

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL
PUBLIC & MEMBERS ENGAGEMENT MEETING

4.30pm 7 APRIL 2022

VIRTUAL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Robins (Chair) Bagaeen, Barnett, Brown, Clare, Davis, Gibson, Heley, Hugh-Jones, Lewry, Mac Cafferty, McNair, Meadows, Nemeth, Osborne, Peltzer Dunn, Powell, Shanks, Simson and C Theobald

PART ONE

14 COVID HEROES

- 14.1 Today I again wish to pay tribute and celebrate the everyday heroes in this city who went above and beyond to help others, support their community or keep the city running during an unprecedented chapter in our city's and our country's history. Just as life got very hard for so many, there were individual people, organisations and public services who did everything they could to help others in need and give hope, kindness and support to our city during a time of crisis.

We have been asking the people of Brighton & Hove and council staff to nominate and share stories of our residents, organisations and colleagues who are Covid heroes and I'm delighted to share a small selection of some of those stories with you here today.

Ollie Minton has nominated the University Hospitals Sussex Palliative Care Team.

In his nomination he shared how proud he was of his team and the consistently excellent end of life care they gave. The team made sure families were updated during the last days of life and supported giving iPads to make sure they were able to say goodbye when visiting wasn't possible.

I'm of no doubt this made a significant difference to the bereaved families.

We've also been told the story of another NHS worker. Olivia Davison became a fully-trained paramedic in 2019 just months before she found herself saving people and being on the front line of a global pandemic.

Olivia was nominated by her friend Francesca Thornton who gave these words: Olivia, you're my hero in every way, not only the most dedicated human to caring for the community, but a beautiful friend too.

Beyond our public services other residents and organisations active in the community did their best to support the city through this crisis.

I want to pay tribute today to Together Co and their amazing volunteers.

At the very start of the pandemic, staff and established volunteers made rapid arrangements to advertise for and recruit hundreds of extra volunteers to provide shopping, medicines collection and in some cases dog walking duties for their 100s of scheme members needing to isolate due to their health or age vulnerabilities.

Together Co's volunteers and staff have continued to work hard, maintaining the support and contact so vital to those already feeling lonely and isolated.

I also want to recognise our own council staff who, like others, not only had to deal with the monumental changes and difficulties the pandemic presented to their personal lives, but had to adjust to new ways of working to provide vital services the city needed, and continue working hard to restore services in a changed world.

The Community Hub was set up at the beginning of the first lockdown. People were brought together from many different services within the council and with rapid training, they were answering calls from Brighton & Hove residents in response to support needed regarding the Covid pandemic.

The Community Hub staff went above and beyond to help people who had no food, collecting medicines, were lonely and struggling with self-isolation. They continued to come into the office each day during all the lockdowns, restrictions and uncertainty to help run this vital frontline service.

They were the voice of support during a worrying time for the Council by answering inbound telephone calls and reaching out to all the critically extremely vulnerable that had been told to stay at home to shield themselves from catching this awful virus.

"Lastly we must recognise those individual Council staff working in front line roles. Ryan Cooper, who works for our City Parks service, is one of the team of grave diggers that provide grave digging and cemetery maintenance for our bereavement services.

This is an essential service for people in their most difficult of times, and burying loved ones during the pandemic created extra pressures on Ryan and the other grave diggers.

Ryan worked hard to keep that essential service available for the community during a period that was extremely difficult for all.

These people represent some of the best of Brighton & Hove and their stories demonstrate humanity at its best. A full list of these names and their stories has been published on our website and is being publicised on social media.

I want to thank all those who took the time to make sure that these stories were heard. I look forward to sharing more stories and celebrating our Covid heroes at future sessions of council.

- 15.1 **RESOLVED:** The Minutes of the Public Engagement Meeting held on 3 February 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

16 TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

- 16.1 The mayor invited the submission of petitions from councillors and members of the public and said that he had been notified that 7 petitions would be presented. He reminded the meeting that petitions would be referred to the appropriate decision-making body without debate and the person presenting the petition would be invited to attend that meeting to which the petition was referred.
- 16.2 The first petition concerned 'Keep the permanent street closure on Queens Park Rise'. The petition was presented by Ms K Tomlinson which had been signed by 240 people. The mayor thanked Ms Tomlinson and stated that the petition would be referred to the Environment Transport & Sustainability Committee for consideration.
- 16.3 The next petition concerned 'Bankside Imposition'. The petition was presented by Mr M Letton which had been signed by 21 people. The mayor thanked Mr Letton and stated that the petition would be referred to the Environment Transport & Sustainability Committee for consideration.
- 16.4 The next petition concerned 'Keep the permanent street closure on Queens by Brunswick School on Somerhill Road'. The petition was presented by Ms R Webster which had been signed by 431 people. The mayor thanked Ms Webster and stated that the petition would be referred to the Environment Transport & Sustainability Committee for consideration.
- 16.5 The next petition concerned 'Traffic Gridlock, Hove Park'. The petition was presented by Mr G Hall which had been signed by 343 people. The mayor thanked Mr Hall and stated that the petition would be referred to the Environment Transport & Sustainability Committee for consideration.
- 16.6 The next petition concerned 'Stop Patcham Court Farm being developed as a delivery office for the Royal Mail'. The petition was presented by Cllr Meadows which had been signed by 378 people so far. The mayor thanked Cllr Meadows and stated that the petition would be referred to the Tourism Equalities Communities & Culture Committee for consideration.
- 16.7 The next petition concerned 'Hangleton Way Crossing'. The petition was presented by Cllr Lewry which had been signed by 787 people. The mayor thanked Cllr Lewry and stated that the petition would be referred to the Environment Transport & Sustainability Committee for consideration.
- 16.8 The mayor noted that the final petition concerned 'Save Brighton and Hove's green fringe' and was due to be presented by Mr L Leather, however he did not attend the meeting. The Mayor confirmed that the petition would be referred to the Tourism Equalities Communities & Culture Committee for consideration.

