



**Brighton & Hove  
City Council**

# **COUNCIL ADDENDUM 3**

**4.30PM, THURSDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2024**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**



# ADDENDUM

**ITEM**

**Page**

**75 MINUTES**

**5 - 88**



# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Council

## Agenda Item 75

**Subject:** Minutes of previous council meetings

**Date of meeting:** 1 February 2024

**Report of:** Executive Director Governance People & Resources

**Contact Officer:** Anthony Soyinka  
Email: [anthony.soyinka@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:anthony.soyinka@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

**Ward(s) affected:** All

### 1. Action required of Council:

To receive and approve the minutes of the Council meeting(s) held on 19 October 2023 and 14 December 2023.

### 2. Recommendations

#### That Council:

- 2.1 Approves as a correct record the minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 October 2023.
- 2.2 Approves as a correct record the minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 December 2023.



**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL**

**4.30pm 19 OCTOBER 2023**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors O'Quinn (Chair), Bagaeen, Davis, Fishleigh, Grimshaw, Hamilton, Meadows, McNair, Robins, Sankey, Shanks, C Theobald, West, Wilkinson, Williams, Alexander, Allen, Asaduzzaman, Baghoth, Burden, Cattell, Czolak, Daniel, Earthey, Gajjar, Galvin, Goddard, Goldsmith, Helliwell, Hewitt, Hill, Hogan, Loughran, Lyons, McGregor, McLeay, Miller, Mistry, Muten, Nann, Oliveira, Pickett, Pumm, Robinson, Rowkins, Sheard, Stevens and Taylor

**PART ONE**

**34 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 34.1 Councillor Oliveira declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in Item 50, a notice of motion concerning Women's Football in the City as Manager of Whitehawk Football Club.
- 34.2 Councillor Sankey declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in Item 49/51, a notice of motion concerning the Academisation of Schools in Benfield and Hangleton as her husband is a teacher at Benfield.
- 34.3 Councillor Willams declared a personal but not prejudicial interest in Item 52, a notice of motion concerning the UCU strikers as a UCU member and lecturer at the University of Brighton.
- 34.4 No other declarations of interests in matters appearing on the agenda were made.

**35 MINUTES**

- 35.1 The minutes of the Special Council Meeting held 20 July 2023 and the Council Meeting held on 20 July 2023 were approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings.

**36 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS.**

- 36.1 The Mayor gave the following communications:

“Dear councillors, ladies and gentlemen,

I'm sure I speak for all of us when I say how shocking the news has been from the Middle East in the last 12 days. I don't believe any of us expected such a devastating and horrifying attack on innocent civilians at a music festival and in kibbutzim in Israel and the major loss of life that ensued. The death and injury of so many innocent civilians in Palestine in the past few days has also caused widespread outrage and sympathy. This conflict has now gone on for many, many decades, far too long, and we pray that a long-term solution that brings peace can be brokered before countless others lose their lives.

I would thus like to propose a 2 minute silence in recognition of all the innocents who have lost their lives in the past 12 days and those who have been taken hostage or are deeply affected by the continuing hostilities. Please join me in standing for a 2 min silence now

I have now been Mayor for 4 and a half months and it has been a complete whirlwind of events, meetings and activities. I have found it a fascinating experience but am grateful that I still have enough stamina to deal with such a demanding role.

One of the great joys I have experienced in the past few months has been meeting so many amazing young people - from the students receiving their degrees in the awards ceremonies for Sussex and Brighton University – to seeing cadets having an exciting time on training camp learning to climb a training wall or set up a complex communications system - to speaking to 5-8 year olds at Assembly about what the Mayor does and answering questions from them – mainly about how heavy the Mayor's chains are. It is such a privilege to see these young people moving forward in life, developing their confidence, their teamwork, their curiosity about life and appreciation of the world around them. It is totally inspiring and energising. I also had the privilege of welcoming a Japanese deputation of students, teachers and local officials to the Mayor's Parlour and giving them a brief history of how democracy developed in Britain in the highly relevant setting of Brighton Council Chamber. What interesting and polite young people and with a fascinating range of hand signals that they delighted in but were a complete mystery to me!

Another highlight was the trip to Dieppe to commemorate the 81<sup>st</sup> year since the Anglo-Canadian Raid. I was accompanied on the visit by Cllr Amanda Grimshaw who is our Armed Forces Champion. I couldn't have asked for a better person to take on the trip as she is so knowledgeable about this area of history. The trip was made up of a series of deeply moving commemorative events both in and just outside Dieppe. The most emotional part for me was when a relative of a Canadian soldier who had lost his life in the raid read out a letter that the young man had written to his family - to be read in the event of his death. This really brought home the great sacrifices that were made in the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, and all other wars. I was also struck by the changes in Dieppe since I had last been many years ago. Such a lively, bustling town now and I very much recommend a visit.

There is much to do in the next couple of months and I look forward to the Remembrance events where we remember the fallen which are such an important part of our national life. The city of Brighton and Hove is very supportive of Remembrance



events and there are always good turnouts to the parades, blessings, and services in the various parts of the city – including Portslade.

I have many carol services to attend to in the coming weeks and Mayoral receptions for Veterans, local communities, and care centres. The Santa Bus should be a fun experience although I am not offering to put on a Santa suit – I leave that to Councillor Robins.

We have a Full Council in December so hopefully we can bring some Xmas cheer to it.”

### **37 TO RECEIVE PETITIONS AND E-PETITIONS.**

- 37.1 The Mayor stated that she had been notified of 2 petitions to be presented and invited the submission of petitions from councillors and members of the public. She reminded the Council that petitions would be referred to the appropriate decision-making body without debate and the person presenting the petition would be invited to attend the meeting to which the petition was referred.
- 37.2 Christina Moore presented a petition signed by 804 residents concerning the cost of resident's parking permits.
- 37.3 The Mayor thanked the lead petitioner and stated that the petition would be referred to the Transport and Sustainability Committee for consideration.
- 37.4 Paul Griffiths presented a petition signed by 54 residents, concerning Car Parking at Clarendon Place.
- 37.5 The Mayor thanked the lead petitioners for presenting their petitions and confirmed that they would be referred to the Transport and Sustainability Committee for consideration.

### **38 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

- 38.1 The Mayor reported that 7 written questions had been received from members of the public and invited Lesley Hammond on behalf of Julia Basnett to come forward and address the council.
- 38.2 Julia Basnett asked the following question; “Will Council review how it interprets rules on public questions, deputations and petitions? For some years, I've been aware of public attempts to assert scrutiny arbitrarily blocked by council officials and/or leaders. There's a good reason why the efficient running of committees requires a defence against persistent submissions on exact same issues when satisfactory answers were already given. Rejecting a submission because a Chair feels, with democratic principles in mind, it will cause undue irritation, worry or clearly damage the good reputation of someone can also be reasonable. However, some feel rejections are too often unreasonable and essentially undemocratic.”
- 38.3 Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council replied; “Thank you for your question, Ms Basnett. We took office as an administration on the 25th May following the local elections on 4th May. I cannot therefore say what happened or did not happen in the past. I can however give you our administration's commitment to openness,

transparency and active public engagement. We have rules in our constitution that are designed to enable Members of the public to submit questions, petition and deputations. We also have the Mayor, the Chief Executive and the Monitoring Officer who oversee the application of the rules in an objective and impartial way. My understanding is that we have more public engagement items than most comparable authorities. But, whatever the position, as an administration, we definitely value the contributions from the public and will not do anything to stifle it. I would also like to highlight that public engagement and scrutiny is not limited to formal council and committee meetings. In fact, most members of the public are not necessarily aware of or feel inclined to use them. One of the main criticisms we heard from residents over the course of the local election campaign was the previous Green Administration's refusal to listen to residents and consult properly on their ideas. We are therefore committed to looking at ways of enhancing public involvement and engagement. Next month"

- 38.4 Lesley Hammond asked the following supplementary question on behalf of Julia Basnett; "Councillors may have noticed that the initial publication of questions for the July 20<sup>th</sup> full council meeting included a question which was subsequently removed by the mayor or the chief executive, supposedly on the grounds of individual privacy. This question did not seek any detail of any individual and no answer to that question could have identified individual. The reason given for the removal of that question would therefore appear to be false. Many of us assume that Labour will want to do better than the Green administration on child protection and safeguarding; I've been informed of multiple legitimate and very serious concerns in the community about the promotion of gender identity theory by this council and the teaching of it in our schools. Following concerns around social transitions of children by teachers and council staff and even the medical transition of children, either this council do not know of these concerns or alternatively they do know of these concerns but don't want us to know of them. Which is it?"
- 38.5 Councillor Sankey replied; "I don't recognise any of the concerns that the questioner has put to me."
- 38.6 The Mayor thanked Lesley Hammond for their question and invited Theresa Mackey to come forward and address the council.
- 38.7 Theresa Mackey asked a question; "This is a short question, but one which probably needs a long answer, and I'm putting this question on behalf of the older people's council. Bella Sankey recently stated that the Council is reviewing parking 'in the round'. Does this include the issue of digital exclusion that particularly, but not exclusively, affects older residents, and if so, in what ways is it going to be reviewed?"
- 38.9 Councillor Muten replied; "Thank you, Ms Mackey, for bringing this question to council today. A wider review of how the city charges for parking is currently taking place. The initial results will be due to be presented to the Transport and Sustainability committee in December alongside a scope on the way forward. This parking review will include payment methods and is expected to consider ways to simplify the range of different parking tariffs we presently have across our city. We will consider your points within that review."

- 38.10 The Mayor thanked Theresa Mackey for her question and invited Kay Lyons to come forward and address the council.
- 38.11 Kay Lyons asked a question; “I note the committee decision to increase time for public questions from 15 to 30 minutes and to reduce the number of “notices of motion” at full council meetings. I speak for many citizens when I say that 30 minutes is still insufficient. Nor should there ever be time restrictions on what our elected representatives need to say. In the light of
- 38.12 Cllr Sankey’s commitment to widen public participation will she agree to either monthly full council meetings or a new, radical, and additional forum for direct democratic engagement? A quarterly Citizens Council would facilitate nuanced exchanges and better outcomes.”
- 38.13 Councillor Sankey replied; “Thank you Kay Lyons for your question. Starting at the beginning, the proposed changes that we’re bringing today will enhance and not restrict the time allowed for public questions. Most local authorities provide a set time for public questions and we’re no exception in Brighton and Hove. And it’s with no disrespect at all to my elected representative colleagues, who are always wise and learned, but I believe that there must be some time restrictions on what we say. If anything the time we allocate, with the extension that we’re proposing today, is more generous than in other local authorities. Under the new rules, every question is guaranteed a response either orally during the allocated time or in writing. We are therefore effectively undertaking to respond to each and every question submitted. No question will be left unanswered. It is simply that the questions not dealt with during the 30 minutes time will receive a written response. This is a significant improvement on what we had under any of the previous administrations. On the question of Notices of Motion I would like to make it clear that Members are not limited to submitting Notices of Motion to full Council. They can submit NOMs to any committee or sub-committee of the Council as well. In fact any Notices of Motion that require a substantive action are referred to the relevant committee for a decision with an officer report. Another facility available to Members is the ability to write a letter to any committee of the Council proposing a substantive action. If within the remit of the Committee, they are entitled to have it included on the agenda, and to address the committee before a decision is made. These opportunities, taken together, provide members ample opportunity, in my view, to submit Notices of Motion to Council or Committees as well as Member letters. We expect we will still have more Notices of Motion and Member letters than comparable authorities. In terms of widening participation, which you referenced, tomorrow we will be launching a new programme called Reimagine Brighton and Hove, which will set up regular forums for direct democratic engagement, similar to the type you foresee with your question. I have also commenced Leader’s Surgeries, giving resident across the City the opportunity to meet one to one with me so I can hear their views, ideas and recommendations. I hope this answers your question.”
- 38.14 Kay Lyons asked a supplementary question which was ruled out of order as not being relevant to the original question.
- 38.15 Councillor Sankey replied; “I would like to put on the record that I utterly refute everything that that questioner has just put to us as a council. We do not act illegally or unlawfully, we believe in protecting children in our schools including our precious trans

children in this city. I think the level of aggression that was just exhibited, reveals the agenda that underlines all of these protests.”

- 38.16 The Mayor invited Nigel Furness to come forward and address the council.
- 38.17 Nigel Furness asked a question; “In view of the alarming increase in incidents of severe, weather-related flooding across our City in recent years, Councillor Sankey, including this one, can you enlighten us please, are you of the same persuasion as your ‘Green’ predecessors in that the blame for such disasters lies solely at the door of Climate Change?”
- 38.18 Councillor Rowkins replied; “Whilst climate change has obviously meant that we now see more regular extreme weather events that can cause flooding, that is clearly not the only factor. All around the city, natural permeable surfaces have been built on paved or tarmacked over. We have a drainage system that was not built to cope with the kinds of weather patterns that we now see and becomes overwhelmed more frequently. We are also losing urban trees to elm disease faster than we can replace them, further compounding the problem. We are working closely with the flood risk team to increase resilience and minimise the risk. We’re developing plans for sustainable drainage systems at strategic locations as well as insisting on them as part of the planning process where practicable”.
- 38.19 Nigel Furness asked the following supplementary question; “As mother nature goes about her orderly business, so should Brighton and Hove City Council, and I would like to ask the councillor this business about a modern drainage system. Would you agree with me, we have a perfectly adequate drainage system which I used to work in over 50 years ago, we used to have a thing very popular in this city called gully suckers which would clean out road drains. Currently I can identify drains that have been for over 10 years in the centre of this city have been blocked solid, perhaps the guerilla gardeners should come back and start growing root veg in them as you’re taking over all the allotments for development.”
- 38.20 Councillor Rowkins replied; “I’m not exactly sure what the follow-up question there was, but I’ll take that away for sure. The point is that the perfectly good drainage system that you refer to now gets regularly overwhelmed and things have been put in to cater for events that used to be described as one in 10 year events or one in 100 year events and those are now happening far more regularly so there is a need to, and I take your point about maintaining what we’ve got, but there is a need to modernise and bring the system up to date to face the kinds of weather events that we now see.”
- 38.21 The Mayor thanked Nigel Furness for his question and invited Michael J. Adams to come forward and address the council.
- 38.22 Michael J Adams asked a question; “The council’s continuous tiered fee increases since 2018 on CO2 emissions based residents and traders permits are unfair, I now face an exorbitant year on year 75% surcharge for parking even though my vehicle emits no CO2 when parked with the engine off. The absence of any data from the council since 2018 supporting your claim that parked vehicles should be charged for CO2 emissions raises questions about the legality and fairness of these charges. Councillor Davis says the permit charge is for driving to and from a parking location, yet the councils transport

committee confirmed there is no CO2 ULEZ scheme in Brighton and Hove that charges residents and traders for driving. I urgently request a clearer explanation of how these CO2 charges and fee increases can be fairly and lawfully justified when applied to parked vehicles that produce no CO2 emissions with the engine off. This is imperative due to the substantial financial burden these unfair and misleading permit charges place on residents and traders.”

38.23 Councillor Muten replied; “Each vehicle that parks on a street uses space which could be used for some other vehicle or some other person using that space, so there is a limited space on the public highway for parking vehicles, so it’s not as simple as whether a car is moved or not, it’s whether or not that space can be used by somebody else and there is a limit to how many parking spaces and bays there are on an individual street or parking zone. In terms of your substantive question about the association with parking and carbon dioxide for static vehicles, I’m more than happy for somebody from the council to write to you to answer that in detail.”

38.34 The Mayor thanked Michael J Adams for his question and invited Heidi Stone to come forward and address the council.

38.35 Heidi Stone asked a question; “Does the council have plans to update the 2019 - 2030 Health and Wellbeing Strategy, which is based on statistics dating from 2011-2018?”

38.36 Councillor De Oliveira replied; “The Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy was prepared by the Council and NHS Sussex in partnership with the Voluntary and Community Sector as a 10- year strategy running through to 2030. Whilst neither the Council nor its partners intend to update the Health and Wellbeing Strategy at the present, it is important to note both;  
Key priorities within the Health and Wellbeing Strategy are included in more recent plans and strategies including the Integrated Care Board strategy ‘Improving Lives’ and the Brighton and Hove Health and Care Partnership Shared Delivery Plan;  
Second, whilst the strategy is based on statistics from 2011-18 we have introduced a standing item at the Health and Wellbeing Board which reviews the latest data with agreed outcomes of the Health & Wellbeing measures. This will ensure that the Health and Wellbeing [Board] considers the latest data and strategy actions in place on a regular basis.”

38.37 Heidi Stone asked the following supplementary question; “There’s an additional key part of the strategy that’s been omitted that I’d just like to ask a question about, I’ll just give you a little bit of context to enable you to answer it better. The key aspect that’s been omitted actually is the way in which services are provided, autonomy is a prerequisite for psychological wellbeing but we’re seeing a surge in the negative impacts due to increased digital use. There’s increased rates of digital anxiety, burnout, addiction and depression correlated to the mounting pressures to self serve with either no alternatives provided, promoted or they’re made difficult by highly criticised nudge techniques. We also hear that when alternatives, specifically by the council, have been provided, specifically the paypoint, they’re so poorly designed they increase anxiety, stress and fear, all of which have been proven through psychoneuroimmunology to shut down peoples immune systems and increase their susceptibility to viruses and more serious health issues which seems in complete contrast to the outcomes that you’d really want with your health and wellbeing strategy. This demonstrates that the council has not been

able to review this and integrate it as part of their approach. The public sector equalities duty clearly lays out the obligations of service provision for example to be proactive that the citizens who use the services should be treated with dignity and respect and have their human rights protected, so whether it's a failing of the Equalities Act or the Human Rights Act regarding the service provision, I hope this demonstrates the direct link between service provision and our health and wellbeing. My question is, what steps is the council committed to taking in order to ensure that the design and delivery of its services are conducive to our health and wellbeing as citizens?"

- 38.38 Councillor De Oliveira replied; "I think I answered that question when I made sure that we reviewed on an ongoing basis, so we meet pretty much every week to review the data and act accordingly. So I think the answer is pretty much that we do use data that was from 2011-2018, however, it's ongoing and we're reviewing the data."
- 38.39 The Mayor thanked Heidi Stone for her question and invited Carol Wilson to come forward and address the council.
- 38.40 Carol Wilson asked a question; "My submitted question is, how does the council and its councillors check itself against the Brighton and Hove council's constitution?"
- 38.41 Councillor Sankey replied; "The Council reviews the effectiveness of its constitution regularly. On average, we have a review of the constitution every 6 months, if not more often. Members are free to propose changes, either through Group Leaders, Notices of Motion, or Member Letters.  
We do not have quantitative performance indicators, but we review the effectiveness of the arrangements, including the effectiveness of the public and member engagement items. We also look at good practice from other local authorities and incorporate it where appropriate.  
The constitution is a living document, and it is constantly developed to reflect the needs of Members, the public and the need to ensure the proceedings of the Council are conducted in an effective and efficient manner."
- 38.42 Carol Wilson asked the following supplementary question; "Against the context of the statements within the code of conduct for councillors and the seven Nolan Principles of public office, what should residents do if reasonable questions which have already been asked to councillors are not answered verbally or written? We are seemingly being ignored and does this constitute breach of the codes and the principles? And just to link Councillor Sankey's statement about 10 minutes ago where she has specifically put on public record 'No question will be left unanswered', but I'm afraid, dismally, there are a huge amount of outstanding questions that are not being answered so I have written to Democratic Services to find out what the process is for this, and I'm not impressed with what I've received back. We follow the channels that are open to us as concerned residents and we are not getting the response and also, just going to the answer to the answer to the question now about engagement, the engagement doesn't exist at the moment, and I raise serious concerns."
- 38.43 Councillor Sankey replied; "Over the last municipal year, the council has dealt with some 58 public question, 34 notices of motion, 14 deputations, and 15 petitions at full council; this is much higher than most local authorities and was definitely higher than the questions, petitions, and deputations received by Bristol, Camden, East Sussex, West

Sussex, Portsmouth, Southampton, and West Sussex and I am so proud of what a thriving democracy we have here in Brighton and Hove. We're committed to keeping this level of public participation and you'll see that we've got an item later on the agenda that proposes some changes to enhance public participation. The council's constitution has very clear rules and processes on what questions, petitions, and deputations are allowed. This is available for any member of the public to see on the council's website, and the mayor applies these rules objectively, impartially, and having regard to the council's desire to promote public engagement. The mayor is advised by the monitoring officer and the chief executive as necessary in the interpretation of the rules. I cannot comment on each and every case, and I don't have the information that you're referring to, but I can assure you that the council treats every question, petition, or deputation with respect and they are rejected if, and only if, they do not comply with the rules and the mayor, committee chair, or the chief executive have taken legal advice that considers that it would not be appropriate to allow them to be presented."

38.44 Pete Ranson asked a question but was not present at the meeting; "Beryl bikes removed their 'Minute Bundle' offering in August, an offer available in other UK regions. We feel they are failing to adequately deliver the scheme to the community, especially to infrequent users. By removing the 'minute bundle' option, Beryl appears to be profiteering from our tourist credentials, to the detriment of the community, denying us an economically viable option. Can the council apply pressure to Beryl to re-introduce the "Minute Bundle" option, therefore reintroducing the scheme's sustainability whilst broadening its appeal to the community who live here and not just the tourist?"

38.45 Councillor Muten replied; "Thank you, Mr Ranson, for your question. Lower prices and minimal rises were possible during the old scheme in a period of historically low inflation. This was a subsidised phase of the service using grant funding secured from the Local Enterprise Partnership in 2016. Our new scheme must operate under very different conditions.

