

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL

4.30pm 1 FEBRUARY 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Asaduzzaman (in the Chair), Atkinson, Davis, Evans, Fishleigh, Grimshaw, Meadows, McNair, Robins, Sankey, Shanks, C Theobald, West, Williams, Alexander, Allen, Asaduzzaman, Baghoth, Burden, Cattell, Czolak, Earthey, Gajjar, Galvin, Goddard, Goldsmith, Helliwell, Hewitt, Hill, Hogan, Loughran, Lyons, McGregor, McLeay, Miller, Mistry, Muten, Nann, Pickett, Pumm, Robinson, Rowkins, Sheard, Simon, Stevens, Taylor, Thomson, Winder and Guilmant

PART ONE

74 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

74.1 No declarations of interests in matters appearing on the agenda were made.

75 MINUTES

75.1 The minutes of the Council meetings held on 19 October 2023 and 14 December 2023 were approved and signed by the deputy mayor as a correct record of the proceedings.

76 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

76.1 The deputy mayor gave the following communications:

I would now like to ask Cllr Sankey as Leader for the Labour Group to introduce the new Member to the Council.

Cllr Sankey introduced Cllr Guilmant.

Cllr Guilmant entered the Chamber upon introduction and took their seat. The deputy mayor welcomed Cllr Guilmant to Brighton & Hove City Council.

On behalf of the Mayor, I will now read the Mayor's Communications which have been prepared by the Mayor.

"Dear councillors and members of the public, Apologies for my absence today for medical reasons. I wanted to begin by emphasising that respectful behaviour is required

of all councillors at Full Council and indeed at all other council meetings. I would thus emphasise the two most important ways of achieving such behaviour:

1. Everybody needs to speak through the Chair as this will help to discourage any inappropriate behaviours. This applies to all council committee meetings.
2. Even where members have strong views about statements made during the debate they must never make personal comments. We can engage in robust debate but absolutely nothing personal.

I hope that councillors understand the need for the above and behave accordingly. During January the main emphasis has been on young people once again with a visit to the Air Force cadets training at Preston Barracks and the Sussex University Graduation ceremonies. The visit to the Air Force cadets was very uplifting as it's so positive to see young people engaged in a wide array of training such as drill, simulated flight training and leadership training - and thoroughly enjoying themselves in the process. There was also a visit by Cllr Amanda Grimshaw, our Armed Forces Champion, and I to the Veteran's Breakfast Club in Crawley and that was also most encouraging as there were a good number of veterans from all three branches of the Armed Forces who were all very much appreciating the chance to get together and had fascinating tales to tell me about their time in the military. It is our aim to set up a similar Breakfast Club in Brighton as there is a pressing need for it. Most people don't realise there are 5,000 veterans in Brighton and Hove. All of this work and interest is part of the drive to gain Gold Status for Brighton and Hove regarding our work with veterans and the Armed Forces. The Sussex University Graduation ceremonies last week were exceptionally joyous and great fun as the Chancellor, Sanjeev Bhaskar, attended all of them and it is obvious that he is greatly loved and admired by the students as he is not only very funny, but is also hugely approachable. The Brighton University Graduation ceremonies are next week, and I am sure that they will be the same joyous occasions. It's a great privilege as Mayor to be part of these important celebrations and to meet graduates and their families after the ceremonies and will be one of the abiding memories of my time as Mayor. There's much to look forward to in the coming weeks as February is looking like a busy month."

77 TO RECEIVE PETITIONS AND E-PETITIONS

- 77.1 The deputy mayor invited the submission of petitions from councillors and members of the public. He reminded the Council that petitions would be referred to the appropriate decision-making body without debate and the person presenting the petition would be invited to attend the meeting to which the petition was referred.
- 77.2 Catherine Lane presented a petition signed by 519 residents concerning the cost of resident's parking permits.
- 77.3 The deputy mayor thanked the lead petitioner and stated that the petition would be referred to the Transport and Sustainability Committee consideration.

78 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- 78.1 The deputy mayor reported that 11 written questions had been received from members of the public and invited Omaid Hiwaizi to come forward and address the council.

Q1. Omaid Hiwaizi asked a question: Plant-based diets result in 75% less GHG emissions and land-use than diets with 100g of meat daily. They cut wildlife destruction 66% and water-use 54%. An analysis by the Office of Health Economics shows that plant-based diets would save the NHS £6.7bn yearly, with 2.1 million fewer cases of disease. Research consistently shows that local governments are trusted more than national politicians making the council well-positioned to introduce plant-based initiatives and deliver public education. Can Brighton join Haywards Heath, Edinburgh, Exmouth, Norwich, Lambeth and Norwich, by endorsing the Plant Based Treaty and developing an action plan like Edinburgh?

Councillor Taylor replied on behalf of Councillor De Oliveira: Thank you for your question which raises a number of important points. The research you have cited is obviously correct and justified. You're absolutely right to say there are health benefits from a plant-based diet. We'll consider your request and write to you.

Omaid Hiwaizi asked a supplementary question: I would wonder if you would be open in your considerations to carry out an impact assessment in the way that Edinburgh did, and if that would be helpful, I can send you copy of their impact assessment because there's potentially a way of responding to this and to be clear about the benefits and potential challenges in Brighton and Hove. So I'd be very happy to do that.

Councillor Taylor replied: Thank you for the suggestion. Yes, if you could email that to Councillor De Oliveira I'm sure he'll look at it and be happy to correspond with you. Thank you.

The questioners for question 2 and 3 were not in attendance so the deputy mayor moved to the next question.

Q4. Clara Usiskin asked a question: Has Labour u-turned on declaring a biodiversity emergency?

Councillor Rowkins replied: No, Labour has not u-turned on the biodiversity emergency. We are working on a number of large-scale biodiversity projects in and around the city that are focused entirely on aiding nature recovery, including implementing the City Downland Estate Plan – which as you probably know is a landscape-scale intervention to restore wild chalk grassland on the South Downs and to move local farming practices away from the intensive methods of the late 20th century towards a more sustainable and regenerative future. Wild chalk grassland is incredibly species rich, and the South Downs represents 44% of the city's footprint, so this will have a profound impact on local and regional biodiversity. However, Brighton and Hove is a city. We have a duty to look after our residents too, and that includes providing safe and accessible infrastructure. We are currently failing in that duty, and after 5 years of unchecked weed growth and no plan, we need a reset to get the situation back under control. We have spent months thoroughly assessing all of the options and if there was another way to control the problem, which again I would just illustrate is much worse than it was because of five years of there being no plan, we need a reset to get the situation back under control. We spent many months thoroughly assessing all of the options and if there was another way to control the problem I can assure you we would be doing it.

If we had u-turned on the biodiversity crisis, we would have voted for the conventional glyphosate application method favoured by most other local authorities. It would have solved the problem, been easier to source and cost less money. Instead, we voted for a new approach that strikes the right balance.

Clara Usiskin asked a supplementary question: Is there a council strategy being implemented for reducing the generation of plastic waste on the sea front in pursuit of the broader biodiversity emergency?