17 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

17.1 The mayor stated that 9 written questions had been received from members of the public.

17.2 Ms J Gough, CE of RISE asked the following question:

In the children and families team at RISE we have noticed significant support gaps at schools and in the healthcare and legal system for children and young people who have experienced domestic abuse in Brighton and Hove.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 recognises children as victims of domestic violent instead of just witnesses however currently the cycle of abuse is not being prevented, instead it is being maintained. What are the council's plans to make a positive change to impact the lives of babies and children harmed by perpetrators of domestic abuse in the long term?

Councillor Powell, Joint Chair of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee gave the following response:

The Domestic Abuse Act of 2021 has extended the definition of DA to include children as victims in their own right. The Council will continue to develop its response to DA and have already committed to developing additional resources for the children and young people as agreed that the TECC Committee in March of this year. This consists of the safe accommodation for children and young people, domestic abuse pathway and this has three elements. The first one is the community program, this program is aimed at any family where there has been domestic abuse, including those who have been in supported accommodation. It is aimed at children aged 3 and up and the non-abusing parents. The second one is the safe accommodation, children and young persons, domestic abuse outreach caseworker, this is support for young people aged 16 plus who's risk level is below marked threshold, but who are affected by abuse? The third one is the safe accommodation pilot program for young people using violence in personal relationships. A pilot for young people aged between 11 and 18 who use abuse and personal relationships towards a partner or family members, and the service would be offered to young people who want to change their behaviour. In addition, children's services in partnership with the Tavistock Institute are developing a new training program for social workers on parental conflict and the impact on children with specific reference where conflict, intersects with domestic abuse, the Council will continue to work with partners across the city to ensure that there is a robust response to domestic abuse. We will do this with our communications campaign to raise awareness of DA related issues, including the impact on children and we will use support partners including RISE to develop their service capacity to mitigate the harm to children either through identifying funding opportunities for additional capacity to support children, and or enabling partners to work in collaboration to identify children affected by DA.

Supplementary question:

The Government estimate that about 7% of 10 to 15 year olds might be impacted, so the plans that you've described, would it be the Council's view that there will be sufficient funded supports to account for that number of children in Brighton and Hove?

Response:

That's a big question, isn't it? I'm afraid I haven't a crystal ball, so I can't confirm, but obviously I'll let you know as and when I know.

17.3 Mr Christopher Hawtree asked the following question:

In last year's much-awaited Book-Stock Report, there was reference to the outsourced stock selector being supplied with a 'demographic' of readers. Would Cllr Powell please tell us how readers' tastes are thereby judged and how this is applied to stock being made available on the shelves at Hove's Carnegie Library?

Councillor Osborne Joint Chair of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee gave the following response:

Demographic data is obtained from various standard sources such as the census data to give an overview of the demographic makeup of the area surrounding the library. This information is then refined using data from our own library systems. Consideration is given to the frequency,

the different authors, genres and subjects that are borrowed.

The service considers purchasing books that are suggested by customers and also takes into consideration results and public surveys such as the one carried out last year, which was incredibly successful. The stock policy approved by the TECC Committee last year sets out how stock is purchased using all the data collated about customers to create selections of stock suggestions from the supplier which library staff then assess and modify before purchasing. Library staff can then also add orders for stock of local interest and also if they identify any gaps in provision.

Supplementary:

Good books are central to an effective library, though I'm alarmed to hear it refers to readers as customers, which is perhaps symptomatic of what's happening to this country.

Can you ensure us further as to what you have just replied? That shelves will become fuller again at the Carnegie Library, which is our town Central Library, not a branch library.