Each Beryl scheme is priced according to the level of local subsidy it receives. It is not fair to suggest that Beryl is profiteering here. Active travel funding has been awarded to our City by the Department for Transport, and this has been allocated to other infrastructure schemes that improve cycling and walking journeys across the city. The city was not successful in securing other funding from the various Government grant funds we could use to support the scheme.

We are not eligible to bid for grants available to authorities that have elected mayors and with devolved transport authority powers. These are used to subsidise schemes such as London's Santander Bikes and Greater Manchester's Bee Bike scheme. We cannot ignore the current financial climate either. According to the Office for National statistics, Retail Price index inflation was running at 11.6% in the 12 months to December 2022 alone and is still well above 6% today.

A full business case shows the scheme can generate enough surplus revenue to allow us to service the borrowing which was necessary to purchase the new fleet. The scheme must remain financially viable during a high inflation period and considerable pressure on Local Government finances. For these reasons the new offers will not be able to match those the old one, including the annual membership offer.

However, since the 18th of August, three separate minute bundle offers have been available. The 2-day minute bundle is aimed at the visitor market, while the 7-day and 30-day bundles offer businesses and residents further savings for frequent use. The average ride time is 23 minutes, but the 30-day bundle allows for up to 30 minutes per

ride. A 23-minute pedal bike ride costs 92p and the same ride on an e-bike ride costs £1-92. Beryl will shortly be announcing a limited annual membership deal for students in full time education, jobseekers in receipt of benefits and pensioners. There may be further such packages for specific user groups in due course, but the Council and Beryl are prioritising these lower income groups. We hope residents will understand the need for the scheme to minimise cost to the council taxpayer in the current climate. The new scheme is delivering benefits such as cutting carbon emissions and air pollution. It offers improved health and wellbeing outcomes as well as some savings on bike ownership. We hope this will persuade residents to pay a bit more for the service. We will continue to look for grant funding opportunities to extend savings to scheme users and will ensure low-income groups are prioritised.”

### **39 DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

- 39.1 The Mayor reported that one deputation had been received from members of the public and invited Peter Moore as the spokesperson for the deputation to come forward and address the council. The deputation related to the residents of Upper Abbey Road demanding reinstatement of the protective barrier at the junction of UAR, Whitehawk Hill Road and the hospital South Service Road.
- 39.2 Councillor Muten replied; “As per the Council’s previous reply, the railings were removed to enable a crossing to be installed whilst development works are being carried out at Royal Sussex Hospital. It is understood that these railings were most likely installed in the late 1980s by East Sussex County Council prior to Brighton and Hove becoming a Unitary Authority. This in effect means that we do not hold digital records of why the railings were installed. However, these railings may have been installed after reports of vehicles driving over the footway. The railings were not suitable as a vehicle crash mitigation system and had become damaged beyond repair. The old railings are very unlikely to have prevented the vehicle involved in this incident from crashing into the wall. The council is reviewing the repair or replacement of all railings on a risk-based approach prioritised within existing budgets and is only replacing/repairing those that serve a clear safety purpose and are designed as such. The space available for a robust crash mitigation system at this location is very limited and would effectively mean there is insufficient access along this length of pavement. There have been more recent substantive improvements in this area including an improved pedestrian crossing with associated betterment of line markings and signage and introduction of a 20 MPH speed limit. The council undertakes a review of all streets on a 6-monthly to annual basis and an assessment of the Upper Abbey Road area will be considered within our Better Safer Streets Programme on the basis of priority, need and suitability of appropriate mitigation measures.”
- 39.3 The Mayor thanked Peter Moore for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. She explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to Transport and Sustainability Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.

### **40 NO TO ULEZ OR OTHER DISCRIMINATORY TRAFFIC SCHEMES IN BRIGHTON AND HOVE**



- 40.1 The Mayor stated that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at the council meeting. There were three petitions which had reached that threshold. The first was No to ULEZ or Other Discriminatory Traffic Schemes in Brighton and Hove and she invited Laura King to join the meeting and to present the petition.
- 40.2 Laura King thanked the Mayor and presented the petition.
- 40.3 Councillor Muten replied "May I firstly thank you, Laura King, for a remarkably successful petition. Be assured of your success. You have brought a petition that the electorate of Brighton and Hove overwhelming decided by ballot of 4<sup>th</sup> May 2023 to so do. Had you taken the time to compare, for instance the Green Party manifesto with the Labour Party manifesto, you may have seen that the former proposed a citywide ULEZ; which was not proposed within the Labour Party manifesto. Without wishing to suggest it may have bypassed your attention, the electorate made a decision to remove the Green Party administration reduced from 20 Green councillors to a mere 7; whilst choosing to increase from 16 to establish the overwhelming supermajority of 38 Labour Party councillors with Labour representation in 18 out of 23 wards in our city. Were you to be observant, you may have notice that the Labour Party opposed the proposed Hanover and Turner Low Traffic Neighbourhood in the February 2023 Budget Council, rediverting £1M to save public toilets across our city that the Green Party had decided to close. The unpopularity of the proposed Hanover and Turner LTN was perhaps one reason why the local community elected 3 new Labour councillors in the Green Party's second safest seat in the city. However, we do have a functioning ULEZ in our city that has been in place since 2015. This successful ULEZ does discriminate against drivers for driving in legally owned vehicles which have passed their emissions tests as unless drivers drive a compliant bus or taxi, they will be charged as they drive through our ULEZ along Western Road and North Street between Montpellier Road and Castle Square. We have no plans to remove this and, in this context, your petition is very unlikely to succeed in removing our existing ULEZ and thereby undermining our successful buses that service all our communities including those who can least afford alternatives. However, we do have an air quality challenge in many parts of our city. Although good progress in air quality since 2015 with some 60% improvement in North Street for example, the past 3 years have seen deterioration in air quality in some of the most polluted areas of our city. Much of our air quality monitoring data commenced from January 2020 when Labour was last in administration. However, although data was collected, there was a lack of strategic direction and political leadership over the past 3 years as we came out of lockdown both from the Green-led administration in our city seemingly taking an arbitrary, rather than evidence-based policy approach to air quality; and from a Tory government without a plan despite sound evidence to tackle the health risks associated with air quality. Opportunities were definitely missed. Air quality data was collected, with no clear strategic policy or plan to implement. It is no wonder that we are not where we should be as a city. Lip service has not been the answer; nor has abandonment of air quality policy leadership. Labour is committed to working up a realistic strategy for improving air quality through a targeted, data led approach, listening to communities and working in partnership to deliver for each of our 6 Air Quality Management Areas. One size does not fit all. We know residents across Brighton and Hove from Portslade to Rottingdean deserve a much better policy on air quality than before. Labour has the political will to deliver what works best for each area. We will be data and science led to

find the most effective way to protect human health, improve air quality and establish a low carbon transport system fit for the 2030s.”

- 40.4 Councillor Davis and Bagaeen spoke on the petition.
- 40.5 The Mayor thanked Laura King for presenting the petition and put the recommendations to the vote.
- 40.6 **RESOLVED:**
- 40.7 That the petition was noted and referred to the Transport & Sustainability Committee for consideration.

#### **41 MAKE SCHOOL BUS TRAVEL FOR KIDS FREE IN BRIGHTON**

- 41.1 The Mayor stated that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at the council meeting. There were two petitions which had reached that threshold. The second was Make School Bus Travel for Kids Free in Brighton and she invited Mark Juba on behalf of Tina Philips to join the meeting and to present the petition.
- 41.2 Mark Juba thanked the mayor and stated that the petition had been signed by over 1200 people. The petition stated to propose looking at ways to make the school travel free for all children, following example of London where all bus travel for under 16s is free of charge.
- 41.3 Councillor Muten replied “Thank you for coming to the committee today with your petition. Broadly, we actually do agree on much of this, but we do need to look at how we fund it. Our principles are very much aligned with this in principle but again, I'll give you some background on where we are at with this and our constraints as well. I recognise the burden of travelling costs for parents and carers in the city. The aspiration of this administration is to be on a course towards more affordable fares for children and young people. However, the Council does not operate bus services as bus services are not regulated so 97% of them are provided commercially. It also does not have the legal power to set bus fares or routes. The Council were recently awarded £28m over three years to support its Bus Service Improvement Plan for measures to get people back on buses following the pandemic. It is working in partnership with all the local bus operators on agreed priorities such as new and extended bus lanes and bus priority at junctions Also included are measures to provide simpler and lower fares with priorities identified as follows, Free bus travel for accompanied children and young people. A 50p fare for unaccompanied children off peak. Although it is true that it costs £40 for children who have Bus ID and are travelling alone to school and paying monthly for SAVER tickets, 90 Day and 12-month SAVER tickets offer further savings; these concessions are proving very successful. For instance, Brighton and Hove Buses report that half a million accompanied children have travelled for free since the start of 2023; and half a million £5 day fare caps since May. In addition, The Wave Community Bank offers members 10% off the cost of the £410 12-month ticket – and can provide a low-interest loan to the parent or carer to spread the cost: As part of the BSIP (Bus Service Improvement Plan) bid the Council did request £30m funding for free school travel for three years but the Department for Transport did not approve this since the BSIP

objective was focused on increasing bus ridership rather than cost of living mitigations and there were also concerns about what will happen at the end of the funding period where the government support is withdrawn. Even were the DfT to fund such measures, the impact on future Council budgets of sustaining them when the government support is withdrawn also needs to be considered. A scheme such as free fares for all young people would not be commercially viable and would therefore require a substantial annual subsidy from the Council were it to continue. It has previously been estimated that this would cost at least £6 million per year, although this would be subject to further modelling and the costs of extra buses to service the additional demand. Although the recently announced extension to the £2 fare is very welcome, the lack of longer-term commitment by central government to bus service improvement funding risks a cliff-edge for our service. The sooner we have a general election and a government prepared to commit to a longer term plan the better for all bus passengers in our city. Thank you for coming today.

- 41.4 Councillor Davis moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Hill.
- 41.5 Councillor Hogan spoke on the matter.
- 41.6 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Hogan on her maiden speech.
- 41.7 Councillor Muten responded to the debate and did not accept the Green Group amendment.
- 41.9 **RESOLVED:**
- 41.10 That the petition was noted and referred to the Transport & Sustainability Committee for consideration.

## **42 CALL OVER FOR REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.**

### **(a) Callover**

The following items on the agenda were reserved for discussion:

Item 45 CHANGES TO THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION

### **(b) Receipt and/or Approval of Reports**

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that Item 45 had been reserved for discussion.

### **(c) Oral Questions from Members**

The Mayor noted that there were 9 oral questions.

## **43 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS.**

43.1 The Mayor noted that written questions from Members and the replies from the appropriate Councillor were taken as read by reference to the list included in the addendum which had been circulated prior to the meeting as detailed below:

**1. Councillor McNair**

**Tennis Courts**

It has been good to see some tennis courts renovated by Lawn Tennis Association and the UK Government. We understand the importance of a centralised booking system to help with collecting fees to maintain the courts. But with the new pricing structure, it could cost £15.40 for a parent and their child to play tennis for an hour. If it's before 5 on a weekday it would cost £12.70. This is very expensive, and unlikely to help enable children to become future tennis players. Will the council consider providing free slots for juniors across the city, for example Monday to Friday 3- 4.30pm and Saturday-Sunday 9-10.30 and 1-2.30, and during school holidays: 9am to 11am and 1-3pm?

**Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of Culture, Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Economic Development Committee**

Currently the council run courts are free before 10am so there are opportunities for free play early in the morning. The charges for tennis are set as part of the council fees and charges report and will be reviewed for April 24 when members will have the opportunity to input on what next year's charges should be.

**2. Councillor McNair**

**Flooding Scape project**

The Scape project in Carden Avenue has been working for a number of months. Some residents report less flooding; others report problems with the dangerous height of the grass on exiting their drives onto Carden Avenue. The amount of grass in the basins appears to stop water falling into the basins. Has there been a review of the Scape Project, and what improvements will be made?

**Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee**

The SCAPE project is a pilot and is under continual review. Early indications are that it has had a positive impact on flood risk in the area but, as with any pilot, you would expect some improvements to the design to become apparent.

We have found that the original inlets were not appropriate for maintenance activities and so they were redesigned. This included the addition of silt traps, which are easier to clear of detritus.

The planting was selected to provide a filtration system to remove heavy metals and other associated run off from the highway, and so is an integral part of the design. However, we have found maintenance issues with the cutting of the growth in the basins, and the cutting regime has been amended accordingly.

We will be returning to the design with improvements moving forward.

**3. Councillor Meadows**

**Peace Gardens**

The Peace Gardens have had benches damaged recently, graffiti and a fallen column. The paving is broken in many places. The paving around the edge of the sunken garden has been broken for years and is a trip hazard. Benches have not been replaced. This is a war memorial. When will improvements be made to the gardens to ensure they look well-kept.

**Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of Culture, Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Economic Development Committee**

Unfortunately, much of the park's infrastructure is in poor repair. The Council has set aside some money to address some of the worst of the dilapidation and I will ask officers to assess what can be done at the Peace Garden.

**4. Councillor Bagaeen**

**Housing**

The council gave on 4 October the developer of the Dairy site on the Droveaway in Westdene & Hove Park a get out clause from delivering what was then the only affordable homes being delivered in the ward. No Registered Provider could be found for these and the council did not want to take them on. What is the council doing to facilitate the delivery of affordable and social housing in our ward? And what is the council doing to support Registered Providers to enable them to take over the small number of properties coming through s106 obligations? After all, an obligation is not an obligation if this council will always allow developers to take the easy way out. This council should be on the side of residents, not developers.

**Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee**

The council is committed to increasing affordable housing across the city but does not set targets for specific wards. Hyde Housing have delivered The Goldstone Lane, Hove scheme which was in the Hove Park ward (prior to the boundary changes to the wards earlier this year) and delivered 26 units of affordable housing (8 rented and 18 shared ownership).

In addition a number of neighbouring wards in Goldsmid, Wish and Hangleton & Knoll have had affordable new build schemes coming through and the council has an active programme of 'buy backs' in these wards. The Hove Park & Westdene ward has 17 council owned dwellings of which 7 are leasehold so there will be limited opportunities to buy back homes in this ward.

In future the provision of affordable housing in this ward will be dependent on the number of new applications coming through and these will be assessed to determine the level of affordable housing that should be provided.

On new major planning applications the council engages with developers at an early opportunity to advise them to engage with Registered Providers. Whilst we have partnership arrangements with a number of larger Registered Providers who are developing within the city, we also encourage developers to approach smaller providers to widen the options available. If a small number of homes are available, this is often not viable for providers to take on due to management and viability issues. In these circumstances some Registered Providers are interested in buying more homes in order to make it viable and we have seen this successfully work on schemes such as Kings House, Grand Avenue and The Former Texaco Garage, The Kingsway. This option would depend upon developers being open to selling more homes to a Registered Provider and would form part of their negotiations.

If no Registered Provider can be identified a commuted sum is sought and these have been used to support the council's own affordable homes programme and this approach is supported by policies in the development plan.

**5. Councillor McNair**

**Carden Hill**

Carden Hill is a major artery, and bus route. When will it be resurfaced?

**Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you Cllr McNair for your question.

The Council carries out annual condition surveys of the carriageway across the network. This data is then prioritised against a set of criteria to ensure that the limited funds available are used in the most needed locations. The most recent condition survey took place in May 2023. During this survey, Carden Hill was identified as a suitable site for machine lay patching; however it is currently 770 on the priority list of schemes to be completed. We are in the process of updating our forward works programme for the next two years based on this data. However, we inspect all roads within the City on a regular basis and should the condition of a road alter significantly then this will be reflected in the programme as necessary. Carden Hill is inspected every 6 months via walked inspection.

**6. Councillor Meadows**

**Brangwyn Estate**

The Brangwyn Estate has not been cleared of weeds. The lanterns at the entrance to Brangwyn Way are in a poor state. And the newly planted trees

planted to camouflage the 5G mast are all dead. When will the area be de-weeded? And when will the trees be replaced?

**Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee**

The lights at the entrance to the Brangwyn Estate are part of the Brighton and Hove street lighting inventory and were installed when the estate was built. They are unique and specific to this location. They are beyond repair and need to be replaced with new lanterns, and unfortunately that requires a specialist manufacturer and significant investment.

I am assured that the Brangwyn Estate has adequate street lighting to provide safe passage for motorists and pedestrians. The lights on the pillars are classed as decorative or amenity lighting, and currently there is no funding specifically available to replace them. Any opportunities for funding will be sought, but a date for replacement cannot be provided at this time. In the meantime, I have asked for options for some cosmetic work to improve them aesthetically.

Street Cleansing Operatives were at the Brangwyn Estate last week clearing weeds and work is also taking place this week to complete the job.

It is very sad that the tree whips have not survived. They will be removed and replaced this winter. The Arboriculture Team do not normally water whips, and the dry periods during recent summers have made it difficult for them to become established. The five additional standard Yew trees that were provided are alive and have been watered.

**7. Councillor Lyons**

**Beach huts**

On what basis does the council claim to be able to require beach hut owners to enter into a new licence? The licence on which they hold hut 96 dates from the 1980's and does not, it is believed, contain any right of the council to simply require a new form of licence to be entered into, nor a right to terminate the licence save in the event of a breach of its terms. If this is correct the council cannot demand that beach hut owners enter a new Licence. If this is considered incorrect, could we receive a copy of the Licence that governs the hut and refer to the relevant clauses?

**Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of Culture, Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Economic Development Committee**

If the proposed changes are agreed by the Council following the ongoing consultation period, the current licences will all be terminated in accordance with notice provisions set out within the original licence or, in some cases, subsequent renewal licences and new licences will be granted. From 1 April 2024, any beach huts without a new licence in place would be unlicensed huts and would need to be removed by the owner.

The Council has published a Q&A document answering some of the common questions raised during the initial stages of the consultation process. This document has been sent to the Secretary of the Hove Beach Huts Association to share with members at the forthcoming AGM and the consultation period has been extended to allow further consideration by members after that meeting. The new deadline for further responses to the seafront office is 9am on Monday 23 October 2023

## 8. Councillor Theobald

### Affordable housing units

Can the Council please advise me on the number and location of affordable housing units that the Council has provided since 2018 with section 106 commuted financial sums from developers who have been unable to provide on site affordable housing.

### Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee

Number of affordable housing units since 2018 are detailed, along with section 106 commuted financial sums. We are happy to provide further details in writing of the wards in which we have buybacks

	2018/19 £'000	2019/20 £'000	2020/21 £'000	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	Total
Commuted sums utilised	0	821	1,072	264	2,510	4,667
Number of units supported by commuted sums	0	34	16	4	67	121



**9. Councillor Theobald****Buildings with flammable cladding**

Councils have a duty to investigate suspected category 1 hazards under the Housing Act that may include all buildings with flammable cladding. The LGA is continuing to encourage its members to consider whether any private buildings might benefit from a Joint Inspection Team inspection. Has Brighton & Hove City Council inspected all such buildings in the City and if not, how many remain to be inspected and where are they located?

**Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee**

Following the Grenfell Tower tragedy council officers worked with Government (DLUHC) to review the exterior of high-rise private sector purpose built residential buildings in the city to support Government collation of information about potentially unsafe cladding.

The Council's current approach and response to any issues arising with high-rise private sector residential buildings reflects LGA advice arising from their 2022 publication 'Principles for effective regulation of fire safety in flats'.

In line with this LGA advice we have advised Government (DLUHC) officials of our approach, which is to take forward strategic level consultation with East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service (ESFRS) to make sure that we coordinate required actions and resources with regard to purpose built high rise residential blocks to meet our respective demands and responsibilities under the Housing Act / Building Safety Act (BHCC) and updated Fire Safety Regulations (ESFRS).

This is in order to ensure that we effectively target our resources and provide strategic direction enabling both BHCC and ESFRS services to build operational plans to deliver our respective duties and avoid duplication of effort.

Senior council officers regularly meet with Government (DLUHC) officials to discuss fire safety in private sector purpose built residential buildings, including updating on our engagement with ESFRS. We also share information that we may have on private sector blocks in Brighton & Hove may be brought to our attention by Government officials.

We have advised Government (DLUHC) officials that ESFRS operating under fire safety legislation have recently issued letters to various 'Responsible Persons' for all high rise residential blocks within their area asking for specific information on compliance with their fire safety duties and steps to achieve compliance with timescales.

Government officials have advised the Council on the availability of the Joint Inspection Team.

The Council will keep this option under review while also continuing to engage with the fire service on the outcome of their actions following to their recent letter, which may include ESFRS enforcement action.

**10. Councillor Goldsmith**

With falling Pupil Admission Numbers across the city, is it likely that the council will have to close schools, and what is the council doing to try and avoid this?

**Reply from Councillor Taylor / Helliwell, Joint Chairs of Children, Families & Schools**

It is a priority for this administration to address the very real impact on schools of the falling pupil numbers in the city. This is an urgent issue for our primary schools and will soon be affecting our secondary schools. We have been approaching this issue with care and attention and want to make sure all options are properly explored. However, we want to assure you that we will be taking early action on this point – and understand that this will have long term impacts beyond the term of this council. Any proposals to address this issue will be centered around the wider longer-term interests of children, young people, and families.

This issue has been kicked down the road for too long, and the city now needs Leadership from the council.