Councillor Rowkins replied: I think that's a very good point. One of the things that's striking to me, and was striking to me when I first came into this role, is that we have a lot of strategies and plans for the city, we've got a very far reaching ambitious plan for the South Downs, but we don't have a big large-scale strategy for how we treat the sea. I think that's something we need to work towards and certainly reducing plastics would form a fundamental part of that. So I would absolutely agree.

Q5. Suda Perera asked a question: Why the decision on Bright Start is being rushed through without a community consultation on future childcare needs and why co-location is not being considered a viable option?

Councillor Taylor replied: As part of our proposals for Bright Start, as you are aware, the option that was voted on back in November was to move the nursery to the Tarnar Family Hub which is very close by. We think this is a much better solution than the previous proposal which was to close the nursery entirely. We had a parent consultation which I joined and spoke to many parents. We have said before and since that it would be a meaningful consultation with parents, and it has been because the proposal that was initially in the paper has been changed. And the proposal that has now come out based on feedback is that we should change the operating hours and the number of weeks available for the nursery. Twenty-two places would be available for children between two and five years old. That means that all children currently at Bright Start nursery can take up a place. I'm aware that there are two children that are below the age of two and they can be accommodated at the new setting up until they turn two and then they will be in the age group. As far as co-location being considered: that is what the option is. It is being co-located with a number of other important services that are council run at the family hub. That's in line with our broader policy which is often nurseries are based in family hubs. We think that makes sense. Other services for families and children are available in that hub and so co-location is a core part of the model we're putting forward.

Suda Perera asked a supplementary question: Just to clarify: the parents who are on the Bright Start waiting list, parents who are currently expecting children, were purposefully excluded from that consultation, so the consultation isn't fully meaningful. But parents have also suggested co-location at St Barts School where there would be space for a baby room, and in line with Labour's national policy of co-locating nurseries in primary schools, which would be a sensible option to save a much loved school in the city as well. We are wondering why the council is refusing to even look into this option and ignoring the lived experience of families in the North Laine?

Councillor Taylor Replied: So that has been considered and that was brought to committee both as, I think, a deputation and as a proposed amendment from the Green

Group and we did respond to that. The truth is that the two issues are obviously slightly separate. Our schools issue that we have in the city is that we have a dramatic fall in the number of pupils of primary age and we've had to take action. Very sad action that we have regretted and don't want to take but we were convinced it is the right thing to do for the primary sector in the city and that's what head teachers have consistently told us has needed to happen. Placing a nursery in such a school would not save the school as some people have presented. Nobody has really explained why it would save the school as the school has a large deficit.

Suda Perera added: It would provide a steady income of nursery aged children who would then go to that primary school.

Councillor Taylor replied: It probably wouldn't because those children could go to that school right now if they want. There is a large amount of excess capacity in the city centre in primary schools and so putting a nursery there doesn't guarantee they would go to that nursery. Indeed there are already lots of nurseries based in schools where children don't necessarily go on to that school. So it wouldn't fix the problem unfortunately. It's a perfectly legitimate thing to suggest and we answered it fully. That doesn't solve the problem with schools in the city and it also doesn't solve the issue we are looking to solve on nurseries.

Q6. Stuart Lauchlan asked a question: Clarendon Mansions is a block of 12 flats on the seafront, housing around 30 residents within the CIZ. Given our location, we are surrounded by bars, venues and two 24 hour off-licences. We recognize the importance of the nighttime economy. That said, there are ongoing problems with licence breaches and lack of enforcement of the terms of those licences. To date, we have struggled to have these issues addressed by officers. As Clarendon Mansions Residents Association, can we meet with councillors, council officers and impacted local businesses to discuss the situation and find a satisfactory resolution for all concerned?

Councillor Sheard replied on behalf of Councillor Daniel: Clarendon Mansions is located within the Cumulative Impact Zone where there are a number of licenced premises on East Street and the surrounding area. Officers have dealt with a number of complaints over the period of time and they would be happy to meet with residents to discuss specific concerns as I am sure local councillors would also be prepared to do.

Stuart Lauchlan asked a supplementary question: It's very welcome to hear that. We have been told this before and those meetings have never taken place. So what can we do to ensure they actually happen this time?

Councillor Sheard replied: I'm sorry to hear that and I understand that when residents aren't listened to it's absolutely frustrating. I fully believe that this is a frustrating situation and my heart goes out to you. All I can hope to say is that we are still in a new administration, and I have worked with Councilor Thompson for Regency issues and I am more than happy to step in myself through Councillor Thompson. So all I'd say is, if you start again I will help make sure this gets done as I know Councillor Daniel will on her return.

Q7. Bev Barstow asked a question: At the recent CFS meeting, the Chair confirmed that it will respond to draft DfE guidance (on Gender Questioning Children) by pointing

out that it does not meet relevant legal obligations. Can you please list for me what these legal concerns are and why you say you will recommend the 'toolkit' to schools rather than the DfE guidance?"

Councillor Helliwell replied: As confirmed in that meeting, we will be responding to the consultation and publishing our response including where we think the draft guidance does not appear to meet all the relevant legal obligations. At the moment there is no final DfE guidance to recommend. What has been published is a draft for consultation. The Government's own lawyer's advice has been leaked that has drafted operating a starting point against social transition would be unlawful, and the assertion in the guidance there is no duty to allow a child to social transition meant a "high risk of successful challenge to the guidance on the basis that this statement is misleading or inaccurate". The leaked legal advice also expressed that, the failure in the draft guidance to provide balanced advice on the law in relation to discrimination "doesn't give schools the correct legal test to apply". The government lawyers appear to have given warnings about several other key aspects of the guidance, including in relation to toilets and uniform. The draft guidance itself acknowledges that this is legally uncertain when it says in the final paragraphs: "This guidance covers areas that remain untested in the courts." What is needed is nuanced guidance that respects that individual cases are different, and there is a careful balancing exercise to be done to promote the welfare of students. This council will be joining many other organisations in identifying to the government the ways in which we consider the guidance misrepresents the law and does not provide the guidance that is needed to promote the welfare of all our students, including those vulnerable to discrimination. Our response will be published.

Bev Barstow asked a supplementary question: As our elected administration, it is important you inform residents why exactly you think the Department of Education guidance is flawed. Discredited groups such as the Good Law Project, wrongly assert that the Department of Education guidance is legally flawed and reputable lawyers and commentators have demonstrated that legal flaws exist in the Trans Toolkit. Does the council agree that recommending schools ignore the Department of Education guidance in favour of continued use of the Toolkit will leave schools in limbo and exposed to very serious criticism. I hope you will make the position clear to schools without delay.

Councillor Helliwell replied: We have made our response clear to schools and we have recommended that they continue to use the Trans Toolkit as this is just a consultation, this is not official guidance. Our response will be published and so you will be able to see clearly where we feel that this does not meet legal requirement.

Q8. Katie Blood asked a question: Would the full council agree that as suggested in government guidance about consultations with the public, that they should "include validated impact assessments of the costs and benefits of the options being considered"?