Although some ground floor shelves have books back on them now, upstairs is still depleted to say the least, and at this time of books being crucial, a beacon of civilization in a very troubled world, I'm dismayed to find that only one copy of Richard Overy's, acclaimed history of the long Second World War "Blood and Ruins", was bought last year, and that this is missing now. But funds have been wasted this year on 8 copies of Rosemary Sullivan's recent, rapidly discredited book about Anne Frank. That's some detail to show what we're taking an interest in with books on shelves so, to come back to this, can Councillor Powell tell us that she will encourage readers to return to a well stocked library, partly by means of the website having pages which lists the monthly acquisition of new books, so that at a glance readers can see what's available and if they find books they want aren't there make the suggesting of a new title more prominent on the website. Thank you very much councillor Powell and I hope you can make these innovations.

Response:

I like your suggestion perhaps we can chat a bit more about that, I've been informed,

you know that there are over 40,000 items of stock at the Carnegie and that spending on stock is now back to normal levels following the pandemic. In comparison with other similar authorities B&Hs issues are higher and we purchased 37% more items per 100,000 population. I agree with you because I saw the state of those shelves that several bays shelves were left empty at Hove library for access reasons, library staff however are currently rearranging the stock at the Carnegie and this work is expected to be completed by the end of June this year. I absolutely agree with you that by displaying some books and stock it does encourage borrowing as customers can more easily find stock that they would otherwise miss. So, let's keep talking, Chris. Let's get visiting again later in June, and I'll speak to you more about your suggestion.

17.4 Mr Peter Harland asked the following question:

I just want to add a couple of sentences into the front of my question. Very recently I saw on social media somebody talking about the results of a Freedom of Information request and it got me thinking about duplication, triplication, efficiency and full openness. My question is, Why do Brighton & Hove City Council not publish all Freedom of Information requests and responses

The Leader of the Council gave the following response:

The Council is committed to the principles of openness and transparency and those things are specified, in the Council's Constitution. I can confirm that we do publish FOI requests, responses anyone can access them by visiting the Freedom of Information disclosure log on the Council's website. However, in line with legal requirements and also best practice, there's some instances where we don't publish FOI requests and responses. These include cases where the information requested is not held or where information cannot be provided because an exemption was applied, for example, where it was, a response would contain personal data or is commercially sensitive information. There are also cases where the matter is not of public interest. All of those exceptions aside, FOI responses are published.

Supplementary:

After I submitted the question that I did find the disclosure log, and I did see that it says disclosure log only holds selected information. Thank you for your answer.

There was an Argus report recently about expenses and at the end of last month and I saw and wondered if this one's on there. Maybe that's an example of what you what you said in so far as personal information?

Response:

There is an independent review relating to the queries around expenses. And, because that process is independent., I'm not at liberty to talk in any more detail about that and not least because it's going to be handled independently. However, if you have further questions about the FOI process, I can ensure that those are referred to the FOI team and I can ensure that you have my email address if you need to follow other queries.

17.5 Ms Nicole Sheppard asked the following question:

I am concerned about the health implications of 5G. What reassurances can you give me that it is not detrimental to our health, and how will I know when 5G is planned for where I live.

Councillor Shanks Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board gave the following response:

I can reassure you that it's not detrimental to your health. We had a report at Health & Wellbeing Board on January 2020 and there's a copy of that report on the Council's website. It was clear that there had been a lot of extensive research and Public Health England said there should be no consequences for public health from the new 5G technology, but they will continue to monitor and update its advice.

For residents and planning officers to understand the need for masts in new locations will be publishing a register on the website of all existing masts across the city and it will include all pending and approved applications for new masts.

There was no supplementary question.

17.6 Ms Laura King asked the following question:

Could the Council Leader please advise if the Greens and Labour are still running Brighton and Hove City Council as a coalition according to their Memorandum of Understanding agreement with regular monthly meetings?

The Leader of the Council gave the following response:

I can confirm there's no coalition between the Green Group and the other group in the Council. Immediately after the last election, the parties that won the biggest electoral mandate made an open and public pledge to work together where our views align. This includes work on the city's housing and homelessness crisis, work in mitigating the climate crisis, challenging austerity and joint work on diversity inclusion, equalities and Brighton & Hoves' status as a city of sanctuary.

Members of all political groups in the Council have a legal and moral obligation to act in the best interests of the city and its' residents. This means working in collaboration where necessary with other councillors, officers, businesses and public authorities in the area to promote and protect the interests of residents. We are proud to work together with anyone who is keen to serve the best interests of our city. Our Council continues to fight some critical and hugely damaging challenges and our residents deserve a Council that works for them.

Supplementary:

Will the parties definitely have their full identity back by May 2023. So people know who they're voting for.

Response:

I'm fairly sure that the monitoring officer of the City Council would have kept me minded as to what the Nolan principles mean for the determination of political parties not come to imagine if he thought that the Nolan principles weren't going to be obeyed, that he would have allowed the sort of situation that you're talking about there.

17.7 Mr Nigel Furness asked the following question:

Does the Leader of this Council have full confidence in ALL members of your executive?