We've been meeting with Heads and Chairs of Governors at some individual settings to discuss specific proposals and have now met them as a group. Our initial proposals on addressing this issue will be set out in a report to our next Children, Families and Schools Committee early in November.

**11. Councillor Goldsmith**

What work is the council doing to assess the potential impact of the Department from Education's miscalculation on school funding?

**Reply from Councillor Taylor / Helliwell, Joint Chairs of Children, Families & Schools**

The updated position on Schools funding in 2024/25 after the DfE miscalculation was reported to Schools Forum on 9th October.

We know that the DfE funding error equates to a loss of funding to the Schools Block in Brighton and Hove of approximately £1.5m across all maintained mainstream schools and academies. In per pupil terms this is equivalent to approximately £50 per pupil.

**12. Councillor McLeay**

Theobald House is in serious need of repair and residents were assured that major capital investment works were to be undertaken within the 2022/23 financial year. Residents have since been updated that the planned works are

being pushed into the next financial year. Could the Chair of the Housing and New Homes Committee share an update as to the reason for this delay and when these residents can expect the works to begin?

**Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee**

The works are scheduled for commencement in April 2024. The delay has been caused by the requirement to engage structural engineers. This is to enable us to review and provide confirmation of the loadings on the concourse in relation to the scaffold. We have now engaged a specialist who will provide the required survey.

We will engage with residents as soon as we have the full details of the reports and are able to confirm works and timelines.

**13. Councillor Hill**

Has there been any change to the schedule of major works on Sylvan Hall? Hollybank and Rowan House blocks were scheduled for autumn repairs.

**Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee**

We are undertaking the works to Hollybank and Rowan House as part of our planned works programme this financial year and works start late October, this will entail the replacement of windows and external repairs and decorations. Elm Lodge / Maple House / The Willows are in the 2024/25 programme for planned works to undertake the replacement of windows and external repairs and decorations. For the remainder of Sylvan Hall Estate we are in the process of surveying the remaining blocks for a future major capital works programme.

**14. Councillor Hill**

Labour's 2024-2025 budget process has promised to take a 'more fundamental look at the council's cost base and the affordability of services and capital investments'. What does this more fundamental look mean in practice? For example, how does this affect our procurement processes?

**Reply from Councillor Taylor / Helliwell, Joint Chairs of Children, Families & Schools**

The cost of both in-house and externally commissioned services has risen significantly over the last two years due to inflationary pressures while demands across many services have been increasing significantly for many years, particularly across social care and homelessness. Government funding and restricted local tax increases have not kept pace with the cost of services. This council, in common with many others across the country, is now facing severe financial challenges and, as our in-year monitoring shows, is spending beyond its available resources.

We will therefore look at the current capital programme, particularly where borrowing is required, to explore where schemes could be curtailed or delayed to reduce capital financing costs. We have similarly asked all services to look at the cost of providing services and explore options to make further efficiencies and economies through redesigning service delivery, using technology and digital improvements, or reviewing the extent of non-statutory provision. This extends to procured goods and services where we are asking services to tighten up tender specifications to meet only minimum requirements unless there is a good financial case for specifying higher quality.

We are working through all of these issues as part of developing budget proposals for 2024/25 and will be bringing a full set of proposals to February Budget Council as normal. However, we are keen to engage our experienced and knowledgeable staff, unions and partners in helping to identify other ideas for saving money or delivering services differently and have recently launched a communication campaign and on-line forms to enable people to put forward their suggestions.

**15. Councillor Hill**

How does the council's recruitment freeze affect jobs that are necessary for the provision of statutory services?

**Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council**

The management of recruitment controls has been devolved to each Service Directorate to ensure that impacts on services are properly understood and managed. Directorates are able to over-ride vacancy controls where recruitment is necessary to maintain critical and statutory services, for example, care home staffing levels. Even for non-statutory services or support service functions, controls can be over-ridden, for example, where a service already has a number of vacancies, and a further vacancy would severely impact delivery.

**16. Councillor Hill**

What is the amount of gas oil that has been used per annum to maintain the temperature in the Newhaven incinerator boiler plant and mobile plant for the past 5 years?

**Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee**

Combustion at the Energy Recovery Facility (ERF) in Newhaven is self-sustaining and uses waste as the sole fuel.

There are rare occasions on which diesel will be used to increase the temperature in the boiler to maintain it above 850 degrees C, and I have requested information on how often that happens in an average year and what quantities are involved.

**17. Councillor Hill**

British Glass have written to Brighton and Hove Council asking them to support the UK circular economy and decarbonisation efforts and sell the glass they collect for recycling to a company which processes the glass for remelt in the UK. Currently the glass is sold to the Days Group who export it and use it for aggregate. British Glass provided Brighton and Hove City Council with a list of UK companies who process glass in the UK. Do the council intend to continue selling to Days Group OR will they support the UK circular economy and keep the glass in the UK by selling to a different company, e.g. Beatson Clark, Enva, Glass Recycling UK, Recresco, Sibelco, URM Group.

**Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee**

We have been in touch with British Glass, who are keen to assist us in our efforts to increase recycling and reduce the amount of waste we produce. We want to do everything we can to move towards a circular economy and to reduce our carbon emissions.

It is the case that the glass collected in the city currently goes to Days and is exported to Belgium for remelt. The majority of the remelt capacity in the UK is in the north and transporting it to Belgium means substantially shorter journeys. The proximity of Brighton & Hove to mainland Europe means that exporting can sometimes be the more sustainable option.

Some of our glass has previously gone to Recresco, which is on the list suggested by British Glass.

We will of course continue to review options and assess where we send materials for recycling and are committed to recycling material in the most responsible manner. I am happy to liaise with Veolia and assess the domestic options available.

**18. Councillor Pickett**

The critical environmental concerns around the dumping of raw sewage in our rivers and seas by water companies continues. Despite being continually fined for illegally discharging sewage into our waters, Southern Water continues to do so. Brighton & Hove residents pay to ensure water is effectively managed and considers Southern Water is not fulfilling its duty to update drainage systems to cope with rainfall that occurs more often, due to global warming. What is the council's plan to ensure that Southern Water fulfils the obligations of a water company to provide clean and safe water, and to remove sewage and road run off in a way that does not cause environmental damage?

**Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee**

We are all horrified by the dumping of sewage into the UK's seas and rivers. It has been a national scandal, and rightly so. I'm pleased that you mention surface water in your question, as this is discussed much more scarcely and yet happens far more often. Surface water run off contains hydrocarbons, plastics and other pollutants and this problem needs to be addressed.

As you will no doubt be aware, one of the first things our administration did was to agree with Southern Water that they would fund independent, year-round testing of our bathing waters, as well as reactive testing when a suspected outflow takes place.

BHCC is producing a Surface Water Management Plan, delivered through funding from Southern Water and the Environment Agency. We are also working with Southern Water to inform a mapping exercise of the city to identify potential sites for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). This assessment will help to inform priority areas for targeting SuDS schemes across the city and will help minimise surface water outflows. The SuDS at Norton Road has been part funded by Southern Water, and we will continue to seek contributions from them for other projects.

In terms of the provision of clean and safe water, the council is working with Southern Water through [The Aquifer Partnership](#), looking at the health and management of the chalk aquifer to protect the city's drinking water.

On a national level, we will continue to push for tighter regulation of water companies to prevent outflows and bring about the required investment in infrastructure. Locally, we will continue to work with Southern Water to make interventions in the city that alleviate pressure on the drainage and sewer systems and will seek funding from them at every opportunity.

**19. Councillor Pickett**

With regard to Enterprise Point, Melbourne Street, the current property guardians have been told that despite the owners being refused planning permission, they intend to demolish the building and evict the huge number of guardians within 30 days. What actions is the council taking to support residents and can we be advised what steps can be taken to ask the property owners to delay the timeframe for this eviction? Has the council made any direct representations to Kosy Homes?

**Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee**

People employed by live-in guardian companies will tend to have their accommodation provided as part of a commercial contract. Guardians are not usually tenants within that contract are usually provisions to provide access to alternative accommodation when the contract expires. These are private organisations, and Enterprise Point is privately owned, however we could request a delay.

The council has already engaged with the occupants living at Enterprise Point, providing advice about housing options. Should any of the occupants believe there is still a risk of homelessness upon the expiration of the contract, individuals can approach the council. Although alternative accommodation is unlikely to be offered, we will agree a 'Personalised Housing Plan' setting out the 'reasonable steps' both they and the council will undertake. If these 'reasonable steps' are engaged, it will reduce the risk of homelessness.

**20. Councillor Earthey**

Some Labour councillors have claimed that BHCC has disengaged from ESCC's A259 Corridor Study to the extent that major congestion points to the east of the city have been under-represented and poorly evidenced in the analysis conducted to date, including the Rottingdean traffic lights. What steps is BHCC taking to re-engage with the Study to ensure that there is a fully co-ordinated approach with ESCC to identify A259 improvements, and to ensure that important funding opportunities to improve our critical pinch-points are not missed?

**Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you for your question Councillor Earthey. I am not sure of the source of the comments on the council's involvement in this study, which is being led by East Sussex County Council. However, I can confirm that representatives of our council have been invited to, and do participated in, a number of workshops that have been arranged to engage a range of stakeholders and seek their input at this early stage. I attended the most recent workshop in July and was the only member present from our city's Labour Group and can provide strong assurance that we are very engaged with the A259 Corridor Study.

The work that is currently being carried out involves the development of an initial, high level Strategic Outline Business Case, to put forward as strong a case as possible for further funding from central Government. As the business case moves through various stages, there will be continued opportunities for discussion and debate as the process continues. I am sure that this will provide the opportunity to further explore measures that are consistent with the study objectives, including those that were raised by stakeholders when various options were being discussed. These would be developed by officers and evaluated and appraised as part of the next business case stage for consideration for inclusion in the final A259 Corridor Package.

The city council would be responsible for the development and delivery of any specific measures within its boundary and this would involve appropriate levels of local consultation and engagement, so that we can hear everybody's views. Where necessary, the process would also involve continued, close working with colleagues within the county and district councils.

The city council has looked at locations within the study area on a number of occasions, and the study team is aware of this work. Some have been identified in the Bus Network Review document, and others are in our Bus Service

Improvement Plan which identifies key locations where public transport infrastructure is needed to improve journey times and reliability. Locations were identified on the basis that they met the Department for Transport's funding criteria at the time. We also have our Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan. This is the strategic plan to develop and deliver high quality infrastructure which makes active travel accessible, easy, welcoming, enjoyable and safe. It includes priority networks and neighbourhoods, including those in the 'Deans area.

**21. Councillor Earthey**

What new locations have been identified for a park and ride?

**Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you for asking this question, Councillor Earthey.

Labour has long called for a park and ride scheme in the city; it was in our manifesto at the local elections this year and was one of the recommendations made by the Climate Assembly in 2020. So it is definitely something we would like to see happen. Officers have been exploring possible options and I am expecting a briefing on the outcomes to discuss the conclusions and possible next steps.

I therefore can't announce any specific potential locations at this time. Historically, potential sites have been limited without finding a clear suitable option and, more recently, there has not been political will to pursue potential options. We recognise that finding a suitable location is not without its challenges. The city sits between the sea and the South Downs, and has a lot of competing needs for the limited areas of land that could be used. There is also a need for complementary measures to make a service attractive and reliable. Nonetheless, I am encouraged that our City Plan has policies that could enable Park + Ride, and that the principle of it is also identified as part of the regional transport strategy and strategic infrastructure plan prepared by Transport for the South East. We now have the political will and with due diligence we are pursuing Park and Ride options as a matter of priority to help alleviate city centre congestion, to reduce carbon emissions, to improve air quality and in response to the climate emergency.

**22. Councillor Earthey**

Based on the engagement promises made by BHCC Labour Leadership at the recent launch of the Brighton Climate:Change Think Tank, what specific, practical steps is the Leadership taking to engage with local resident expertise to create novel designs for local carbon sinks, and insetting and offsetting schemes, which are so vital to the city's Carbon Neutral 2030 strategy?

**Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee**



You are quite right to highlight the importance of collaboration in achieving carbon neutrality, and I was very pleased to speak at the Climate: Change event, along with Transport & Sustainability chair, Cllr Trevor Muten and Leader of the Council, Cllr Bella Sankey.

I was shocked to discover after more than 3 years of a Green-led administration that there was no practical plan in place for achieving Carbon Neutrality across the city by our target date of 2030. Consequently, we are now playing catch up and urgently identifying the steps required. We intend to make use of expertise wherever we find it and would of course welcome your views.

To reach carbon neutrality as a whole city, we need to act as a whole city. We are in the process of assembling the key stakeholders, including our academic and research community, and again are shocked that this has not already been done.

In broad terms, we are reviewing the way we involve and consult with the public to enable a more meaningful, strategic and coordinated approach across council services.

#### 44 ORAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 44.1 The mayor noted that oral questions had been submitted and that 30 minutes was set aside for the duration of the item. She asked that both the questioner and responder endeavour to keep their questions and answers as short as possible, in order to enable the questions listed to be taken.

Question 1 Councillor Davis

Councillor Davis asked; The King's Council report makes a clear link between the toxic culture and a poor bin collection service. Openness and transparency around events is key to resolving these issues. Will the Leader of the Council agree to change the position of the Labour Group that previously rejected a call to publish the 2019 report into issues at the depot and now publish it, warts and all, along with the full minutes and webcast of the Policy & Resources Committee held in private session on the 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019?

Councillor Sankey replied; The interim report, which was obviously published last week, this report reveals a toxic workplace culture in our cityclean depot where racism, sexism, homophobia, bullying, and intimidation have become routine. I want to put on record in the chamber this evening my profound apology on behalf of Brighton & Hove City Council to all staff who have been affected past and present, directly and indirectly by this inexcusable workplace culture. I also want to apologise to the residents of Brighton and Hove for the way in which this disfunction has affected service delivery over very many years. As was made clear in the interim report, there are several disciplinary cases being commenced and we will be publishing the final reports and recommendations as soon as the maximalisation process allows. To Cllr Davis' question, I think it's very important to note that, while the question implies that the Green Party were trying to make public the 2019 report that he refers to, when they assumed office in 2020, no effort was made to publish that report though it would have been

perfectly open to them to make necessary redactions to confidential information and to publish the report. I find it quite strange and odd that they're now seeking to politicise this issue with this request and I don't really understand why it wasn't something that they did when they had the ability to do so. I also want to highlight a number of initiatives that are already underway to try and improve the reliability of our rubbish and recycling service: over the last few months we have purchased four new electric vehicles which are now in service, we have ordered four new side-lifting vehicles for the collection of communal refuse with the first vehicle being due for delivery by the first week of December, we've ordered a new top-loader vehicle for the collection of communal glass due for delivery before the end of December, we've hired four additional RCV's and seven more are on order, we've purchased a small-twin pack to support collections from locations that are difficult to access, work is already being undertaken to address missed collections through improved performance management which has already led to a reduction in missed collections in September and an afternoon crew has been recruited with the ability to use a range of vehicles available in the afternoon so that if collections have been missed due to vehicle availability this crew can step in with service improvement plans for specific rounds or locations where there are ongoing issues with missed collections. As the KC report highlights, there are many challenges at cityclean that have been there for decades, and it will take time to address. There is progress which has been encouraging, but there is so much more to do. We are committed to supporting the service to achieve long lasting and sustainable improvements and turn around the culture at this department.

Councillor Davis asked a supplementary question; I think, given the interim report reference to the detrimental impacts of the involvement of elected members in HR matters particularly in 2019, can the Leader of the Council reassure the public there is no current conflict of interest and commit to an independent route and branch review of how they manage industrial relations locally?

Councillor Sankey replied; I don't think I will give a substantive answer to that because I think much of that answer is contained in the final report which will be published in the coming weeks.

Question 2 Councillor McNair

Councillor McNair asked a question; Birchgrove Crescent has some of the most vulnerable residents in my ward of Patcham & Hollingbury. My ward colleagues and I are contacted more about missed rubbish collections in this area than any other – the lack of collections leads to huge amounts of litter which takes weeks to clear. Residents deserve better. When will rubbish collections take place on a consistently weekly basis?

Councillor Rowkins replied; I know that area is very narrow and that there's been some access issues which I'm aware of. I have written to managers about whether or not that can be moved on to, Councillor Sankey mentioned earlier we've got some small twin-pack vehicles which are much more manoeuvrable. As far as I'm aware that round isn't on the small calls round at the moment, but I'm looking into whether it is and if it is what more can be done and if it's not whether or not it should be, because clearly missed collections will lead to more litter around. I am awaiting some further information on that and I will come back to you on that in due course.

Councillor McNair asked a supplementary question; Birchgrove Crescent in the small road that you're aware of has only had one glass collection this year, can we be reassured that this will happen regularly going forward?

Councillor Rowkins replied; I'm aware of some issues with the glass collections. As I understand it, the situation there is that in the central part of that narrow street there are two 360 litre glass bins and, again, the vehicle access is difficult to get to those and empty them properly. I believe that the plan at the moment is that those are going to be taken out and there's two 1100 litre glass bins, one at either end, which would mean that no matter what the access issues are on that street they would be accessible. I believe that's the plan, if there are any concerns about accessibility for people within the central part of that street, we can look at assisted collections or any other forms of assistance. I'm more than happy to liaise with you as I know more.

Question 3 Councillor Fishleigh

Councillor Fishleigh asked a question; How much money does the Council save on diesel and people power by reducing its verge cutting programme this year, and can this please be diverted to unblocking drains that are now congested with really long grass cuttings?

Councillor Rowkins replied; I take it that you're inferring that we've cut fewer verges in order to deliberately save money on diesel? That's not the case. The issue of verges being cut, that's a pretty straightforward problem it's really just a matter of resources – parks has been disproportionately cut year on year and we see the effect of that. The service has also been carrying quite a lot of staff absence early in year and there's quite a few places that have missed at least one of their cuts. I'm waiting for a further update, but there has been quite a lot of progress in getting those up to date. In terms of unblocking drains, I don't see that there's any link between the grass cutting regime and drains being blocked or unblocked. If there are specific areas or roads where there are problems with the drains then obviously we need to look at that, I would say that at this time of year the highways team do focus on clearing the drains in high flood risk areas as a priority so it could be that they just haven't got to it yet. Again, if there are specific roads, I'm happy to look into that.

Councillor Fishleigh asked a supplementary question; Yes, this isn't any kind of dig. There are people who manage the grass verge cutting teams, they know how much diesel they saved, they've told me, they know how much money they've saved in people power and I'm simply asking if this money can be diverted to solve another problem.

Councillor Rowkins replied; I take the point but if the Council has saved money on use of diesel because of things like staff absence and not being able to get around the full range of the mowing regime, that doesn't mean that you can plan with such precision that you can hire more people to go and unblock the drains. I think that's an oversimplification, but I do take your point that there are obviously some drains in the area that need looking at.

Question 4 Councillor Hill

Councillor Hill asked a question; I'd like to ask something that's personally relevant to myself regarding the standards of public office in relation to tweets shared by Councillor Thomson prior to her election which I feel disappointed by the Labour Group's response

to. Does the Council agree that comments which compare a minority group to dogs is dehumanising that group and that in dehumanising that group it makes it easier for people to view them as sub-human, which in turn, as seen recently in a report by the Home Office, is directly linked to an increase in hate crimes towards that group?

Councillor Sankey replied; I apologise for the hurt and distress that the retweets by Councillor Thomson has caused to you and to members of the trans community. You raised standards in public life and so I think it makes sense to refer to the precious Nolan Principles, which include selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, and leadership. Those principles, while in increasingly short supply in our national government, are principles that I pledge we will stick to rigorously as your Labour administration. I joined the Labour Party because it is the party of equality, the vast majority of legislative reforms to advance equality in this country come from the Labour Party. From the Race Relations Act to the Equal Pay Act, the last Labour government broke new ground when it passed the Gender Recognition Act in 2004 and the Equalities Act in 2010. Labour's Gender Recognition Act enabled trans people to legally change their gender for the first time, and our Equalities Act protected those who have undergone gender reassignments and discrimination and harassment. We in the Labour Group are proud that it was the Labour Party to bring in these changes. Now we're in 2023 we have a much better understanding of the barriers that trans people face, and this is why Labour is committed to modernising the Gender Recognition Act when in government, this will modernise, simplify, and reform gender recognition law. In relation to Councillor Thomsons tweets, I'll say this: We all make mistakes. In my view there has been some toxic public discourse on this subject which has had the effect of driving people to the extremes and has undermined the culture of respect and dignity that we must hold on to when discussing fundamental rights and perceived tensions. I believe that Councillor Thomson is genuinely remorseful and committed to learning a better understanding the lived experience of trans people. I believe in second chances. I believe in discussion, sharing perspectives, and education leading to a better mutual understand and respect between people, and I believe that we will reach a better place as a society on this issue to increase respectful dialogue rather than cancelling and throwing people away.

Councillor Hill asked a supplementary question; I don't believe in cancelling and throwing people away, but I think there's a difference when you're in public office, there's a different standard that you should be held to under the Nolan Principles, it's about respect and leadership and that's not been achieved here, I believe. I do agree we all make mistakes, but whether or not you have the ability to continue to learn from those mistakes whilst in public office I think is different, particularly considering the extremity of comparing people to dogs. Do you agree that, whilst she has apologised, that it's inappropriate that she remains a part of the Labour Group and do you understand why so many people such as myself feel that her rights as a Councillor, let alone part of the administration of this Council, goes far beyond the standards of public office that her comments should normally be treated with in terms of how harmful they are?