Councillor Taylor replied: Thank you for your question which obviously comes in the context of our proposals on school reorganisation and the very difficult proposals to close two schools in the city. I think the guidance you're referring to is Cabinet Office published guidance in 2018 that refers to how government departments should conduct consultations, which isn't directly relevant to this process. Our process is governed by, not guidance, but a statutory piece of guidance from the Department of Education in

2023 that outlines the process for proposers and decision makers on opening and closing maintained schools. We've obviously been following that guidance. We're obviously still in the process at the moment which is statutory notices have been issued then a further meeting will take place in the Childrens, Families and Schools Committee then ultimately the decision on these proposals will go to Full Council in March. It's worth nothing that obviously we've taken legal advice throughout this process on how we conduct the statutory consultation and we're very confident we followed that all the way through. In terms of the substance of your questions in terms of weighing up options and costs and benefits. Clearly that's what councillors have had to do and that's what's been in the papers that have gone to committee. There's been a very full set of papers that have been considered very carefully by this administration and all councillors who vote on the options.

Katie Blood asked a supplementary question: So actually that guidance is from the Closing Schools Guidance, so that is absolutely what should be being followed. But your answer didn't refer to financial costs and benefits. These have not been calculated for school closures. Why does the council think it's correct that there are no calculations to show financial implications for school closures?

Councillor Taylor replied: I know this has been discussed a number of times both at committee and in writing about the costs and really what you're asking is: is there a completely validated cost for if a school is to close? We've been very clear that we can make estimates on that, which is that there is a cost obviously for absorbing the deficit budget for a school that closes; there is likely to be some cost potentially on redundancy of staff, which has been estimated but can't truly be known until we work through redeployment and potential redundancy; there've also been costs we've been very transparent about that the council have allocated resources to help support the transition proves and we've been clear across that that happens for both schools and that's about £200,000. So the costs have been estimated, but we can't have an exact figure. But the costs are pretty clear, and we're pretty clear as an administration that we didn't want to make any of these proposals. Why on earth would any council want to propose the closure of a school? It's the last thing we would want to do. But we're very clear that the financial position of schools across the city in the primary sector is so drastic and the fall in numbers of pupils have made too many schools unviable in their budgets, and not able to provide the support they need to SEND pupils, that we had to take some action on this. And that taking the action now will result in less deficits growing in the future. So we have absolutely weighed up the cost and the benefits and that's what we've done in making these proposals.

Q9. John McCooke asked a question: What does the council understand by the term conversion therapy?

Councillor Pumm replied: CT includes acts that may be committed with the intention of changing a person's sexual orientation and / or gender identity. Under existing criminal law, physical conversion therapy practices are already prohibited via a range of criminal offences such as rape, assault and forcibly administering drugs. The government indicated that it would look to define conversion therapy further in its legislation to ban CT. In the meantime, we remain fully committed to being a fair, inclusive and accessible council and city where everyone should feel, and be, safe to live as their authentic selves.

Q10. Stuart Conway asked a question: On the 14th of November 2023 the Council issued a notice under Section 94b, and schedule 3a of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, expanding the flyering licence area. The notice specifically mentions the handing out of political material, and the flyering licencing team confirm it would cover candidates' flyers during an election. SHEDULE 3a section 1.4.b of the EPA 1990 excludes distribution "for political purposes or for the purposes of religion or belief". Should the notice and any others like it, and the council website, be amended to show these exclusions, and enforcement staff informed?

Councillor Rowkins replied: Thank you for bringing this to our attention. The short answer is yes. The information provided on the [flyering page of the website](#) was indeed incorrect and has since been updated to remove the reference to political material. The [Environmental Enforcement Framework](#) sets out the offences for which enforcement action will be taken, which includes flyering. This is approved by the relevant Committee before new enforcement activities are implemented. The Framework has always had the correct information in it. Environmental Officers are aware of when and when not to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice in relation to flyering. The team have asked me to pass on their apologies for the incorrect information being on the website.

Q11. Adrian Hill asked a question: Last meeting we heard Cllr Rowkins talk about smoke control areas. He suggested that it was previously possible to enforce smoke control areas. Contrary to these suggestions I understand that new regulation has only recently been made available and it wasn't previously possible to enforce. Can you please clarify the nature of the new regulations, when they were made available to the council and whether other councils have been able to use the new regulations?

Councillor Rowkins replied: During the last Full Council meeting, as you said, the Green Group called on the new administration to expand the city's existing smoke control areas. In my response I outlined that there had been no enforcement or preventative action within the city's existing smoke control areas during the previous administration, and also made the broad point that there's little point expanding something that currently doesn't really do anything. Local authorities do indeed have the ability to enforce and have done for some time. The most recent government guidance, which is dated May 2022, outlines the powers local authorities have to enforce smoke control areas, and those include written warnings and fines as you would expect. DEFRA, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, has recently made a revenue grant of £11,710 to those UK authorities with smoke control areas under the Air Quality New Version Determination. The purpose of that grant is to provide support to local authorities to improve enforcement and management of smoke emissions in smoke control areas. This winter for the first time, as you probably recall from the last meeting, our Trading Standards officers visited suppliers and retailers of solid fuels in order to check the material entering the city is compliant with the requirement of our smoke control areas as they stand currently.

Adrian Hill asked a supplementary question: PM 2.5 is double the World Health Organisation levels and we have 35,000 asthmatics in the city. I think every one of us will have or will suffer from blood pressure, heart disease or cancer in our lifetime. This is a serious issue and I think that the current rate of progress is barely scratching the surface. In your manifesto you said you would consult, and I've asked for a meeting with

Councillor Muten as well but we haven't met. I think some of the possible inaccuracies and judgements could be ironed out if we met and discussed these things and spoke. I was just wondering if you would agree to a meeting fairly soon to discuss?

Councillor Rowkins replied: We did meet, I think not long after the election in the summer. Councillor Muten and I would be very happy to meet with you again. As someone who's campaigned on this issue, thank you and well done for keeping it on the agenda. Emissions from smoke, particularly emissions from solid fuels, is an issue. One thing we don't currently have in the city is very good data. I believe we only have one monitoring station that's not by a roadside which therefore gives us a better idea of what's coming potentially from the solid fuels, but we are working to improve that monitoring capability as well as our ability to enforce and take preventative action. As I say, we'll be very happy to meet and pick up the conversation from there.

Adrian Hill added: Just on the point of good data – its double the WHO data, but there are other monitors that also show that. I think there's enough data to show that the problem is severe and we need action.

Councillor Rowkins replied: I'll just come back briefly on that. That data is there, but how much of it comes from solid fuels is unclear at this point. If we're going to start enforcing, we need to find where we focus that enforcement because obviously doing it over a city-wide area would be quite difficult.

