

CABINET ADDENDUM

2.00PM, THURSDAY, 13 FEBRUARY 2025

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

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BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CABINET

4.30pm 23 JANUARY 2025

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Sankey (Chair) Taylor (Deputy Chair), Daniel, Miller, Muten, Pumm, Robins, Rowkins, Williams and Robinson

PART ONE

124 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

124a Declarations of interests

124.1 There were none.

124b Exclusion of the press and public

124.2 In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 ("the Act"), the Committee considered whether the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item of business on the grounds that it is likely in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during it, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act.

124.3 **Resolved-** That the public are excluded from the meeting from items listed on Part 2 of the agenda.

125 MINUTES

125.1 **Resolved-** That the minutes of the previous meetings be approved as the correct record.

126 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

125.1 The Chair provided the following Communications:

I'd like to start by taking this opportunity to welcome our colleague, Councillor Birgit Miller, back to Cabinet after a period of sickness leave, Councillor Miller obviously attended and contributed to our special cabinet meeting on devolution earlier this month, but in honesty, in the excitement of that meeting, I didn't properly welcome her back. So welcome back, Councillor Miller. I'd like to also put on

record my thanks to Cabinet adviser Councillor Mitchie Alexander for providing such excellent cover while Councillor Miller was away.

Councillor Alexander is unfortunately unwell today and so will not be attending in her Cabinet advisor capacity, although our new food strategy which will be discussed today is one of her projects and that that will be led today by Councillor Leslie Pumm.

I'd like to also record my thanks to Councillor Ty Goddard who has stepped down as cabinet advisor and economic development and regional partnership to focus more on his other work. He's provided really fantastic and outstanding support to the work that the Administration has done so far in writing new economic strategy for the city and giving a real boost to our economic development plan. So, I'd like to put on record my thanks for that. It's genuinely inspiring to be surrounded by so many Members who are so passionate about this city and so determined to continue delivering on the priorities of local people. I've never been more confident that in 2025 this will be a year of opportunity for this Council and our amazing city. And I think that today's business includes welcome progress on a number of key priorities and examples of the really positive and important work being done by officers and Members.

I'm very proud to see our preventing and tackling violence against women and girls and domestic and sexual abuse strategy 2025 to 2028 come before Cabinet. As a proud feminist, I know that this will make a difference to the lives and the lived experiences of people throughout the city, and I thank everyone that has worked so hard on the strategy.

Domestic abuse accounted for 11% of all recorded crime in Brighton and Hove in 2024. With police reports showing that there were 1209 sexual offences in that period and 460 incidents of stalking, these offences are often also, as we know, underreported, meaning the actual numbers are likely even higher. I know from my case work with survivors that they are frequently forced to recount their stories endless times, and that the services they need from everything from housing to the criminal justice system are not properly aligned and supportive.

We are determined to tackle this and our three-year action plan, which includes the creation of a new board to oversee relevant services and support in the city, is the latest step of our ongoing efforts. I was also pleased yesterday to take up my new role on the Labour Party's national Policy Forum in the Safer Streets Commission, which will be working closely with the Home Secretary on the government's missions across crime, civil rights and justice, which includes government's ambitious missions of halving violence against women and girls.

By working together, we can create a better future where violence against women and girls, domestic abuse and sexual violence is prevented. Survivors are supported and perpetrators are held accountable.

Housing is another real area of focus for this Council and today's Cabinet agenda includes discussions on the appointment of a contractor for our new Moulsecoomb Housing and Community Hub.

This project represents a significant regeneration opportunity for Moulsecoomb and Bevendean with 200 new council homes and a multi-use community hub. It will have a transformative effect on the surrounding area and provide residents with access to a range of community facilities.

Importantly, this project's design has been shaped by residents. More than 200 local people told us what they wanted on the site and shared any concerns, and their feedback has been instrumental in finalising these ambitious plans.

Under this Administration, we will always be a listening Council and a Council that is unapologetically focused on investing in communities that have been historically

underserved. Everyone deserves an accessible, affordable and decent home, and we will continue to deliver this. I can't wait to see the project on this work get underway, assuming that Cabinet approves the report this evening.

I'm proud that this Council remains committed to supporting schools to support trans and gender questioning young people and their families.

And I'm pleased that we're discussing an updated version of our Trans Inclusion tool kit on today's agenda.

These young people have been consistently identified both locally and nationally as vulnerable in terms of education outcomes. If adopted today, this update will be the fifth version of our toolkit and should be a source of pride for this Council that we continue to be at the forefront of work in this area. All young people deserve safety, dignity and respect and trans and non-binary young people deserve to participate as equals in their school life.

You will also see plans for Park and Ride on this cabinet agenda.

This has been something residents have been calling for many years and it's brilliant to see it finally moving closer to becoming a reality under this Labour Administration. The approach being recommended to councillors today, initially using existing car parks to house a park and ride scheme, has been used successfully by many other local authorities to support the case for an eventual purpose-built facility.

We plan and hope to have this scheme in place and operational by the summer.

Once again, this Administration is listening and delivering on local priorities.

Finally, today we will discuss recommendations around the potential sale of the Brighton i360. While the sale is a decision for the administrators Interpath, they must act in the best interests of creditors and as the largest creditor for this sale to go ahead, the Council needs to agree the release of the debt owed by the i360 company to this Council. The final decision on the sale will be made by Interpath.

When the Green and Conservative parties voted to back the i360 with public money in 2014 and to take out a £36 million loan, which was passed straight on to private developers, they effectively submitted this City Council and our taxpayers and residents entirely to the free market. Mindbogglingly little thought was given to what would happen if the venture didn't initially succeed and so that decision has ultimately brought us to where we are now.

Before and since the Board of the i360 filed for administration last month, our Cabinet Member for Finance and City Regeneration, Councillor Jacob Taylor, has been working relentlessly with officers against the bad hand we've been dealt to try and secure a buyer for the attraction. It benefits everyone for the attraction to still be in use if at all possible. Former employees who may regain their employment, businesses next to the i360, who have already seen a drop in footfall and profits since the i360 closed its doors and ultimately residents and the City Council, the derelict structure benefits no one. Another West Pier, but without the history that makes the West Pier in all its rugged rustiness beloved of Brightonians through the generations. If the i360 can operate again, then it can help bring in business rates, and if we proceed with the recommended buyer that has come forward, the City Council will get a small share of future revenue should the attraction become profitable again.

This may be the least worst option. I understand why residents are so incredulous that this situation has come to pass. I'm incredulous and in honesty, I'm also angry. There are Green councillors present in today's cabinet meeting and given that we are due to discuss this issue, I ask again that they reflect on their leading role in this catastrophe and call on them to make a public apology to the city's residents for this £51 million worth of debt.

127 CALL OVER

127.1 The following items on the agenda were reserved for discussion:

- Item 132: Brighton & Hove Food Strategy Action Plan 2025-30
- Item 134: Moulsecoomb Hub and Housing Project
- Item 135: Park & Ride
- Item 136: Microsoft licence renewal
- Item 138: Regional Care co-operative DfE pathfinder
- Item 139: Preventing and tackling Violence and Women and Girls and Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy 2025-2028
- Item 140: Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit Version 5
- Item 141: Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund
- Item 142: Brighton i360: Decision on Future

127.2 The Democratic Services Officer confirmed that the items listed above had been reserved for discussion and that the following reports on the agenda with the recommendations therein had been approved and adopted:

- Item 133: Admission of New Member to the Greater Brighton Economic Board
- Item 137: Council Tax Base and Business Rates forecasts 2025/26

128 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**(a) Petitions****1) Install Adequate Lighting in Tarner Park**

125.1 The petition was withdrawn.

(b) Public Questions**1) Preventing and tackling violence against women and girls, domestic abuse, and sexual violence – Brighton & Hove City Council's strategy 2025-2028**

125.2 Clare B Dimyon read the following question:

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).

125.3 Councillor Daniel provided the following reply:

To be clear, the strategy addresses all violence against women and girls, domestic abuse and sexual violence, regardless of the sex or gender of either the perpetrator or victim. It serves all affected by these crimes. I understand in the development of this strategy, the Council has not stated nor referred to this hypothesis.

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

125.4 Allison Hooper read the following question:

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?

125.5 Councillor Daniel provided the following reply:

So, this strategy outlines our strategic aims to prevent and tackle for domestic abuse and sexual violence. The commissioning of services occurs in line with the commissioning cycle, so different dates. The Council currently jointly commissions its main contract for domestic and sexual violence services on a pan-Sussex basis. Going forward, consultations for future commissioning will be undertaken to inform those future commissioning decisions. We will take into account any barriers raised by any cohort of victims and survivors and endeavour to address them, but I have to be clear that the Council has not changed its commissioning policy in relation to the current services on gender and sex in terms of access to the services in the city, nor has it withdrawn or changed female only services on a sex basis. The service criteria did not change in the last commissioning round and the policies of providers remains the same as it did under previous contracts and providers.

3) Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit Version 5

125.6 Adrian Hart read the following question:

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.

125.7 Councillor Daniel provided the following reply:

The toolkit makes it clear that it's not for schools to make decisions about medical treatment. The case you referred to involves the NHS and does not appear to have been determined yet, and as the Council is not a party to it, I cannot comment on it.

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

125.8 Naomi Bos read the following question:

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?

125.9 Councillor Daniel provided the following reply:

The membership of the Oversight Board will be composed of key partners from the voluntary and community sector as well as the statutory sector. In terms of the Oversight Board, the Board will develop the work around survivor involvement. My main initial priority is to be satisfied that the survivor voice includes a broad demographic, for example disabled survivors, older survivors and care experienced survivors

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

128.10 Gail Grey read the following question:

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?

128.11 Councillor Daniel provided the following reply:

In 2021, Brighton and Hove City Council commissioned Stonewater to carry out research on the housing options for survivors of domestic abuse locally. Stonewater in partnership with the Council developed the Savehaven by the Sea Report. As a result of that process, several recommendations were identified, and those recommendations are contained within the Strategy. The Council will continue to work in partnership to deliver on those recommendations.

We've already worked in partnership to develop safe house provision with Stonewater, which has provided an additional 5 units of accommodation. We continue to work to identify and expand the level of safe housing for those affected in the city

6) Park & Ride

128.12 James Taylor read the following question:

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?