The Leader of the Council gave the following response:

Yes

Supplementary:

Regarding the unsavoury rumours which are currently circulating in the local media appertaining to your 2 missing Regency ward councillors and your total failure to communicate with the media, plus the fact that one of those two missing councillors is on his way to Ukraine tomorrow on a mission of mercy. Could you now please enlighten everybody in this Chamber if you will be making a vitally needed statement on this very great matter directly after these questions conclude? Or could it be the case that these councillors are seeking oolitical asylum on the continent?

Response:

There is an independent review into the councillors around expenses. I'm not at liberty to discuss any more details, not least because that's going to be handled independently from me. Thank you for your suggestion of a statement.

17.8 Mr Ty Galvin asked the following question:

With ever present pressure on hospital beds, and growth of 'Discharge to Assess' schemes, what is the Council doing to ensure that vulnerable people and carers are never left without the support they need immediately on discharge from hospital?

Councillor Shanks, Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board gave the following response:

As you know, with discharge we have problems sometimes finding beds, enabling people to get home safely when leaving hospital. This is mainly managed within the NHS, so it's not something that the Council directly manages, but we do get involved if we need to find somewhere for people to go and we or if we need to provide support at home for people, so then we do work with individuals and there are delays, the services are under pressure. We don't discharge people from hospital if there isn't support available in the in the community or in a residential home, and we do commission a range of discharge to assess services. So sometimes people go to a different place to be assessed, to make sure that they can go home safely or whether they need to go into residential care.

Supplementary:

Why is the lovely Craven Vale Care Home Resource half empty when it is run by the Council and not being fully utilised to help ensure people have a safe discharge from hospital?

Response:

It is a lovely resource, it's in a nice setting and it's one of our most important resources. It has 24 beds currently, at the moment it's got 16 occupied. We did have staffing challenges during the pandemic and there are pressures all over the country in finding staff. I think I met you at the protest about living wage for care workers recently. We do pay good wages in the Council, certainly the living wage, so that's important and we do need people to come forward to be care workers and there's a recruitment campaign on

at the moment. We've got an ongoing campaign to support recruitment across all our services in adult social care. Anybody who's watching this, we do have vacancies and we're very keen to recruit good people because it's very important work.

- 17.9 Ms T Mackey asked the following question:
What is the Council doing to address the dreadful crisis in Adult Social Care Recruitment?

Councillor Shanks, Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board gave the following response: I agree this is a crisis, being felt all over the country as well as here in Brighton and Hove. Locally we are working with our providers to support them with these challenges and have passported significant government funding to them over the past two years to support with these pressures. We are also in the process of reviewing our workforce strategy. Within the Council we are undertaking rolling recruitment and considering ways that we might improve career pathways, attract more applicants to apply to work for Brighton and Hove and simplify recruitment so we don't lose people in the process of application. HASC has also invested in some additional HR support for a Social Care Recruitment Working Group, working directly with recruiting managers to remove barriers to recruitment for care, increase the diversity of our applicants and reach out to underrepresented groups in the workforce. We are also looking at short and long term strategies to improve the profile of care and social work in Brighton and Hove in order to increase the number and diversity of applicants.

Ms Mackey asked the following supplementary question:
How many people is the Council aware of who are currently waiting longer than two weeks to get the care package they are assessed as needing?

Response:

The current homecare pressures are being felt right across the country with waiting lists for people requiring access to homecare. In Brighton and Hove there are currently 122 people awaiting homecare for 2 weeks or more. Of those 90 have been referred from community teams, 11 from Hospital teams and 21 in residential placements. Whilst some packages of care are taking longer than we would wish to place, this is always the case as providers will pick up packages based upon their available capacity. We do have waiting lists but we do not measure this from a 2 week period following their assessed need. We continue to work closely with providers of homecare to ensure that we can meet the needs of the residents of the city including additional financial investment to support the current challenging position. I feel that any delay is not acceptable, and we are committed to get help to people who need it, we await extra commitments from govt to this important service

- 17.10 Mr Bruno de Oliveria asked the following question:
An analysis published to mark the Race Equality Week showed that more than 1.2 million (78 per cent) adults from households headed by someone from a Black, African, Caribbean or Black British background reported having less than £1,500 in savings and investments, compared to a national average of 48 per cent.
Based on that, what is the council's prediction on the impact of the cost of living crisis on black and ethnic minorities in the city?

Councillor Powell, Joint Chair of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee gave the following response:

Green colleagues, like Labour colleagues, are very concerned regarding the probable impact of rising costs on all of our marginalised communities. We know that the cost of living is higher than average in Brighton & Hove, which is exacerbating inequality.