Councillor Sankey replied; In response to the publicity around Councillor Thomson's retweets she said: "I apologise unreservedly for retweeting these posts which contained anti trans sentiment. I'm deeply sorry for the offence caused to the transgender community and to others, I have removed them. I have agreed to undergo training so

that I can better understand the lived experiences of transgender people and to help me become a good trans ally.”

As I've said already publicly, we've removed Councillor Thomson's lead role while an investigation was conducted and she will be undertaking training as I've previously set out. Once this training is completed, we will be ensuring that Councillor Thomson demonstrates her commitment to trans equality, and if that is achieved then no, I don't think she should be dismissed from the Labour Group.

#### Question 5 Councillor Bagaeen

Councillor Bagaeen asked a question; We heard from a resident earlier about the cost of bus travel in the city, the resident called for renegotiated contracts with bus companies operating in the city and there was a little murmur in the background that said 'we don't do that'. Councillor Muten confirmed he agreed with the principals laid out by the residents, so the question is: If there is a cliff edge for a bus service in the city, as noted earlier this evening, would the Council consider taking in-house a bus service following the example of Labour run Liverpool and Greater Manchester?

Councillor Muten replied; Thank you, Councillor Bagaeen, for a very interesting question. I think that's one of the questions we may have to take away from this meeting rather than give a policy statement on the hoof, but we do want to see bus service improvements and that's why we are fully committed to the bus service improvement plan which, as I indicated previously, we just applied for the transit funding and have been successful and so we're able to implement the next phase of the bus service improvement plan. So we do recognise ways to improve our service and we do particularly want to focus on making sure our school children to get affordable bus services to our schools, and one thing we did put in our manifesto and we need to find a way to deliver if at all possible is free bus travel for school children under the age of 19 in full term education, and that's something we are aspiring to – we need to find a way to deliver that and it would be very good to have some central government fund commitment to consider that option. In terms of the future of the bus service, I'll decline to comment in detail on that at this point.

Councillor Bagaeen asked a supplementary question; Does Councillor Muten not believe that the Council controlling bus routes and bus fairs is better for our families and young people?

Councillor Muten replied; The Council subsidise certain routes and one thing we've had to do as we came out of lockdown as a Council is to make sure that bus services were viable we've essentially funded a subsidy for certain routes where a route is important and a community requires that and they may not be a profitable route, there is perhaps a case for funding or subsidy to the bus service. One thing we do in partnership with the bus companies that operate in our city, we would meet them regularly and we look to press them on improvements to their bus service across our city and we are committed to making sure that they are building a better service. One thing for example in that is that since the beginning of July, we've pressed Brighton & Hove Buses to improve their service particularly for the secondary school runs across the city to make sure every child can get to school, and in that process they've employed 89 drivers recruited in September and a further 26 drivers recruited in October meaning they've got 115 new drivers since the start of July and so we are pressing them to improve, we're asking further improvements to make which they've made commitments to. So while that

doesn't fully answer your question, we know we've got to work hard with them to get a better service.

#### Question 6 Councillor Earthey

Councillor Earthey asked a question; Given the increasingly cold outlook for this winter brought about by El Niño, repeated breaches of the polar vortex, and multiple reoccurrences of the 'beast from the east', what active practical steps is the Council taking to look after the welfare of vulnerable residents through the adequate provision of public warm spaces, help with home insulation, and other ways to keep warm?

Councillor Sankey replied; We're acutely aware that, now we're into the colder months, the Tory cost of living crisis means residents are struggling to heat their homes. We'll be updating our warm welcome directory as it provides a list of locations of a wide range of free indoor places and activities open to residents in the city. We will be providing accommodation also under the SWEP initiative triggered for 23/24 where it feels like 0 degrees or where there are amber weather warnings. Accommodation will be provided mainly on a private bedroom in shared facilities model with some small amount of provision for communal spaces depending on the demand we face on any particular night. On site security and food is provided as part of the SWEP offer, the Council's SWEP coordinator based with the street outreach service will be coordinating referrals for the accommodation with partner agencies and confirming placements. Ward members will be briefed prior to opening and full information about the service will be on the website. Rough sleepers brought into SWEP accommodation continue to work with street outreach and other services to achieve a move on where possible.

Councillor Earthey asked a supplementary question; In our ward, we are setting up a state of the art warning system using state of the art weather and other financial data used by the energy industry, so my question is: Given that many wards have access to weather and climate change expertise as at least as great if not greater than that available to the Council, will you, Councillor Sankey, reaffirm your recent commitment to the Brighton climate change thinktank that the Labour administration will engage with this local expertise?

Councillor Sankey replied; Thank you Councillor Earthey, that sounds like a very worthy initiative, and we'll be keen to hear much more about it.

#### Question 7 Councillor Goldsmith

Councillor Goldsmith asked a question; Just to be clear, I would rather not be using time in Full Council to speak about this, but as the administration has been so unresponsive to at least the local LGBT+ groups that I've spoken with, I do feel the need to ask this on their behalf. Can Councillor Sankey commit that the training which has been given to Councillor Thomson, and ideally to all members of this Council, will be provided by a local trans-led organisation as has been requested by these groups and, in light of what Councillor Hill asked earlier, can Councillor Sankey please explain exactly what training she feels would be necessary for a politician to know it's entirely wrong and dehumanising to compare minority groups to dogs?

Councillor Sankey replied; Our chief whip has been speaking to a number of providers of LGBT training and we'll be making the necessary arrangements, but we won't be taking any lessons from the Green Party on trans rights and equality. As I outlined to

Councillor Hill, the last Labour government broke new ground when it passed the Gender Recognition Act and the Equality Act. Since taking office, we have robustly defended trans rights publicly, as I demonstrated earlier on in this chamber and indeed at our last Full Council meeting in July and behind the scenes as we develop policy we will be judged on the outcomes we've delivered to trans people and I'm committed to increasing their visibility, safety, and life outcomes. I'd also like to take issue with misleading comments that Councillor Goldsmith made at the last Equalities Committee last week, implying that we are refusing to speak with trans groups in the city which is completely inaccurate, and we actually received an apology from the voluntary community sector today for those comments, and they didn't know how they'd come about. While we're on the subject of Councillor training, Madame Mayor, could I suggest that our Green Group colleagues undergo training on disability rights, their last administration left a disabled woman effectively housebound following a completely wrongful TRO amendment that they brought through and implemented in January, yet even when we consulted with residents and traders to put forward a sensible set of reforms, which would actually increase pedestrianisation at the times that suited traders but allow this vulnerable resident to enter and leave her home, rather than apologising to her or to our community of disabled people in the city, the Green Party doubled down, attacked us, and whipped up opposition to these plans. I really take issue with them now masquerading as a party that cares about equal dignity and worth. Far from it. Harming residents, not only through their words, but through their actions.

Councillor Goldsmith asked a supplementary question; I do feel like that was largely unrelated to my question, but thank you for the extra information, I suppose. You say that you will be judged on your outcomes; you've been protested by a large group of trans people today for your inaction on this, you are being judged on the outcomes of what you are doing and they're not making people happy. I've had trans residents in mine and Councillor Thomsons ward get in touch with me saying that they no longer feel safe or comfortable getting in contact their other Councillor. I don't see how you feel that's acceptable to them, so what will you actually be doing to listen to trans residents after you have undergone whatever training you say you're going to carry out to make sure that they actually feel reassured by the actions that you have taken. Right now, it's clearly not working.

Councillor Sankey replied; As Councillor Goldsmith knows, we're already setting up a roundtable with our trans community which is going to take place next month. We have been building our relationships with the trans community since we came into office, but I'd like to reiterate that I think Councillor Goldsmiths approach to this issue has been incredibly unhelpful, and I think it's actually been responsible for whipping up fear and mistrust and alarm, which serves absolutely nobody in this city.

Question 8 Councillor Hogan

Councillor Hogan asked a question; What is the plan to deal with decline in pupil numbers at schools across the city?

Councillor Helliwell replied; As you know, in Brighton & Hove we have seen a 22% decline in the birthrate as compared to 5% in the national, so we do have a roughly 20% excess places in primary schools and that will soon be feeding into secondary schools. Councillor Taylor and I have worked all summer on a plan, we have been visiting

schools and when we have our committee in November then we shall reveal our plan on how we plan to deal with those excess places.

Councillor Hogan asked a supplementary question; Are we going to have to close schools?

Councillor Helliwell replied; We are looking at all options and we have not made any firm decisions at the moment as everything that comes to committee will be a consultation.

Question 9 Councillor West

Councillor West asked a question; In the first few months of the Labour administration, Labour have chosen to pause, rethink, and rework a number of major projects; The A259 sea front cycle lanes, Madeira Terraces, Valley Gardens 3, and Kingsway to the Sea, this is despite the fact that, in the case of the A259 Cycle Lanes, the scheme had already passed through a number of committee decisions with Labour support and contracts had already been let. Contracts have now been cancelled, unprogrammed work for officers created and funding put at risk. What is the total cost of this hasty unnecessary meddling?

Councillor Sankey replied; The cost to our very sensible to plans to reevaluate and improve our active travel schemes in the city and our major projects is far less than the black whole that the Greens left in our budget last year.

Councillor West asked a supplementary question; I'm disappointed, Madame Mayor, that the Leader of the Council didn't answer the question straight and just decided to make another political attack. Given the scale of the budget pressures that you face now, how do you justify the additional expenditure that you have heaped on in the first few months of your administration?

Councillor Sankey replied; With respect, I think Councillor West might be confused; the Kingsway to the Sea project was paused while we could find savings in the project, so that project is now going to be delivered at a lesser price than the original price tag for it, so I'm not really sure where he's going with his question. There's no additional cost to all of the projects that we've decided to reevaluate and review, it just doesn't exist, it's a fantasy. To the more serious point, we are an administration that is absolutely committed and serious to regenerating this city in a way that our residents want to see. The fact that we voted for things in the last administration when there was no overall control doesn't mean that we thought projects that were being pursued were absolutely ideal, it was in an effort to reach compromise with the then Green administration, but now that we have overall control we of course are going to look at projects that have been initiated to make sure that they work for everybody in our city and I'm really pleased and proud that so as well as redesigning the A259 to make it a much higher quality active travel scheme rather than the dogs dinner that the Greens came up with, we're also going to be kickstarting our consultation on redevelopment and refurbishment of the King Alfred; we believe that the people of this city deserve and need a really high quality leisure centre, we're very committed to Madeira Terraces and we're going to be moving ahead with that at pace, and as I say, Kingsway to the Sea is now back on thanks to some brilliant work by officers to find the savings that we can while also delivering as much of that project as we can as well.



**45 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S CONSTITUTION**

- 45.1 Councillor Sankey introduced, and formally moved the report.
- 45.2 The Mayor noted that there was a joint amendment from the Green Group and the Conservative Group in relation to this report as set out in the addendum papers.
- 45.3 Councillor Shanks moved the joint amendment which was formally seconded by Councillor McNair.
- 45.4 Councillors West, Fishleigh, Burden, Meadows, Miller and Robins spoke on the matter.
- 45.5 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Miller on their maiden speech on behalf of the council.
- 45.6 Councillor Sankey confirmed that they would not accept the amendments.
- 45.7 The Mayor then put the amendment to the vote which was not carried.
- 45.8 The Mayor then put the recommendations as detailed in the report listed in the agenda to the vote which was carried.
- 45.9 **RESOLVED:**

That the council:

- (1) Approved the proposed changes set out in paragraphs 3 and 4 of the report and reflected in Appendices 1, 1A & 2 to come into effect immediately following their approval by Council, and
- (2) Authorised the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer to take all steps necessary or incidental for the implementation of the changes and authorises the Monitoring Officer to amend and re-publish the Council's constitutional documents to incorporate the changes.

**46 PRINTED PARKING VOUCHERS**

- 46.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Earthey on behalf of the Brighton and Hove Independents Group and formally seconded by Councillor Fishleigh.
- 46.2 Councillors Muten, Davis, Theobald, Lyons and Sankey spoke on the matter.
- 46.3 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Lyons on their maiden speech on behalf of the council.
- 46.4 The Mayor then put the notice of motion to the vote which was not carried.

**47 NET ZERO**

- 47.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Bagaeen on behalf of the Conservative Group and formally seconded by Councillor Meadows.
- 47.2 Councillors Muten, Pickett, Earthey, and Rowkins, spoke on the matter.
- 47.3 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Pickett on their maiden speech on behalf of the council.
- 47.4 The Mayor then put the notice of motion to the vote which was not carried.

#### **48 BETTER CUSTOMER SERVICE**

- 48.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Theobald on behalf of the Conservative Group and formally seconded by Councillor Hogan.
- 48.2 The Mayor noted that there were two amendments from the Green Group and the Labour Group in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.
- 48.3 Councillor Shanks moved the amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Goldsmith.
- 48.4 Councillor Stevens moved the amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Robinson.
- 48.5 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Robinson on their maiden speech on behalf of the council.
- 48.6 The Mayor, then put the Labour amendment to the vote which was carried.
- 48.7 The Mayor then put the following motion to the vote which was carried:

“This Council:

- 1) Notes the public dissatisfaction and high volume of complaints Councillors receive from residents about basic council services from missed refuse and recycling to overgrown weeds; to graffiti and litter on our streets, beaches and in our parks; to the general maintenance, upkeep and cleanliness of our city;
- 2) Notes that in the 2022-23 Annual Customer Insights Report, the overall customer service satisfaction rate was 59%, compared to a national benchmark of 60%; that only 51% of customers found the service easy to access; that stage 1 complaints increased by 25% since 2021/22; that face-to-face service accounted for less than 5% of all contact; that contact with customers is was down 22% overall since 2018;
- 3) Notes that a 28% increase in the Brighton & Hove 65+ population is expected in 2030 – from 38,300 to 50,100
- 4) Notes that a new Customer Experience Strategy, which outlines the continuing work to improve customer service, including improving accessibility by establishing new access points in libraries and family hubs, will be presented to the Strategy, Finance & City Regeneration Committee in December;
- 5) Notes that a new mystery shopping exercise reveals current overall satisfaction with council services at 85%.

This council therefore resolves to:

- Continue to progress its ongoing radical modernisation and renewal programme of Customer Service & Housing Support provided to Brighton and Hove residents from Hove Town Hall and Brighton Town Hall and other access points across the wider city
- Publicise and promote any future changes to the provision widely;
- Continue to improve the digital offer, including an ongoing end-to-end review of council web pages, to make it easier for customers to access all services online, in order to free resources to provide more face-to-face or telephone contact for those who genuinely need it
- Continue to encourage residents and members to use the online Councillor Enquiry Case Management System which enables residents to contact members 24/7 and streamlines members' contact with relevant officers
- Request officers to review the operation of these arrangements in 6 months and bring a report outlining the outcome of the review to a future S,F&CR Committee meeting

#### **49 OPPOSE ACADEMISATION OF OUR SCHOOLS**

\*

There was a combined debate on item 49 & 51

Cllr Sankey left the room at the commencement of this item and did not take part in the debate.

- 49.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Shanks on behalf of the Green Group and formally seconded by Councillor Goldsmith.
- 49.2 Councillors McNair, Fishleigh & Hogan spoke on the matter.
- 49.3 The notice of motion was not carried

#### **50 WOMEN'S FOOTBALL IN THE CITY**

\*

Cllr Sankey rejoined the meeting at the commencement of this item.

- 50.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Hewitt on behalf of the Labour Group and formally seconded by Councillor Miller.
- 50.2 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Hewitt on their maiden speech on behalf of the council.
- 50.3 The Mayor noted that there were two amendments from the Green Group and the Conservative Group in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.
- 50.4 Councillor Hill moved the amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Pickett.
- 50.5 Councillor Bagaeen moved the amendment on behalf of the Conservative Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Lyons.
- 50.6 Councillor Fishleigh spoke on the matter.

- 50.7 Councillor Hewitt confirmed that he would not accept the amendments.
- 50.8 The Mayor then put the Green Group amendment to the vote which was lost.
- 50.9 The Mayor then put the Conservative Group amendment to the vote which was lost.
- 50.10 The Mayor then put the following motion to the vote:

“This council notes:

1. That the City’s top-flight women’s football team- Brighton & Hove Albion-currently play their home matches in Crawley, some 22 miles from the City.
2. That this has a detrimental impact on attendances and hinders development and participation.
3. That the team having a purpose-built stadium in Brighton & Hove will benefit both the club and the City.

Therefore, resolves to:

4. To support in principle the return of the Brighton & Hove Albion women’s team to the City.
5. Request a report to Culture, Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Economic Development Committee on how the Council can support the club in establishing a women’s stadium in the city, including through identification of possible sites.

- 50.11 The Mayor confirmed that the motion had been carried.

## **51 OPPOSING ACADEMISATION OF BENFIELD AND HANGLETON SCHOOLS**

\*

There was a combined debate on item 49 & 51

Cllr Sankey left the room at the commencement of this item and did not take part in the debate.

- 51.1 The second Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Taylor on behalf of the Labour Group and formally seconded by Councillor Baghoth.
- 51.2 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Taylor on their maiden speech on behalf of the council.
- 51.3 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Baghoth on their maiden speech on behalf of the council.
- 51.4 Councillors McNair, Fishleigh & Hogan spoke on the matter.
- 51.5 The Mayor, then put the notice of motion to the vote which was carried.

“The council:

- (1) Request officers to ask the Governing Body for Benfield and Hangleton schools to pause the academisation proposal to enable more time to engage with the local authority and the community, including parents and carers

- (2) Request officers to work with the Hangleton and Benfield school communities and Governing Board to encourage them to remain in the Local Authority school's family
- (3) Request a report to a future Children, Families and Schools Committee addressing SEND and SEMH provision in the city
- (4) Request a report to a future Children, Families and Schools Committee which considers options for strengthening the partnerships that make up our family of schools, and boosts the support given to local authority school leadership."

## 52 SOLIDARITY WITH UCU STRIKERS

\*

Cllr Willams left the room at the commencement of this item and did not take part in the debate.

- 52.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Goldsmith on behalf of the Green Group and formally seconded by Councillor Pickett.
- 52.2 The Mayor noted that there was an amendment from the Labour Group in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.
- 52.3 Councillor Grimshaw moved the amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was seconded by Councillor Sheard.
- 52.4 Councillor Goldsmith confirmed that they would accept the amendment.
- 52.5 The Mayor then put the notice of motion as amended to the vote:
 

"This council notes:

  - 1) The industrial action taken by the University and College Union members against redundancies being made at the University of Brighton
  - 2) Concerns that there will be a significant impact on the university's offer in certain subjects as a result of the planned reduction in lecturers teaching students in education, engineering, humanities, art, media and sports science
  - 3) Recognises the significant impact on staff and students in our city of the decision to make 82 staff redundant
  - 4) Concerns for staff who have already had their pay deducted as a result of taking industrial action
  - 5) Recognises the challenges that universities are facing as a result of funding pressures, the impact of the hard-Brexit, and of the Covid-19 pandemic Therefore, resolves to:
  - 6) Express our support for all workers and unions who strive for fairness and better conditions including the workers who are involved in the current industrial action
  - 7) Encourage and urge a satisfactory outcome to save as many jobs as possible
  - 8) Request that officers work in partnership with the city's universities, staff and students to understand the challenges faced by the sector and explore opportunities for further lobbying of government on Higher education funding and support."
- 52.6 The Mayor confirmed the motion had been carried.

**53 CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting concluded at 10.27pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2023

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL**

**4.30pm 14 DECEMBER 2023**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors O'Quinn (Chair), Atkinson, Davis, Evans, Fishleigh, Fowler, Grimshaw, Meadows, McNair, Robins, Sankey, Shanks, C Theobald, West, Wilkinson, Alexander, Allen, Asaduzzaman, Baghoth, Burden, Cattell, Daniel, Earthey, Goddard, Goldsmith, Helliwell, Hewitt, Hill, Hogan, Loughran, Lyons, McGregor, McLeay, Miller, Muten, Nann, Oliveira, Pickett, Pumm, Robinson, Rowkins, Sheard, Simon, Stevens, Taylor, Thomson and Winder

**PART ONE**

**54 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

- 54.1 Councillor Hill declared a personal but not prejudicial interest as a member of Unison the union.
- 54.2 No other declarations of interests in matters appearing on the agenda were made.

**55 MINUTES**

- 55.1 The minutes of the special meeting held on the 19 October 2023 were approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings.

**56 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS.**

- 56.1 The Mayor gave the following communications:

“Good evening councillors and members of the public, It doesn't seem that long ago since the last Full Council, but much has happened between then and now. It's been a busy couple of months and the first major event during that time was the Mayor's Reception at Brighton Pavilion and I was delighted that it went so well. Over a 120 people attended and the feedback was excellent especially regarding the Silver Strings and our young singer Scarlett. That brings me onto one of my favourite areas which is young people. I have attended a number of events which support young people such as Teen Tech at the Amex – an amazing event to encourage young people to be creative about technology; the awards ceremony at the Amex for those either in Care or Care Leavers; the Apprenticeship Awards ceremony at the Metropole and the awards evening at the Hangleton and Knoll Project which celebrated many of its young people amongst others. All of these events plus Dance Active and physical fitness events showed how

much is being done to support and encourage the young people in our city especially as they experienced such a difficult time during Covid. That's not to mention all the amazing work that has been carried out on transforming many of the playgrounds in our city. We should all be proud of how much is done for young people in Brighton and Hove and the council's involvement in this.