128.13 Councillor Muten provided the following reply:

Thank you, James, for your question. The provision of park and ride in the city is necessary to offer travel choices for those coming to our city. Currently, those who need to drive to our city centre have limited choice, leading many visitors to drive right into our city centre to park, providing park and ride offers a genuine choice alongside a range of other modes of transport.

There may be a range of reasons people need to drive to city centre and we are working on the details of park and ride to offer incentives to do so.

We're currently not looking at a one in one out approach as this would not be beneficial for our city in relation to our visitor economy and growth agenda and really vibrancy of our city.

The do nothing approach as previous administrations effectively chose to implement is also proved not beneficial. There has been a net loss of approximately 500 spaces in the city centre parking spaces over recent years for a range of reasons, including the closure of Carlton Hill and Oxford Court car parks and the loss of parking to install the Madeira drive cycle lanes and no park and ride offer to offset this number.

We do need a park and ride that works well for our city, helps reduce congestion and improve air quality. A park and ride offer could incentivise car sharing.

Bike hire hubs will provide visitors an active travel option. The price points we offer will be an important factor that for its successful details of park and ride. Park and ride will be presented at a future at a future cabinet meeting.

7) **Trans Toolkit Version 5**

128.14 On behalf of a resident, Councillor Goldsmith read the following question:

Having been through a rigorous consultation process, and having accepted the importance of the trans inclusion toolkit as vital guidance for schools and to support inclusion for all our CYP, what are the Council's plans to ensure schools are informed about and trained in utilising this guidance for the benefit of all their pupils?

128.15 Councillor Daniel provided the following reply:

If approved today, we will promote the toolkit with all of our schools through a number of channels, including head teacher meetings, a weekly bulletin, our PSHE networks and the PSHE newsletter. We will also communicate with governors via our school governors team to raise awareness and where schools have questions about specific issues, officers can provide further support and advice as required on a case by case basis.

129 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS

125.1 A copy of the questions received was circulated ahead of the meeting. Responses provided are as follows:

1) Councillor Meadows- Park & Ride**Response from Councillor Muten**

Thank you for your question, Councillor Meadows. You are right in stating that there is already a Park & Ride in Mill Road for football events. This is separate to the proposals being discussed today for a Park & Ride to serve the city.

2) Councillor Meadows – Park & Ride**Response: Councillor Muten**

Thank you for your question, Councillor Meadows. This question is answered by your previous question in that football Park & Ride is separate to what is being discussed today. To address your on-street matchday parking concerns in Patcham, enforceable matchday parking restrictions as successfully rolled out recently elsewhere in the city may be an option should residents request this. To again stress, this matchday park & ride arrangement is separate from the Park & Ride proposals being discussed today.

3) Councillor Meadows- Park & Ride**Response: Councillor Muten**

Thank you for your question, Councillor Meadows. The proposal being discussed today would not be subject to consultation as it is the utilisation of existing car parks and existing bus services for Park & Ride in the city. Your third question, as are your earlier two questions, seem to focus on a misplaced assumption. May I again respectfully emphasise that the proposals being discussed today are for a Park & Ride to serve the city; and are not in relation to the existing football matchday Park & Ride that operates on Mill Road, Patcham.

4) Councillor Meadows- Park & Ride**Response: Councillor Muten**

Thank you for your further question, Councillor Meadows. This question is answered in the answer to Question 1 in that the existing arrangements for football matchday Park & Ride is separate to what is being discussed today. This paper is focused on the Park & Ride that serves the city. Previous Cabinet, Full Council and Planning Committee meetings focused on the decisions around the Patcham Court Farm site. Visitors in vehicles would be directed to the active Park & Ride for the city, which may lower the number of visitor vehicles parked on residential streets. In this regard, the Park & Ride provides mitigation for the concern you identify.

5) Councillor Meadows - Park & Ride

Response: Councillor Muten

Thank you for your question, Councillor Meadows. This question is answered by the answer to your first question and subsequent three next questions in that football Park & Ride is separate to what is being discussed today. The proposal at Cabinet is for a Park & Ride for the city and not in relation to the existing matchday arrangements for football parking that uses the Mill Road as a Park & Ride for the Amex.

6) Councillor Meadows - Park & Ride**Response: Councillor Muten**

Thank you for your question, Councillor Meadows. The proposed Park & Ride is going to utilise existing car parks and bus services on existing routes. The ticketing and pricing details of this are being worked out and will be subject to a future Cabinet report. Subject to the details of each location under consideration, the Park & Ride parking ticket will connect with and enable the Park & Ride bus offer. If visitors chose to park elsewhere, they would be subject the normal bus fare for that route.

7) Councillor Hill - Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit Version 5**Response: Councillor Daniel**

The toolkit has been thoroughly reviewed to ensure it refers to all current relevant statute, statutory guidance and relevant legislation. It further emphasises that each student needs to be considered on a case by case basis, in partnership with parents or carers except in exceptional circumstances. It provides detailed and nuanced guidance to support schools and educational settings to develop policies and practice to support trans children and young people.

8) Councillor Hill - Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit Version 5**Response: Councillor Daniel**

A draft of the toolkit has been shared with the DfE

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

The procurement of services that support women who have been affected by violence are undertaken in line with procurement legislation with oversight by the Council's Procurement Team. The Council is aware of the suggestion by Womens Aid that local specialist provision is procured and can confirm that in the past, local specialist services have been invited to tender for services. Going forward, the Council welcomes submissions for tenders from local specialist providers.

It is my intention to ensure that we use the guidance provided by organisations such as Women's Aid and Gallup to support our commissioning process in order to provide reassurance to the public that future processes have been informed by national best practice and that the outcome should be supported by the whole community.

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

Response: Councillor Daniel

Sex workers are a group who can be affected by the harm caused by VAWG. Currently, the Council fund a local provider Oasis to deliver support via the Sex Workers Outreach Project. At Cabinet, I (Councillor Daniel), committed to continuing to support sex workers Our work will include the consideration of dignified and fair access to services for sex workers We will continue to work with our colleagues in the Police to tackle those who exploit sex workers whilst working with harm reduction services to improve routes to safety for those engaged in sex work who wish to exit. I gave my contact details to the group who came to council and invited them to get in touch to ensure that they are kept informed of any relevant work strands and consultation opportunities.

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

Response: Councillor Daniel

Working with Education establishments is a key to our strategic aim of prioritising prevention. The Harmful Sexual Practices workgroup oversaw the delivery of the Pattern and Progress programme delivered by the YMCA and funded by the Trust for Developing Communities. This programme had a strong focus on pro social behaviour change at young men. Currently staff from Cranstoun attend schools to support young people using abusive behaviours in their relationships.

The Council work with the universities of Brighton and Sussex to ensure engagement with and awareness of the local service offer. Going forward, as we deliver the strategy, the Prioritising Prevention subgroup will collaborate with local partners to organise a partnership approach to educating children about health relationships based on the learning available from national best practice.

We will extend our focus to include VCS sector partners and sports clubs who work with children and young people to deliver workshops to raise awareness of VAWG/DA/SV to young people.

I have asked the young people involved in Citizens UK in the city who have done some amazing work on young people and mental health to consider putting together proposals around what they think would be the most useful interventions and what role they think young people should play in preventing VAWG DA SV.

12) Councillor West - Park & Ride

Response: Councillor Muten

Thank you for your question, Councillor West. The provision of Park & Ride is necessary to offer travel choices for those coming to the city. Currently those who have to drive to the city centre have limited choices and many choose to drive right into the centre of city to park. Providing Park & Ride offers a genuine choice, alongside a range of other ways to get to the city including those you mention. There may be a range of reasons people come to our city by car. We are working on the details of Park & Ride to offer incentives for Park & Ride for those needing to drive without taking their vehicle into the city centre.

To encourage growth in our visitor economy, we do not support a one-in one-out policy, as perhaps intimated by your question. Rather, the option of Park & Ride will always be in conjunction with offering a range of transport choices for those accessing our city. We have lost some 500 car parking space over recent years with the development of Carlton Hill and Oxford Place car parks and loss of parking to install the Maderia Drive cycle lane, all without a commensurate Park & Ride offer to visitors. Further to bus transit, Park & Ride locations will have bike hire. As in some other cities, Park & Ride can encourage and incentivise car share reducing car numbers whilst enhancing visitor numbers. Full details of Park & Ride will be presented at a future Cabinet meeting.

13) Councillor West - Park & Ride

Response: Councillor Muten

Thank you for your question, Councillor West. The preferred option in the discussion today is the provision of Park & Ride using existing car parks and bus services on existing bus routes. Details of options for Park & Ride sites are continuing to be investigated and will be the subject of a future Cabinet report. Previous administrations have repeated exploration of a large single site on the edge of the city and South Downs. This “obsession” as you describe included a study under the Green administration between 2021 to 2023 which also focused on these same sites – more than a decade after the South Downs National Park was formed. Pursuing the recommended Option 2 in the report breaks this former approach. we do need to evaluate something which is operationally viable in the first instance.

Using existing sites and it doesn't preclude the possibility of developing a more permanent site in the future, but we do need as a priority to get park and ride up and running and that is the principal focus.

14) Councillor West - Park & Ride

Response: Councillor Muten

Thank you for your question. By taking forward this option to utilise existing car parks and bus services on existing routes, this offers a flexible approach which allows testing of the proof of concept by working in partnership without to making costly investment and potential subsidy. The scheme will have ongoing review with potential for more partners and sites to come on board. Use and development of active travel routes can further encourage cycle hub connection for multi-modal access to our city. On proof of concept, the offer can grow.

As a member of Transport for the South East, I can assure you we are strongly advocating better public transport for our region. It is on public record when I spoke at

the last meeting of this Cabinet in support of a devolved mayoral strategic authority for Sussex to develop an integrated transport policy with a planning policy that encourages better public transport to and from our city. We are also improving bus services and installing better active travel infrastructure across our city.

15) Councillor West - Park & Ride

Response: Councillor Muten

Thank you for your question, Councillor West. Unlike your party, we do not make decisions based on wishful thinking and political ideology. No, we are data led problem solvers to get things done. As part of the officer work on this, the data from the Withdean site has been considered and reviewed. Likewise, officers are reviewing what works elsewhere and undertaking modelling and site visits to get the best we can for our city. Further assessment of other city's operations is taking place. Building on data from other successful schemes, our new approach to Park & Ride will work well for our city and its constraints. The details of Park & Ride will be subject to a future Cabinet report. Once operational, we will measure usage, incentive and feedback to assess success with review to improve.