Estimates suggest that between 6500 and 7000, further people in the city will enter fuel poverty in April. The research, carried out by Bristol University academics and published on Tuesday this week by the campaign group Fair by design, highlights the burden society places and some of those least equipped to shoulder it. The study found that the risk of people on low incomes being charged more for banking and credit, among other things, was greater amongst those with protected characteristics such as race, age, disability as well as health, migration history, sex and religion. Greens share Labour's concern about the poverty premium. A report on the cost of living crisis is being taken to P&R committee, that's the most senior committee of the Council on the 12th of May. This report presents an overview of the current cost of living crisis, outlining the causes of the crisis and looking in more detail at key areas of impact, fuel price increase, energy price increases, increasing housing costs, and tax and benefit changes. The report will outline the national and local measures being taken to try and reduce the impact of the cost of living crisis on individuals and communities. Mitigations typically cut across themed areas. The report also seeks to identify where there are gaps, either in our understanding of the impacts of the cost of living crisis or in terms of the measures being taken to protect people from these impacts.

Other committee reports, currently being written, by departments across the Council on specific aspects of the cost of living crisis are the Welfare Revenues & Business Support report detailing the Discretionary Energy Payment Scheme and the Impacts to Food Access from Cost of Living Increase report both going to P&R Recovery sub-committee on the 21st April as well as the paper providing an update on the Fuel Poverty Affordable Warmth Strategy to the Health & Wellbeing Board on 19th of July. Lastly, I'd be very happy to do more detailed work at my own committee, the tourism, Equalities, Community Culture Committee and I welcome further discussion with colleagues cross party across the Chamber on this.

Mr Oliveira asked the following supplementary:

With wages stagnating, inflation at higher levels, black and ethnic minority work is experiencing a pay gap. After the promise made about two years ago, would Council agree with me that the current administration has failed ethnic minorities and allied communities, and Brighton & Hove by not releasing the ethnic pay gap report? If not, could a date be given for a release of the Brighton & Hove Ethnic Pay Gap report?

Response:

We have actually eliminated the two lowest grades within the Council. I'm very happy to continue this dialogue. It's very important that we do. So please keep in touch and let's see what more work we can be doing.

18 DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- 18.1 The Mayor noted that there were two deputations on 'Church Road, Hove' and 'Pedestrian Crossing' as set out in the agenda.
- 18.2 The Mayor invited Ms S Law-Smith as the spokesperson for the deputation on Church Road, Hove, to address the Council.
- 18.3 Ms Law-Smith spoke on the deputation relating to to design improvements to Church Road.
- 18.4 Councillor Heley thanked Ms Law-Smith for the deputation, and said that at a recent meeting of the Environment Transport & Sustainability (ETS) Committee Councillors considered the responses received to the emerging local transport priority areas. Those focused on creating an inclusive and integrated transport system and developing a system which would encourage and enable active travel. Making improvements to the public roads would play a key part in achieving these outcomes, and therefore suggestions such as yours would be consistent with the long term aims to improve the local areas which the transport network served. I am happy to ask officers to meet with you to discuss this further.
- 18.5 The Mayor thanked Ms Law-Smith for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. The deputation would now be referred to the Environment Transport & Sustainability Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.
- 18.6 **RESOLVED:** That the deputation be noted and referred to the Environment Transport & Sustainability Committee.
- 18.7 The Mayor invited Mr T Hodges as the spokesperson for the deputation Pedestrian Crossing to address the Council.
- 18.8 Mr Hodges spoke on the deputation relating to a pedestrian crossing by West Blatchington Primary School.
- 18.9 Councillor Davis thanked Mr Hodges for the deputation, and stated that he, Councillor Barnett and transport officers had recently undertaken a site visit to the school and whilst there a number of measures had been agreed and implemented, including two new electronic warning signs that were recently installed, additional bollards to prevent poor and dangerous parking and new signage etc. These were introduced to improve the crossing environment for pedestrians and to ensure drivers were aware of people crossing. Transport officers must carefully consider the implementation of new crossings to ensure that they were not incorrectly installed which could lead to safety concerns. One key issue looked at was the frequency of use by pedestrians. In this case whilst a high number of pedestrians would be expected when children were being dropped off and then collected from school the usage would be much lower during the rest of the day. For these reasons we do not recommend a light control crossing at this site. However, an alternative and more appropriate measure would be the installation of a school crossing patrol officer. This site has been listed for assessment by the school crossing patrol manager to identify its suitability and once that has been concluded the outcome would be communicated.

- 18.10 The Mayor thanked Mr Hodges for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. The deputation would now be referred to the Environment Transport & Sustainability Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.
- 18.11 **RESOLVED:** That the deputation be noted and referred to the Environment Transport & Sustainability Committee.

19 ORAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 19.1 Councillor Allcock
Subject matter: **Swimming Facilities**

The Council's Prince Regent swimming complex in King Alfred Leisure Centre provide important sports and fitness facilities, including 25 metre swimming pools. Although an entrance fee of £5.25 is still expensive for a swim in a public pool, particularly in the current economic climate, there are a range of concessions that make them cheaper and more accessible than the commercial alternatives in the city.

As is my experience with municipal pools, they are well used, but most importantly, they are a vital facility in supporting the health and well being of residents in our city. However, Councillors will know that both these centres are past their intended lifespan and that the King Alfred has deteriorated badly and it is in a terrible state of disrepair. My question, Councillor, is how much does the Council predict it will spend to keep each pool functioning over the next three years and what is the long term viability of these two pools over this period?