79 DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.

- 79.1 The deputy mayor reported that four deputations had been received from members of the public and invited Clare Whitworth as the spokesperson for the first deputation to come forward and address the council.
- 79.2 Clare Whitworth thanked the deputy mayor and presented the deputation concerning allocating lead professionals to cases of vulnerable (especially homeless) adults.
- 79.3 Councillor Burden replied, firstly, I would like to acknowledge and share our deepest condolences to the family for their tragic loss. I would also like to extend thanks to Claire, Simon, Naomi, Barbara, Helen and Laurie for contacting me on this and for bringing their concerns to Full Council at such a difficult time. We can confirm that a referral was received by the Brighton and Hove Safeguarding Adults Board in February 2023 and following an extensive amount of information gathering regarding organisation's involvement with the person across all agencies in the partnership it was agreed that a Safeguarding Adults Review would be completed. The person's family are aware of this, and have been and will continue to be involved in the review including meeting with the Safeguarding Adults Board Business Manager and Independent Chair of the Board. We offer them assurance that their concerns are heard by the safeguarding partnership of Brighton and Hove and that we will work together to really learn from the review, which is being completed independently. Safeguarding Adults Reviews provide a vital opportunity to improve how agencies work together, sharing what we learn, and ultimately enhancing how we safeguard adults at risk of abuse or neglect. It is a multi-agency process including the NHS, Police, and different internal council departments that together consider whether or not serious harm experienced by an adult, or group of adults at risk of abuse or neglect, could have been predicted or

prevented and uses that consideration to enhance the safeguarding adults partnership in Brighton & Hove, improve its services and prevent abuse and neglect in the future. As this safeguarding adults review continues, please let's stay personally in touch about what we've learned and where we've identified we can improve. Thank you again for coming to present this deputation to full council, in the light of these tragic circumstances it takes real courage, and your bravery should be applauded.

- 79.4 The deputy mayor thanked Clare Whitworth for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. He explained that the points had been noted.
- 79.5 The deputy mayor invited Dr Davis as the spokesperson for the deputation concerning Air Quality to come forward and address the council.
- 79.6 Dr Davis thanked the deputy mayor and presented the deputation.
- 79.7 Councillor Muten replied, thank you for bringing your deputation to Council today. For the record: we are fully committed to act; to improve air quality across the city. We are highly focused on addressing the impacts on residents' health, especially those with respiratory health conditions; and are fully committed to taking clear targeted action to improve air quality in the six air quality management areas (or AQMAs). May I concur that in recent years, there has been insufficient progress in effectively tackling and improving air quality. Unlike what you may have experienced from previous administrations, Labour are committed to robust action to deliver substantial air quality improvements. We are fully committed to our citywide Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP). Our commitment is to a scientific data-led approach to policy implementation; and to set our aim above and beyond central government's minimum compliance requirements. Where the data shows deteriorating air quality requiring action, we will of course act. We have a clear duty to do so *and* the political will to make much needed change now happen. We presently have six AQMAs across our city. It is my strong view that one size does not fit all – we need the best and most targeted interventions for each AQMA. Improving air quality in AQMA3 South Portslade is by working with businesses taking heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) and vans along the Shoreham Port designated access route. In AQMA4 in Sackville Road / Old Shoreham Road and AQMA2 in Rottingdean High Street, junction design and traffic flow may deliver the improvements needed. From 2015 to 2020 showed substantial improvement in air quality in along our existing Ultra Low Emission Zone (or ULEZ) between Palmeira Square and Castle Square However, since some deterioration in air quality over the course of the past 3 to 4 years. It is our view that there was insufficient action taken as we came out of the pandemic lockdowns and the unique opportunity was not taken to really gain the improvements in air quality our city needed. The inaction of the Green administration is not an excuse; know we have to reverse the worsening trend. We are installing air quality monitors across our city and connecting many of these to real time on-line public access. We recognise that improving our city's air quality requires us to work in partnership with others across the city. Earlier this week, Cllr Rowkins and myself met with leading air quality experts at the University of Brighton. Quarterly Nitrogen Dioxide levels have dropped since April 2023. Nonetheless, they persist above World Health Organisation [WHO] standards – the higher than minimum statutory target which have adopted as our target - and therefore there is much to do. This is why as a Labour administration; we have already taken bold action – with much more to come – to really tackle air pollution and bring about the air quality improvements that residents rightly call for.

- 79.8 The deputy mayor thanked Dr Davis for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. She explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to Transport and Sustainability Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.
- 79.9 The deputy mayor then invited Sue Spink as the spokesperson for the deputation concerning introducing parking restrictions in Nevill Road and Nevill Avenue, Hove to come forward and address the council.
- 79.10 Sue Spink thanked the deputy mayor and presented the deputation.
- 79.11 Councillor Muten replied, may I firstly thank you for your deputation today. I wish to state clearly that I will be taking this very seriously. Thank you for raising these pressing matters. I have had several residents in the south Nevill and Orchards area also contact me directly asking for parking enforcement in response to increasingly pressure for on street parking in this area of Hove. Regrettably as this area is not within a permitted parking zone. As a result, beyond double yellow lines, there are presently limited enforcement options. Further, with new high-rise developments in former Sackville Road Trading estate, Newtown Road, Hove Gardens in Conway Street and the proposed Portslade Panelworks site on Orchard Gardens, more and more residents are expected to live within this area. Quite limited parking provision is provided by these new developments, with some on-street provision in the Artists Quarter. However, as you rightly note, combined with commuters parking to access Hove and Aldrington train stations and some using as a park and ride and workplace parking, and with residents moving in to Moda from March this year, there is clearly a case for evaluating the design of a permitted parking zone as a matter of priority. Ward Cllr Lyon's initiative to undertake an unofficial survey of residents in this part is helpful – good work as a ward councillor. However, your delegation is the first report received by the council of this local survey. I have spoken to some residents in this area who were under the misapprehension that the council had undertaken consultation as part of formal process. May I ask Cllr Lyons to share his survey results with the council? Noting 62.3% of the 123 respondees are in favour of the Council introducing parking restrictions; I welcome your deputation calling for parking restrictions and parking enforcement. I will press for a proper public consultation as part of a Traffic Regulations Order (or TRO) aligned with the strategic citywide outcomes from our parking review for residents of Nevill Road, Nevill Avenue, Orchards and nearby streets to have a well-designed new parking zone; to enable residents to park in their streets and enforcement to take action. As for drivers speeding, nearly doubling the 20MPH speed limit, this is absolutely unacceptable, irresponsible and a danger to pedestrians, cyclists and other vehicles including those pulling out of driveways and parked along this busy residential road. I will support action to effectively address this. Pavement parking is a citywide challenge. Regrettably, enforcement is limited to pavements where a double yellow line is in place. There is a need for a law change in England outside London – as in Edinburgh and in London. We call for this Tory government to stop provocation on pavement parking and to urgently implement one of the three recommendations from the Department of Transport's extensive consultation in 2019. Despite the Secretary of State's commitment to implement the preferred option, this has yet to happen some four years later. The TRO

process on a street-by-street basis is costly and impractical for widespread pavement parking ban and this is not the answer to this problem. English Local Authorities outside London - such as Brighton and Hove City Council - need central government enable a ban of pavement parking to bring about the change called for today.