16) Councillor Pickett - Park & Ride

Response: Councillor Muten

Thank you for your question, Councillor Pickett. As you state, there are several main arteries into the city, and therefore our work on Park & Ride is considering these. Our more versatile approach enables this. On proof of concept, we aim to grow to enable this model close to main routes into the city. The details will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting.

17) Councillor Pickett - Park & Ride

Response: Councillor Muten

Thank you for your question, Councilor Pickett. This funding will enable site evaluation, understand what works for comparable cities and to establish the first site to be launched this summer. We are working closely with bus operators to enhance bus services on existing routes to establish Park & Ride for our city. For this to grow, a business case will be written to demonstrate longer term viability and sustainability. On proof on concept, we will develop Park & Ride options on a more sustainable and viable basis.

18) Councillor Pickett- Park & Ride

Response: Councillor Muten

Thank you for your question, Councillor Pickett. We plan to work in partnership with car park owners. Negotiations continue and the details of Park & Ride will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting.

19) Councillor Pickett- Park & Ride**Response: Councillor Muten**

Thank you for your question, Councillor Pickett. With respect to the legacy Park & Ride, the ticketing and current payment for parking at Withdean Sports Centre is entirely under contract to Freedom Leisure with no plan to change from current arrangements. For Park & Ride for the city, we are considering an approach that allows flexibility both in terms of the use of sites and also the use of bus services on existing routes. This allows the testing of this proof of concept for Park & Ride without the need for a subsidised dedicated bus service.

20) Councillor Pickett - Park & Ride**Response: Councillor Muten**

Thank you for your question, Councillor Pickett. We are working on the details of this in discussions with the relevant stakeholders, and details will be brought to a future Cabinet meeting.

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?

Response: Councillor Muten

Thank you for your question, Councillor Pickett. The more costly Option 1 is not preferred. The recommendation in the report is for Option 2. For this approach we are planning to establish a proof of concept and utilise this at multiple locations. This more flexible approach could be established on each main artery route into and out of our city. This flexible and more distributed approach aims to avoid the concern you raise. The details will be considered at a future Cabinet meeting.

22) Councillor Pickett- Moulsecomb Hub and Housing project**Response: Councillor Williams**

The shortfall has been included within the Council's successful Brownfield investment and land programme bid, which was successful as we've just heard this week. And as outlined in Part 2 of the report, a range of mitigations, including exploring value engineering options, are in place to ensure this project remains viable and deliverable.

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

Response: Councillor Daniel

The council is committed to addressing VAWG, DA and SV. Feedback from partnership consultations highlight that to effectively tackle the harm caused by VAWG/DA/SV there is a need to develop a coordinated response. This approach recognises that everyone has a role in tackling and preventing VAWG and goes beyond commissioning specialist services. Our “One Council Approach” and the new strategy aim to ensure that all Council and commissioned services prioritise VAWG.

It is anticipated that our strategic priority of “strengthening the co-ordinated response” to VAWG/DA/SV will work to improve coordination and strengthen how services work with victim/survivors. The aim is that wherever in the partnership an individual discloses they are affected by VAWG/ SA/SV they will receive an appropriate response and be signposted to support. In developing this strategy, we received strong feedback from stakeholders that no single agency can provide the whole response to VAWG and that everyone in the city has a role to play in tackling VAWG. The Council will continue to drive the work with the public, statutory and community voluntary services to improve how we respond to VAWG as a city.

24) Councillor Shanks- Moulsecoomb Hub and Housing project**Response: Councillor Williams**

The youth services currently provided at the 67 Centre will continue at the new Moulsecoomb Community Hub. The youth space will continue to be managed by the Council, and the Council will commission youth providers to ensure it meets its statutory duty regarding sufficient youth activity.

25) Councillor Goldsmith- Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit Version 5**Response: Councillor Daniel**

Our staff are involved with national and regional networks and that will be shared as any of our policies would be.

26) Councillor Sykes- Brighton and Hove Food Strategy Action Plan 2025-30**Response: Councillor Pumm**

The four-year strategic investment into the sector via the Thriving Communities Investment Fund has been protected in the budget in recognition of the importance of the sector not only in meeting residents and communities in crisis now but also their work with the council to develop and support community resilience and move to preventative action. The fund has strategically invested in core and projects key CVS organisations across the city that provide a range of support to diverse communities in the city. The fund also has a stream of funding available for small organisations in the city, the Community Catalyst Fund, this offers small groups greater stability by offering two years of funding. The council recognises that securing external funding for CVS organisations is extremely challenging especially at the moment and especially for core

costs. Many external funds focus on supporting projects. The council recognises that through its investment focusing on core costs we are enabling the sector to survive and thrive and bringing in more and other funds to the city to support residents.

27) Councillor Sykes- Microsoft Licence Renewal

Response: Councillor Taylor

The Microsoft suite of tools provides the essential applications that drive the operation of many council services, and with the evolution of AI and other technologies provide us with many opportunities to innovate and improve the way we do business. There are other options and applications available from other providers, but it is felt that currently the innovations within the Microsoft suite, and our current use of the tools that is already embedded across the council are the best and most efficient approach to streamline our back-office services and ensure we can maximise resource available for direct service delivery to residents.

Our IT&D team keep under review whether the tools best meet our needs both now and into the future. Detailed work has led the team to the view that the best value approach is to re-new these contracts using the frameworks described and continue with embedding tools that will improve productivity going forward. We will continue to review whether there are other tools that better meet our needs, and the options we have to contain costs as far as possible with the use of frameworks and effective joint procurement through our Orbis partnership.

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

Response: Councillor Taylor

You're quite right. Clearly, we don't want empty properties in the city. The premiums themselves are clearly a powerful incentive for owners to bring their properties back into use. The numbers have come down from 934 to 858 as of the 2nd of January 2025. That's a sort of update versus in the paper. So, the numbers have come down a bit, but clearly the figure does fluctuate as properties come in and out of use. The large majority of properties are in the one to five year empty category and currently 68% of those are one to two years. Most long long-term empty properties in Brighton & Hove under two years empty are transactional and tend to come back into use before two years has elapsed from routine engagement with owners and light touch local authority involvement. Transactional includes things such as advertising a property for sale, dealing with previous owners affairs, buying and selling delays building delays and obtaining planning consent.

As we can see, the number of properties empty over two years are far fewer, while generally more problematic. This is where the main focus and expertise of the Council's empty property team comes into play. Seeking solutions by working with owners to bring properties back into use, through sale or renting.

29) Councillor Fishleigh- Park & Ride

Response: Councillor Muten

Thank you for your question, Councillor Fishleigh. I'm afraid I can't talk specifics of which bus services at this point in time because we are negotiating with third parties. The details of the Park & Ride will be discussed at a future Cabinet meeting. This meeting is to agree the new approach. Our more versatile approach sets out to use existing bus routes with provision for flexibility including limited stop options. We are aware of the issues on the 27 bus service and are working with the respective bus operator to resolve and improve the level of service that residents expect and deserve from their bus service.

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

Response: Councillor Daniel

The Strategy details our commitment to supporting all victim/survivors. Going forward, future commissioning service plans will be developed in partnership with our joint funding partners and stakeholders across the City. It is and has been the case that survivors are offered single sex provision within organisations that are trans inclusive where that is their need, and this has been the case for decades. It is also the case that the waiting list for any service can be too long for survivors and I acknowledge that isn't where we want services to be and I will work hard with providers to increase the capacity of the sector.

31) Councillor McNair- Brighton i360- Decision on Future

Response: Councillor Taylor

The external investigation will be carried out by someone external to the council who was not in any way linked with the original decision. Seeking external investigations of council activity is not unusual. Most recently the council did a similar exercise with the KC investigation into activities at City Clean.

32) Councillor Meadows- Brighton i360- Decision on Future

Response: Councillor Taylor

The investigation will not be a full Public Inquiry. As such it will not have any powers to compel participation. Although my strong expectation would be that former and serving councillors involved in the decision would agree to participate in the interests of transparency.

33) Councillor McNair- Brighton i360- Decision on Future

Response: Councillor Taylor

The i360 has been through a process of Administration. As the report quite clearly sets out in the recommendations at 2.1 – and also at sections 1.1; 3.15; 3.16; and 6.3 – the buyer will not be expected to take on the interest payments as they are not taking on the

debt. The buyer is aware of the interest payments that were owed by the previous owner. But being absolutely clear: that debt is not the responsibility of the new buyer.

34) Councillor Meadows- Brighton i360- Decision on Future

Response: Councillor Taylor

This is clearly set out in section 6.4 of the report. There will be an estimated £2.2m finance cost to be covered until 2041.

35) Councillor McNair- Brighton i360- Decision on Future

Response: Councillor Taylor

This is covered in the Part 2 report, as the terms of the deal are commercially sensitive until the transaction is complete. To be clear though, this is not expected to be a sum of money that comes anywhere near covering the £2.2m funding gap created by the failure of the i360. But what it does do, is give us a guarantee of some income should attraction become profitable.

The council does not hold a strong negotiation position: the attraction has been marketed for a number of weeks and only two transactable offers have come forwards and this is the stronger one. The only alternative is to leave the i360 empty and declining on the seafront.

36) Councillor Meadows- Brighton i360- Decision on Future

Response: Councillor Taylor

The administration has been absolutely clear from the start of this process: it will not put any further public money into to the i360 and it has not done so. All money lost to date is as a direct result of the 2014 decision by Green and Conservative councillors to lend money to the i360. For the record the Labour Group voted emphatically against this decision.

37) Councillor McNair- Brighton i360- Decision on Future

Response: Councillor Taylor

Budget council on 27th February will consider how the council allocates its resources. Since 2023/24 the council had assumed £1.2m per annum would not be paid, so this year there is a further £1.0m budget gap created by the Green & Tory i360 debt.

38) Councillor Meadows- Brighton i360- Decision on Future

Response: Councillor Taylor

The allocation of any additional revenue generated by the i360 will be a decision to be taken once it is generated. But no payments are being relied upon in financial planning.

39) Councillor Sykes- Brighton i360- Decision on Future

Will there be published Terms of Reference to steer the proposed investigation into the i360 loan decision?

