

CABINET ADDENDUM TWO

4.30PM, THURSDAY, 23 JANUARY 2025
COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

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ADDENDUM

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Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 128(b)

Subject: Public Questions

Date of meeting: 23 January 2025

A period of not more than thirty minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting for questions submitted by a member of the public.

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

(1) Preventing and tackling violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and sexual violence – Brighton & Hove City Council’s strategy 2025-2028 – Clare B Dimyon

When "Violence Against Women and Girls" (female) is recognised by international treaties* (UN 1993, Council of Europe - Istanbul 2013 & Dublin 2022) to be a phenomenon of specifically male violence, as is reflected in UK and other government data globally, across two decades, and in the context of 97-98% opposite-sex [50] orientation (ONS Census 2021), upon what evidence does Brighton & Hove City Council (agents and officers), rely in terms of liability, for the hypothesis that the sexual offending of transgender & nonbinary males (transwomen), is, as low or lower than that of the female population (not excluding transmen).

(2) Preventing and tackling violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and sexual violence – Brighton & Hove City Council’s strategy 2025-2028 – Allison Hooper

Over 500 women have so far signed an Open Letter on sexual violence support for women in B&H and surrounding areas. The letter raised serious concerns about the withdrawal or absence of female-only services for survivors of sexual violence and domestic abuse. Can the council confirm to me today that its VAWG Strategy will be amended to ensure female-only services are reinstated as soon as possible and made available to any female survivor who needs them?

(3) Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit Version 5– Adrian Hart

How will the Toolkit V5 prevent the classroom to clinic pipeline that has developed across the city (something highlighted in the recent High Court case launched by a Brighton parent against the NHS and which began with a child being socially transitioned in a local secondary school)? I’m sure Cabinet will want to reassure parents that the activist organisation Allsorts Youth Project will cease its activities inside schools in facilitating this pipeline.

(4) Preventing and tackling violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and sexual violence – Brighton & Hove City Council’s strategy 2025-2028 – Naomi Bos

In 2021, Rise Up! submitted a petition with over 30,000 signatures to the Council, highlighting public distress at Brighton's home grown specialist domestic abuse charity being decommissioned and services handed over to national generic providers. Subsequently we worked with a cross-party working group to address these failures. However, our requests to be included in the 'lived-experience' board and the City's VAWG Forum have gone unanswered. We seek assurance that there will be a transparent process allowing stakeholder organisations to apply for membership of the new Oversight Board, rather than being privately selected. Will this Board have room for the input of engaged and established volunteer-run survivors' groups and the victim-survivors that they represent and will we be invited?

(5) Preventing and tackling violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and sexual violence – Brighton & Hove City Council's strategy 2025-2028 – Gail Gray

The Pan Sussex Domestic Abuse accommodation and support strategy identified a shortfall of 14 Refuge spaces for women and children. How does the Council intend to fill this gap in provision?

(6) Park & Ride– James Taylor

One of the stated aims of the park and ride scheme is to reduce city centre congestion. Clearly this can only be achieved if drivers choose to use the park and ride scheme, instead of driving to the city centre car parks, but there is no mention of the trial park and ride spaces replacing existing city centre parking spaces. Combine this with the recent reduction in city centre parking charges and there is no incentive for drivers to choose the slightly less convenient park and ride option. If the trial scheme is unpopular for the reasons stated, how will this be considered when making a decision on a permanent scheme?

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 129(a)

Subject: Member Questions

Date of meeting: 23 January 2025

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- Park & Ride

There is already Park & Ride in Mill Road for football events. Where will football visitors be expected to park when the Park & Ride is full?

(2) Councillor Meadows – Park & Ride

At the moment, when the Park & Ride is full, many visitors park in Patcham, seriously affecting residents' ability to park. Will there be a consultation for Patcham residents before a new Park & Ride facility is introduced?

(3) Councillor Meadows- Park & Ride

If there isn't going to be a consultation, why not?