- 79.12 The deputy mayor thanked Sue Spink for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. She explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to Transport and Sustainability Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.
- 79.13 The deputy mayor then invited Ian Leak as the spokesperson for the deputation concerning the Ridgeway, Woodingdean to come forward and address the council.
- 79.14 Ian Leak thanked the deputy mayor and presented the deputation.
- 79.15 Councillor Rowkins replied, the councils Highway Operation team has worked with Southern Water to investigate the highway drainage in this area of The Ridgeway. The team identified that the drain was damaged and had physical obstructions in the pipework. These have now been repaired and maintenance has been undertaken to ensure that the connections from the Gulleys to the soakaway have been restored. The southern water system is near capacity; when a heavy rain event occurs, the run off from properties in the area combined with the road leads to the system being overloaded in a flash flood situation. The soakaways in the area are clear and working well. Clearly, the topography of the area contributes to the increased flood risk. Aside from maintaining drainage from the highway, we are able to apply for Flood Defence Grant Aid but to be eligible there are key performance indicators set by DEFRA that need to be met. To apply for a grant, we need formal reports of flooding and evidence that properties have flooded. I'm told we currently don't hold that information for these properties in our role as Lead Local Flood Authority, although if you believe that may be inaccurate, I will certainly ask officers to check. The Environment Agency has the strategic responsibility for flood risk nationally, and they have provided guidance that sandbags should no longer be used as a form of flood defence. Their advice is now that it is residents' responsibility to make their own arrangements to protect their property from flooding, although I obviously recognise that that advice is not terribly helpful to you and other affected residents. I will ask officers to provide guidance on how best to protect properties in known high-risk areas. I'm very happy to come and visit the area and meet with you and other concerned residents in order to better understand the situation, and if you'd like to arrange that please get in touch.
- 79.16 The deputy mayor thanked Ian Leak for attending the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. She explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to City Environment, South Downs and the Sea 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.

80 SCHOOL AND COLLEGE BASED COUNSELLING ACROSS BRIGHTON AND HOVE

- 80.1 The deputy mayor stated that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at the council meeting. He had been made aware of one petition and invited Fi Abou-Chanab and Tally Wilcox to join the meeting and to present the petition concerning School and College-Based Counselling across Brighton and Hove.
- 80.2 Fi Abou-Chanab and Tally Wilcox thanked the Mayor and presented the petition which had been signed by over 2500 people in less than 3 days.
- 80.3 Councillor Czolak moved an amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Taylor.
- 80.4 The deputy mayor put the Labour Group amendment to the vote which was carried.
- 80.5 The Conservative Group abstained from the vote.
- 80.6 Councillor Goldsmith, Hogan and Earthey spoke on the petition.
- 80.7 The deputy mayor then put the recommendations as amended to the vote which was carried.
- 80.8 RESOLVED

(1) That the petition was noted and referred to the next Strategy, Finance & City Regeneration Committee for consideration.

81 CALL OVER FOR REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Callover

The following items on the agenda were reserved for discussion:

Item 84 – BUDGET PROTOCOL

Item 85 – COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS ON SECOND HOMES

(b) Receipt and/or Approval of Reports

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that Items 84 & 85 had been reserved for discussion;

(c) Oral Questions from Members

The deputy mayor noted that there were 15 oral questions.

82 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

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

1. Councillor Theobald

S106 money - In response to my written question at the 19 October 2023 Council Meeting, Cllr Williams kindly confirmed in the written answer, that since 2018 121 units have been provided which have been supported by section 106 commuted financial sums, totalling £4 million six hundred and sixty-seven pounds. I have been informed that the Council collected over 5 times this amount. Is this true? What is the total sum currently being held by the council from developers who have been unable to provide onsite affordable housing?

I am also advised that the Council has not invoiced all developers for the commuted sums that they owe, so that the total sum is even higher. Is this the case and why has this been allowed to happen?
What is the total sum owed to the council by developers?

Reply from Councillor Loughran, Chair of Planning

The council has accumulated a balance of circa £20 Million for all s106 across all types of contribution (sustainable transport, education, recreation etc) and circa £4M of that was held at 1st April 2023 for affordable housing. All of the detail is included in the Annual Infrastructure Statement which was approved by the Culture Heritage Tourism Sport & Economic Development Committee in November.

The council had a period of several months at the start of the current financial year when s106 demands were not able to be issued pending the recruitment of a new officer. This was resolved in the summer, invoicing is up to date, demands for circa £1.6M have been issued for affordable housing and payments of £293k have been received. The balance of £1.2M has not yet fallen due.

2. Councillor McNair

Claims - How much money has the council paid out to residents in compensation in relation to potholes and flooding? In the period 01.01.23 - 31.12.23
What percentage of claims are successful?
How is the council planning to improve the ease with which residents can claim?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

Thank you, Cllr McNair, for your question.

BHCC are committed to improving the road and drains across our city and work closely with insurance companies and the wider industry to ensure we respond well to those affected by large potholes and localised flooding.

Between 01.01.2023 and 31.12.2023 BHCC has received 184 claims relating to potholes and 1 claim in relation to highway flooding.

Of the total 185 claims, a total of £2,190.16 has been paid in compensation to date

- i. What percentage of claims are successful?

Of the 185 claims received, 42 remain open. This means 143 claims have been through the claims handling process and 10 of the 143 have had a successful claims settlement which equates to 7%.

- ii. How is the council planning to improve the ease with which residents can claim?

The council is in the process of developing an online claims process which will be more efficient for both the claimant and the councils claims handling team. This will be progressed during 2024/25.

We recently sent out comms to reminded residents and visitors to report potholes and other environment related concerns directly via our existing council webpages. These feed straight into our operational rotas and are therefore the quickest way of getting action taken.

We ask people to give us as much information as they can, including photographs and description of locations – including What3Words app - if possible.

Our webpage for reporting potholes is at www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/roads-pavements-and-potholes-report-damage

We are committed to fixing potholes that are assessed as being urgent within 24 hours of us being notified.

We also have a gullies clearance paper coming to the Transport and Sustainability Committee in early February with sets out our commitment to clearing road gullies and drains to reduce localised flooding.

3. Councillor Meadows

Dog Poo bins - Recently, many dog poo bins went uncollected across Patcham & Hollingbury for many days and were overflowing. We have waited years for new bins. When will they be provided?

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

Where possibly Cityclean have been removing dog poo bins and replacing with normal litter bins. This is because there is no need to separate out the waste, and litter bins are emptied more frequently. Cityclean have also relocated bins from countryside locations to adjacent car parks to improve the reliability of collections. Bins located in rural/park land take much longer to empty. Collections from these bins are also affected by the weather, in very wet weather it is difficult to access the bins and they remain unattended for several days. There were over 500 dog bins in the City and the programme of work replacing with litter bins is ongoing. Cityclean apologise for the recent disruption to collections from the dog poo bins – this was due to staff shortages. The service is now back on track and additional staff have been trained on the round to provide a more resilient service in the future.