Response: Councillor Taylor

Yes.

40) Councillor Sykes- Brighton i360- Decision on Future

The paper refers to (s4.4) options assessments undertaken about the future of the i360. Was the overall economic preferred option assessed different to that being proposed in the paper?

Response: Councillor Taylor

So, at the time the option paper was put together was before the i360 fully entered into administration and at that stage the process the preferred option would to have been to sell the i360 to a buyer through a pre pack administration which could have meant that the business could have stayed open and the jobs retained. While there were a number of interested buyers at various stages, no bidders came through that process and the i360 did go into administration.

Clearly that reduced the number of options that were open to us.

There were no options that involved the Council getting back a significant portion of its debt, which we'll explore later in the paper, but there were options that we didn't pursue that could have involved the Council putting in a lot more public money into the attraction, but that would have been public money at risk. Clearly, we'll explore that a little bit further in the paper later where we set out the options that the City Council faces.

41) Councillor Goldsmith- Brighton i360- Decision on Future

Response: Councillor Taylor

Generally speaking, the seafront team within the Council do try to have good contacts with the seafront businesses. I mean, as yet there hasn't been a huge amount to update them on the latest developments, however, if we agree the decision today, and if indeed if a sale proceeds, the Council will make contact with those local businesses and obviously connect them with the new buyer so that they're aware. Clearly, what we've heard since the i360 going into administration is it has had, you know, an impact on surrounding businesses, which is one of the factors we have to consider in making our decision today.

130 MATTERS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE

There were none.

131 REPRESENTATIONS FROM OPPOSITION MEMBERS

131.1 Cabinet received a representation from Councillor Pickett on Item 140, Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit Version 5.

131.2 Cabinet received a representation from Councillor Hill on Item 140, Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit Version 5.

131.3 Cabinet received a representation from Councillor Goldsmith on Item 140, Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit Version 5.

132 BRIGHTON AND HOVE FOOD STRATEGY ACTION PLAN 2025-30

132.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought endorsement for the refreshed Brighton and Hove Food Strategy Action Plan 2025-30.

132.2 Resolved-

- 1) That Cabinet agrees to endorse the city's Food Strategy Action Plan 2025-30 (Appendix 1) and to be one of the partners involved in delivery and evaluation.

133 ADMISSION OF NEW MEMBER TO THE GREATER BRIGHTON ECONOMIC BOARD

125.1 Resolved-

- 1) Cabinet agrees that NHS Sussex ICB joins the Greater Brighton Economic Board as a member of the Business Partnership.
- 2) Cabinet notes that these changes to the membership and Heads of Terms are dependent on the decision of all the local authorities represented on the Board agreeing that the new member be appointed.
- 3) Cabinet agrees to amend the Board's Heads of Terms and instructs the Monitoring Officer to amend the Council's constitution to reflect these amendments once they have been formally approved by all the constituent authorities.

134 MOULSECOOMB HUB AND HOUSING PROJECT

125.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought approval for a full construction budget for the residential scheme, and approval to enter into relevant contracts subject to project costs clearing the Council's financial hurdles.

125.2 Councillors Taylor, Muten, Robinson, Rowkins, Robins and Sankey asked questions on the report and contributed to the debate.

125.3 Resolved-

That Cabinet

- 1) agrees a full construction budget for the Moulsecoomb Housing project, as set out in the Part 2 Report

- 2) delegates authority to the Interim Corporate Director- City Operations to enter into relevant contracts for the construction of the Moulsecoomb Hub and Housing Project, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing & New Homes
- 3) in the event of a successful application for funding, delegates authority to the Interim Corporate Director- City Operations to enter into a Grant Funding Agreement for Brownfield Infrastructure and Land (BIL) fund
- 4) delegates authority to the Interim Corporate Director- City Operations to enter into any Contracts required to access Homes England Grant Funding for the residential development

135 PARK AND RIDE

135.1 Cabinet considered a report that set out strategic options for how Park & Ride (P&R) could be delivered for the city.

135.2 Councillors Williams, Robins, Rowkins, Miller and Sankey asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.

135.3 Resolved-

- 1) That Cabinet agrees that the option to use of existing car parks within the City for Park and Ride (Option 2 in table 1 of this report) should be pursued along with the continuation of the development of a business case for a purpose built Park and Ride facility (Option 1 in table 1 of this report).

136 MICROSOFT LICENCE RENEWAL

136.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought approval for the award of three Microsoft Enterprise Licence Agreements.

136.2 Councillor Rowkins and Robinson asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.

136.3 Resolved-

- 1) Cabinet delegates authority to the Interim Corporate Director, City Operations to take all necessary steps to use the NHS Digital Workplace Solutions Framework to procure a Licence Solution Partner (LSP) for the Council.
- 2) Cabinet delegates authority to the Interim Corporate Director, City Operations to Award a contract to the successful Licence Solution Partner (LSP) to provide the Council with three Microsoft Enterprise Licence Agreements for a term of 3 years with an estimated total value of up to £4,000,000.00

137 COUNCIL TAX BASE AND BUSINESS RATES RETENTION FORECASTS 2025/26**125.1 Resolved-**

- 1) That Cabinet agrees the calculation of the council's tax base for the year 2025/26.
- 2) That Cabinet notes the collection rate assumed is 98.75%.
- 3) That Cabinet notes that no change to the Council Tax Reduction scheme is proposed for 2025/26 except that, in accordance with the policy agreed by full Council on 3 February 2022, earnings bands will be uplifted to reflect government changes to the National Living Wage as set out in paragraph 3.7.
- 4) That Cabinet agrees that in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amounts calculated by Brighton & Hove City Council as its council tax base for the year 2025/26 shall be as follows:-
 - 2.3.1 Brighton and Hove in whole – 95,160.3 (detail in appendix 1).
 - 2.3.2 Royal Crescent Enclosure Committee – 29.5 (detail in appendix 2).
 - 2.3.3 Hanover Crescent Enclosure Committee – 39.9 (detail in appendix 2).
 - 2.3.4 Marine Square Enclosure Committee – 72.2 (detail in appendix 2).
 - 2.3.5 Parish of Rottingdean – 1,785.8 (detail in appendix 2).
- 5) That Cabinet agrees that for the purposes of Section 35(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the expenses of meeting the special levies issued to the council by the Enclosure Committees shall be its special expenses.
- 6) That Cabinet agrees that the Enclosure Committees and Rottingdean Parish are paid the required Council Tax Reduction Grant of c£4,000 in total, to ensure they are no better or no worse off because of the introduction of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for the reasons set out in paragraph 3.14.
- 7) That Cabinet notes that the amount forecast to be received by the council in 2025/26 from its share of local business rates and section 31 Local Government Act 2003 compensation grants is £86.520m, based on the latest available data.
- 8) That Cabinet notes that the amount forecast to be received by the council in 2025/26 from its share of local Council Tax, including Adult Social Care precepts, is £197.623m based on latest available data.
- 9) That Cabinet delegates the agreement of the final business rates forecast and completion of the NNDR1 2025/26 form to the Section 151 Chief Financial Officer following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance & City Regeneration and this will be reflected in the General Fund Budget report to Cabinet in February 2025

138 REGIONAL CARE COOPERATIVE DFE PATHFINDER

138.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought approval for Brighton & Hove City Council to continue its involvement in a Department for Education Pathfinder pilot of a Regional Care Cooperative (RCC), alongside 18 other Local Authorities in the South East.

138.2 **Resolved-**

- 1) Cabinet agrees for Brighton & Hove City Council to continue to be involved in the RCC.
- 2) Cabinet agrees for a contribution of £250,000 to be made from to the RCC, with £50,000 being made in 25/26; £100,000 in 26/27 and £100,000 in 27/28. An outline business case has been completed as part of the corporate budget setting process for 2025/26 to access modernisation funding for this purpose.
- 3) Cabinet delegates authority to the Corporate Director, Families, Children & Wellbeing in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Families, Youth Services and for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls to agree the RCC delivery model.

139 PREVENTING AND TACKLING VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS AND DOMESTIC AND SEXUAL ABUSE STRATEGY 2025-2028

139.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought approval of the Preventing and Tackling Violence against Women and Girls, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy 2025-2028.

139.2 Councillors Miller, Pumm, Muten and Sankey contributed to the debate of the report.

139.3 Resolved-

- 1) Cabinet approves the Preventing and Tackling Violence against Women and Girls, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence strategy 2025-2028 in appendix 1.
- 2) Cabinet agrees the implementation of the 3 year delivery plan set out in appendix 2.
- 3) Cabinet agrees to the setting up of a new VAWG/DA/SV Oversight Board to report into the Community Safety Partnership to ensure effective implementation, accountability and alignment with strategic objectives.

140 TRANS INCLUSION SCHOOLS TOOLKIT VERSION 5

125.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought approval to publish the Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit v5. The toolkit supports schools and education settings to develop policies and practice that promotes the welfare of some of the most vulnerable children and young people in the city.

125.2 Cabinet considered the following Officer Amendment to the recommendations:

- 2.1 Cabinet agrees to publish the Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit Version 5 (appendix 1) **subject to the amendment below** and recommends all education settings in Brighton & Hove use its guidance to inform policy and practice.

Cabinet agrees to amend paragraph 2.7.9 of the Toolkit to read:

- 2.7.9 Statutory Guidance, Relationships Sex and Health Education recommends that all children and young people have access to ~~the same~~ information about puberty:

125.3 Cabinet approved the Officer Amendment.

125.4 Councillor Rowkins, Pumm and Sankey contributed to the debate of the report.

125.5 Resolved-

- 1) Cabinet agrees to publish the Trans Inclusion Schools Toolkit Version 5 (appendix 1) subject to the amendment below and recommends all education settings in Brighton & Hove use its guidance to inform policy and practice.

2.7.9 Statutory Guidance, Relationships Sex and Health Education recommends that all children and young people have access to information about puberty:

141 WARM HOMES: SOCIAL HOUSING FUND

141.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought approval to enter into a grant agreement with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) pending a successful application to the Warm Homes: Social Housing Fund and, subject to this, award a contract to E.ON Energy Solutions to deliver works outlined in the agreement.

