

CABINET ADDENDUM ONE

2.00PM, THURSDAY, 14 NOVEMBER 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

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ADDENDUM

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Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 95(c)

Subject: Deputations

Date of meeting: 14 November 2024

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of deputations from members of the public.

Notification of a further Deputation has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

2) Deputation: transparency concerns over Patcham Court Farm sale

I am here to express concerns about the council's potential deal with Royal Mail for the lease of Patcham Court Farm at a peppercorn rent.

Firstly, the council has kept a refurbished, council-owned three-bedroom house just metres from the site, intentionally vacant for over five years. Emails between council officers obtained via FOI reveal that this decision was made to support Royal Mail's potential access needs. This choice implies two alarming things: 1. That the council values corporate deals over addressing the needs of the 4,700 families on the social housing waiting list, and 2. that this deal was effectively decided in 2018.

With trust in Royal Mail at an all-time low, it is bizarre that our council is considering giving a 250-year lease to them on sensitive land within a crucial tap water protection zone. This land was safeguarded by parliament for its role in our water supply. Yet, the proposed lease gives the keys to a logistics company and also awards them the flexibility to sublet to others - alarming given increasing water insecurity.

Previously, the council estimated a maximum of £8.84 million from this deal—bringing the city just £35K per year, far below market rates. This deal provides no new jobs. Claims that the project supports net zero are misleading, as it will actually increase HGV traffic and will merely relocate congestion from the city centre to Patcham without reducing overall emissions. So what is the real motive? Furthermore, we question the integrity of the Planning Committee's process. FOI emails show that Brighton and Hove Bus Company, under pressure from the council, was persuaded to support Royal Mail's bid. Southern Water's voiced concerns about the bid as late as the day of the committee itself, but these were left unaddressed. Highways Agency objected for years and then when quiet at crunch time, why?

The council has also been inconsistent in defining the land's use classification, B1 versus B8, hindering resident participation. Before the September committee meeting, residents were promised an opportunity to ask questions, yet were denied this chance. The Planning Committee allowed a mere 11 minutes to the case against development and gave over 3 hours to Royal Mail and its allies.

If the cabinet approves this deal, we ask them to ensure that Royal Mail's current properties, do not become luxury developments. Developers should not be allowed to sidestep social housing obligations by paying penalty fees. We also remind the council of its duty to protect Patcham residents from increased pollution, flooding, and safety risks if this project proceeds. Finally better, more sustainable options could be considered for Patcham Court Farm, like a solar farm, community hub,

tech hub or low-impact housing. Please choose a future that reflects our city's values.

Supported by:

Rebecca Mintrim (Lead Spokesperson)

Karen Sanusi

Yusufuu Sanusi

Rebecca Kimber

Michael Howard

Heather Rutherford

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 96(b)

Subject: Member Questions

Date of meeting: 14 November 2024

A maximum period of fifteen minutes in total shall be made available at each meeting of the Executive for questions from Members of the Council. The questions included on the list of questions referred to above shall be taken as read at the Cabinet meeting. The question will be answered either orally or at the discretion of the Chair by a written answer circulated after the meeting. Officers may assist the Leader or a Cabinet Member with technical answers to questions. No supplementary questions shall be permitted.

The following written questions have been received from Members:

(1) Councillor Meadows- Patcham Court Farm

Why is the lease set to last 250 years (paragraph 2.1)?

(2) Councillor Meadows - Patcham Court Farm

Let's assume the sale price is £3m. That would amount to an income of only £12000 per year to the council. Aren't we selling this too cheaply for 250 years?

(3) Councillor Meadows- Patcham Court Farm

What will prevent the Royal Mail in 10, 20 or 50 years time selling the lease on, or subletting the land to another organisation or building company?

(4) Councillor Meadows- Patcham Court Farm

Why are park & ride, housing, and Royal Mail the only three options considered for this site? Why isn't the land being considered as allotments or for growing food as per Cllr Alexander's Notice of Motion from Full Council on 24th October?

(5) Councillor Meadows- Patcham Court Farm

During the so-called consultation by Royal Mail and the council it was suggested to residents that this proposal freed up land for social housing. Why were the Hove and North Road sites not financially viable given Royal Mail are getting such a cheap deal for Patcham Court Farm? The lead councillors must have been aware this was not viable before planning was granted.

(6) Councillor Meadows- Patcham Court Farm

What justifies the comment in paragraph 5.1 that the “considerable weight of public opinion was considered” given that residents attended and watched the whole process?

(7) Councillor McNair- Corporate Systems Improvement

The council must have known that our corporate systems approach needed renewing. Was the £2.75m for phase one budgeted for this financial year 2024-25?

(8) Councillor McNair- Corporate Systems Improvement

How many additional staff will be required to ensure this back-office operation runs smoothly?

(9) Councillor McNair- Corporate Systems Improvement

What's the expected cost saving of the new corporate system?

(10) Councillor McNair- Open Spaces Events Programme

What is the makeup of the May festivals forum (paragraph 3.12)?

(11) Councillor McNair- Open Spaces Events Programme

This approach seems to outsource all outdoor events in the city. Who's responsible when events fail?

(12) Councillor McNair - Open Spaces Events Programme

Why do we track Manchester's more expensive site hire fees?

(13) Councillor Sykes- Corporate Systems Improvement

Social value: With increasing sums planned to be paid to global and national tech firms in license fees for software and cloud access, and cashable savings arising it seems from reduced future need for technical, management and administrative roles, is this proposal doing enough to maintain in-house /in-city capacity and resilience to support and possibly help develop new systems?

(14) Councillor Shanks- Homewood College

What meanwhile use has been considered for Homewood College? Has other educational use been considered as it is an easy to access location?

(15) Councillor Shanks- Open Spaces Events Programme

Events – Can this be amended to reflect measures suggested in the recent petition by Derek Wright on the use of our public spaces? Does the council

support measures to compensate residents for the loss of amenity caused by events by reinvesting some receipts for direct improvements to the area where the event is held?

(16) Councillor Hill- Corporate Systems Improvement

Phase one of this scheme has a capital investment requirement of £2.75 million from borrowing with a loan period of 10 years. £4-6 million more is estimated in phase 2. Are there proactive steps the council is looking into to ensure that the phase 2 of the procurement is more affordable?

(17) Councillor Hill- Open Spaces Events Programme

Are there ways that the council can help ensure there is suitable space on the Level for football during and/or immediately after events? There is a school group from Fairlight who use it with their headteacher for practice who often raised concerns with Councillors about their lack of access due to events. Sometimes the Level is left in a poor state after events that means it looks like 'a scene from War Horse'.