4. Councillor McNair

CCTV - CCTV at Stanmer Heights has recently been found to be out of focus and providing poor quality footage if any at all. Is all Council-owned CCTV in Patcham & Hollingbury now in good working order?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing and New Homes Committee

The CCTV camera installed at Stanmer Heights is operating as expected and regular maintenance is carried out to ensure this. All other cameras in Hollingbury and Patcham are in good working order, with high-definition picture quality.

5. Councillor Meadows

Flooding in Winfield Avenue, particularly at the junction with Ladies Mile Road, is worsening. What is the plan to reduce flooding in Winfield Avenue, and to reduce the effects on properties near the junction being flooded?

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

Thank you for your question. The council has apparently not received any formal reports of flooding for the area since 2014. However, in 2016 the Council were a partner in SCAPE which was a European-funded initiative to investigate retro-fitting SuDS in an urban environment. One site which was identified as part of SCAPE was a proposal to construct SuDS on Patcham Primary School playing fields.

To deliver flood risk management schemes there will be a capital burden to the Council, and so these projects will be funded through Flood Defence Grant in Aid from the Environment Agency. A stipulation of the FDGIA in addition to the requirements of the HM Treasury Green Book, is to remove properties from flood risk.

The Council will begin working on a city-wide feasibility study for Surface Water Management in the next quarter, this location will be included in the study for consideration.

More broadly, Southern Water are undertaking a mapping exercise to identify suitable locations for SuDS around the city to alleviate pressure on the sewage system. We are seeking to work more closely with them in order to make sure that this is joined up with the council's efforts to find solutions to this shared problem.

6. Councillor Theobald

Birch Grove Crescent - Residents report litter to Estates Management only to be told it is Cityclean's responsibility. Cityclean report it is Estates Management responsibility. Can residents be directed to the correct contact to expedite work.

Scaffolding has been there for over a year, but no work appears to have been carried out. If it hasn't been removed yet, when will it be?

Behind no 68 Birchgrove Crescent is a collection of abandoned children's bikes and scooters as well as at least three sheds which people are using to dump their unwanted items (furniture, tyres, toys beer cans etc). When will the sheds be renovated?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing and New Homes Committee

Missed rubbish collections should be reported to City Clean, reports of bulk waste or general litter on Housing land should be reported to the Housing Estates service. The Estates Service have attended and cleared the litter and bulk waste in the area.

The scaffolding will be removed within the next week.

The children's bikes and scooters behind Birchgrove crescent all appear to in good working order and in use. Housing will undertake a survey of the sheds and contact residents once this is done, with the view to refurbishment or looking at alternative storage options.

7. Councillor Shanks

What is the total predicted cost of closing St Peters and St Barts schools, including paying the deficit, staff redundancies, extra support for children transferring, cost of moth balling buildings?

Reply from Councillor Taylor , Joint Chair of Children Families & Schools

Thank you for the question Cllr Shanks. As was referenced in committee on Monday evening there are some known and unknown costs should a school close. There is the cost of the school's deficit on its closure and for both St Peter's and St Bart's this is approximately £200,000 each. Then there is the cost of redundancy for staff, this will be dependent upon a number of factors including the number of staff, their age and entitlements, but also the extent to which staff are redeployed (therefore avoiding redundancy). During the consultation and at Committee an indicative figure of £200,000 for a one form entry primary school has been quoted.

The Council has approved up to £200,000 of spending to support teams to help support the transition process. Other costs will be dependent on the needs of the children and their families. We have not calculated that cost but should the closures proceed we can request that officers report back to committee about the costs at a future meeting.

As for the accommodation costs to maintain the building and retain its security and integrity, this will be dependent on its future use and the length of time it remains unoccupied. We will seek to minimise the time the building is not utilised and will ensure it remains maintained in the meantime.

8. Councillor Shanks

At what point in the budget process has consultation occurred with our city's valued community and voluntary groups on the impact of cuts to their grant funding and other council services, what opportunity was given for them to input into the shaping of the budget papers before the drafts went to committee, and can the council commit to ensuring a longer timeframe for discussion and consultation on the budget in the future, given the scale of cuts and the seriousness of their impact?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council

Consulting on budget proposals is not a statutory requirement for councils but I fully accept it is good practice and can be valuable. Unfortunately, the announcement of the government's Autumn Statement and subsequent Local Government Finance Settlement on 18 December came very late in the day. Not only that, but the announcements caused huge shockwaves across local government by confirming no additional funding compared to the 2022 announcement. This has meant that very substantial additional savings proposals have had to be identified at extremely short notice to close an unprecedented budget gap that has now grown to £33 million. Inevitably, these final savings include significantly more difficult choices and cuts than earlier proposals which focused on finding as many savings as possible from efficiencies or operating services differently. The recent additional funding announcement is welcome but does not fundamentally change the council's financial situation.

That said, we have held confidential discussions with our recognised trade unions to alert them to potential staffing implications and we have signalled to all parties and residents that difficult choices lie ahead through our communications on the budget and the council's financial situation. Along with many other councils, we continue to lobby government to recognise the perilous position that the financial settlement has left local authorities in and to provide additional resources.

I would absolutely prefer to consult and engage more widely, however, the financial position of the authority inevitably means prioritising statutory provision over most other services. With finances now at a critical level, a multi-year financial settlement instead of a very late, single-year announcement would also enable the council to plan and consult for the longer term.

9. Councillor Pickett

Preston Park velodrome is a well-used and much-loved part of Preston Park. It seems some locals are using the area to train their dogs because it is fenced in,

while some families are choosing to take their children there rather than the nearby playground or open spaces in Preston Park. This has created problems for people using the velodrome for its primary purpose of cycling and cricket, with a number of accidents, collisions, and other unfortunate incidents, including one which left a cyclist in hospital. Could the council explore the potential for a) clearer signage urging families with young children to be mindful of cyclists and other velodrome users, b) a potential PSPO preventing dogs from being let off their lead within the velodrome, or c) another practical solution which would enable all users of velodrome to continue to enjoy the area without the added risk of collision and injury?

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

We currently have four dog control public space protection orders; two relating to dogs on leads, one relating to defecation by dogs and one setting out areas of the city that from which dogs are excluded. These were recently extended for a further three years by the Equalities Community Safety and Human Rights committee, until Oct 2027.

We are currently evaluating evidence with regard to the impact the use of this space by dog owners is having. In order to create additional PSPOs or to extend the areas that the current orders cover, there would need to be both statutory and public consultation regarding the possible introduction. Following that a report would need to go to committee seeking member approval to introduce a PSPO.

In the meantime, if there is evidence that signage is necessary to protect users of the velodrome, and there is a significant case for investing in signage, the council could take this forward. There are a limited number of entry points that would need signage.

10. Councillor Pickett

Will this council be making representations in response to the open consultation from the Planning Inspectorate on the proposals for Gatwick Airport Northern Runway, in line with previous stated opposition to the plans? Given that the Leader of the Council has previously stated that 'any airport expansion must pass our tests on air quality, noise pollution and delivering economic benefits while enabling us to meet our obligations on climate change,' can we have more detail on what the criteria for the 'tests' referred to on air quality and noise pollution constitute in practice?