141.2 Councillors Rowkins and Sankey contributed to the debate of the report.

141.3 Resolved-

- 1) That Cabinet delegates authority to the Corporate Director for Homes and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Housing and New Homes and the Cabinet member for Net Zero and Environmental Services, to enter into the Grant Agreement with the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero for the Warm Homes; Social Housing Fund Wave 3.
- 2) That, subject to Warm Homes: Social Housing grant funding being agreed, Cabinet delegates authority to the Corporate Director for Homes and Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Cabinet member for Housing and New Homes, to award a contract, following 'negotiation without reopening competition to Suppliers', to E.ON Energy Solutions to deliver the works summarised in this report with a value up to £2.4 million from April 2025 to September 2028.

142 BRIGHTON I360 - DECISION ON FUTURE

142.1 Cabinet considered a report that provided an update on the decision of the board of Brighton i360 Limited ("Brighton i360") to file for administration and the work done by the administrators, following their appointment, to seek a sale of Brighton i360's business and assets to new owners. The report recommended the council agree to the release of its security on the debt owed to the council by Brighton i360.

142.2 Councillors Robins, Miller, Muten, Rowkins and Sankey contributed to the debate of the report.

142.3 Cabinet agreed to move to confidential session at 7.45pm.

142.4 Cabinet resumed public session at 8.15pm.

142.5 Councillor Taylor moved a motion to amend recommendation 2.2 as shown in bold italics below:

2.2 Cabinet delegates authority to the Corporate Director for Operations, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and City Regeneration, to complete **negotiations and** any legal documentation required to give effect to recommendation 2.1 above.

142.6 Councillor Rowkins formally seconded the motion.

142.7 The Chair put the motion to a vote that was approved.

142.8 The Chair moved the recommendations as amended to the vote that were approved.

142.9 **Resolved-**

- 1) Cabinet agrees to release the security on its £51m loan debt and rolled-up interest to the Buyer. In return, the city council will receive a future share of revenue, as set out in the Part 2 report.
- 2) Cabinet delegates authority to the Corporate Director for Operations, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and City Regeneration, to complete negotiations and any legal documentation required to give effect to recommendation 2.1 above.
- 3) Cabinet agrees to commission an external independent investigation to understand the circumstances of and lessons from the council's original decision to loan public money to deliver the Brighton i360.

143 MOULSECOOMB HUB AND HOUSING PROJECT (EXEMPT CATEGORY 3)

As per the Part One minutes

144 PARK & RIDE (EXEMPT CATEGORY 3)

As per the Part One minutes

145 BRIGHTON I360 - DECISION ON FUTURE (EXEMPT CATEGORY 3)

As per the Part One minutes.

146 PART TWO PROCEEDINGS

125.1 **Resolved-** That the confidential items listed on the agenda remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 8.18pm

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 151(c)

Subject: Deputations

Date of meeting: 13 February 2025

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 the following Deputations has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

1) Deputation: General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

As a parent of a child with complex needs + disabilities - and as representative of parent campaign group Send Us a Break - I ask you to consider how the budget can meet needs for short breaks/childcare/ respite for SEND children Additionally how does this budget support findings and recommendations of the Independent Service Review of Disability Respite and Residential Services commissioned by the LA April 24?

You have obligations under Short breaks legislation to provide childcare/short breaks/ respite for parent/carers of SEND children - provision is wholly inadequate and has been for years. We have welcomed commissioners listening since March 24, however, provision remains inadequate, particularly for children like my son with complex needs requiring 1:1 support.

Despite some provision developments figures speak for themselves - there is inadequate financial provision for SEND children - especially those needing 1:1 specialism. (Evidenced in the statistical data provided in the Additional information 1+2)

Residential respite - essential provision for children with complex needs giving families a break enabling them to continue caring for their child at home. We ask you to consider the impact of the proposal to rent out the Drove Road flat to other LA's generating income to fill budget deficits - instead of using it creatively to develop support for SEND children in your own LA! There is already a waiting list for respite. This proposal is despite your commissioned review recommending utilising Drove road space to develop day care, holiday clubs, respite, workforce development and training and an emergency respite bed.

Additionally the residential respite budget is insufficient to meet the need for SEND families. (This is evidenced in the Additional information 3)

We also ask you to consider how this budget supports plans to develop an appropriately trained, skilled workforce to support us caring for our children? The Direct payments scheme relies on PA's - a limited workforce and minimum wage barrier. Drove Road is also experiencing significant workforce challenges resulting in respite cancellations, with provision grinding to a complete halt recently due to zero staff. How does your budget provide capacity for the overdue workforce development plan supporting the entire SEND sector including breakfast + after school clubs, short breaks, DP's/PA's and residential respite?

In making a speech to cabinet we wish to raise your awareness of the lack of equality for childcare in the city for SEND children - and inform you of the impact on families with SEND children when there is insufficient childcare short breaks and respite care.

Supported by:

Natalie Woods (Lead Spokesperson)

David Rafferty

Kate Bloc

Helen Irving

Alexander White

Rhianydd Summersett

Stephanie Fallows

Laila Zaghari

Priya Sathy

Victoria Captain Johnson-Kio

Nicola Billington

Ruth Bassett

Supporting Information:

1- Statistical information - provision of specialist holiday short breaks versus the need (supply and demand)

It has been extremely challenging for us to access meaningful transparent data re the need for and the provision of short breaks for children with complex needs. The council have frequently responded to our complaints with statistics that are meaningless and mask the true extent of how little is provided in relation to need. For example citing that hundreds of sessions have been provided without detailing how long a session is and how many children with complex needs those sessions are divided between.

The statistical data we have managed to obtain recently includes the following:

Summer school break 2024

Specialist provision with 1:1 support was 257 days (average of 5 hours per day) for children requiring 1:1 support - given that a minimum of 49 children require short break specialist provision (*based on numbers applying for specialist provision over the Christmas break*) this equates to 5 days provision per child in the whole 6 weeks of the school summer holidays.

Christmas school break 2024

49 families requested specialist provision with a minimum requirement of 1 day and for some families 2 days - only a total of 15 spaces were offered across two days, so 34 families with a need for specialist provision got nothing. Additionally one of the days offered was cancelled due to staff sickness resulting in only approximately 16% of families with children with a high support need being offered any provision at all in a two week school holiday break.

In contrast - non SEND children can access 5 days per week (up to 8 hours per day) for the entire school holidays if parents need this provision to enable them to work or study.

NB: these stats relate to applications from 49 families needing specialist provision over Christmas - the only data we have. However as parent/carers we are aware that there are approximately 220 pupils in special education in the city who need 1:1 support - many more who need a lower level of support (2:1) in the familiar structured safe school environment will need higher support (1:) in the community and in unfamiliar environments.

This evidences the actual need for both targeted and specialist provision is far higher than the numbers currently accessing provision. We know anecdotally of many families being unaware of the LA's obligation to provide short breaks and what the current provision is and numbers of parent/carers joining Send Us a Break is increasing all the time.

2- Statistical information - cost of specialist short breaks (inadequate budget)

The council's proposals to develop short breaks that have recently been shared with parent/carers to comment on will only enable between 13-16 families to access 3 specialist sessions per week per school holiday for one child. We know that 49 families needed specialist short break provision for the Christmas break. The cost of a 6 hour specialist short break is high - £297

An intention has been expressed to provide 3 days per week short breaks in school holidays - if 49 families need specialist short breaks for 3 days per week this totals a required provision of 1911 days per year. This would cost £567,567

Based on the actual numbers of children in the city in special education requiring 1:1 support it is clear that those eligible for specialist provision is much higher than 49 families.

Statistically it is therefore impossible to fulfil your statutory obligations in meeting the need - even with parental contributions - on a short breaks budget of £130,000
NB: these statistics do not include SEND children in the targeted category - a percentage of whom you also have a statutory obligation to provide short breaks for.

3- Statistical information - cancelled Drove Road residential respite sessions in last 10 weeks

There have been at least 4 families who have experienced a total of 11 cancelled residential respite stays.

On 5th February all residential respite stays were cancelled as Drove Road had zero staff to cover the respite service.

There is currently a waiting list for residential respite at Drove Road and Tudor House and the time to secure provision is often lengthy

There is a growing number of families with SEND children who are not currently accessing Drove Road but know they will need to in the near future who are not being consulted with.

Brighton & Hove City Council

Cabinet

Agenda Item 152(a)

Subject: Member Questions

Date of meeting: 13 February 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 Shanks- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

Will the cabinet consider lobbying government for the power to implement a tourist tax on overnight visitors?

(2) Councillor Shanks – Targeted Budget Management (TBM) 202/245: Month 9 (December)

Will cabinet consider bringing some home to school transport in house and supporting schools to deliver some journeys.

(3) Councillor Shanks- Targeted Budget Management (TBM) 202/245: Month 9 (December)

Will cabinet consider developing more inhouse temporary accommodation e.g. in empty council buildings.

(4) Councillor Meadows- Visitor Economy Strategy for Growth 2024-2034

Will it affect our city's ability to attract tourists by bringing VisitBrighton in-house? If VisitBrighton is brought in house, will it end up costing the taxpayer twice as much

(5) Councillor McNair- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

What will it mean for communities by transferring the Community Infrastructure Levy over to the Thriving Communities Fund? Will residents lose out on vital traffic improvements?

(6) Councillor McNair- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

Have other councils, where private rentals are more affordable, agreed to accept residents discharged from the care of Brighton & Hove City Council? Is it feasible to uproot 90 households as outlined in the budget papers, to save £0.705m.

(7) Councillor Meadows- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

Will the reduction by £0.050m from the Highways Operations Team mean fewer potholes are filled?

(8) Councillor McNair- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

Areas of Brighton have recently been decimated through the loss of trees due to Dutch Elm and Ash dieback. We note the council intends to directly sell the ash that is cut down in our woodlands for use by biomass power stations and sell elm to construction and landscaping businesses. Will this policy risk spreading these diseases across our city, and undermine the council's policy of restricting woodburners?

(9) Councillor West- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

Impact Initiatives have expressed grave concern about the impact of the proposed cut to the Ageing Well Service included in the BHCC 25-26 budget proposals. Over the past 6 years of contract delivery the service has experienced a real term decrease of at least 15%, with no uplift in BHCC or NHS funding. Going forward, the NHS is cutting their funding by £100,000 from April, and there is also significant increased NI costs to bear. The addition of the BHCC cut will further threaten the ability to deliver essential elements of this nationally recognised service. A viability tipping point for delivery partners will be reached, risking decline of health and well-being of thousands of older adults, quickly increasing knock-on cost for adult social care. What sense is there to cut this cost-effective service when the disbenefits to older people's health and ASC expenditure will be so great?

