apply for grants of up to £2,700 under the government's Warm Front scheme.*
- *The Citizens Advice Bureau, based in Hove have trained debt advisers to help people find the best solutions for getting out of debt and to pay the bills.*
- *Most energy suppliers now have a charitable trust or fund to help low income customers who are struggling with their bills. These grants could be used to write off existing debt or to help pay off incoming bills.*
- *Many energy suppliers have special, cheaper social tariffs available for lower income households*
- *The provision of an extra winter payment in January for pensioners of £60 and £120 for couples, benefiting over 12 million pensioners."*

Proposed by: Cllr Christine Simpson

Seconded by: Cllr Les Hamilton

NOTICE OF MOTION

AMENDMENT FROM THE GREEN GROUP

FUEL POVERTY

Insert an additional request and two points at the end of the motion as shown in bold italics:

“This Council notes with concern that in 2008, millions of people still struggle to heat their homes properly because of their inability to pay their fuel bills; which are on average more than £1000 annually. The Government’s own figures estimate that the number of ‘fuel poor’ households in England is now higher than at any time recorded since Labour came to power.

In 2000, the Government introduced a Fuel Poverty Strategy and the Warm Homes and Energy Conservation Act and committed itself to ending the fuel poverty of vulnerable people by 2010, and to end fuel poverty for everyone by 2016. However since 2004, the number of English households in fuel poverty is estimated to have risen almost three-fold, when it stood at 1.2 million. Even the Government now accepts that it will fail to meet its legal duty to reduce fuel poverty in the time frame that it created.

This Council notes with concern that the package the Government announced in September was inadequate and is likely to result in energy companies passing on £910 million in extra charges to consumers.

This Council recognises that local authorities are doing what they can to protect people from fuel poverty. Last month, Brighton & Hove City Council began a programme of works to establish how it could cut the fuel bills of council tenants and increase the energy efficiency of their homes.

However local authorities can only do so much, therefore this Council calls on the Government to fulfil its responsibilities to help the residents of Brighton & Hove who are struggling to pay their energy bills and as a result face a bleak, cold winter.

This Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change to ask him to:

- Take more effective practical steps to help homeowners reduce their energy bills, ensuring additional costs are not passed on to consumers.
- Use OfGem’s powers more effectively to ensure energy companies give customers a better deal.”

Furthermore, it calls on the city’s three MPs to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer asking him to:

- 1. Ring fence the at least £700 million extra he has collected this year in VAT from the increase in domestic energy bills and use the money in***

this and subsequent years for energy improvements to the homes of low income families, including pensioners.

- 2. Impose a windfall tax on the power generators. Price rises apart, UK power generators will reap a £9bn windfall from the EU Emissions Trading scheme, according to Ofgem, which suggests the UK Government tap into this pool of money to help relieve poorer households. Put together the earmarking of the VAT income and the windfall tax will cut energy bills, significantly lower energy use, reduce the national carbon footprint and create thousands of jobs.***

Proposed by: Cllr Bill Randall

Seconded by: Cllr Amy Kennedy

NOTICE OF MOTION

AMENDMENT FROM THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT GROUP**GOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE OF COMMUNICATIONS – THE DATA BASE STATE**

Insert a final bullet point as shown in bold italics:

“This Council notes with grave concern the Home Secretary’s recent announcement of an Interception Modernisation Programme which will establish a central database of the electronic communications data records of all individuals in Britain. The proposals are as a result of the Government’s adoption into UK law of the EU Data Retention Directive 2006, which requires the introduction of such a scheme for internet communications by 1st April 2009. A public consultation on the proposals is due to take place in early 2009.

Whilst this Council recognises the increasingly complex nature of investigating the terrorist threat, it believes that a database of this sort would represent a serious and unnecessary infringement of the ancient and hard-fought civil liberties of the people of Brighton & Hove and the rest of the country.

This Council agrees with the Information Commissioner who stated recently that such proposals would be “a step too far for the British way of life”. Indeed, such an approach is counter-productive and hands a moral victory to the terrorists, and their apologists, who oppose the very democratic principles upon which our liberal society is founded.

This Council expresses concern with the proposals on the following grounds:

- Cost – Government IT schemes are notoriously expensive. Initial estimates put the potential costs of the Interception Modernisation Programme at up to £12 billion.
- Data security – The Government has an abysmal record of protecting personal information and sensitive data. Indeed, the Prime Minister recently admitted that “we cannot promise that every single item of information will always be safe”.
- Efficacy – a recent report from the U.S. National Academies concluded that such a surveillance system would be inefficient, would create huge numbers of false leads and would be highly unlikely to detect or pre-empt terrorist attacks.
- Surveillance overload – this is another in a long line of intrusive surveillance measures introduced or proposed by this government such as ID cards, the National DNA Database (which stores the DNA of innocent people) and the Contact Point child database.

Therefore, this Council instructs the Chief Executive:

- To write to the Local Government Association and the Office of the Information Commissioner, requesting that they join the council in conveying to the

Government their concern about the potential adverse impact on civil liberties of establishing a central electronic database.

- ***To express the views set out in this motion as part of the Home Office's consultation on the secondary legislation for ID Cards, which amongst other issues is seeking comment on the information held on the National Identity Register and the agencies required to share information held on citizens.***

Proposed by: Cllr Paul Elgood

Seconded by: Cllr David Watkins

NOTICE OF MOTION

AMENDMENT FROM THE GREEN GROUPGOVERNMENT SURVEILLANCE OF COMMUNICATIONS – THE DATA BASE
STATE

Insert after the current second paragraph:

Notes that Home Office ministers describe the Intercept Modernisation Programme as a 'cross-government programme' which will lead to unprecedented data sharing of our information in tax records, educational achievements, National Identity cards, the National Vehicle Tracking Database, CORE (the proposed central electronic electoral roll system as well as our personal internet use).

Insert after the current fourth paragraph:

This Council resolves to:

Take no part in any pilot scheme or feasibility work in relation to the introduction of the Interception Modernisation Programme, National Identity Cards or the CORE central electoral roll system.

Insert after the final bullet point:

To write to the Home Secretary expressing the views resolved in this motion and asking her to reconsider her decision to push forward with such a wide array of hugely expensive programmes which threaten our civil liberties.

Proposed by: Cllr Jason Kitcat

Seconded by: Cllr Bill Randall