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

The Council has submitted a 'Relevant Representation' in response to the consultation by the Planning Inspectorate relating to the Northern Runway. This raised an objection to the scheme on the basis that it would result in an unacceptable impact on climate change. With regards to impacts on air quality

and from noise pollution, having reviewed the detailed information submitted, which was based on agreed methodologies for Environmental Impact Assessment, officers did not consider that the scheme would result in any unacceptable impact on the City. It is noted that the local authorities in closer proximity to the airport, including Crawley Borough Council, have submitted detailed responses to the application, including in relation to noise and air quality impacts, and are expected to have specialist representation on these matters at the Examination in late February/early March.

11. Councillor Hill

Last June at the Culture, Heritage, Tourism, Sport and Economic Development Committee we were told that a draft version of the Council's new 5 year Economic Strategy would be used to guide the implementation of the new Council budget. Will the draft of this plan be made publicly available? It is important that the public understands what the Economic Strategy of this Council is given the last one expired last year.

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

The council has commissioned a new Economic Strategy to cover the period from 2024-2027. Work on this strategy is nearing completion and will comprise of a Strategy and accompanying Evidence Base. These documents will go to CHSTE Committee for approval in a public forum, and will be published on the Council website once finalised.

12. Councillor Hill

A recent Local Government Association report raised the alarm over "unprecedented increases in demand" for sexual health services which is partly due to a steep rise in gonorrhoea and syphilis cases. Cases of HIV transmission also have been plateauing despite the government's goal to end new transmissions by 2030. Cuts to sexual health services have been a key contributor to this, with some Local Authorities elsewhere no longer funding sexual health provision due to budget cuts. Will funding for sexual health services be protected in the upcoming budget in light of a rise in sexually transmitted diseases and a lack of progress in ending new HIV transmissions?

Reply from Councillor De Oliveira, Chair of Health & Wellbeing Board

Sexual health services are funded through the ring-fenced public health grant and there are no plans to reduce current levels of investment locally.

Brighton & Hove City Council provides good access to clinical sexual health services which offer face to face, booked and walk-in appointments from three sites across the City – including a dedicated young persons' clinic. The service also provides STI and HIV self-testing kits for people to use at home. In 2022/23 over 34,000 sexual health appointments were provided and over 12,000 self-test kits processed. A dedicated website www.brightonsexualhealth.com provides up-

to-date, accurate and accessible information and advice regarding all aspect of sexual health, including translation function into several languages.

The website also provides a comprehensive guide to where to get an HIV/STI test in Brighton and Hove including a number of community settings and the award-winning vending machines at several locations across the City.

England continues to experience worrying levels of poor sexual health with high rates of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) and this is also reflected locally. Brighton & Hove rates increased by 3% from 2021 to 2022, compared to a 24% increase for England, these increases follow a decrease during the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, in 2022, the rate of diagnosis for all new STIs in Brighton & Hove was 1,141 per 100,000 people, which is almost double the England rate of 694 per 100,000. The local profile of STIs locally is more in line with rates seen in London boroughs and Manchester.

Brighton and Hove has a high rate of diagnosed HIV infection at 7.3 per 1,000 (aged 15-59 years) compared to 2.3 per 1,000 in England. However, the rate of new diagnoses in Brighton and Hove has fallen from 28.2 per 100,000 in 2016 to 9 per 100,000 in 2022, which is a greater reduction than in England.

We are currently undertaking a sexual health needs assessment to ensure an up to date full and clear understanding of the sexual health needs of our residents and to inform the development of a new sexual health strategy for Brighton and Hove later in 2024/25.

13. Councillor Hill

How many vacancies exist in each directorate because of the Council's recruitment freeze?

Reply from Councillor Sankey , Leader of the Council

The council does not hold detailed information on vacancies held in lieu of recruitment controls because these controls have been in place since July and vacancies will therefore have occurred at different times and for different lengths over the period. For example, some vacancies are held indefinitely whilst some have only been held for a short period due to pressures on the service or an unsustainably high number of existing vacancies. However, I can advise that vacancy savings of approximately £3 million have been reported through the Targeted Budget Management (TBM) monitoring reports to date, which is the equivalent of approximately 86 full-time staffing vacancies. However, over the same period the use of Agency Staffing has also fallen significantly by around 14% which should also be taken into consideration.

14. Councillor Hill

Has Councillor Rowkins received a response about the amount of diesel used per annum in the Newhaven Energy Recovery Facility? I was told last October that he requested information pertaining to this.

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

Thanks for your question Cllr Hill. I can provide the following update.

To start a boiler from cold to "waste on a grate" in accordance with the Environmental Permit conditions, Veolia typically uses between 15,000 - 20,000 litres of fuel. Similarly, Veolia use fuel to shut down the plant which is approximately 8,000 - 12,000 Litres. Startups and shutdowns are strictly limited to planned maintenance and unplanned downtime. This ensures the continuity of Service for the Contract and similarly electricity generation of which the Councils are vested in both.

Veolia are on a 24-month outage strategy for planned maintenance. On occasion, when there is an issue with furnace temperature, Veolia also "put a burner in". This adds to the fuel usage which is significantly less BUT contingent on the nature of the object causing the issue in the boiler. Such objects would be a NOx canister or medical canister that residents have erroneously placed in bins.

15. Councillor McLeay

What is the average estimated cost per property needed to bring all council properties up to an EPC C and EPC B?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing and New Homes Committee

Using the current Housing Energy Modelling software the estimated average cost of improving all council tenanted properties to an EPC band C is £4,069 per property affected.

To improve all council tenanted properties to an EPC B the estimated cost is an average of £6,621 per property affected.

It should be noted however that the modelling identifies that in both scenarios even this level of investment would not see all properties meeting these standards due to the SAP methodology behind the EPC process, the amount of work required to achieve this, the technical feasibility of the work required and other restrictions in place. The number **not** achieving minimum EPC B currently would be a significant proportion of all properties.

16. Councillor McLeay

November housing and new homes committee reported 88 council home having an EPC of band E or below. How many of these 88 council homes have an EPC of E, of F and of G?

Reply from Councillor Williams , Chair of Housing and New Homes Committee

Of council tenanted properties 63 homes are EPC band E, 24 homes are band F and 1 home is band G

Due to the archetype of some of these properties i.e. age, solid walls, in conservation areas we are limited on the improvements that can be made that would currently reflect a significantly improved EPC band based on the current methodology.

17. Councillor McLeay

Quarter 2 2023/24 HRA rent collection returns showed that rent collection was falling and predicted that only 93.66% of the rent would be collected this year against a target of 95.36%. If this prediction proves correct, how much less rent will be collected compared to if the target of 95.36% collection rate were to be achieved?

Reply from Councillor Williams , Chair of Housing and New Homes Committee

A collection rate of 95.36% would result in c.£1.1m being received as opposed to a collection rate of 93.66%.

18. Councillor McLeay

How much does a by-election cost the Council?

Reply from Councillor Sankey , Leader of the Council

The cost of a by-election can vary depending on the size of the ward's electorate and the proportion of postal voters. The higher the electorate and/or the proportion of postal voters – the higher the cost. This is because the majority of the cost of by-elections is the postage/return postage of poll cards and postal voting packs.