Remembrance Commemorations were also a main feature of the month of November, and it was indeed an honour to represent the city at a number of these. The numbers of people who attend these events every year is increasing which is most encouraging, and we are all grateful for the support that the council gives to enable these events to take place. The commemoration services are deeply moving and remind us all of the sacrifices that our armed forces have made over many years and in many conflicts, both large and small. I'd like to express my thanks to all those who make Remembrance so very special – without them we wouldn't be able to put on so many events and services.

To follow up on Remembrance events we held a Veteran's Christmas Reception in the Mayor's Parlour which was exceptionally well attended and enabled a considerable amount of networking to take place. Amanda Grimshaw and I will be working with Veteran Groups to ensure that the momentum for change is not lost.

And now we turn to Christmas which is only a few days away. The Mayor is certainly not allowed to forget that it's the festive season as there are numerous invites to Carol Services across the city, turning on Xmas lights at the Bevy in Moulsecoomb and in Palmeira Square - and launching the Santa Bus – which was great fun. On a more serious note, I have attended some wonderful events by one of my Mayoral Charities, Together Co, which focuses on loneliness amongst young and old people. The number of volunteers 'befriend people' is quite extraordinary – 500 for Together Co alone. Loneliness has grown amongst the population since Covid, and we are also aware of it far more because of Covid and we all need to be aware of how damaging loneliness is to people's mental and physical health. We are fortunate to have both charities and the council working on this issues in the city.

I wish all of you a very enjoyable and restful Christmas break and an excellent New Year."

## **57 TO RECEIVE PETITIONS AND E-PETITIONS.**

57.1 The Mayor noted that there were no petitions to be presented at the meeting.

## **58 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

58.1 The Mayor reported that 6 written questions had been received from members of the public and invited John Mills to come forward and address the council.

58.2 John Mills asked the following question: Why is no protection being offered, by The Council, for the school which has the highest percentage of pupils with a disability or the highest percentage of teachers with a disability? Shouldn't the school be ringfenced, especially when a staff member has experienced ableism in a Brighton and Hove school previously?



- 58.3 Councillor Helliwell replied: Thank you for your question, John - and thank you for your input to the consultation event. I know you've also exchanged emails with Cllr Taylor and myself on this subject. It's really important that we hear your voice and your perspective. I'm really sorry to hear that you've faced ableism in your previous job in the city - that's just not acceptable. It's clear that you are great teacher and are passionate about your pupils. We completely recognise the worry and potential impact of these proposals. As has been discussed earlier in the meetings that we've had across the city, our primary school system in the city is under considerable stress, and because of a continued fall in pupil numbers. Our consideration of whether to propose the closure of a particular school was based on a number of factors, including the current and future viability of the school, and associated pupil numbers. If a decision is taken to close any school, it will be important for the council to properly support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and ensure that they can transition to an appropriate new school. We want to keep skilled and talented staff within the city wherever possible and are asking other unaffected schools to consider this in their future employment activities. We will also give school staff at risk of redundancy access to the Council's redeployment pool where they may be able access other Council jobs.
- 58.4 John Mills asked the following supplementary question: What specific support will be offered to staff who have found a uniquely welcoming home at St. Barts, and will now have to move to a school which, based on previous experiences, may not be as welcoming.
- 58.5 Councillor Helliwell replied: All schools should be welcoming to all new staff, and if you find any problems in future schools then you need to follow the line of command so that you need to raise issues with your head of department, your head of school, and if you are still having problems then absolutely email us and we will see what we can do.
- 58.6 Mo Marsh asked the following question: Would Cllr Taylor agree with me that the citywide declining school population, and budget restrictions presents the administration with huge challenges determining admissions policies which need to be addressed carefully and sensitively involving all stakeholders, including of course the increasing numbers of pupils with additional needs identified since Covid and ever diminishing resources.
- 58.7 Councillor Taylor replied: Thank you Mo for your question, and welcome back to the chamber. As a predecessor of mine as Moulscroomb and Bevendean's Councillor, thank you for your question. I completely agree with you. The city faces a significant challenge in terms of falling pupil numbers. The numbers nationally are significant, but they're particularly stark in Brighton & Hove. From 2011 to 2021 the fall in children 0-4 years has been 22% and the consequent impact of that on funding for schools is very significant and we may explore that later in the meeting, and many of our schools are in extreme financial difficulty, so we have had to take action and make some proposals on this, but I completely agree with your question that none of it is easy and none of those options are particularly appetising or ones that we would have wanted to make. I agree with your proposition that it has to be considered carefully, the consultations have to be considered and the output has to be considered and particular care and consideration has to be given to pupils that may be impacted that have SEND and other needs, and that's what we'll be doing.

- 58.8 Mo Marsh asked the following supplementary question: These proposals will have a huge negative future impact on generations of the cities families including possible loss of local authority schools to become academies, which would be one way of removing themselves from this process of having their PAN's reduced, or their schools even closed. Emerging data, which is emerging as the consultation proceeds, shows that the east of the city seems to be particularly severely impacted, and unfairly. I'm not a statistician or a mathematician, wiser people than me show that we have a smaller fall in pupil numbers in the east of the city. The date of the Children's, Families, and Schools meeting has already had to be moved on because of the impending by-election in portland, and so what I'm asking for shouldn't be unachievable. There are other solutions to this process which could be explored, IE partnerships, confederations, smaller class sizes – how would that be? That is a real education winner, we know that smaller class sizes are the best thing for pupils, better resourcing from a future Labour government could also be explored. There's other things to explore, those are just some of them. I know you asked in your consultation documents for solutions. Therefore, would you please consider an immediate extension of the current consultation date from next Friday, which is the day before Christmas and nobody's going to be doing anything for a few days, to allow officers and everyone to consider all the information that's coming forward from the consultation process, information, and data, with the idea that this is for the future good of the city. Can we just hold fire on the process and extend it?
- 58.9 Councillor Taylor replied: I'm afraid I disagreed more with the proposition in your first question than your second one, which is that you have said that these may have a disastrous impact and it might lead to academisation; that is the situation we are already in because the truth is, in this city, the problem has been kicked down the road for too long. This isn't me saying it, it's every single head teacher in the city. Proposals over the last three years were looked at to reduce PAN's and yet we are where we are where more than half the schools in our city are in financial deficit and the very main driver of that is the dramatic fall in numbers and that many schools don't have enough pupils in their school. We have to take some action, we didn't want to take any action, but we have to because we're a responsible council. I would also challenge slightly that the east of the city is being disproportionately impacted. Brighton Kemptown constituency is the only constituency that isn't subject to a school closure proposal, although I agree with you that two schools are proposed for PAN reductions in the ward that I know you're particularly closely related to. I don't think your suggestion of extending the consultation is a good idea. Many, many contributions have been made to the consultation, at the latest count over a thousand have been made, so people are very aware of the proposals, have been making contributions to the consultations which we've been listening to, responding to, engaging with and in January, as you have said, the committee has been moved back by three weeks. We will consider everything in the consultation, and we will make our decisions, thank you.
- 58.10 Christopher Hawtree asked the following question:  
Would Councillor Sankey please outline the steps by which this Authority envisages the use and implementation of Artificial Intelligence for the processing and supply of its public services?
- 58.11 Councillor Sankey replied: Thank you for your question, which is very pertinent. The starting point for us as a local authority is to ensure that there is a policy framework in place which addresses the risks and ethical considerations, along with identifying the

areas of low risk in terms of data governance and security. A draft policy is currently scheduled for review by officers. Following the approval of this policy, existing Digital, Data and Technology governance will be used to identify opportunities for exploration. This step would involve reviewing examples from other local authorities and public sector organisations. These examples would inform the understanding of our own requirements, including the level of investment and preparatory activities required. Once there is sufficient levels of assurance concerning risk management and benefits realisation, the AI capabilities would be drawn-upon as part of the overall package of IT and Digital capabilities at the disposal of this council.

- 58.12 Christopher Hawtree asked the following supplementary question: As you indicated in your reply, this is of course a resonant subject in our time. It ranges from the provision of that subtling up there with a modicum of accuracy to the intricacies of open-heart surgery. As such, would, for example, the collection and processing of refuse likely be one of the things considered by the officers whom you mention, something that's likely to be automated in this way? Will you be, as part of this review of the situation, be advocating the introduction of a universal basic income so that those affected will be able to take better, even positive, advantage of this momentous turn to human destiny?
- 58.13 Councillor Sankey replied: I think we've pivoted a little bit to Universal Basic Income, but we are actually as a matter of fact considering a pilot of Universal Basic Income, along with a number of other Labour councils nationwide, and there will be more information about that over the coming months.
- 58.14 Laura King asked the following question: We are constantly told this Brighton and Hove City Council is short of money, yet the budget for 2023/24 is £895million. How is this not enough for the city's upkeep and goods and services delivery?
- 58.15 Councillor Taylor replied: It's an important question because it allows us to explain a bit more to the public about the budget. That very large figure that you cited, nearly £900 million, is the gross budget of the Council. Within that, very significant portions are ringfenced for specific things. For example, the dedicated schools grant schools funding that comes directly from government and goes directly to schools, in a nutshell, is about £240 million. There's many other ringfenced areas. A more relevant figure to look at is probably the net general fund, which is about £250 million, and that's the bit that we have control of and which we have to deliver many of our non-statutory and indeed statutory services. You may have noticed around the country, Laura, that many councils are in difficulty at the moment, it's not an invented problem, it's a real problem. Tory councils, Labour councils, Lib Dem councils, SNP councils, are in difficulty at the moment and the simple fact is that the funding that local authority receives largely from national government, but also through council tax and business rates, has not kept up with the cost of services, and so what we're facing next year in Brighton and Hove is what we call a 'budget gap' of £31 million, roughly speaking about £53 million is what it's going to cost more to provide the services we already provide, and we get about £21 million extra funding that leaves us with a gap that we've got to fill. Yes it's a big budget, and we deliver 400 services. It's a bit like asking how can a company that has a large turnover get into trouble, well because they have high expenses and high liabilities, so that's the position we're in. I guess the thrust of your question is are we wasting money as a council on not doing things efficiently. A huge focus of the current budget setting

process will be to try and deliver things better and more efficiently so that we can reduce costs that keep delivering services.

58.16 Laura King asked the following supplementary question:

Is it now time for the councils legally appointed 151 officer to serve a 114 notice on Brighton and Hove City Council regarding the substantial anticipated shortfall of £70 million in its revenue account and to make way for a local residents shadow council, more able to manage the council's finances, to take over and the existing leadership of the council should step down?

58.17 Councillor Taylor replied:

The short answer to that is no. We're not in that position yet as a council, but we are in a very serious position. Some other councils in the country have got to the position where they're issuing section 114 notices. It was a novel idea presented that we might then replace the elected council of this city with some other body, presumably not elected, but it does highlight why it's really important that we do manage to budget and that we do set a budget that's sustainable next year and that it's controlled and managed by the democratically elected representatives of the city so that we can reflect our residents priorities in that budget.

58.18 Rohan Lowe asked the following question: What ideas are being look at on improving the current Hove Station footbridge as part of the neighbourhood plan so that it is more as accessible as possible for people with disabilities?

58.19 Councillor Muten replied: The existing Hove Station Footbridge was designed and constructed in the 1880's without the accessibility arrangements we would expect today. An historic agreement means that BHCC has responsibility for maintaining the footbridge, as owned by Network Rail. For this reason, a quarter of million pounds has been made available this year and for next to continue maintaining this aging bridge. As ward councillor, I absolutely agree - an accessible crossing of the railway in Goldsmid ward is needed. The only accessible option nearby is the Fonthill Road tunnel which needs improving including better lighting. The is some distance from Hove Station, more so as an accessible route. The Council's initial focus will be agreeing a solution with Network Rail on its existing maintenance and longer-term viability of the Hove Station Footbridge. This needs to include improvements in overall accessibility for people with disabilities for the local community and rail passengers. We will be pursuing options and funding to improve access in the near future.

58.20 Rohan Lowe asked the following supplementary question: Given that the Hove Station Footbridge is close to a major visually impaired base and several supported living houses for people with disabilities, will the council be taking this into account?

58.21 Councillor Muten replied:

Absolutely, we do need to take into account the local communities and those people that most need to be able to cross this railway. It is really inadequate, the existing bridge does not provide accessibility options for many local residents and people who need to use the station, so yes, we do need to look at the needs of the local community and specific groups that you mention there as well. There is quite a lot to do to solve this, but as ward councillor and chair of Transport and Sustainability, I'm actually passionate to solve this and so I'll be working with network rail and other partners in that area to get

an accessible route across the station and make it much more easy for everybody to cross.

- 58.22 Nigel Furness asked the following question: Since the construction of the i360 was enabled in 2014, our city now has an estimated debt of £51 million and rising. What are this Administration's plans to mitigate and prevent further losses?
- 58.23 Councillor Sankey replied: We share your pain; Labour's position has always been that the i360 should not have been financed with public money - it was Green and Conservative councillors who lumbered the council with this significant debt and this reckless use of public funds which was an unforgivable lack of judgement and which they must never be allowed to forget. Despite this, we hope that this landmark in our city can turn itself around as nobody sets to gain from its failure, least of all residents. It's for that reason that myself and Councillor Taylor have met with the current managers of the i360 to talk about their plans. Whilst the total debt now stands at over £44m, any rise in the debt owed is due to the addition of rolled up interest for elements of the loan that have been deferred. It is not additional borrowing by the council. Our number one priority is ensuring the council gets back all or as much of its money as possible. We continue to explore all options. We have been encouraging the i360 to diversify their business model and they have taken some immediate measures such as letting space to Sixes Social Cricket. They are also preparing a longer-term business plan and we have stressed that this plan must be realistic and deliverable. Once we have considered this business plan we will review our next steps in the short to medium term and officers will report back to Committee.
- 58.24 Nigel Furness asked the following supplementary question: Thank you for your honesty and your accuracy, Councillor Sankey. Credit where it's due, but I do have to ask; if we can't pay, will they take it away, please?
- 58.25 Councillor Taylor replied: With your permission Madame Mayor. The position with the i360 is difficult in that if we were to essentially enforce against the loan and put the company into default, we would have to crystalize that loss straight away in our accounts, and that would cause a big problem in-year. The strategy that's being pursued is the right one for now, which is to try and make the business viable, support it. There are mixed views as to what the actual attraction looks like. It's actually a great piece of engineering at least, and when you get up it there are some great views, so I don't think there's any immediate plans to take it away from the seafront.

## **59 DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

- 59.1 The Mayor reported that three deputations had been received from members of the public and invited Ed Armston-Sheret as the spokesperson for the first deputation to come forward and address the council. The deputation related to Brightstart Nursery.
- 59.2 Councillor Taylor replied, "thank you Ed, for your deputation, and your engagement with the process. I know you are like me, busy being parents, as well as juggling jobs and normal life – so thank you for taking the time to bring this to Full Council tonight. It was good to see some of you on Tuesday night at the parent consultation meeting, and also to speak to you in November as you just referenced, where lots of valid concerns and questions were raised. This administration shares your view that Early Years provision

is vital, and we are doing everything we can to maintain council provision against a backdrop of brutal government cuts to council funding. The council faces a £31 million budget gap for next year, and many other councils are in a similarly difficult position – which is one of the reasons why most others have been forced to stop providing nurseries (which are non-statutory for councils). We're proud that Brighton & Hove City council still maintains a number of high-quality early years settings – and we want it to stay that way. I realise that this change will be of concern to parents. However, moving the provision to the Tarner Family Hub is not a closure: it is a way of guaranteeing the future of council-run nursery provision in the area. The proposed model is for a 16 place nursery for children aged 2 to 5. We are confident that we can accommodate all children currently attending Bright Start Nursery within the proposed model and the space available in the Tarner Family Hub from September 2024. We are currently consulting with parents on the proposed model of Bright Start at the Tarner Family Hub. We are offering individual meetings to all parents of children currently attending, to discuss their individual needs. We invited all parents to a consultation meeting on 12 December to explain the proposed model, and many attended. Based on the information gathered from families and staff, the specifics of the proposed operating model will be considered. As we discussed in the meeting on Tuesday – this is a meaningful consultation because the input provided can shape the final offer at Tarner. Thanks again for your deputation.”

- 59.3 The Mayor thanked Ed for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. She explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to Children, Families & Schools Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.
- 59.4 The Mayor advised that in view of the similar subject matter of Deputation 2 concerning St Peter's Primary & Nursery School, the deputation and the Petition for Debate on the related subject at Item 62 would be considered together.
- 59.5 The Mayor thanked Emily for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. She explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to Children, Families & Schools Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.
- 59.6 The Mayor advised that in view of the similar subject matter of Deputation 3 concerning St Bartholomew's C of E Primary School the deputation and the Petition for Debate on the related subject at Item 61 would be considered together.
- 59.7 The Mayor thanked Azhhar for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. She explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to Children, Families & Schools Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.

**60 NEGLECT OF PUBLIC FACILITIES AT WISH PARK IS IMPACTING THE COMMUNITY'S HEALTH**

- 60.1 The Mayor stated that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at the council meeting. She had been made aware of three such petitions and invited Mr O'Dell to join the meeting and to present the petition concerning Neglect of Public Facilities at Wish Park is Impacting the Community's Health.
- 60.2 Mr O'Dell thanked the Mayor and presented the petition which had been signed by 1770 people.
- 60.3 Councillor Rowkins thanked Mr O'Dell for presenting the petition and stated that "First, I'd like to apologise for the deterioration we have seen at Wish Park and the impact it has had on the community. We have been monitoring the situation for some time and working to resolve it. Firstly, the current state of one of the football pitches is primarily due to damage caused by an event earlier in the year rather than a lack of maintenance. Clearly that is not ideal, and we are taking steps to avoid any similar incidents in the future. Unfortunately, when the circus was on the site, it was particularly wet and that left the pitch in a poor state. This has now been soiled and seeded, but unfortunately it was not done to the standard we would hope. We are very sorry for the disruption caused to football clubs wanting to use the site, and certainly it is my view that crucial, regular community activities such as sports should be a priority and not disrupted. We have put in place a new framework for events, to ensure that groundworks can be enabled more quickly where possible, and there are no events are planned for the Park in Summer 2024. We are also working on a series of updated, park-specific event packs that will provide better guidance for events to ensure minimal negative impact. We will be communicating with the football clubs to keep them informed. A final plan for the use of the available 3 pitches is now being finalised between the FA and the parks team. We hope to share this proposal with the teams before Christmas and will then share this more widely with the community. We are currently developing an action plan to ensure that the cricket pitch will be usable from April. The Council agree with the Association of Sussex Cricket Grounds that spring reseeding is now the best possible approach to ensure the best possible results in a timely manner, and agree that any deeper work would require heavy machinery that would cause significant further damage. Weather allowing this should see the surface more than useable from April. We hear the concerns from Friends about needing a new solution for protecting the cricket green. We are currently exploring other viable options on this, but currently the mesh and pins solution is the best to ensure the cricket square is preserved without creating a significant safety hazard to park users. Things are moving forward regarding the replacement of the outdoor gym, which was removed in 2021 because it was rotten and unsafe. The Friends of Wish Park are preparing a bid to secure the funds and the location of the gym has been agreed between City Parks and the Friends of Wish Park. Nearly all the city's shrub beds have been in decline over the last 20 years, from an aesthetic point of view. This is due to the combined effect of a reduction in staff and replanting budgets due to local authority cuts. I'd like to thank the Friends Group for the work they are doing to weed beds in Wish. The management of parks and green spaces across the city is currently under review, and we aim to test new working practices to maximise the use and spread of our teams in the new year. We will communicate this with Friends of the parks, clubs and local residents once this is approved. However, I am pleased to say that plans for Wish Park are now moving with more pace, and a

dedicated officer is liaising with stakeholders to address the issues raised by the petition. This included a meeting with the ward councillors last week, which has produced an action plan to address concerns raised. I'd like to thank the petitioners for bringing these issues to our attention and to the Friends of Wish Park for their commitment to providing a park where residents can enjoy recreational activities in the heart of their community."

60.4 Councillor Pickett moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor West.

60.5 Councillor Hogan spoke on the petition.

60.6 Councillor Rowkins confirmed that he would not accept the Green amendment.

60.7 The Mayor then put the Green Group amendment to the vote which was lost.

60.8 The Mayor thanked Mr O'Dell for presenting the petition and put the recommendations to the vote.

**RESOLVED:**

60.9 That the petition was noted and referred to the City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee for consideration.

**61 SAVE ST BARTHOLOMEW'S C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL FROM CLOSURE**

61.1 The Mayor stated that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at the council meeting. Due to the similar subject matter of a Deputation these were taken together.

She invited Azhhar Naeem and Katie Blood to join the meeting and to present the deputation and petition concerning St Bartholomew's C of E Primary School.