(10) Councillor Hill- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

Do you agree with me that the cuts to public services we are continuing to see across the country will have a harmful contribution to the situation we find ourselves in where 52% of people of my generation believe 'the UK would be a better place if a strong leader was in charge who does not have to bother with parliament and elections'? A third also prefer the army to run the state all according to recent Channel 4 polling? I do not think this government wants to push young people towards supporting fascism, but do you understand why I perceive this as connected to systemic degradation of our public realm which it is contributing to?

(11) Councillor Hill- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

The decision to 'decommission the service care pathway for sexual dysfunction' mean there won't be therapeutic support for woman needing help with what is termed in the document as 'female sexual dysfunction'. The impact assessment states that this will significantly impact woman who are unable to identify or afford a paid for therapy service. The only mitigation for this is just letting the ICB know you have made the cut which they will likely not fill as they are making cuts of their own. This is rated the worst possible outcome by your own equalities impact assessment, in part because this disproportionately harms survivors of sexual violence who very often cant afford to pay for this support themselves. Can you do everything you possibly can to reverse this cut?

(12) Councillor Hill- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

The reduction of the Knowledge and Library Service to realise budget savings of £18,000 per annum will negatively affect an 'essential service needed for evidence-based decision making to fulfil our statutory duties'. Given this impacts the council's ability to support a statutory service, how will the council ensure it is maintained despite the serious concerns raised in the equality impact assessment?

(13) Councillor Hill- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

The Equality Impact Assessment for the cut to residential respite provision at Drove Road says that 'There is a recent example that Drove Road has been able to provide a week's respite for a child who's baby sister was born with a heart defect and had to stay in intensive care in a specialist hospital in London, it was not appropriate for her to be in London with her mother and due to her learning disabilities and behaviours that challenge this would not have been a safe place for her or others around her. Without the provision of Drove Road this child may have had to come into Local Authority care.' Assuming this goes ahead, can the Council ensure this cut does not force children into local authority care when this would be both cruel to families and costly to the council?

(14) Councillor Hill- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

What do you suggest people do to receive civil fair-trading advice now that this is being cut by the Council? Can Citizen's Advice adequately cover this cut?

(15) Councillor Hill- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

Do cuts to the aging well service and public health run contrary to the council plan of Living and ageing well as part of a healthy city where people thrive? It seems the opposite of a preventative approach.

(16) Councillor McLeay- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

Looking at the Homelessness and housing options, where plans to implement the new Housing Allocations Policy is to move people in TA to out of area placements in PRS, reducing costs from £950k to £705k. There is reference to " Delivery Risk: If residents decline a reasonable offer that is out of area, then they risk street homelessness." How have you modelled this when considering the rent saving vs the financial impact on BHCC homeless services? What happens if someone would be more interested in sleeping on the street rather than being moved out of area?

(17) Councillor McLeay- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

For the section on temporary and supported accommodation, where new initiatives to incentivise landlords will help landlords to reach their EPC rating. Has this been tested anywhere? Where will specialist advice will be sought? Ref: (Pg 58) " Delivery Risk: Specialist advice will need to be sought due diligence before entering into a long-term arrangement."

(18) Councillor McLeay- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

Appendix 4 - Management and Service Costs: A year ago the allocated budget was £25,685m (2024/25) which was then projected to be £26,384m for 2025/26. In these papers the number has jumped up to £28,589 (8% increase). That seems a lot. Is there a reason for that increase?

(19) Councillor McLeay- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

Appendix 1 - Tenancy Services: Wondering if you could explain this increase? Why are we seeing an increase of £1,780m (vs £526m last year - 2024/25)? What is this increase being spent on? What will it pay for? That detail is missing in the budget papers.

(20) Councillor McLeay- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

Appendix 3 – New Supply: £36,009 was budgeted last year. I spotted we carried over £19,603m which is about 50% of the amount budgeted. We now have a budget of £50 million for new supply this year - which is great. Of course, we want to see new home building and purchases. Can you reassure us that the budget will be spent this time? Why was so little spent last year? What is causing the failure to spend it? Where underspend is being considered in other parts of the budget – should we be considering

underspend here as being an opportunity to replenish the Sustainability and Retrofit Reserve or the Rent Reduction Reserve?

(21) Councillor McLeay- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

Where homelessness prevention is often supported by voluntary sector organisations across the city and with their funding being further squeezed, how possible would it be to allocate a percentage of the Homelessness Prevention Grant to these services – where housing advice and mediation have helped to keep people housed in our community – reducing demand on TA? Has the council evaluated the potential impact on their own service if voluntary groups lose their ability to fund their homelessness prevention service?

(22) Councillor West- General Fund Revenue Budget, Capital & Treasury Management Strategy 2025-26

With non-smoking related lung cancer now a growing cause of early death, and the prevalence of other life-limiting respiratory diseases severely impacting people of all ages, there is a very real and urgent need to drastically curb air pollution and improve air quality. However, the new Government has continued the fuel duty freeze while ending the £2 bus fare cap. Cabinet are seeking to increase parking availability through Park & Ride, with a cost to the council, and the BHCC 25-26 budget proposals seek to freeze residents' parking charges. While the cost of all forms of sustainable travel is allowed to rise, the Cabinet and Government are clearly keen to encourage and support use of motor vehicles by holding back the cost for motorists. How is this approach reconciled with the need to encourage affordable sustainable travel, and to address air quality and climate change?

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.00pm 7 FEBRUARY 2025

HOVE TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER

MINUTES

Present: Councillor O'Quinn (Chair) Sheard (Deputy Chair), Czolak, Grimshaw, Helliwell, Mcleay, Meadows, Shanks, Simon, Thomson. Sara Fulford (OPC), Joanna Martindale (CVS), Jasmine (Youth Council Rep).

PART ONE

28 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

A Declarations of substitutions: Cllr Grimshaw for Cllr Cattell.

B Declarations of interest: There are none.

C Exclusion of the press and public: There are no part two items

29 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

29.1 The Chair gave the following communication:

Today we are scrutinising the City Council's budget ahead of it going to cabinet and full council. We will hear from Cllr Jacob Taylor and then I will take questions from members of the committee. We are also joined by relevant directors and cabinet members who can come forward to answer any service specific questions where necessary.

We are also joined in the audience by April Baker, CEO of Together Co, a loneliness charity in the city, and by Caroline Ridley, CEO of Impact Initiatives a local charity offering a range of services to both younger and older people. I have invited them to hear our discussions about their areas of work.

The minutes of this meeting will be shared with cabinet, and of course members of the cabinet are here, so the views of members of this committee will be heard.

30 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

30.1 There were no public questions, petitions, or deputations.

31 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

31.1 There were no member questions.

32 GENERAL FUND 2025/26 - SCRUTINY OF BUDGET PROPOSALS

32.1 Cllr Jacob Taylor presented the report to the committee, outlining the financial position of the council and the pressures that the council was under. Nigel Manvell outlined areas of risk in the budget plans and mentioned some of the ways in which these risks had been partially mitigated.

32.2 Cllr Grimshaw asked about the employability scheme and the government funding that was planned to replace the council's funding. Cllr Taylor said that the growth hub and growth funding was going towards this. Deb Austin said that the council is working with West Sussex on connect to work funding, available from June 2025 and funding from shared prosperity fund to fill any gap.

32.3 Fiona England of PACC asked questions about short break holiday funding as some families were not receiving this service; on lessons learnt this year; and on the lack of a designated social care officer. She also asked about Drove Road and workforce development. Cllr Taylor said that he was hearing the message from PACC and was nudging things in the right direction. He said that the overall budget for the directorate was increasing in cash terms, but he recognised that short breaks was an area under pressure. Cllr Taylor said that where there was a statutory duty the council would provide funding.

32.4 Cllr Simon asked about public health spending and the number of staff being cut. she enquired about an EIA and whether the money was going to be used in a different area. Cllr Burden replied that public health has only recently come into the directorate and that savings made in public health will be spent on other areas of the council. He said that the public health team had good outcomes for the money that they spent. Deb Austin said that this was not the most appropriate point for an EIA, which should follow staff consultation. Caroline Vass said that they had looked at reallocation of budgets, which was predominantly supporting family hubs, child and adolescence drug services, schools programming around mental health, reducing county lines drugs, rough sleeper services. She said that these are all services that meet the criteria for use of the ringfenced public health budget. Cllr Taylor said that the team were working through the announcement of more public health funding to see if it was a real terms increase. Cllr Taylor said that the council had over 3500 staff and the budget was looking at a reduction of 60 posts.

32.5 Cllr Shanks asked about increasing inhouse fostering placements and youth led grants. Cllr Taylor said that we don't celebrate the successes of children's services enough. He said we used to have the second highest number of children in care and the council is now under the average. Cllr Taylor highlighted the importance of finding children foster placements. On youth led grants he said he didn't want it to go entirely but wanted to look at participatory budgeting and using other funding such as the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or the Fairness Fund.

32.6 Jo Martindale asked about the aging well reduction, saying it would have a significant impact. She also asked about working more closely with health colleagues to take a coordinated approach to funding. Cllr Burden said that there were lots of adult social care services that focus on prevention. Regarding the aging well contract, the saving is only a very small proportion of the contract, and will not have a major impact. Cllr Taylor said that they work very closely with health professionals and the NHS. Genette Laws said that she was

working really closely with health colleagues and had a meeting planned to collaborate further with them.

32.7 Jasmine, Youth Council Representative, asked about the youth-led grant funding cut and mentioned some of the causes that it helped to fund and asked how they can be supported without the funding. She asked a further question about audio active, a charity supporting children facing gang violence, and how this could be supported. Cllr Taylor said he would have liked to maintain the funding and is happy to work with the Youth Council to get funding from other pots and ensure that young people have a say. Regarding county line and drug dealing Cllr Taylor said it was a big issue and that the adolescent service did really good work. Caroline Vass said that the audio active programme could possibly be funded by the drug and alcohol reduction grant.