(4) Councillor Meadows- Park & Ride

The Royal Mail development will attract significant new numbers of workers to Patcham parking for free and displacing residents. Football visitors already significantly increase congestion and lack of parking in Patcham. An increased Park & Ride service will further increase the number of cars parking in the ward. What mitigations will the council introduce to help residents in Patcham affected by this significant overspill in cars?

(5) Councillor Meadows- Park & Ride

Will there be a dedicated shuttle bus from Mill Road, or will Park & Ride users have to utilise the current bus service?

(6) Councillor Meadows- Park & Ride

If Park & Ride is going to be ticketed what incentive will there be to stop people from parking for free across the road?

(7) Councillor Hill - Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit Version 5

What do you see as the main changes in this document compared with the last iteration of this?

(8) Councillor Hill - Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit Version 5

Have Cabinet members spoken with Bridget Phillipson or those within her department about this policy? Do they have her support with this?

(9) Councillor Hill- Preventing and tackling violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and sexual violence – Brighton & Hove City Council's strategy 2025-2028

Competitive procurement practices have been raised by residents with me as an area of concern in a relation to the provision of services that support women who have been affected by violence. Is the council looking to ensure that local specialist provision, as suggested by Women's Aid, is prioritised under its procurement policies?

(10) Councillor Hill- Preventing and tackling violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and sexual violence – Brighton & Hove City Council's strategy 2025-2028

What is the council doing to protect sex workers in their violence against, women and girls strategy?

(11) Councillor Hill- Preventing and tackling violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and sexual violence – Brighton & Hove City Council's strategy 2025-2028

What can we done to educate children about healthy relationships in our schools to support the objectives of the violence against women and girls strategy?

(12) Councillor West- Park & Ride

The report suggests that the proposal to operate P&R from existing edge-of-city car parks (option 2) will reduce traffic and congestion in the city centre. How will that be the case when there is no commensurate proposal to remove an equal number of city centre car parking spaces? Rather than encouraging visitors and commuters to conduct their journeys end-to-end by sustainable means, it appears the proposal will merely make the choice to drive to the city a more attractive option. We have three rail lines, and multiple coach and bus routes leading to the city. What consideration has been made of the potential negative impact this P&R proposal will have upon the use of these scheduled public transport services?

(13) Councillor West- Park & Ride

A previous major study conducted before the formation of the national park proposed a number of sites for a permanent P&R car park that are now either within the national park, in highly controversial locations or built upon. For decades the quest to deliver a substantial purpose built P&R has remained a fantasy and false electoral promise. This obsession has caused a major distraction from the focus that is required upon the greater problem of reducing the city's internal car movements - which are of much greater scale than the incoming commute. Where do Cabinet think the available and acceptable sites for permanent P&R could possibly be? Do they seriously want to concrete over areas in the national park?

(14) Councillor West- Park & Ride

In addition to the significant capital investment required for a permanent P&R, the previous study also exposed the colossal annual subsidy that would need to be provided to operate the frequent dedicated direct P&R shuttle buses. If the scheme is to achieve a lowering of traffic in the city centre then the cost of reduced revenue from a commensurate reduction in parking spaces in the city centre must also be added. Rather than wasting funding on the option 2 experiment and on a fresh study of permanent P&R, which will merely reveal the same fundamental problems about the lack of availability of suitable sites and the eye-watering cost, does the Leader not think that more might be achieved with this precious public money if it was instead spent on supporting increased use of scheduled public transport and active travel.

(15) Councillor West- Park & Ride

The thin report before cabinet mentions Park & Ride services in other towns yet fails to share any evidence of how well these operate. What study has been conducted of the use by commuters and visitors of the so-called Withdean Park & Ride which uses the 27 bus service? Why is there no information on this given in the cabinet report? The fact of the matter is, studies show that to prove attractive to motorists, P&R needs to offer a swift journey of ten minutes or less. If the option 2 schemes are to use existing scheduled stopping bus service routes, what are the measures of success the cabinet will be setting? Does a decision to commit further funding and officer time to this project not need to be based on a fully evidenced case, rather than wishful thinking and political ideology?

(16) Councillor Pickett- Park & Ride

With regard to Park & Ride sites, I am assuming that the plan is to cover all the main arteries into the city, how many sites are planned?