61.2 Katie Blood thanked the Mayor and stated that the petition had been signed by over 3000 people.

61.3 Thank you, Madam Mayor, and thank you, Azhhar and Katie, for presenting your petition and deputation today, which I acknowledge has been signed by a large number of people. We welcome it, and we ask the Council to note it, and we will refer to the Children, Families and Schools Committee in January where this matter will be discussed further and we also thank you for the deputation, which will also be referred to the same committee. I want to start by acknowledging how sad this situation is for the city and how painful this proposal is for parents, children and staff. It breaks my heart to be doing it and it breaks my heart to hear, Azhhar the comments you have made and the experiences that you are relaying. Katie, as you have said, you have invited members to visit school. I have visited the school, I have met with you. I have actually visited the school many times before you worked at the school. I know, given my personal connection to the school, what has been highlighted in the petition and the deputation is vitally important and must be heard. The same goes for the feedback we have received in the consultation, both in meetings and in writing, the voices of staff,



parents and the broader community are being listened to, and they will inform how we proceed. The affection with which the community holds the school is evident and has come across strongly in the consultation process. I want to directly address the point you've raised about Black and Global Majority pupils, as you have highlighted. St Bartholomew's has a higher than average number of such pupils. It is also worth pointing out the same is true of many schools in the centre of the city, and let me try and give some context for parents and for full council. Of the 12 schools closest to St Bartholomew's, 9 have a larger number of BAME pupils, and that is using the Department of Education terminology. The nearest school, St Paul's C of E Primary School also a one form entry school has 18 more, BAME children. St Mary Magdalen's Catholic Primary school less than one mile away from St Bartholomew's has more than double the number of BAME pupils despite this also being a one form entry school. If any of the nearby schools are proposed for closure there would be an impact on Black and Global Majority pupils and we accept that, acknowledge that and have to include that in our decision making. In many cases, there would be a greater impact in terms of the number of pupils at those schools. I want to assure you that these factors have been considered in our decision-making process so far when we put these proposals forward, but as a Council, we do have lessons to learn in how we demonstrate our process and whether in future we need to be more explicit and transparent in our considerations. It is also worth noting that parents and staff have highlighted the intersectionality of factors affecting some families at the school, some have faced trauma, have additional educational needs and have English as an additional language and whilst that is not unique to just St Bartholomew's families, we absolutely recognise that fact and agree that we must consider it when making our final decisions. I also want to address the broader question of why these proposals have been made. I do not think anyone in this Chamber became a councillor because they wanted to propose a closure of a school. I certainly didn't and many mornings I wake up and wish I was not in this position. But being a compassionate and responsible council, mean sometimes making difficult decisions. I have to be honest with the city and with councillors and with parents and with staff. Our primary school system is under severe pressure because of the issue of falling pupil numbers. The city currently has 2610 reception places in primary schools in the coming years, we expect only around 1900 pupils will require a place. Our reception classes will be a quarter empty. This has a very severe impact on the ability of many schools to set viable budgets for schools are funded on a per pupil basis. If they do not have the pupils close to their capacity, they lose funding and we are not predicting an issue with school budgets in the future. We have one now. At the Strategy, Finance and City Regeneration Committee last week, the Chief Financial Officer talked us through the current situation, 54% of schools in this city are in licence deficit and the school's grant is about to go out of balance. We asked Nigel whether this was common, whether it was typical in recent years. It's very, very far from being common 10 to 15 years ago, one or two schools might be asking for licence deficits, with plans to come out of them. We now have more than half our schools in financial deficit, but this isn't really about the money. I want to explain why schools are funded by government, after all, not by councils. It's not about penny pinching or saving money. It is about what the lost funding could buy. Extra support to pupils that need it and resources, and by the way, this isn't councillors saying it? It is the people who most understand our school system, Headteachers. I want to finish very quickly, Madam Mayor, by quoting from a letter that I received from 36 primary headteachers in the city back in June.

- 61.4 Councillor McLeay moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Shanks.
- 61.5 Councillor Hogan spoke on the matter.
- 61.6 Councillor Taylor confirmed that he would not accept the Green Group amendment.
- 61.7 The Mayor then put the Green Group amendment to the vote which was lost.
- 61.8 The Mayor thanked Katie Blood for presenting the petition and put the recommendations to the vote.

**RESOLVED:**

- 61.9 That the petition is noted and referred to the Children, Families & Schools Committee for consideration.

**62 HELP SAVE ST. PETER'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

- 62.1 The Mayor stated that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at the council meeting. Due to the similar subject matter of a Deputation these were taken together.

She invited Emily Brewer and Kirsty Moore to join the meeting and to present the deputation and petition concerning St Peter's Community School.

- 62.2 Kirsty Moore thanked the Mayor and presented the petition.
- 62.3 Councillor Taylor thanked Kirsty and Emily for presenting the deputation and petition and stated that "more generally, thank you for engaging so passionately and knowledgeably with this difficult proposal. It was good to meet both of you today, where we went through a lot of the more detail of everything that lies behind what you have said. It was also good to see and hear you at the public consultation meeting, where a number of these points were raised. If I am honest, I wish we were meeting in different circumstances because on so many issues, we would agree and be able to work together really well. The issues that have been raised in the deputation and the petition are vital for the Council to hear, understand and reflect on, and we will refer them to the January Children, Families and Schools Committee, where they will be considered alongside the overall proposal. I just want to reiterate what a difficult position we are in and that we genuinely do understand how upsetting this is for parents, children, and staff. We do not want to be making these proposals, we will ensure that the papers and decision-making take into account the important points that you have raised. I do just want to briefly respond on a few, in terms of not taking into account net migration and forecasting. The forecasting over the previous number of years has been 96 to 98% accurate in terms of pupil numbers for the following years. So, a high degree of accuracy generally and more broadly than that, the sad truth is that we already have a significant problem in terms of school places today. So even if the predicted decline isn't as sharp as assumed, we still have a significant issue that we have to try and tackle, and the Council is in contact with West Sussex and will monitor and discuss the places available in the area around St Peter's as we move towards making a decision and if we

do make a decision afterwards, we have acknowledged the concern about the potential loss of nursery class within the school and we will need to consider that implication very, very carefully in the next steps we take and the decision making and just briefly on the mental health of people, which I completely accept, this is a distressing proposal for everyone concerned. The Council has already allocated additional resources to support any transition if it is agreed, and that will include resources for educational psychologists to support the process. I will just finish by saying that once again, thank you for your deputation and petition and for making your voices heard. We are listening.”

62.4 Councillor Shanks moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Goldsmith.

62.5 Councillor Hogan spoke on the petition.

62.6 Councillor Taylor confirmed that he would not accept the Green Group amendment.

62.7 The Mayor then put the Green Group amendment to the vote which was lost.

62.8 The Mayor thanked Kirsty Moore for presenting the petition and put the recommendations to the vote.

#### **RESOLVED:**

62.9 That the petition is noted and referred to the Children, Families & Schools Committee for consideration.

#### **63 CALL OVER FOR REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.**

##### **(a) Callover**

The following items on the agenda were reserved for discussion:

Item 66 APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE  
Item 67 REPORT BY AILEEN MCCOLGAN KC

##### **(b) Receipt and/or Approval of Reports**

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that Items 66 and 67 had been reserved for discussion; and

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the following reports on the agenda with the recommendations therein had been approved and adopted:

68 HOVE STATION NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DECISION STATEMENT  
69 ROTTINGDEAN PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN – DECISION STATEMENT

##### **(c) Oral Questions from Members**

The Mayor noted that there were 16 oral questions.

**64 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

64.1 The Mayor noted that written questions from Members and the replies from the appropriate Councillor were taken as read by reference to the list included in the addendum which had been circulated prior to the meeting as detailed below:

**1. Councillor Fishleigh**

When will the development brief for Black Rock be written and marketed?

**Reply from Councillor – Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee**

Tibbalds were appointed in the summer to begin this piece of work and the current timetable allows for a report to come to committee in March 2024.

**2. Councillor Fishleigh**

What is the timescale for resurfacing The Green and High Street in Rottingdean and what is the plan to improve the adjacent paving?

**Reply from Councillor – Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you, Cllr Fishley, for your question.

You may be pleased to hear that the Green and High Street are on the provisional carriageway surfacing programme for 2024/25; subject to funding and programme timing. As I am sure you appreciate, next year's programme for will not be finalised until the budgets are set in March 2024 and the final stage of the prioritisation process can be completed.

I have been advised by council officers that the Highways Maintenance budgets do not currently extend to improving the adjacent paving. As such, footway budgets are very limited with the current budgets prioritised to deliver a targeted programme of footway 'seek and fix' which repairs the worst sections of footway first rather than delivering full schemes. This approach ensures that the limited budgets reach the locations that are most in need of safety maintenance. In all cases, our Highway Inspectors walk every road in the City a minimum of once every 6 months (more frequently in busy areas) and all investigation level safety defects are investigated and actioned as per our approved Highway Safety Maintenance Policy.

I will ensure that an assessment is done as we plan the resurfacing of The Green and High Street in Rottingdean to ensure that the footway 'seek and fix' approach addresses any safety defects in the adjacent paving.

**3. Councillor Fishleigh**

Which BHCC-owned assets have been identified for disposal, what are the timescales and asking prices?

**Reply from Councillor – Sankey, Leader of the Council**

Property Parts 1 and 2 reports presented to Strategy, Finance & City Regeneration on 7<sup>th</sup> December Committee asked for approval to proposed disposals for non-HRA residential properties that are vacant, surplus to requirement and poor performing commercial properties as part of a Commercial Investment Strategy. Estimated valuations are commercially sensitive and confidential and once approval is obtained, marketing of the vacant properties will commence.

**4. Councillor Earthey**

EV charging is a problem for people without off-street parking, but there are solutions for these people such as 'EV Channel Charging', that can be implemented without cost to councils because the residents bear the cost of the charging infrastructure. Is BHCC following the lead of Nottinghamshire and other councils and evaluating these schemes for possible adoption in Brighton?

**Reply from Councillor – Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you, Cllr Earthey, for your question.

We are aware of some trials that local authorities (LAs) are undertaking to allow residents to lay their own EV cables in channels dug into the pavement. We will watch with interest when those trials are complete and the LAs publish their findings, however we do have concerns about the channel strategy, in terms of accessibility to the space, the potential for trip hazards and ongoing maintenance. We expect the trials currently being undertaken by other LAs will provide some useful insight that could be considered as part of our future EV charging infrastructure strategy.

It is also important to note that the channel solution requires a parking space to be available directly outside a resident's property, which unfortunately is not something that we can guarantee, due to the high and increasing demand for both parking and charging. For this reason and close proximity of terrace properties and flats, connection with individual private dwellings may not be the best communal option. We are committed to delivering our next phase of designated parking bays for communal EV charging across our city.

**5. Councillor Earthey**

Assuming a positive outcome to the evaluation, by when could BHCC implement a city-wide 'EV Channel Charging', which would allow our residents without off-road parking to charge their electric car at a reasonable cost?

**Reply from Councillor – Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

We will be going out to tender for Phase 2 of our EV charging programme early next year and fully expect a lot of interest and competition in the opportunity. The evaluation process will consider the cost of charging as a key element. Some operators have already started to offer off-peak charging rates to their customers, taking advantage of lower energy prices overnight or when the network has extra

capacity. Operators may also propose innovative solutions that we are not yet aware of. We shall await the outcome of the procurement before considering any alternative approaches.

## 6. Councillor Earthey

BHCC's 'Blink Charging' currently costs EV users between 60p/kWh and 78p/kWh, plus a 20p transaction fee. Why are these charges so high, being around double the commercial cost of electricity?

What proportion (if any) of Blink Energy's tariff revenue goes to BHCC?

### Reply from Councillor – Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

Thank you, Cllr Earthey, for your further question.

EV cars do offer a low carbon and cleaner alternative. As EV car prices are now reducing and more come onto the second-hand market, we are gearing up our provision of EV charging across our city. This is why we are committed to delivering the next phase of on street EV charging in 2024 bringing hundreds more charging points to all parts of the city.

The Blink charges are comparable to the national averages, according to recently published figures from ZapMap ([Zapmap Price Index - Average weighted price to charge on the public network - Zapmap \(zap-map.com\)](https://zapmap.com)). The average price nationally in Oct '23 for public charging at a 7kW charger was 55p/kWh and 79p at rapid/ultra. Blinks rates sit within that average, albeit a little over on the slow charging option at 60p, and slightly under at 78p for rapid charging.

It is important to note a direct comparison between the residential rate of electricity and the on-street rate cannot be made as residential prices are not subject to VAT. In the same way that energy companies apply a standing charge to households, Blink's charge also includes an element to cover their own costs of providing this service. It should also be noted that Blink provided the majority of the investment for the City's EV charging network and are a commercial organisation.

The current contract with Blink is regularly price checked against our neighbours and the national average to ensure that our users are charged fairly. As previously mentioned, the new procurement we will be undertaking will test the market further on price charged to the user. As always, charges are subject to variation as the energy market fluctuates. Price increases are minimised and when the market allows we will ensure that price reductions are passed on to the user.

To take a phrase from COP28, our opportunity for Fossil Fuel Phase Out is now. Thank you for raising this – yes, we are on this and want to set prices that mean more can chose EV rather than burning polluting fossil fuels. This is why we are committed to delivering the next phase of on street EV charging in 2024 bringing hundreds more charging points to all parts of the city.

## 7. Councillor Earthey

Ovingdean, Rottingdean, and West Saltdean have only one of the city's 400+ EV charge points, but we have much more than 1/400th of the city's population. When is BHCC going to address the chronic shortage of public EV charge points in the Ovingdean, Rottingdean, and West Saltdean areas by giving us a fair share?

**Reply from Councillor – Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you Cllr Earthey.

This is a really good point. I agree, Ovingdean, Rottingdean, and West Saltdean areas should have their fair share to access public on-street EV charge points. A Climate and Biodiversity Emergency was declared in 2018 and Fossil Fuel Phase Out is for every part of our city and is important and pressing.

Our initial focus has been to provide charge points in locations where there is a high density of households with no access to off-street parking and where there has been demand for a charge point from those residents. The funding we have received to date prescribed this approach.

Subject to receiving additional funding from central government (Office for Zero Emission Vehicles or OZEV) in the new year, we will be able to broaden the criteria with our next installation (Phase 2). We must still focus on residents on who do not have off-street parking, but we will be ensuring that charge points are evenly distributed across the City. Our aim is to have a charge point within a short walk of every resident who needs to charge their vehicle and who does not have off-street parking.

We will consult with all stakeholders in the second quarter of 2024 about potential new locations. Residents who would like to request a charge point can do so via our website [Support for electric vehicle owners \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/support-for-electric-vehicle-owners).

We are committed to installing on-street EV charging in all areas with the next EV charging phase planned in 2024. Thank you for your support in calling for this to happen at pace. We agree, we act, we will deliver.

**8. Councillor Bagaeen**

S106 Moda

Residents in Hove Park are angry about the manner in which S106 allocated under a legally dining agreement have been repurposed against the terms of the legal agreement between the council and Moda. Could you please confirm who took the decision to repurpose the s106 monies which was in place to mitigate the impact of the Moda development on the local community?

Please also confirm how the decision to repurpose the s106 funds was taken and why was this not formally communicated when the decision was taken to members of the Moda Community Liaison Group, a formal group that has had senior officer membership and support for a little over two years.

### **Reply from Councillor – Robins, Chair of Culture, Heritage, Sport, Tourism & Economic Development Committee**

The S106 agreement does not allocate funding to particular projects in specific wards adjacent to the Moda development. It highlights certain council assets where the funding could be used and the Kingsway to the Sea site is one of the assets identified in the agreement.

The council has been working with the Moda Community Liaison Group on various aspects of the S106, including the implementation of the artistic contribution and the identification of a number of small, local schemes that various local groups have identified (eg basketball court refurbishment in Hove Park.) Subject to further work on costs, it is anticipated that the majority of these projects will proceed funded through the S106 contribution. We caution Tory ward councillors against misleading residents about how S106 funding works and political mischief-making, and particularly against using such inflammatory language.

The decision to allocate further funding to Kingsway to the Sea, was also one taken transparently through the committee process. Following the public consultation on the Kingsway to the Sea project (which identified overwhelming public support to re-provide key facilities if funding could be found), the October Strategy, Finance and City Regeneration (SFCR) Committee meeting approved the use of a further £1.29M of S106 receipts, including circa £800k from monies being paid to the council for the Moda development. These unique facilities will benefit many residents in the new development, the immediate vicinity and across the city.

Having checked the attendee list for the meeting, I can confirm that Cllr McNair was present at October SFCR and suggest that the Conservative Group improve their internal communications.

Following a query received from the developer, myself and officers have been in discussion with Moda to clarify various points. working arrangements and operational procedures. This will include clarifying the scope, costs and implementation mechanisms for the local schemes that have been identified to date.

### **9. Councillor McNair**

Is it true that the Labour Group have commissioned Gendered Intelligence to conduct Cllr Thompson's 're-education' and Labour Group training?

How can the council and the public have confidence in the Labour Administration when there is publicly available concern that Gendered Intelligence consistently misrepresent the law, not least in their co-authorship of the report Transforming Futures, within which it attacks the principles of consent to sex?

How does this

a) align with current laws around consent and



b) align with the administration's commitment to a strategy to tackle violence against women and girls?

**Reply from Councillor - Pumm, Chair of Equalities, Community Safety & Human Rights Committee**

I can confirm that Labour Group councillors attended a thoughtful and informative training session on trans awareness provided by Gendered Intelligence. As elected representatives, we are keen to continually build our understanding of the issues facing people in our community.

As an administration we are absolutely committed to tackling violence against women and girls in all its forms and are currently consulting on our draft strategy for the next three years. The draft strategy outlines our partnership approach to tackling violence against women and girls (VAWG) in Brighton & Hove and we're inviting residents, partner agencies, businesses and community organisations to help us shape the plans.

**10. Councillor McNair**

Bins at Carden Park

Carden Park is a very popular park. It is also home to a thriving community centre. Could there be an increased number of bins and recycling bins placed at Carden Park, near the community centre, to encourage a reduction in litter and improve recycling rates?

**Reply from Councillor – Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee**

The way waste in parks is handled is not ideal and there are aspirations to introduce recycling and collect with vehicles more suitable for the purpose. This would involve incorporating parks recycling in with Cityclean recycling rounds and therefore is dependent on the remodelling of rounds. This will be a possibility once the rollout of forthcoming in-cab technology is completed and rounds are reviewed.

**11. Councillor Lyons**

Pothole repairs

Is the council considering the implementation of a public system for monitoring, prioritising and planning for pothole repairs, according to safety and especially volume of cars etc?

**Reply from Councillor – Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you, Cllr Lyons.

BHCC follows national guidance on the delivery of the Highway Safety Maintenance Service, taking a risk-based approach as set out in the National Code of Practice. The fundamental principles of the Code of Practice are that highway authorities develop their own approach to maintenance of highway infrastructure, using risk evaluation to determine local needs, priorities and affordability.

The details of the BHCC approach, including road hierarchies and the risk matrix, can be found in the Highway Safety Maintenance Policy and the Strategy for Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure. Both documents are presently being reviewed. Although officers are not anticipating major changes to the current approach; any minor updates will be brought to Committee for approval in the new year.

We are working with our communications team with a view to improving the customer engagement for those wishing to report safety concerns such as potholes. Decisions about how and when to prioritise repairs need to be taken as part of a robust risk-based approach that is implemented by qualified Engineers and Highway Inspectors.

Our news story on our website dated 3rd October highlights some excellent work repairing potholes across our city. This includes Road Resurfacing on Falmer Road (The Vale to The Green), London Road (St Peters Place to Preston Circus), Preston Road (Cumberland Road to Tongdean Lane), Trafalgar Road junction with Victoria Road, Warren Road, Lewes Road junction with Coldean Lane, Old Shoreham Road (Hangleton Link to Locks Hill) with the work on Lewes Road and Old Shoreham Road funded by National Highways following our successful bid for funding.

## 12. Councillor Lyons

New crossing at Hangleton Road crossroads

Why has the council decided that anyone walking from Snakey Hill direction can't cross at the new crossing at the Hangleton Road crossroads? Despite putting in lights, it's still dangerous to cross.

### **Reply from Councillor – Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you, Cllr Lyons

Traffic signals have to be replaced about every 18 years or so. Like any other piece of equipment – as with 13 years of Tory rule - as they age, they become increasingly unreliable and prone to failure.

When we do these refurbishments, we look at what else can be done at the same time without significantly increasing the cost. At this junction we added some cycle lanterns, a new crossing on Clarke Avenue and widened the existing crossing on Hangleton Road west. We also looked at adding new crossings on Court Farm Road and Hangleton Road west but this entailed significant engineering to the highway and footpath which was not feasible within the limited funds available.

**13. Councillor Lyons**

Santa Bus

Will the council work with Brighton & Hove Buses to bring the Santa Bus to Withdean next year?

**Reply from Councillor – Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you, Cllr Lyons, for you for your question.

I agree, the Santa Bus is wonderful and visits many communities, across the city every December, bringing not only festive joy but also raising substantial sums for charity and it has grown over the years.

When I met with Brighton and Hove Buses, they said they start planning their Santa Bus rounds from January each year. I asked them to make sure they include Withdean next year to bring smiles more children throughout our city.

I also managed to get teams call with Santa who assures me that Santa will be coming to homes Withdean in 10 days' time and is very keen not to miss any children out in our city this year.

**14. Councillor Theobald**

Patcham Roundabout

I observe that the landscaping improvements at the unsightly Patcham roundabout on the A23 at the entrance to our City have still not been started.

Please can you print out on the agenda the reply to my most recent question on this subject earlier this year, the reasons why yet again the assurances given to me have failed to be implemented and when after all these years works will start.

**Reply from Councillor – Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you for your question Cllr Theobald.

I have taken a look at my response to you at Full Council on 20<sup>th</sup> July this year as well as the answers you received at Council on 17<sup>th</sup> December 2020 and to Full Council on 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022 regarding Patcham Roundabout. I tend to agree with your concern about progress.

Officers advise that the council's financial constraints has limited progress. Officers are reviewing the costs involved to ensure sufficient budget is available to progress this, without placing any further financial strain on the council. Once this is completed, a further update can be provided.

