



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

HOUSING & NEW HOMES COMMITTEE ADDENDUM

4.00PM, WEDNESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2018

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 at each ordinary meeting for questions submitted by members of the public who either live or work in the area of the authority.

i) The following written question has been received from Barry Hughes.

The recommendations of the report indicate a minimum of £20m per annum being spent on procurement from private contractors with a further £1.8m of the “in-house” budget being used to pay for sub-contractors.

- Could the Committee explain how this justifies any claim that the Future Delivery of Housing Repairs, Planned Maintenance and Capital Works is to be brought “in-house”

ii) The following question has been received from David Thomas

Paragraph 1.7 states that “Feedback from numerous stakeholders has enabled the council’s programme team to develop a set of clear strategic objectives for the future delivery of the services” including; “Increased transparency, control and accountability around cost, programme information and quality assurance”

- Could the Committee please explain how increased transparency and accountability is to be achieved? This is particularly important given the press statements issued around the report and the refusal of the Chairperson to receive a deputation on this issue at the last Committee meeting.

iii) The following written question has been received from Daniel Harris.

Paragraph 2.4 recommends approving “the procurement of at least one contract for the provision of planned maintenance and improvement programmes to council housing stock with a term of five years with the option to extend for up to a further two years”

Paragraph 2.5 recommends approving “the procurement of a multi- contractor framework agreement for major capital projects with a term of four years”

- Other than the time period of 5/7 or 4 years in what way can this recommendation be seen as a break with shoddy, over-priced, and sometimes unnecessary work under the present contract and as the issue of potential fraud and lessons from actual fraud are not referred to in the report how to the Committee intend to deal with this problem?

iv) The following written question has been received from David Croydon.

Paragraph 2.6 “Notes that the specialist works will continue to be delivered through individual contracts, with reports coming back to committee for authority to procure and award such contracts if required in accordance with the council’s Constitution”

- As this process has been shown to be at best controversial and at worst against the interests of residents and an unnecessary burden on Council finances why have lessons learnt not been applied? Even at the current time residents are expressing deep concern over the “Fire Alarm System Servicing, Maintenance, Design, and Installation” long term contract.

v) The following written question has been received from Maria Garrett-Gotch.

Paragraph 3.49 states that the “in-house” contract will require 58 workers and 34 managers

- Does the Committee believe this to be a realistic ratio of workers to managers or is it one of the arguments to be used against even a small percentage of the work/budget for the Delivery of Housing Repairs, Planned Maintenance and Capital Works being withdrawn from private companies?

vi) The following written question has been received from John Hadman

Paragraph 4.3 of the ‘towers & hamlins’ report provides an option of a “Wholly-Owned Subsidiary (and Managed Service)” and claims that “This is an innovative option where employees are engaged by BHCC but treated as part of contractor’s supply-chain and managed by the contractor” and of the 268 pages that comprise the report as a whole at least 200 are provided by “consultants” from the private sector

- Does the Committee regard a “wholly-owned subsidiary” as just another way of forcing through privatisation and does the Committee accept the domination of “consultants” as undue influence by those who profit from the proposals they support?

vii) The following written question has been received from Jim Deans.

We are facing a housing crisis in the city yet we see many properties, council owned lying empty for many months. How many council homes are "empty"...whether it is waiting for refurbishment or otherwise? These properties are under the control and timescale of Mears and the current contract with them.... How many are more than 3 months empty? What has been the turn round times in empty properties?