Reply from Councillor Osborne, Joint Chair of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee:

That's quite a technical question for the three years of the spend, if you want to look at the sports facilities investment plan, that report was last year, I think in the July P&R report, there is spend for each year predicted over the next year the next few years and over the next 10 years. For maintenance I would refer you to that report and if you want to have a look at the predicted costs. But they are quite expensive, they are multi million pound investments in the King Alfred and the Prince Regent needed over the next few years. I can't give you a specific amount, but the information is in that report.

Supplementary Question:

I do have a supplementary but the second bit of my question there was what is the long-term viability of these two pools over that period?

Response:

Long term viability, but from the reports they are sites which are difficult and have been deteriorating over a number of years. I don't know how long they will last in terms of the exact number of years predicted, but they are already over their lifespan. So exact number of years, I can't tell you specifically but there has been further research being done recently on reports about the structure of the King Alfred, and all the information

will be going to the sports facilities investment Plan Working Group, our next meeting is going to be held next month so further information will be provided to the councillors on that working group then.

Supplementary Question:

Can you, Councillor, as the administrations joint chair of the TECC Committee, reassure residents and Councillors that the renewal of swimming provision in the city is being looked at as a matter of urgency and give what's really important a clear indication of how long this will take. And you referred to the committee, but it's really timescales that both Councillors and residents are concerned about.

Response:

On the timescales, we are working to a plan this year for both refurbishment of the Prince Regent and some of the works on the Air handling unit there. Then there will be works on the King Alfred happening over the next year or 18 months. It is a massive priority for us and a priority across the whole of the UK. I know there are a lot of problems with sports facilities and with swimming facilities specifically, but it is a priority. We are making sure that we are doing all we can to ensure that the swimming pools are kept open, that there will always be at least one pool kept open and we will never close both of them to do refurbishment and renovation. It is a priority over the next few years and the further expansion of the Western hub in the Sport Facilities Plan will include a pool and the specification of that again will come to the Sports Facilities Investment Plan Working Group, which will happen next month, that's our priority for the next few years refurbishment, renovation to keep the Prince Regent, and King Alfred open, and then the new Western hub in the city in the next few years.

19.2 **Councillor Nemeth**

Subject matter: **Parking Charges**

Some some residents and visitors will by now have discovered the true consequence of the Green and Labour coalition budget when it comes to increased parking difficulty in the city. £4.50 an hour to park in The Lanes or Trafalgar Street £5.10 an hour in central Brighton, traders paying £800 annually, and residents such as nurses sharing paying £560.00 annually for just one permit. Given that the same number of people each year are ultimately paying for parking. What would you Council say to those on low incomes who need a car but who are now being forced out of Brighton through the use of what is ultimately a series of super taxes on those needing to work.

Response from Cllr Gibson:

In terms of the parking charging policy in the budget, which was a very difficult budget to set, we have instituted a freeze for residents permits and for low income households, therefore, no increase. What we've tried to do is that the increase for residential permits is more or less the level of inflation and we've tended to increase parking charges more for people driving into town. As you mentioned, those off Street car parks for visitors, there is a kind of policy purpose behind that in a way, if you are going to increase charges then you want to make it slightly more attractive for people to come to town by public transport or by walking or cycling by bus and less favourable to drive into the centre and the implications are fairly obvious, the more the more vehicles driving into town, the worst air quality. To summarize, a fairness in terms of the low income

household freeze and a greater weight on visitors in costs in order to promote improvements in air quality.

Supplementary Question:

Year on year, the same number of people are applying for permits, it doesn't go necessarily up, it doesn't go down, there's a queuing system and the same number each year applies. Is it accepted ultimately by the administration that the current policy on parking in the city is simply making driving in Brighton & Hove the preserve of the wealthy?

Response:

The freezing of the low income household permit, which it follows on the decision to freeze it in previous years is making the residential permit more affordable for low income households, so I wouldn't really accept that premise.

19.3 **Councillor Pissaridou**

Subject matter: **Children's Mental Health**

We're in the midst of a paediatric mental health crisis, and parents, schools, the NHS and this Council all need to take action before it's too late. The pandemic has not only killed hundreds of thousands, it has also shut us inside, cut off social contact, taking parents out of work, children out of school. The consequences have been horrendous and far-reaching and one of those consequences is that we had seen an alarming amount of anxiety and depression in our children and teens. Only one in four of half a million children and young people certified every year receive their help, as services are stretched, and many are refused care because they're deemed not to be ill enough. In Brighton, a record number of children, 215, were admitted to hospital last year for self-harming and I know one person, now 14 years old, but was twelve when they started having anxiety issues which quickly escalated into self-harm. However, many refused treatment, many more weren't even referred. This is woefully inadequate, and we are sleepwalking our way into a crippling long term mental health pandemic. Every day of delay is a major risk to the child and often are living hell for those caring for them.