(17) Councillor Pickett- Park & Ride

I know that £50,000 of funding has been secured for creating a business case and that a request has been made to use £75,000 of the BSIP funding

to deliver existing car park site. Will these funds be enough to secure the entire project or do you envisage more funding needed at a later stage?

(18) Councillor Pickett- Park & Ride

Will private landowners be compensated for use of their land and how will this cost be mitigated?

(19) Councillor Pickett- Park & Ride

Please can you clarify? Currently at Withdean Stadium people have to pay to park their car and then pay again to catch the bus that normally runs from the area into town. Would you not agree that this isn't really how P&R works? Usually, a fee is paid that covers parking and the bus fare. Plus, a bus that is set to run from pick up into town without stopping is laid on.

(20) Councillor Pickett- Park & Ride

Is the plan that eventually these P&R sites will be self-financing and if so, do we have an approximate date as to when we can expect that to happen?

(21) Councillor Pickett- Park & Ride

When you suggest a longer-term plan of building a singular purpose-built site, doesn't this go against the common idea that P&R sites only work for a city if there is more than one site and that to only have one site could mean that the concentration of traffic builds up in that area instead of the centre. Therefore, isn't it just moving the concentration of cars from one area to another?

(22) Councillor Pickett- Moulsecoomb Hub and Housing project

The report on the Moulsecoomb Hub states that a further £800K is needed to cover increasing costs. Can the Cabinet lead please clarify if this extra funding will be sourced as a payback grant from perhaps Homes England? And if it is, but isn't successful, is there a Plan B?

(23) Councillor Pickett- Preventing and tackling violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and sexual violence – Brighton & Hove City Council's strategy 2025-2028

I am very happy to see the inclusion of a new VAWG strategy and action plan and the creation of a VAWGDASW Oversight Board, that, as this report suggests takes on the "changing threat that is VAWG in the city." Does this mean that the administration has noted its error in cutting funding for VAWG in last year's budget, and that it will now endeavour to continue to support the vital and pro-active work of VAWG within our city as is the council's statutory and legal obligation to safeguard and support victims of violence and domestic abuse?

(24) Councillor Shanks- Moulsecoomb Hub and Housing project

Will the cabinet ensure that youth provision will be run by the council and will have open access provision for young people in their leisure time ie a youth club?

(25) Councillor Goldsmith- Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit Version 5

I appreciate that a lot of effort has gone into ensuring that this latest version of the toolkit is robust and completely in line with current legislation. What work will the council be doing to reach out to other local authorities who have either had a toolkit in the past, or are considering introducing their own?

(26) Councillor Sykes- Brighton and Hove Food Strategy Action Plan 2025-30

Recognising the food strategy and the value which Brighton and Hove Food Partnership brings to our city, what reflections does the administrations have with respect to our city's community and voluntary sector in the forthcoming budget round?

(27) Councillor Sykes- Microsoft Licence Renewal

Is the administration concerned about our dependency on MS and escalating costs and are there any feasible alternatives, or part-alternatives? If there are no alternatives is this a matter for concern in terms of potential future costs?

(28) Councillor Sykes- Council Tax Base and Business Rates Retention Forecasts 2025/26

I note from the report that 934 residential properties in our city have lain empty for between 1 and 10 or more years. What more can the administration do or advocate for to bring these properties back into use to help alleviate the housing crisis in our city?

(29) Councillor Fishleigh- Park & Ride

Do you agree that a park and ride that uses existing bus services which have multiple stops between the car park and the centre of the city isn't actually a park and ride?

Please would you ensure that any new park and ride doesn't rely on the existing 27 bus service. This is because when there are delays the service is terminated before it reaches its final destination at the back of Saltdean leaving residents stranded on the coast road.

(30) Councillor Fishleigh- Preventing and tackling violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and sexual violence – Brighton & Hove City Council's strategy 2025-2028

Councillors received correspondence from a woman who had been raped who felt that she couldn't use various support services in the city as they couldn't guarantee biological women-only spaces. Is this addressed in the new plan you are discussing today?