I share your concern. I will pursue the improvements at the Patcham Roundabout that are called for and update you as soon as possible. I sincerely trust you share my

concern about the national government placing increasing and unreasonable financial strain on the public pursue and could agree with me the 2024 is definitely time for complete change from Tory roundabout of chaos to bring in the change we truly need.

#### 15. Councillor Theobald

Change of use for Hippodrome

Please can you advise me of the grounds for planning permission for change of use of the Hippodrome from bingo to live performance and entertainment being refused under delegated powers?

#### Reply from Councillor – Loughran, Chair of Planning Committee

The principal Hippodrome application remains under consideration and has not yet been determined (BH2022/02443). This will go before the Planning Committee before a decision is reached.

The applicant also recently applied for a lawful development certificate (LDC under BH2023/02483) to seek confirm that the Hippodrome had an authorised use as a live public performance entertainment (with ancillary provision of food and beverage). However, since the last use of the building was as a Bingo Hall (*sui generis*) and has been vacant since this time it could not be considered to have a lawful planning use as a live public performance entertainment space.

The reason for refusal was as follows:

*The evidence presented indicates that at the time of the buildings last use in 2006 the established lawful use of the property is considered to be as a bingo hall with ancillary entertainment performances, food and beverage (Sui Generis by virtue of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020.). As such, planning permission would be required for the proposal as a "live public performance entertainment" space which is materially different from the last lawful use of the site.*

As I am sure you are aware whilst a live public performance entertainment space falls within the “*sui generis*” use class and so does a bingo hall, each use that is a *sui generis* use is considered a use in its own right and requires planning permission. Therefore the decision was taken that it had not been demonstrated that the lawful use of the Hippodrome was as a live performance venue and planning permission would be required to re-use it as such.

In direct answer to your question, as this application was a Lawful Development Certificate, such applications are a legal determination based on the evidence presented by the applicant only and for these reasons these types of application are for officers to determine under delegated authority as the judgements are very legal and technical.

The principal application which seeks to restore the public performance function to the Hippodrome does remain under consideration and will not be determined as a

refusal or approval without going before the members of the Planning Committee. We are still encouraging the applicant to submit some additional pieces of information required to progress the proposal and we do not consider the refusal of this certificate (LDC) to hold up the main application.

I hope that the above is clear but do let me know if you would like any further clarification.

## 16. Councillor Meadows

Flooding in Warmdene Road

Flooding in Warmdene Road is worsening, and more properties are being regularly affected. When is the report into flooding in Warmdene Road likely to be ready? When are flood gates to newly affected properties likely to be installed?

### **Reply from Councillor – Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee**

Warmdene Road is a known problem area in the Preston Park catchment. BHCC is working on local flood risk management strategy which includes a catchment prioritisation-based approach. We are close to finalising a Section 19 flood investigation report for the highly risky areas and this should be in place by the first quarter of 2024. We then aim to proceed with SuDS retrofitting and Property Flood Resilience interventions for Warmdene Road in the second quarter of 2024, depending upon the availability of resources. In 2019, 17 properties were protected and we would like to extend the protection level with more sustainable solutions.

## 17. Councillor McNair

Lighting at Old Boat Corner Community Centre

It is extremely dark around Old Boat Corner, especially in winter, making the centre challenging to access and potentially dangerous. Will the possibility of additional lighting be investigated?

### **Reply from Councillor – Pumm, Chair of Equalities, Community Safety & Human Rights committee**

Unfortunately, at this moment in time the Street Lighting Team are not funded for the installation of additional lighting requests across the city.

Funds would need to be found to finance the new installation then our team would be able to adopt the new lighting installation and add that to our inventory and maintenance regime providing the equipment meets our specifications. We are funded for the essential maintenance of our stock; additional funding would need to come from another source as part of another project or from another service. The street lighting team are not able to identify where this additional funding will come from.

At the moment, we are not in a position to install any new street lights.

## 18. Councillor Hill

Currently there are £4,284,541 of unallocated Section 106 funding which can be committed for education infrastructure. At the last CHSTE committee meeting, it was stated that the Council is 'currently reviewing demand for infrastructure across the city to address issues, including falling numbers on roll, SEN provision and Alternative Provision. As part of these proposals, they will be seeking to maximise the use of existing S106 funding the council has secured for education, in order to minimise the revenue borrowing costs the council will incur. Will the Council consider consultation with local schools and parents about how best to use these funds? Can it provide further information as to any stipulations behind this money, such as where funds need to be committed to a specific geographical area and whether or not it can be used for youth services? How much does the Council expect to use to cover revenue borrowing costs?

### **Reply from Councillor – Taylor / Helliwell, Joint Chairs of Children, Families & Schools committee**

We welcome the availability of Section 106 funding to make necessary education infrastructure improvements across the city.

We are aware of certain stipulations around the use of S106 funding and will ensure that any spend is made appropriately within that. We are also looking at how best we can maximum the use of this S106 funding, alongside other funding streams such as education maintenance and basic needs capital and high needs provision funding and the additional resources provided by being part of the DfE's SEND and AP change programme, to ensure that benefits are maximised and both immediate, medium term and long term infrastructure needs can be met. Our understanding is that Youth facilities would not be covered unless part of educational delivery in schools and other education settings.

We have already earmarked some S106 funding to particular projects in our schools and ensured alignment with the geographical limitations placed upon some of the funding. It is essential that we maximise the use of this funding for the long term delivery of education that meets the needs of all of the city's children. This is why consultation with all partners is important before all funds are allocated.

Wherever possible, Section 106 funding will be maximised to fund capital investment in educational infrastructure across the city to reduce the need to borrow for such infrastructure. This will therefore reduce the related revenue costs of interest and Minimum Revenue Provision. The review of available S106 funding against the need for capital investment will determine the level of revenue savings associated with reduced borrowing.

The council's current proposals for tackling falling pupil numbers is currently out for public consultation. Any future expansion of SEN provision in the city is managed via consultation with city schools and with our parent representative groups.

**19. Councillor Shanks**

As a draft budget has not been brought to the December Committee can the administration tell us what processes are in place to allow scrutiny of budget proposals by opposition and community groups?

**Reply from Councillor – Taylor, Deputy Leader of the Council**

While there is no legal or constitutional requirement to bring a draft budget report to committee, we do want to ensure that we engage widely on budget proposals with our key stakeholders including staff, trade unions, statutory and community & voluntary sector partners and, of course, people affected directly by proposed service changes. We have had some meetings already and will be ensuring that further meetings are held over the next few weeks as proposals firm up. We would of course prefer to be in a more advanced position, but the government's Autumn Statement announcement was the latest yet, being 5 days later than last year, giving local authorities extremely short notice to plan effectively for next year. Not only that, but it is also a very challenging Autumn Statement, containing no additional resources compared with those announced last year despite an ongoing cost of living crisis and inflation running well above the government's own forecasts. The result is the largest projected budget shortfall in this council's history which is presenting difficult choices and is inevitably more challenging to resolve. We will be bringing budget proposals to the Strategy, Finance and City Regeneration Committee in February, before then taking it to the Full Council. Opposition groups will of course have the normal opportunities to debate the budget and propose changes.

**20. Councillor Hill**

Can the council explain if, and when, a change of policy was agreed on the community's purchase and use of planters? Residents in my ward are willing to buy their own planter which will also have the added benefit of helping prevent fly tipping in a spot that is well known for litter.

**Reply from Councillor – Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee**

Thank you for your question. The Council has never had a dedicated policy in place to support the installation of planters by residents or community groups. Previously, planters financed by these groups have been refused or agreed in a non-consistent way without any ongoing maintenance agreements in place. Unfortunately, some planters that were installed in good faith by residents or community groups have not been maintained. This has led to them falling into disrepair and attracting litter, and the council has had to step in to remove them when they became a safety concern.

When planters are installed, the council has to be sure that the ongoing repair and maintenance of these planters is secure. The new policy is still being drafted and will set out legal agreements and costs for anyone requesting planters. We had hoped to be able to put the draft policy before committee this year but have been waiting for the New Manual for Street guidance from DfT. This was due to be released in Spring 2023 but has yet to materialise. We still do not have a date for this guidance, but officers will be meeting with DfT in the coming weeks and will push for an update.

Once the Manual For Streets guidance is released, we will complete the draft policy and present it to committee as soon as possible.

## **21. Councillor Shanks**

What are the total savings generated by items being brought forward to this financial year which would ordinarily be left to the February budget?

### **Reply from Councillor – Taylor, Deputy Leader of the Council**

At this stage, there have been no budget savings brought forward into this financial year. The current forecast outturn as at the end of October is for a £2.87m overspend, a significant reduction on forecasts early in the year and an improvement of £6.1m since the previously reported position for August. This has been achieved through financial management action across all service directorates as normal, together with council-wide recruitment controls and instructions to all budget managers to restrict expenditure to essential and critical spending only. Spending on some non-statutory, discretionary items has therefore been held back where there are no contractual commitments, whilst some one-off resources have also been identified to assist the overall position such as reduced Waste PFI costs.

## **22. Councillor Hill**

Will Councillor Trevor Muten meet with Round Hill residents who are concerned with rat running? They have repeatedly asked him for this to no avail thus far.

### **Reply from Councillor – Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you, Cllr Hill.

Yes. Of course. I am sorry if I have missed a specific invite. Please, let's find a date that works. I am more than happy to meet with Round Hill residents to discuss rat running.

The Safer, Better Streets report was presented to the Transport and Sustainability Committee last week (5/12/2023). This report included the assessment process and associated priority list for improvements, prioritised based on a thorough assessment process to ensure that limited funds are allocated to those locations most in need. Round Hill was included in the assessment process, but this time was not identified amongst the highest priority locations.



However, I am keen to better understand residents' concerns and how to bring forward improvements where we can. I met with residents of Upper Abbey Road soon after the October Full Council meeting and listening to residents and understanding their concerns in their streets makes a big difference in helping to find solutions that work. As a result, we have found some funding to progress improvements in Upper Abby Road. Thank you and I await you invite.

### **23. Councillor West**

What legal basis is there for the recent move to restrict official opposition spokespeople from receiving officer briefings for committee and council meetings? All elected members have equal voting rights in committees, but some are now being deliberately kept in the dark about the council's business. Well informed scrutiny and the opportunity to recommend improvements are essential to ensuring service are delivered well. So how can the restrictions on access to information and involvement, councillors are now face with, be explained as a good thing?

#### **Reply from Councillor – Sankey, Leader of the Council**

Officer briefings are available for Opposition Councillors on Committee items upon request. The Council's constitution contains full details of the Access to Information provisions that are in place, including the ability of Councillors to request and receive information relevant to their role under the 'Need to Know'. Committee reports are published at least 5 working days in advance of the relevant meeting (unless urgency or confidentiality provisions apply) in accordance with legal requirements. Councillors are able to ask questions, both written and oral, at Council and Committee meetings as well as submitting letters and supporting petitions, enabling scrutiny of decisions to take place prior to a decision being taken.

The previous system of pre-meetings prior to Committees was not a legal or constitutional requirement. It was a voluntary arrangement agreed by the Leaders of the Political Groups in response to the need to obtain consensus in a situation of no overall control.

### **24. Councillor Shanks**

Will the administration undertake to pursue the divestment of any shares in fossil fuels from the East Sussex Pension Fund?

#### **Reply from Councillor – Taylor, Deputy Leader of the Council**

East Sussex County Council is the Administering Authority for the East Sussex Pension Fund and through its Pension Committee, made up of East Sussex County Council councillors, determines the strategic investment policies for the fund. However, this council, as an Admitted Body, is able to make representations through the separate Pension Board, which has a scrutiny role. In 2021 this council approved a Notice of Motion requesting the Chief Executive to write to the fund to urge them to divest fully from fossil fuels as quickly as practicable. At that time the fund had a 4%

exposure to fossil fuel equities but reduced this to under 2% the following year. The fund has further improved its position and the latest statement on its website states:

*'The Fund has no exposure to fossil fuel companies within its equity portfolio which represents 40% of the total strategy.*

*The Fund was the 2021 winner of the Local Authority Pension Fund 'Fund of the year' and was highly commended for its Climate Change Strategy.*

*The Fund were signatories to the Investor Agenda's 2021 Global Investor Statement to governments on the Climate Crisis, urging governments to rapidly scale up their climate ambition.*

*The Fund invests in two specialist index fund managers, Storebrand and UBS Asset Management, both of whom have a fossil fuel free investment strategy and also exclude companies with large exposure to the value chain of fossil fuel producers.*

## **25. Councillor Mcleay**

How can the Council better support and empower the SWEP service to secure a venue that provides more flexible emergency shelter provision? Given we are just entering winter, and SWEP has been in operation for over 12 days consecutively, can more funding be allocated to this service and help save lives?

### **Reply from Councillor – Williams, Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee**

It appears that Councillor McLeay lacks understanding of the meaning and purpose of SWEP.

It is important that anyone sleeping rough is offered help as soon as possible and that the assistance offered meets their needs, so accommodation for people on the streets is provided through referrals from organisations who understand what's available and what support is needed. This is available all the time, every day.

SWEP (Severe Weather Emergency Protocols) works in addition to that service.

SWEP is an emergency shelter to keep people safe when the weather is severe. It provides additional shelter for rough sleepers in severe weather. We open a severe weather shelter when the temperature feels like 0 degrees Celsius or when there is an amber weather warning. Brighton & Hove City Council has one of the lowest triggers for opening SWEP provision in the country. That is why SWEP has recently been open for 12 consecutive days.

Shelter is available to anyone rough sleeping referred through the street outreach team. There isn't a limit on numbers or any requirement for a local connection as the purpose is to keep people safe during extreme weather. Additional venues are opened if needed to meet demand.

## **26. Councillor Shanks**

When is the administration planning to convene the next Climate assembly?  
Following the transport one it was agreed to use the same process for other issues and housing was the suggested next topic.

**Reply from Councillor – Sankey, Leader of the Council**

Since taking control of the administration, we have reviewed the approach to achieving carbon neutrality and our focus is on an evidence-based approach that provides value for money. This is being developed through our decarbonisation pathways work.

The council is at present considering the best way to engage the local community through existing groups and partnerships, and supporting community events, for example through our Re-Imagine engagement programme.

**27. Councillor Shanks**

Seaside homes- please provide an update on the situation with seaside homes.

**Reply from Councillor – Williams, Chair of Housing & New Homes Committee**

In line with the delegation of authority agreed at Joint Housing Committee and Policy & Resources Committee [27th February 2023]. The council is in discussion with Seaside Homes and other parties with a shared interest to seek to end the current Local Delivery Vehicle arrangement in order to bring the temporary accommodation currently leased to Seaside Homes back into Council control.

These discussions are complex. We can neither pre-determine the outcome of these discussions, nor the time it will take should an agreement be reached, in order to undertake the due diligence required for the Committee to make a final decision.

**28. Councillor Pickett**

Brighton & Hove is home to a huge and unique elm tree collection and has been designated as holder of the UK national elm collection. However, we are losing elm trees faster than ever before because people are bringing infected logs into the city. What extra precautions have the council taken to maintain this special collection and to improve messaging regarding the spread of elm disease and the movement of diseased and infected elm logs around the city, particularly as this is the time of year when residents are buying logs for popular wood burners?

**Reply from Councillor – Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee**

Thanks for your question. As you know, this is something to which I've been paying a great deal of attention.

Earlier this year, we began an inoculation programme for some of our high value, most mature Elms in the city centre. This will involve yearly doses and will be monitored for efficacy.

We do try and encourage as much media coverage of the value of the city's elms and the risks they face, and I have made several TV and radio appearances on the subject.

On a small- scale, staff do sometimes pick up Elm log movements, but success depends on public vigilance, awareness and cooperation, which is why the best approach to this is wide reaching publicity.

In September I wrote to DEFRA to request assistance in protecting our collection, but unfortunately material help was not forthcoming. They have asked us whether we would like to take part in some wider national research and our Arboriculture Manager is assessing whether we have the resources for this.

Earlier this week, I made a short video with one of our Arboriculture team in which we explain in simple terms how residents can identify Elm logs which will better equip them to help us manage the situation. We are also developing the key points into a visual guide and will be contacting some of the larger retailers of logs in the city to make sure they have this information.

## **65 ORAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

65.1 The mayor noted that oral questions had been submitted and that 30 minutes was set aside for the duration of the item. She asked that both the questioner and responder endeavour to keep their questions and answers brief, to enable the questions listed to be taken.

65.2 Councillor Davis asked a question:

I think everyone who has read the report by Eileen McColgan KC into the appalling behaviour of the City Clean depot will agree that every effort must be made to focus on staff and residents to ensure that the issues highlighted do not happen again. The King's Council report makes repeated mention of political interference including at member panels and alleged sharing of confidential information by Labour Councillors is playing a key role in the development of a toxic work culture at City Clean. To ensure that this doesn't happen again when it comes to developing an action plan, can the Leader of the Council clarify what steps are being taken by the Labour administration to address any conflicts of interest?

65.3 Councillor Sankey replied:

We are obviously going to be debating substantively the report by Eileen McColgan KC into the whistle blowing allegations at City Clean. First, obviously, the most important thing to say is that the treatment that is revealed in that report of our valued staff members over a very long period of time is absolutely appalling, unacceptable, and has stopped and will not be allowed to take root in this organisation again. There are 10 recommendations in total that are made by the eminent KC, we have already said publicly that we will be implementing all of those recommendations and I pay tribute to the staff team who are already working incredibly hard to get those recommendations implemented. We will be bringing those to the Strategy, Finance, & City Regeneration Committee next month in January with a progress report, but our plan is to have all of those recommendations implemented within the next six months of the final backstop; some will take a little while for procedural reasons. An important recommendation in the report is the proposal to remove personnel appeal panels, and this is something that we

are progressing and about to get underway in terms of a consultation with our recognised unions. We agree as an administration with this on principle, we believe that it is not appropriate for politicians to be involved in any way in HR processes and what I compare it to is it would be as if civil servants in Whitehall had MP's involved in their HR appeals, which I think everyone would agree is inappropriate. We believe that formal processes related to disciplinaries and matters of dispute should be dealt with by officers in an objective way, and it's our view that this separation of duties between members and officers in employment matters is crucial to ensure that we have the right employment processes and that the organisation learns the lessons of the past. Going forward, we will need to ensure that we have the most robust and fair employment processes and that we treat our staff with fairness and respect, and as I've said we will be consulting our unions on the appeal mechanisms that should replace personnel appeal panels.

65.4 Councillor Davis asked a supplementary question:

I'm sure the Leader of the Council will understand that the city desperately needs assurances that the current administration is committed to openness and transparency, not least following the recent revelation of the alleged 340 mile round trip of two Labour Councillors just to get to their wards. In paragraph 12, 17, 18, 21, 22, 23, 24, and 45 the KC report refers to the 2019 Doherty report, it is clear then that the KC report cannot be read in isolation. To ensure that we get to the bottom of the context of issues at City Clean, and to reassure residents that the Council is committed to full openness and transparency, would the Leader of the Council agree to publish it?

65.5 Councillor Sankey replied:

The answer is no, and I'm going to explain why, I'll also say at the outset that the Greens left administration in May this year. They took over the administration in 2020, they had 3 years to publish this report if they had so wished and they didn't, so I find it interesting that they are suddenly so keen to publish the report. The 2019 decision not to disclose and publish the Doherty report was made on a number of bases; first, because it included observations and recommendations that were highly confidential when the report was concluded as they

A – detailed multiple instances of conduct by staff understood to have potential to be the subject of disciplinary action

B – included observations considered to be of a highly sensitive nature, not least because of the context of a risk of widespread industrial action.

For these reasons, a decision was made not to publish these papers prior to a policy and resources committee in 2019, and instead to discuss them in confidential session. The current position is this: the Doherty report, as Councillor Davis has just highlighted, is referred to in the recent independent investigation and Eileen McColgan KC had full access to this, as well as a huge amount of documentary evidence, and also the testimony of over 70 witnesses. Unlike the McColgan report, the Doherty report was not commissioned with the expectation of publication. While it would be possible to redact personal data relating to third party individuals in the Doherty report, a key concern, and the advice I have, is that it would not be possible to render the individuals concerned completely unidentifiable because of the other information which is already in the public domain. This is a concern considered to be especially live given the high-profile nature of the McColgan report. This risks compromising our internal disciplinary process and could create liability for the Council in terms of data protection and breach of confidence. Because the report was not commissioned on the basis that it would be published,

disclosure would be likely to inhibit the ability of Council staff, as well as other stakeholders, to express themselves openly, honestly, and completely in future and would negatively impact on the willingness of staff across the organisation to provide evidence and otherwise support the Council in sensitive processes. Council is still determining how best to respond and implement the recommendations in the McColgan report, and it is considered that disclosure of the Doherty report would have a negative impact on the Council's ability to focus on responding to the recent investigation.

65.6 Question 2 - Councillor McNair asked a question:

There have already been a number of well publicised accidents due to icy conditions, I know residents in Patcham & Hollingbury who have ended up in A&E. Officers have been very prompt to my queries but Patcham & Hollingbury, and many of the hilly areas across the city, have small roads which need gritting but are not on the priority list for gritting. What plans are in place to ensure that not only arteries such as Carden Hill and Carden Avenue are gritted adequately, but particularly steep hills are also gritted.