Would this Council agree that we need an integrated whole society joint strategy to tackle this situation, one that focuses on prevention just as much as treatment? What strategies does this Council have to resolve this situation?

Reply from Councillor Clare, Chair of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee

The Sussex wide review before the pandemic have called foundations for our future, which reports regularly, and members of Brighton & Hove City Council staff are involved in that. Much of what you spoke about, including specialist CAMS, is the responsibility of the NHS. We do things like the Brighton Hove Inclusion Support service. That's more early help rather than kind of more technical stuff. I am aware there's a lot of delays in CAMS, a lot of that is to do with recruitment and there was a really interesting report, which I recommend you reading, that went to HOSC in January, which highlights some of the challenges that the NHS are having with mental health. So we continue to be an active participant as our role in the Council and Foundations for our Future. There was also a small amount of money put in our budget this year and which came as a result of

some work that we're doing with Brighton Hove Citizens who have been campaigning on children and young people's mental health.

Supplementary Question:

Over the last couple of years, unfortunately, the Youth Village Centre, which has served young people in of Portslade for decades was closed and also the outside gym equipment in Mile Oak West was removed with no consultation with the community. That gym was paid for by the Portslade Community Forum out of their Health and Neighbourhood Grant as well as the one in Victoria Park in South Portslade. Young people have lost their facilities and at the time when it is important for their health and well-being.

They are able to once again be active after this period of time and social isolation. When is there going to be investment for our young people and when will our equipment be reinstalled?

Response:

I think that's more than a matter of general policy and and that would be a question for my colleagues on the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee. We have invested £3 million in park replacement, but I'm afraid I'm not aware of the detail of every single bit of play equipment because that wouldn't be something that councillors should be responsible for. But as I said, it's a matter for my colleagues on the environment, I suggest that you contact them outside of the meeting.

19.4 **Councillor Simson**

Subject matter: **Air Quality**

On the 9th of March, the government announced it was awarding Brighton & Hove City Council a £499,500 Air quality grant. Can the Chair please advise on what projects that this funding will be directed?

Reply from Councillor Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

I believe they're still working on the detail, but I'm happy to share it with you when I have better sight of it.

Supplementary Question:

Traffic schemes in the city centre, such as the bus lane restrictions on Lewis Rd, and the traffic build-up caused by Valley Gardens scheme are pushing traffic to use Woodingdean as a bypass. This is resulting in air quality concerns and a lot of congestion in my ward. Will the Chair advise what air quality measures are planned to mitigate this increase in pollution for Woodingdean residents? Will the Council put in place air quality monitors to record the current level of pollution in Woodingdean?

Response:

There is an updated air quality action management plan due this summer and we can get back to you on some of the detail for Woodingdean specifically and near the time if that would be helpful.

19.5 **Councillor Fishleigh**

Subject matter: **Treating Residents with Respect**

At the March CYPs meeting, a black woman living in the Rottingdean coastal ward was scolded, denigrated and had her views and lived a life experience cancelled by the Chair of the committee, who is white.

Do you agree that this incident was unedifying, unnecessary and brought the Council into disrepute? And will that councillor and the Chief Executive apologise at today's meeting and both send a written apology tomorrow?

Reply from Councillor Clare, Chair of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee:

I don't agree with councillor's interpretation of that meeting, but oral questions from councillors, according to the Constitution, are for matters of General Policy 9.8 of the Council standard rules and procedures, therefore, I do not have to answer that question. If councillor officially believes that I have behaved in a way that goes against the Council code of conduct, and I urge her to submit a standards complaint against me.

Supplementary Question:

Bola Anarchy confirms that she has not had a reply from her March 11th email that was sent to Councillors McCafferty and Clare or Geoff Raw, in which she said she would like the council to formally apologize for accusing her of wishing protect, to pretend that racism doesn't exist. She says that as someone who's experienced racism first hand, she finds that allegation just graceful.

Response – from Monitoring Officer:

The question is going to a particular incident particular matter rather than a point of general policies. So it's not in line with the criteria for oral questions. And Councillor Clare has also indicated that she's not prepared to answer that and therefore I don't see any point in the supplementary.

19.6 Councillor Evans
Subject matter: Royal Pavilion Museums Trust

In February this year, Government Minister, Nadine Dorries proudly launched an initiative to strengthen cultural links and focus on collaborations in the museum, film and heritage sectors, with the Conservatives good Friends, the despotic, murderous government of Saudi Arabia.

Almost immediately, many of England's largest and most prestigious museums distanced themselves from the initiative, with the British Museum Tate and VA, amongst others, making clear they wanted nothing to do with it. Last month, only days after the Kingdom announced a record 81 executions in one day, I was sent a picture of the Royal Pavilion's Museum Trust CEO Hedley Swain, taken from the Saudi Gazette on a visit to Riyadh as part of Dorrie's initiative. My question is, was the leader of the Council aware of Swain's involvement in this project?