32.8 Cllr Czolak asked about child protection services, the increase in the case load and how this can be managed by staff, and about how CIC and CP numbers can be kept low. Cllr Taylor said that child protection and children's services are the most important services the council provides. He said that some of the reductions were from reducing headcount and that the service are confident that they can manage it. Deb Austin said that the service was in a very good position and were one of the few in the country which is not reliant on agency staff. She said that they had looked at the caseload numbers of social workers and that there is some capacity here.

32.9 Cllr Mcleay asked about missing EIAs and noted that at a previous meeting a comment was made about improving EIAs. She also commented about the short amount of time that was given to look at the budget papers. She also asked about the frequent use of phrases in the EIAs that said that other services or partners would pick up the slack when a service was cut, and queried whether all partners had been consulted about this. Cllr Taylor said that he agreed that the budget cycle was unhelpful and that this was because the funding settlement came later this year than last year. He said it was very difficult to publish a draft budget without knowing the funding and that ministers were keen to move to a multiyear funding model which would help to plan earlier. Regarding EIAs he said that he would talk with officers about EIAs that weren't there and if they needed publishing. Regarding health funding he said that £22bn increase had gone to the health service and that not everyone had got so much, and that he wanted to work with them as sometimes they might be able to pick up the slack. Deb Austin said that Drove Road facility had never been used for short breaks but was used by a vulnerable young adult funded by NHS Sussex while a permanent property was secured. Rainbow Lodge is planned to be opened early this year to enable four young people to come back into the city, and to use the flat as an additional income source.

32.9 Jess Sumner said that in the EIAs where it said that other services would pick up the costs, some of these conversations had not taken place. She also asked a question about partnership working saying that partners were working towards a certain amount of funding in a contract but then reductions are made within the budget, which made it very difficult to provide services. Cllr Taylor said that it was a good challenge and that in the budget they have looked at all things CVS and have managed to not significantly reduce funding to the degree of previous years. Genette Laws responded that making savings from existing contracts involved negotiation: reductions can not be forced on providers, but the council can explain the difficulty of its financial position. In terms of checking with NHS partners about their ability to step in to cover services reductions, she has definitely had these conversations with NHS colleagues, albeit perhaps not the same people that Ms Sumner had been speaking to.

32.10 Cllr Sheard asked about home to school transport and a budget reduction after the coming year. He also asked about universal free school meals, and about LCF GP young person's sexual health clinic. Cllr Taylor said that home to school transport the council has learnt the lesson on previous attempts to improve the model. In the medium term the council needs to look at different models, including in-house provision, but there will be no rush to do this without proper engagement, hence why funding is maintained at a high level for 25-26. On free school meals in capital funding he said he thought this was using CIL funding for holiday provision. Caroline Vass said that the sexual health service was a small service accessed via GPs, and was underused as young people preferred to access services online.

32.11 Cllr Grimshaw asked a question cuts in mental health services by the authority and NHS, and could we not ask the NHS to pay more.. Caroline Vass said that the £1.9m joint service was predominantly funded by the NHS with £290,000 from public health, which was being reduced by £20,000, so they did not feel that it would have a significant impact.

32.12 Cllr Meadows noted that public health resources were being diverted to support family hubs, but taht the budget includes a cut to the family hub in Hollingbury and Patcham.Cllr Taylor replied that the Hollingbury and Patcham site was used for fewer activities compared to other sites. Deb Austin added that it was a room in a school mostly used by health visitors.

32.13 Cllr Shanks asked about the reduced hours at libraries and removing the home delivery service, saying that if the home delivery was removed then libraries should be open longer. Cllr Pumm said that he was passionate about libraries. He said that any cuts in this area hurt and that an EIA would be carried out once staff consultation had taken place. Deb Austin said that any changes made to libraries would follow a statutory three-month consultation process and this was why an EIA was not provided. Cllr Taylor said that the council was not talking about closing libraries but possibly changing opening hours at some. Cllr O'Quinn noted that Cllr Pumm would be coming to the March committee to discuss library services.

32.14 Sara Fulford asked a question about adult social care and how cutting preventive services would help and why there weren't EIAs. She also asked if the council could be more imaginative with income. Cllr Burden replied that in some instances it would not be possible to conduct an EIA until detailed plans were developed. In terms of prevention, he spoke of the intense budget pressure in adult social care. He said Ireland Lodge was never designed to be long term and wasn't feasible in that way. Genette Laws said that Ireland Lodge would enable people to step down from hospital as this was not the best place to be, before returning home. Steve Hook said that the independence at home service relates to vacant posts so not reduction in current people, he said it also supports people on other care pathways. He said that repositioning the service to Craven Vale would provide a more streamline service. He said that he was also in negotiation with the ICB to fund this. In term of Ireland Lodge he said there was no reduction in beds or staff but a change to align with Craven Vale, to change from long term care to shorter term care. Regarding the reduction in social workers Steve said that a redesign would see career development carried out by managers therefore reducing back office staff.

32.15 Cllr Mcleay asked about saving of £5m plus to adult social care, and how providers not protected by NICs rises would be affected. She also asked about the staff vacancy factor. Steve Hook replied that the £5m reduction was a significant step. However, recent years have seen consistent uplifts in payments to providers, and in consequence Brighton & Hove has

some of the highest fees in the Southeast. Although there are risks associated with this saving, the local market is in a good position to manage. Regarding the vacancy factor of 4.6% he said it was not a deletion of posts but holding off on hiring. This would work at about 12 posts and would be about 0.6 of a post in each team, which is a challenge that can be met. Cllr Taylor said that these savings are a risk to deliver But that the council has to deliver a balanced budget and this requires that some risks are taken.

32.16 Cllr Helliwell asked about cuts to prevention services and if this was a sound decision, as these services stopped people from falling into high-cost services later on. Cllr Burden said that a lot of work was already focused on prevention. He felt that the adult social care budget was in a better position than last year, because of the focus on prevention.

32.17 Cllr Shanks asked a question about learning disabilities and outsourcing the residential provision. Cllr Taylor said that they wouldn't want to outsource any service if possible but that he had to be honest with people that the financial issues facing councils and the cost of adult social care meant that a range of options had to be pursued. Genette Laws said that they were looking at four out of eight homes and people would not be moved, and staff would not change as TUPE would apply. She said that providers were mainly third sector. Steve Hook said that keeping in house services is much more expensive particularly for learning disability services. He said that the shared lives service would be insourced. Steve said that the four homes were small group homes and that the city had a good market for these services.

32.18 Cllr Czolak asked about temporary accommodation and incentivising landlords. He also asked about proactively discharging people and if it was a 'do or die' attitude, and what a reasonable offer would be. Cllr Taylor said that the council was facing very high costs and a very high number of families presenting as homeless. Taxpayer's money is being used to buy very expensive private sector accommodation and this is not a good use of public money. The council is consequently exploring better value options including purchasing properties or entering into long term leases. The change in the allocation policy is that people are sitting on the waiting list for a very long time but people can now go into the private market and remain on the waiting list. This is cheaper than keeping people for long periods in temporary or emergency accommodation. The out of area policy is not about forcing people to leave the city, but on better supporting people who volunteer to do so, for example to join family in another part of the country. Genette Laws emphasised that it was about working with people who wanted to leave the area not forcing people to leave.

32.19 Cllr Mcleay asked a question about the risk of street homelessness for people refusing out of area offers. Geanette Laws said that the risk of people declining reasonable offers was there whether the placement was out of area or not. She reiterated that they were not making people leave the area who did not want to.

32.20 Cllr Simon asked about the Traveller liaison team and the council's ability to support the needs of the Traveller community. She asked who would do this work and if they had the expertise. Genette Laws said that the restructure would not lead to any redundancies and that it was keeping the same level of service.

32.21 Cllr Sheard asked if we were using budget and budget constraints to change our reconnection policy and will anyone be pressured into reconnection policy. Cllr Taylor said that there is no policy seeking to place people outside of the city against their will. It is about where

someone wants to leave the city. Cllr Taylor said many councils place out of area but that this is not something that we want to do.

32.22 Cllr Grimshaw said that changes to the allocations policy on lone adults had veterans are down as not being impacted. She said some veterans want to leave the city and go to specific veteran accommodation. The nearest is in Portsmouth. She said that maybe the new Sussex authority could look at this. Cllr Taylor said that officers would look at the EIA comments on veterans.

The meeting concluded at 18:36

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

1.30pm 7 FEBRUARY 2025

HOVE TOWN HALL - COUNCIL CHAMBER

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Evans, Baghoth, Fowler, Hewitt, Sheard, Thomson, Shanks, Lyons, Earthey and Mackey

Other Members present: Mark Strong (CVS)

PART ONE

33 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1 Procedural Business

1 a Declarations of substitutions

1.1 Cllr Shanks for Cllr Sykes

1.2 Cllr Baghoth for Cllr Cattell

1.3 Cllr Mackay for Cllr Winder

1.4 Cllr Earthey for Cllr Fishleigh

1.5 Mary Davies, Co-optee for the Older Peoples' Council is unable to attend today so we have invited Angela Stretton, another OPC rep, to ensure that older peoples' concerns are heard at the meeting.

1b Declarations of interest:

1.2 There were none.

1c Exclusion of the press and public

1.3 There are no Part Two items today, so the press and public won't be excluded.

34 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

34.1 The Chair gave the following communication:

Today we are holding a special Place Overview & Scrutiny meeting as part of the budget scrutiny process. The minutes of this meeting and any specific comments made by committee members will be shared with the Cabinet to inform their planning.

We will be looking in depth at the details of the budget plans ahead of the Cabinet meeting on 13th February. We are joined by Cllr Jacob Taylor, Deputy Leader of the Council and cabinet member for Finance & City Regeneration, and Nigel Manvell, the council's Chief Financial Officer, who will be talking to us about the budget and then taking questions from members. We are also joined by Cabinet members and officers who are on hand to help with any questions and I'd like to welcome them to the meeting. Cllr Williams can only stay until 2.30pm so please can we have any questions specifically on housing first.

Although we only have one item on the agenda, there are a lot of us here this afternoon and so we will have a lot of questions to get through. Can I therefore please request that both those asking and answering questions are as brief and to the point as possible. We want everyone who wishes to contribute to have the opportunity.