65.7 Councillor Muten replied:

We are very sorry to hear that some people were injured on ice. Particularly on Tuesday evening on 5<sup>th</sup> December and early Wednesday morning the following morning, our gritters were in action across the city on that Tuesday from late afternoon onwards. We gritted about 156 miles of road around the city, we prioritise main A-roads and most B-roads, bus routes, links to schools, and roads that lead to hospitals are key to emergency services. Our gritting programme is routinely reviewed and we're keen to hear from local communities to inform planned gritting routes improvements, and we'll take on those concerns regarding specific roads and Carden Avenue and others in your ward you've mentioned there, and we need to consider whether they should and could be included to be in our programme. We also need to ensure our grit bins are topped off ahead of the cold weather, and that's something we consider as a priority and we're going to make sure we'll do that better. We would always advise people to be very careful during icy periods as even gritting cannot absolutely guarantee a road will be free of ice.

65.8 Councillor McNair asked a supplementary question:

There is a map on the Council website showing grit-bins and red and amber roads, I don't think it is up to date with all the grit bins. What plans are there to ensure it is up to date, and could the red and amber routes be more fully explained to residents?

65.9 Councillor Muten replied:

I will take that away and answer that question for discussion with officers, and I would suggest that there's always room for improvement and it's wise to review and to reiterate that point; we are keen to get those improvements and where communities are aware of concerns, particularly about grit-bins, to make sure that they are up to date. I think that checks on the maps to make sure they're up to date as best they can be in terms of our websites and access to that and we may need to do some communication publicity to encourage people to look up their local streets to see whether they're included or not to get good feedback for communities.

65.10 Question 3 - Councillor Fishleigh asked a question:

When will printed parking vouchers be available, and how will residents and visitors be

able to buy them? Please could you just give me a month and some outlets, I don't need a big preamble.

65.11 Councillor Muten replied:

In July our administration commissioned a citywide parking review in response to an unsuitable, disconnected parking policy approach from the previous Green administration. Our parking review sets out to establish a simpler, fairer, more equitable, and digitally inclusive parking system, which is accessible to all, benefits the whole city, improves the environment, and adds up. This means that we are reviewing, as a priority, an option such as vouchers or on-street parking meters to enable those without access to mobile apps, their phone, or SMS text message, to be readily able to use. These options will be in the Parking Review Report early next year, and we are listening and are resolved to ensure no one is digitally excluded when parking.

65.12 Councillor Fishleigh asked a supplementary question:

In this parking report that's coming out early next year, will you be ready to go straight away and roll out the system? How long is it going to be?

65.13 Councillor Muten replied:

We are very keen to identify the best way forward and to review to make sure it's a viable option but I think there is an urgency and a promptness, particularly where perhaps some distance from a paypoint and access to other options. We do consider this a priority, the Parking Review will report in February and I'll be working closely with officers to see what we can do to fast-track and bring at least a trial in to show what we can do. I'll take that away and we'll come back.

65.14 Question 4 - Councillor Hewitt asked a question:

In Hangleton & Knoll, one of the concerns we heard in the runup to the elections in May was the unreliability of rubbish and recycling collections. What actions are the administration taking to address this?

65.15 Councillor Rowkins replied:

You're quite right that this was a top priority for a very large number of residents, I think we all heard about it time and again on the doorstep and since. Nothing exemplifies Council services like bin collections, and they have been unreliable for too long. I have been at the depot almost every week since the election and have spoken with staff at every level to understand the details of the service and its various challenges, but we've taken several steps to improve the service so far; crews are now performance managed to ensure that missed work is collected, we've recruited an afternoon shift who can drive any vehicle, collect any type of waste and collect any type of waste in any part of the city. This crew can be deployed flexibly and responsibly to any part of the city based on need and provides a whole new level of operational flexibility. We have new communal refuse vehicles on order, with the first due for delivery just after Christmas. We're also modernising systems in order to make changes to rounds more easily and ensure even and fair distribution of work, as well as provide real-time updates for residents. As we've heard a little bit about earlier, we're also improving working culture at the depot and ensuring managers can manage the service. I'm pleased to report that we're now seeing substantial improvements, I've got a few bits of indicative data which are basically taken from the first two-week periods of every month over the last few months, and this is comparing July to November, which is the last month we have information for. In July

there were 455 missed recycling collections, in November it was 187. In July we had 26 communal refuse collections and in November we had 8. In July we had 278 missed garden waste collections, and in November we had 98. We will continue to treat this service as top priority and are absolutely determined to deliver the service our residents deserve.

65.16 Councillor Hewitt asked a supplementary question:

Another query we had on this subject was the low range of items which can be overcycled, how is this being addressed?

65.17 Councillor Rowkins replied:

We've already made two improvements to our recycling provision, including the addition of metal lids to glass collections and the imminent rollout of 54 new bins for food and drink cartons, sometimes referred to as tetra-bats, and 21 new containers for waste electrical items. Incidentally, we currently only have 2 waste electrical item containers, this will take the total to 23 and there'll be subsequent rollout further down the line pending the success of this round rollout. We've also begun work on a comprehensive communications and messaging strategy in order to reduce our high levels of contamination. Our recycling contamination level in the city at the moment is around about 15% compared to a local and regional average of more like 5%, and that takes up a lot of capacity within our facilities. We will be doing this in order to reduce the contamination, minimise waste, and drive up recycling rates which unfortunately fell to new lows under the Green administration. We continue to develop our plans to introduce food waste collections as well as further expansions to the items we collect. Brighton & Hove has been languishing in the doldrums of the league tables for years; improving the situation and making us a more sustainable city is a personal passion of mine and I'm very pleased to be in a position to be able to deliver for our residents.

65.18 Question 5 - Councillor Pickett asked a question:

In 2022, Green councillors proposed expanding the city's smoke control area to cover the entire of Brighton & Hove in an effort to tackle worrying levels of air pollution created by wood-burning. In November of that year, a report the Greens authored recommended establishing a city-wide smoke control area as a matter of priority for the council. As a minority administration, however, the plans required support from across the chamber – Labour blocked any urgent action by way of an amendment which achieved nothing more than kicking a decision into the long grass. Greens voted against that blocking amendment with Labour and Conservative councillors voting it through, as a result, Brighton & Hove remains the single largest city in the country not entirely covered by a smoke control area. With research showing 89% of the city is now regularly breathing air which exceeds the World Health Organisation's safety limit, and air pollution from wood burning now considered a greater threat to air quality than all the cars and roads in the UK, will Labour finally agree to a local smoke control area which covers the entire city?

65.19 Councillor Rowkins replied:

I saw in the Argus this week that you're calling on us to expand the 5 smoke control areas that we already have to cover the whole city. Thank you very much for the suggestion, but it is something we are already looking at in detail. I was just going to say this information, but I'm quite keen on a bit of audience participation here – I wonder if anyone can guess how many instances of enforcement there were in any of our five smoke control areas during the term of the last Green administration? Let me check my



notes – it was 0. Just to be clear, there was not a single case in which enforcement took place based on smoke control status, so presumably it would be the Green Party policy to just draw a bigger shape with a felt tip pen on a map, send it to the Argus, and give themselves a pat on the back. Residents will be pleased to hear that we're taking a more methodical and evidence led approach. We've been reviewing the data available for particulate matter and inferring, as best we can, what the contribution is in Brighton & Hove from solid fuel burning in the areas in which we have monitoring capabilities. During this winter, we will be actively investigating potential avenues for enforcement in the existing smoke control areas, and that will be supported by funding that we've secured from DEFRA specifically for this purpose. This year, for the first time, our trading standards officers have been out visiting business who supply logs into our city to identify instances of non-compliance, next year we're rolling out improved and expanded particulate monitoring to better enable us to judge to contribution of solid fuels to particulate pollution citywide, including at our schools and in our neighbourhoods. We will combine this, and other data, with our assessment of our ability to effectively enforce, and that will inform the basis of our approach. Madame Mayor, while the Green party is busy posturing in the papers, we are on top of the detail and getting on with our work.

65.20 Question 6 - Councillor Meadows asked a question:

I'd like to know what Labour is doing to develop a hub for the 3000 veterans in Brighton & Hove, so they don't have to travel to Eastbourne or Worthing?

65.21 Councillor Pumm replied:

Can I start by saying that, as the son of a veteran myself, I'm proud that this Labour administration actually cares about veterans and the armed forces deeply. We are making substantial progress to be a good place for veterans again. We started by appointing a lead on Armed Forces & Veterans, Amanda Grimshaw, and she's quite busy with getting us to a gold status. The good news is we have been reaccredited with the military covenant for silver status, so that's good news, and now we're taking the steps necessary to get the gold status. We also, Madam Mayor with yourself, organised a reception for veterans in November, and that was absolutely appreciated. We are rebuilding relationships at the moment, and we are serious not only thanking veterans for their service but looking after them in the best way possible. That means we are also exploring breakfast clubs as one of the measures. I can take the point away about hubs, and I'm happy to explore in partnership with Councillor Grimshaw what we can do, but I'm proud that we've taken the steps and we're serious about it.

65.22 Councillor Meadows asked a supplementary question:

I'd be interested to know in a dedicated hub for those who served our country and who may be suffering mental health disorders and physical disabilities through serving their country. It really is important for them not to have to travel so far. May I suggest some sites, like Patcham Court Farm might be a good hub for those veterans and would be a far better use than the Royal Mail.

65.23 Councillor Pumm replied:

I think we're always open for suggestions, so thank you very much and we can have a deeper conversation at some point probably after the Christmas break. We're looking always for partners and we're always open to any suggestions.

65.24 Question 7 - Councillor Earthey asked a question:

If recent financial news reports are to be believed, Labour HQ may follow the Conservatives lead and renege on the commitment to pledge £28 billion per year on green initiatives and sustainability. If that is true, what additional funding pressure will that place on the council's green budget? Will this administration's revised 2030 programme be financially viable in any shape or form?

65.25 Councillor Muten replied:

The breadth of scientific evidence presses home the urgency for global climate action. A new deal has been agreed at the United Nations COP 28 summit in Dubai calling for all countries to move away from the use of fossil fuel and that was signed yesterday, and decarbonisation of cities is vital as part of that. When we came into administration, we were acutely aware that there was a huge amount to do for our city to reach carbon neutrality, however, when we lifted the bonnet of the CN2030 plans, we were truly shocked to find there was no real plan beyond an aspiration and an annual carbon reduction target for the council; an aim without substance. The previous Green administration had not mapped out how we will get there and had no clear strategy and had found no partners with funds committed to enable the delivery. I'm pleased to say we have since corrected course. In October, at the Transport & Sustainability Committee we gave approval for officers to commission a decarbonisation pathways study, this will model and cost future scenarios for carbon reduction and see development of an action plan to help deliver our ambition to achieve carbon neutrality.

65.26 Councillor Earthey asked a supplementary question:

Local climate action environmental groups regard the possibility of the loss of central government funding as a very real existential threat, and we are starting the circle the waggon in response to that threat. Does the Labour administration want to be on the inside of the circle with us, or stay outside it?

65.27 Councillor Muten replied:

We're determined to work this through for our decarbonisation pathway study and we recognise that to achieve carbon neutrality as a city, we can't do this on public funds alone, we need to go into partnership with others, we've got less than 2% contribution of the council, and we need to work with other businesses, communities, partners, activists, and potentially significant funding through private sector to deliver the carbon neutrality, and so we are committed to this, and I mentioned at the beginning with my answer, it's absolutely urgent. There's a climate emergency and biodiversity emergency. What's been discussed at COP28 is essential to the world's need to take fossil fuels out of the equation and to decarbonize our economy. Yes, we need to work to achieve that, and we need to find a plan that's credible and achievable, understanding risks and understanding the funding mechanisms to achieve that, and that's what we're about, we're serious about getting there.

65.28 Question 8 - Councillor West asked a question:

Residents and experts have raised considerable concerns about the proposed redevelopment of Patcham Court Farm by Royal Mail, risks include contamination of the city's water supply from disturbance of the aquifer, additional flooding of the A23 from over topping of inadequate suds. This is in addition to compromise road safety from challenging site access and parking closures. The council owns the site and can therefore avoid these serious risks, will Labour withdraw the land sale?

65.29 Councillor Sankey replied:

The Royal Mail proposal for Patcham Court Farm is subject to a planning process, and I believe all of the things that he's outlined are currently being investigated and explored as part of that process, so it wouldn't be right for me to comment on that.

65.30 Councillor West asked a supplementary question:

It's nothing to do with the planning, it's to do with the landlord's responsibilities. Given the urgency, as Councillor Muten mentioned, about the need to move to a low carbon economy, the current use of the site is fairly low impact and I would like to ask whether or not the Council may consider the use of the site to support the circular economy, which is endeavouring to reduce the carbon footprint of the city, or for other strategically positive purposes.

65.31 Councillor Sankey replied:

No decisions have been made by the administration about the future of Patcham Court Farm, as I think Councillor Pumm indicated earlier, we're always open to suggestions about uses of land that we own. On the decarbonisation point though that Councillor West raises, I think it's worth colleagues being aware that we have been made aware that this council has never previously submitted an application for any of the billions of pounds in government public sector decarbonisation funding that exists, and it also relates to Councillor Earthy's point; Worthing and Eastbourne have been among the councils that have applied for and received millions, so yes we are serious about decarbonisation, much more serious than the previous administration.

65.32 At the expiry of the 30 minutes allowed for oral questions the Mayor proceeded to the next item of business on the agenda.

## **66 APPOINTMENT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

66.1 Councillor Winder introduced, and formally moved the report.

66.2 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Winder on their maiden speech.

66.3 Councillor Davis, McNair and Fishleigh spoke on the matter.

66.4 The Mayor put the recommendations as detailed in the report listed in the agenda to the vote which was carried.

66.5 **RESOLVED:**

- 1) That Council appointed Jess Gibbons as Chief Executive and Head of Paid Service subject to the satisfactory completion of any outstanding pre-employment checks.
- 2) That the commencing salary for the post be set at £190,000 per annum
- 3) That the appointment takes effect from 1st March 2023 or later.
- 4) That the Director of Human Resources & Organisational Development, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, be authorised to take all steps necessary

or incidental to implementation of the appointment, including any detailed terms or administrative arrangements that may be outstanding.

**67 REPORT BY AILEEN MCCOLGAN KC**

67.1 Councillor Sankey introduced, and formally moved the report.

67.2 Councillor Davis moved an amendment to the recommendations in the report on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Shanks.

67.3 Councillors West, McNair, Rowkins, Meadows, Taylor, Pumm, McLeay and Hill spoke on the matter.

67.4 The Mayor noted that an amendment to the recommendations had been moved and put to the vote which was lost.

67.5 The Mayor, then put the recommendations as detailed in the report listed in the agenda to the vote which was carried.

**67.6 RESOLVED:**

(1) That Members note the report as set out in the Appendix.

(2) That Members note that a report will be submitted to the January meeting of the Strategy, Finance and City Regeneration Committee with an action plan to implement the recommendations.

**68 HOVE STATION NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DECISION STATEMENT**

**68.1 RESOLVED:**

That Council:

(1) To determine that the Hove Station Neighbourhood Plan be modified according to the recommendations in the independent examiner's report and as set out in the attached Decision Statement (Appendix 1) and that the Decision Statement be published.

(2) To approve the examiner's recommendation that the Neighbourhood Plan proceed to referendum, subject to modifications set out in the Decision Statement. The referendum area is the Hove Station Neighbourhood Area.

(3) In the event that more than 50% of those voting support the Neighbourhood Plan at referendum, that the Council formally 'makes' the Hove Station Neighbourhood Plan at its next meeting following the referendum.

**69 ROTTINGDEAN PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - DECISION STATEMENT**

**69.1 RESOLVED:**

That Council:

- (1) To determine that the Rottingdean Parish Neighbourhood Plan be modified according to the recommendations in the independent examiner's report and as set out in the attached Decision Statement (Appendix 1) and that the Decision Statement be published.
- (2) To approve the examiner's recommendation that the Neighbourhood Plan proceed to referendum, subject to modifications set out in the Decision Statement. The referendum area is the Rottingdean Parish Neighbourhood Area.
- (3) In the event that more than 50% of those voting support the Neighbourhood Plan at referendum, that the Council formally 'makes' the Rottingdean Parish Neighbourhood Plan at its next meeting following the referendum.

### **RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY STRATEGY (NON-HRA)**

#### **69a.1 RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report and the Minute extract of the Strategy, Finance & City Regeneration Committee meeting held on 7 December 2023 for information.

### **70 SOLIDARITY WITH OUR COMMUNITIES AGAINST HATE**

- 70.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Hill on behalf of the Green Group and formally seconded by Councillor McLeay.
- 70.2 The Mayor noted that there were two amendments in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.
- 70.3 Councillor Earthey moved the first amendment on behalf of the Brighton & Hove Independents Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Fishleigh.
- 70.4 Councillor Pumm moved the second amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Sankey.
- 70.5 Councillors McNair & Meadows spoke on the matter.
- 70.6 Councillor Hill confirmed that they would not accept the amendments.
- 70.7 The Mayor then put the Labour Group amendment to the vote which was carried.
- 70.8 The Mayor then put the Brighton & Hove Independents Group amendment to the vote which was lost.
- 70.9 The Mayor then put the following motion to the vote:

"That this council notes:

- 1) Brighton and Hove's status as a City of Sanctuary for all those fleeing persecution, conflict, hatred, and discrimination.
- 2) Brighton and Hove's longstanding, cross-party commitment to stand against hatred in all its forms.
- 3) The impact of the situation in Israel and Palestine on our residents and particularly of our Jewish, Muslim, Israeli, Palestinian and Christian residents – some of whom we know have had family members and friends killed in recent weeks

Therefore, resolves to:

- 4) Unequivocally condemn antisemitism and Islamophobia and to reaffirm our position that hate will not be tolerated in Brighton and Hove; further, to reaffirm our status as a City of Sanctuary.
- 5) Endorse calls from the UN Secretary-General António Guterres, the IRC and the ICRC for the release of all hostages and an immediate ceasefire by all parties in the conflict.
- 6) Requests officer to continue to work in partnership with faith and community groups in the city and work to protect our communities who are facing rising hate crime and racially motivated violence.”

70.10 The Mayor confirmed that the motion had been carried.

## **71 PRIORITISING DOMESTIC ABUSE VICTIMS IN HOUSING ALLOCATION**

71.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Nann on behalf of the Labour Group and formally seconded by Councillor Grimshaw.

71.2 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Nann on their maiden speech.

71.3 The Mayor noted that there was an amendment in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.

71.4 Councillor McLeay moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Pickett.

71.5 Councillors Meadows spoke on the matter.

71.6 Councillor Nann confirmed that they would not accept the amendment.

71.7 The Mayor then put the Green Group amendment to the vote which was lost.

71.8 The Mayor then put the following motion to the vote:

This council notes:

- 1) We recognise that many people fleeing from domestic abuse and facing homelessness have already suffered significant trauma and likely spent time in unsettled accommodation in a refuge
- 2) More should be done to support those who have fled domestic abuse or violence to find safe and secure accommodation
- 3) DAHA accreditation is the UK benchmark for how housing providers should respond to domestic abuse in the UK and something that the Council's housing team and all housing providers should be aiming for

Therefore, resolves to call for an officer report to HNC Committee which addresses the following:

- 4) How to ensure that appropriate priority for those who have fled domestic abuse or violence is included in the review of the Council's housing allocation policy
- 5) Sets out what steps are required for the Council's housing team to achieve Domestic Abuse Housing Alliance (DAHA) accreditation
- 6) Identifies how the Council will work with all local housing providers to ensure that they are also working towards securing DAHA accreditation
- 7) How the Council will ensure that all council staff and relevant staff of housing partner organisations are trained to recognise potential signs of domestic abuse

71.8 The Mayor confirmed that the motion had been carried.

## **72 BLOCKED GULLIES AND DRAINS**

72.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Meadows on behalf of the Conservative Group and formally seconded by Councillor Theobald.

72.2 The Mayor noted that there were two amendments in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.

72.3 Councillor Rowkins moved the first amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Muten.

72.4 Councillor Pickett moved the second amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Hill.

72.5 Councillors Earthey spoke on the matter.

72.6 Councillor Meadows confirmed that they would not accept the amendments.

72.7 The Mayor then put the Green Group amendment to the vote which was lost.

72.8 The Mayor then put the Labour Group amendment to the vote which was carried.

72.9 The Mayor then put the following motion to the vote:

"This Council:

- 1) Notes that blocked gullies and drains are leading to significant flooding issues within our communities when there is heavy rainfall and that this is causing great difficulty for many residents;
- 2) Notes that the costs associated with maintaining drains and gullies has substantially increased in recent years due to a number of factors, including inflation, cost of fuel, and workforce shortages post-Brexit
- 3) Notes that, due to central government cuts, the budgets available for clearing and maintaining gullies and drains has remained static for many years, resulting in a real-terms cut of around 50%.
- 4) Notes that the costs of suspended parking in roads where gullies and drains are due to be cleared, or the moving of vehicles parked over gullies and drains means that some are not cleared when attended for example Nevill Close missed the last two scheduled clearances in September 2021 and March 2023 due to parked cars and was not scheduled for another clearance until September 2024;

This council therefore resolves to:

- 5) Have an officer report brought to the next Transport and Sustainability Committee outlining an action plan to improve and increase the clearing of blocked gullies and drains across Brighton and Hove, subject to funding.
- 6) Ensure that in the next update report to Transport and Sustainability committee, officers detail the approach to prioritising high-risk areas for regular clearance; the financial implications of the ongoing maintenance and clearing programme; and how the council will work collaboratively with Southern Water to alleviate pressure on the system through deployment of SuDS at strategic locations.”

72.10 The Mayor confirmed that the motion had been carried.

### 73 CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting concluded at 9.44pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2023