Do we, as a City Council, think it's appropriate for our Royal Pavilion's Chief Executive should go on such a jolly?

Reply from Councillor Osborne

I think that should be for the Leader of the Council. I don't want to speak for him so maybe you could submit that as a written question or bring it up with him personally.

Note: Councillor Mac Cafferty confirmed to liaise directly regarding the question

Supplementary:

But my supplementary question is, given Saudi Arabia's extremely poor human rights record, particularly on equalities issues. Does the Council Leader think that the knowledge of this trip will have a deeply detrimental impact on the morale of LGBTQ plus and female staff in particular? And if so, is there anything we can do through the Pavilion trust to remonstrate with Mr Swain?

Response from Councillor Mac Cafferty:

I understand we have really good relations with Mr Hedley Swain and I am more that happy to raise that with the CE of the Royal Pavilion.

19.7 **Councillor Bagaeen**

Subject matter: **Covid Restrictions**

The question is on COVID restrictions and the question is as follows. What steps will the administration be taking to manage behavior and regulate the number and mix of people attending events in the city over the summer months to ensure that the operation of the events will adhere to the regulation and guidance in place that the administration is applying to our Council meetings and Council services.

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

Because of the government's, complete liberalization of the COVID restrictions we don't have that ability. One in 13, as we know from the OS figures, have COVID 60 people locally are in the hospital and this really doesn't bode very well for supposedly living with COVID. As 19,903 people are living with COVID, we are an employer so what we can do within our own buildings is slightly different and that and that's why we're all wearing masks in this room where as outside of outside of the Council building people are not. While we're able to do that is because we're able to be mindful of the 1972 Hove and Safety at Work Act. Will you support us lobbying the Government to reintroduce some of the COVID measures that have actually kept communities, safe through the pandemic?

Supplementary Question:

The Council owns Brighton Centre which is hosting a large event this week. Brighton SEO an event, which is Mask free on council property with no social distancing. Would the Leader of the Council, condemn this breach of Council rules on council owned property and then council owned buildings.

Response:

We need to draw a distinction between what happens inside this Chamber, which is where Councillors determine what happens inside this room and what happens on Council property? So Councillors, because we determine what happens in this room, can say that we need to wear a mask. We are otherwise obliged to follow the law outside of this Council Chamber. I'm afraid the Brighton Centre, like all other entertainment venues, is subject to the rule of the law

19.8 **Councillor Moonan**

Subject matter: Home Care Commission

Home care as you know, is a key service provided by the Council and that it's up for re-commissioning beginning this year. This service provides care support to vulnerable people such as the elderly, those with disabilities or with mental health issues in their own homes. This service is even more important after the pandemic as more people and their families want to stay at home and have services come to them rather than going into residential care.

I want to ask Councillor Shanks how this re-commissioning will involve service users and their carers in a real and meaningful way so their views are at the heart of the re-commissioning?

Reply from Councillor Shanks, Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board

I think that's a very important point. We are re-commissioning and it's going to be the first quarter of 2023. I will go back to check what the process is because I do think user involvement in all our services is really important. So we do need to get people's views on this as we re-commission.

Supplementary Question:

One of the underlying principles of commissioning within our Adult Social Care services is that of co-production. This is where partners such as user groups and the voluntary sector providers are involved right from the start, in the whole commissioning process. How will the principle of co-production be applied to the Home Care Commission.

Response:

I will have to go away and see how we're doing this, but that is very important. I would expect that that is something that we are already doing, but let's check and come back to you on that

19.9 Councillor McNair**Subject matter: Flood Prevention**

The SCAPE project, the flooding prevention scheme in Carden Ave, has overrun by months, caused residents extreme disruption and the project has fewer and smaller basins than originally planned. Residents are sceptical the project will stop flooding, and it could be an expensive flop.

Can you be assured residents the project will succeed? And if it doesn't work, will further funding be found to increase the number of basins to ensure residents on Carden Ave are not flooded?

Reply from Councillor Davis

I do apologize for the delays, we've seen a lot of issues with materials, with staffing problems from the pandemic. Will it work? We absolutely hope so, and obviously we need this situation to mitigate the advancing climate changes that we've got with excess rainfall.

As to further funding, unfortunately, lots of funding for this came from the European Union, which sadly, we're no longer a member of. We are working extremely hard and I do trust that our officers are very good at finding money. So hopefully, yes, it will work. We are very apologetic for the delay, but there are mitigating circumstances.

Supplementary Question:

Given the significant overrun of this project, are there any lessons which can be applied to the next flooding project?

Response:

I think without repeating my previous answer and using the problems that we suffered through, you know, a national labour crisis, a global material crisis, I'm hoping no, that there will not be any further delays

20 CLOSE OF MEETING

- 20.1 The mayor thanked everyone for joining the meeting and noted that the full council meeting would start at 7.15pm

The meeting concluded at 6.20pm