35 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

35.1 There were no public questions.

36 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

36.1 There were no member questions.

37 GENERAL FUND 2025/26 - SCRUTINY OF BUDGET PROPOSALS

37.1 Cllr Taylor gave a summary of the budget and the background context. He said that the budget gap had closed from £36m to £16m and the situation had significantly improved. The 3 key areas of demand on the budget are adult social care, homelessness and temporary accommodation. There have been significant wins such as the expansion of food waste recycling, expansion of the recycling service to include plastics, foil etc, freezing parking tariffs, gaining funding for street cleansing, parks and open spaces and to build new homes.

37.2 Nigel Manvell said that the large savings programme did well but falls short in some areas. The external auditor is concerned about the financial sustainability of the council.

37.3 Cllr Hewitt asked about the freeze of parking fees and what mechanism they used to evaluate the impact on income

37.4 Mark Strong said that the majority of people in Brighton don't travel by car and subsidising parking fees for car users was detrimental to public transport and goes against the equity and environmental policies of the council. This would create more congestion and make bus journeys slower. By reducing costs for parking and increasing the fare for the Volks railway gives the wrong message.

37.5 Cllr Earthey suggested increasing the charges in a different way based on the time of day and that NHS staff shouldn't be charged a fortune to park at the hospital.

37.6 Angela Stretton said that the Older Peoples' Council are happy about the hourly charges in light touch areas but that in some parts of the city remain difficult to access. Many older people rely on "drop in" visitors and this parking proposal will make this very difficult to continue. She suggested expanding the hourly charges in residential areas and reserve for older people who could be identified by their bus pass, for example.

37.7 Cllr Thomson asked about maximising capital from car parks. There are huge waiting lists for parking permits in zones Y and Z and residents can't afford to park all year round in a car park. Would it be possible to allow those on the waiting list to park in the car parks overnight.

37.8 Cllr Sheard commented that not increasing these tariffs with inflation actually means it's a cut

37.9 Cllr Shanks said she does not agree with the freeze in parking fees and that there are areas in the city with no parking schemes, she suggested they could introduce new zones to generate more income.

37.10 Cllr Lyons welcomed the parking fee freeze and would like a further reduction and asked how much extra revenue they expect over the next 12 months.

37.11 Cllr Muten addressed each of these questions. He said that parking charges had been increasing by 15% every year under the previous administration which meant areas like near the hospital had quadrupled in cost. This penalises key workers who work out of hours when there are less bus services running and the view that all car owners are wealthy is unhelpful. The impact of high parking charges is that people are not coming into the city centre and creates a barrier for those on lower incomes. The council has a growth agenda and want people to come into the city and high parking charges is a barrier to this. They do want to encourage people to use public transport and have good active travel for the city but it needs to be done in a strategic way. The public transport offer in other parts of Sussex is poor and they want those people to come into Brighton. Cllr Muten said that they will be working to make paid parking meters more accessible and to work better for the community. They are looking into new parking zones in Hollingdean and the Nevill Road area in Hove. There have been deputations and members of the public asking for better parking systems so they will also be looking at Portslade and Rottingdean. Freezing parking charges does effectively mean a cut but as it was so high previously, this will bring it to a more reasonable level but it will continue to be monitored. Using the car park overnight has still got a high cost even though it was reduced by £10. They are looking at space in car parks near London Road to allow people living nearby to use those spaces.

37.12 Cllr Evans said she had concerns around proposed cuts to the Planning Department as it is already under-resourced and the team brings in revenue streams.

37.13 Cllr Shanks asked if there was enough in the capital budget for the council to meet their housing target.

37.14 Cllr Sheard asked about emergency accommodation budget as there was a huge spending increase in 25/26 but much smaller investment for the following 3 years and he wanted to know what the plan was with this. He asked another question about offering temporary accommodation out of the city.

37.15 Cllr Williams responded that there is enough money in the budget that is ringfenced for housing to meet the regulatory standards. There were over 2000 households needing help with accommodation last year. They will be establishing a housing company and will buy more homes off the market for temporary accommodation, therefore avoiding charges from a

provider, and giving the council more control. They will be building more homes, there are hundreds in the pipeline including 214 new houses in Moulsecoomb.

37.16 Cllr Taylor said they didn't want to reduce the headcount in planning policy or enforcement. They have seen drops in the income generated by the Planning Team and the proposal reflects the resourcing demands. The reduction should be managed through vacancies and the remaining staff will be able to continue to work on the City Plan and enforcement. They want more developers and more income coming in. Cllr Evans suggested that the income may have dropped because of the current lack of resource to bring it in. Cllr Taylor said that the income is driven by applications and developments. Max Woodford clarified that the reduction would be in the planning policy team and not the enforcement team.

37.17 Mark Strong said that people on low income drive cars less and that there have been steeper increases in bus fares. He said that flexible charging would be better than a blanket freeze. They should be charging for filming as well. The EIA is only looking at the change in the parking bays in light touch areas, not looking at fees as a broader issue, which would raise the issue of those on low income, disabled and so on.

37.18 Cllr Taylor said that older people want to drive into town or to go to the hospital and shouldn't be expected to pay extortionate fees, it puts people off. They want people to use the buses but to also help those who want to use their cars. Cllr Evans added that not everyone can and will drive and others cannot afford the bus fare, particularly big families with lots of children.

37.19 Cllr Muten said that there is an impact on people with lower incomes who do have cars, such as keyworkers whose shift patterns don't work well with bus timetables and small increases can have an impact on their cost of living. There are policies in place to provide for the whole city that includes good public transport, safer cycling and walking infrastructure, and affordable electric vehicles.

37.20 Cllr Shanks said it is a public health issue and was concerned of the impact of cars in the city. She asked what data they have to base the proposal on.

37.21 Cllr Lyons asked about the data available evidencing the occupancy of car parks and that if charges were reduced further, then more people would use them and income would increase.

37.22 Cllr Muten said they have data on the car parks but that the council doesn't own them all. The variable tariff will form part of the parking review. There has been a loss of 500 spaces due to closing car parks in Preston Circus and Madeira drive as well as for cycle hangars, which is an income loss of around £1 – 1.2m per year. The impact is that visitors come into the city looking for somewhere to park which increases congestion and contributes to air quality issues.

37.23 Cllr Hewitt asked a question about food waste collection and for more information on the review; a question about the King Alfred redevelopment and costs in relation to the Withdean swimming pool. Cllr Robins said that the £52k was for the existing King Alfred building which will remain until the new one is ready. The £2423,000 is for the architects to design the new building. There is a similar set up for Withdean where £100k is for the initial design and then £2349,000 to build a modular pool.

37.24 Cllr Thomson asked a question about charging delegate fees at the conference centre. Cllr Miller said this is additional revenue. The north side of the Brighton conference centre has been refurbished and turned into a smaller day conference centre and they are expecting to generate around £30,000.

37.25 Cllr Shanks had concerns about low collection of council tax and rent and asked about the solution there; and that the customer service team is being cut at City Clean. She asked if there was a capacity issue. Nigel Manvell said there was no issue with resourcing but there are very high demands on the service. The high cost of living is causing issues and more people are getting in contact. They are moving towards pre-enforcement work for those who are struggling to pay by signposting them to advice services for help. This can create a delay.

37.26 Cllr Earthey asked about shared funding responsibilities with the NHS and whether savings there have been maximised as much as possible. He also asked a question about the process for claiming insurance when council property is damaged by an individual. Nigel Manvell said that insurance premiums are very high for the council and that the process would be via the Claims and Litigation team.

37.27 Mark Strong asked a question about CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy) and that he didn't want to see competition between community groups. He also said that there is no possibility for small businesses to pay the council to take their recycling and this is a lost income stream. Cllr Rowkins said that they are looking at expanding commercial recycling for small businesses. He said that food waste collection was long overdue and they are reviewing the wider waste rounds as it is not evenly spread between workers. The waste collection service is being modernised using a digital system that can make changes to rounds much quicker as needed.

37.28 Cllr Thomson asked if they can be assured that services won't be affected by the cuts; about the expansion of commercial waste activity, and whether the bins could look a bit nicer as part of the look and feel work. Cllr Rowkins said there is increased demand for trade and garden waste. The look and feel work was impacted by cost pressures in some areas but they are looking at the role of public art and murals to create a more vibrant city.

37.29 Cllr Shanks was not happy about CIL being used with no discussion around how it will be distributed as this is not what it's designed for. She asked about charging people running exercise classes in the parks in the same way that mobile dog groomers are charged. She asked about plans for New England House and commented that the reduction in service for City Clean will mean people will struggle to contact them. Cllr Taylor said that there are two elements of CIL, one tied to specific locations and the other for the overall city. He suggested getting a briefing on CIL from officers as there is a new system. In relation to New England House, the budget is allocated but they haven't decided on the plans yet. Cllr Robins said that people come to the council with ideas for activity in the parks such as dog grooming and cafes but charging exercise classes is worth considering. Cllr Rowkins said that the performance data for City Clean is improving which means the number of complaints is decreasing, reducing the demand on the customer service team.

37.30 Cllr Evans raised a concern about cuts to the Visit Brighton budget as this risks income streams from the tourist industry when we need to bring money into the city and need staff to do this. Cllr Miller said that the team has been brought much closer to the council and cabinet

team in the council redesign which gives it higher prominence and brought into the centre of operations.

37.31 Cllr Evans asked about the medium term financial plan and how plans for Devolution will affect this. Cllr Taylor said there may be concerns around resources, time, energy and focus but until there is a proposal nothing changes and we continue as we are.

37.32 Cllr Thomson asked if the paddling pool in Hove will be replaced. Cllr Robins said it will shut for a year due to building works in the area. However, it is expensive to maintain but is very popular so they will be looking into other ways to fund it. It needs to remain a free, accessible play area.

37.33 Mark Strong asked a question about cutting the out of hours service dealing with dangerous structures and if something happened again like the Royal Albion fire, who would deal with it. Max Woodford said that the council would deal with fencing off the area and making it safe out of hours. They can't guarantee that the person on call would be qualified to deal with all issues.

37.34 Cllr Evans summarised the concerns expressed by the committee as parking charge freezes, cuts to the Planning department, and cuts to Visit Brighton. There was a commitment from Cllr Taylor to do a briefing on CIL. Suggested ways to increase income were: charging open air classes, expand commercial and waste recycling, charging for filming and looking at flexible parking charges.

RESOLVED that Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the 2025-26 General Fund and Housing Revenue Account budget proposals and will send the above comments to Cabinet.

Meeting closed at 15.21

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