Although the cost differs depending on the size of the electorate and proportion of postal vote, by way of an indicative figures, a 3 member ward with approximately 2,500 postal voters would cost around £17k to deliver. The Electoral Services team budgets for one by-election per year.

19. Councillor Earthey

What is BHCC's latest position on the use of glyphosphate weedkiller in the city, and how does it reconcile the perceived benefits of using it against the real environmental damage that will be caused to city food chains and biodiversity?

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

Thank you for your question. The January meeting of the City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee agreed a new approach to tackling weeds. The Committee voted to use a controlled-droplet application of glyphosate to manage and remove weeds from hard surfaces. This will involve mixing the glyphosate with an oil that helps it stick to the weeds. It means we'll use less of the herbicide than traditional methods while reducing the risks to other plant species and wildlife.

This will only be applied to visible weeds on roads and pavements. There will be no use in parks, on verges or at any other green spaces.

This is a very different approach to what BHCC used to do and what most other local authorities still do. The conventional approach taken here prior to 2019 saw quad bikes driving up and down every street in the city three times a year, blanket spraying every road and pavement, regardless of the extent of weed growth. The glyphosate was sprayed in a fine water-based mist that was prone to drift beyond the intended area.

The committee voted instead to use the controlled droplet application, which is a safer and more environmentally friendly method and will be applied in a far more targeted manner. The cost of this approach is substantially higher for the council, but the committee felt strongly that every effort should be made to limit any risks to biodiversity while also ensuring we get the problem back under control.

We must balance the need to keep our residents safe and our pavements accessible with protecting the city's biodiversity and we believe that this represents a sensible middle ground.

Once the problem is back under control, we will reduce the use of glyphosate to the lowest level possible. We will of course keep this under review and explore any viable alternatives should they become available. For now, this new approach will mean our streets will be safer and our city will look all the better for it.

20. Councillor Earthey

In view of Central Government's increase in the budget for repairing potholes, by when will BHCC be able to claim a share of these funds, and accelerate its pothole repair programme?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

Thank you, Cllr Earthey, for your question.

The Department for Transport have awarded BHCC an additional £13m of highway maintenance funding over the next 10 years as part of the Network North Fund.

The Council have received the first allocation of £413k in 2023/24 which is being used to fund the resurfacing of London Road between The Level and Preston Circus. These works have been tendered and are programmed to start in February. In 2024/25 the Council will receive a further £413k which will be used to supplement the programme of planned works which will include resurfacing as well as surface extension treatments such as microasphalt and surface dressing.

The Department for Transport plan to confirm future allocations in the near future. Once the breakdown has been confirmed it will be incorporated into the forward works programming for delivery

The additional funds alone are not sufficient to halt the decline of the Highway Network, Further details on future ways of working will be included in a committee report that is planned to be presented later in the year.

These actions demonstrates our commitment to improving road and paved surfaces and ensure our pothole repair programme can advance at pace.

21. Councillor Earthey

Can the Labour Administration confirm a recent BBC report that BHCC faces a Judicial Review over its decision to move from paper parking vouchers to Pay-by-Phone? If yes, how much council-taxpayers' money is going to be wasted defending this action, brought about by the Labour Administration's insufficient attention to detail?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

Thank you, Cllr Earthey, for your question.

Brighton & Hove City Council does not face a judicial review on this matter. The application for permission to seek a judicial review was rejected in summer 2023 and a recent appeal to this decision was also rejected. No costs have been incurred by the Council in relation to these applications.

22. Councillor Earthey

Residents east of the Marina only have one direct bus per hour to the Royal Sussex County Hospital (14C). What pressure can the Labour Administration bring to bear on B&H Buses to improve this service?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

Thank you, Cllr Earthey, for your question.

The 14C bus service is run commercially by Brighton & Hove Buses, and any decision to increase its frequency per hour is the responsibility of the operator. However, their Customer Service team can be contacted with this feedback via email at info@buses.co.uk or they can be contacted by phone on 01273 886200.

Council-supported service 47 provides an hourly service from Saltdean via Rottingdean via Brighton Marina to the Royal Sussex County Hospital, and the 52 bus also offers an hourly service to Royal Sussex County Hospital from Ovingdean via the Marina. Services 47 and 52 are operated by The Big Lemon under contract to the city council.

Other buses (services 12, 12A, 14 and 27) run every 5 minutes from east of the Marina to the Paston Place bus stop on Marine Parade, from this bus stop it is approximately a 5-minute walk to the Royal Sussex County Hospital.

We are committed to substantive improvement to our city's bus services as a whole through the funded Bus Service Improvement Programme or BSIP enhancing one of the nation's best used bus services. Brighton and Hove has the highest passenger journeys per head of population for any English local authority outside London.

23. Councillor Earthey

BHCC parking fees imposed on visitors to the Royal Sussex County Hospital are outrageously high, and discriminate unfairly against visitors of more modest means. What steps is the Labour Administration going to take to reduce these charges?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

Thank you, Cllr Earthey, for your question.

This financial year, the Labour administration stopped the proposal in the 23/24 Budget to increase parking fees significantly around the Royal Sussex County Hospital area due to the concerns you outline. We took swift action to stop the quadrupling of on-street visitor parking prices as proposed by the previous administration for implementation in July 2023. We could not countenance such discriminatory and regressive parking hikes affecting many on low pay, working in essential services and hospital visitors. A Parking Review was commissioned in response to this and is currently underway. The parking review is looking into how parking prices compare with comparable cities in the UK and this will inform recommendations for the way forward. As part of the parking review, we set out to make parking simpler, more equitable, accessible and inclusive and to make parking work well for residents, visitors and the prosperity of our city.

24. Councillor Fishleigh

Subject: Valley Gardens 3

Is it administratively possible to re-allocate to other capital projects the £5m loan and the £1.8m from BHCC funds assigned to Valley Gardens 3, and if not, why not?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

Thank you, Cllr Fishleigh, for your question.

Although it is administratively possible to reallocate the £5M Council Loan and the £1.8 LTP match funding, this is not considered prudent. Such reallocation would likely jeopardise the Valley Gardens Phase 3 scheme, most likely resulting in a loss of Coast to Capital funding which is £6M making the improvements needed unviable. Essential road maintenance of the area would then need to be funded which is estimated to be between £1M - £1.5M.

Further, as generally acknowledged by many, including local residents at a recent meeting held on Saturday morning 13th January as also attended by Cllr Fishleigh; the Old Steine area is looking fairly “shabby” and is in a general state of decline. Moving money allocated and losing substantial grant funding for the planned improvement works would inevitably lead to further decline and deterioration. As this is one of the most prominent parts of our city centre, we cannot advocate for its further decline by moving allocated money. With no plan, timeline, design or budget to replace the planned scheme, this would not be in the best interests of our city and its reputation. Rather, investing to deliver Phase 3 of the important Valley Gardens project will enhance and make this area a city centre gem, great for residents, visitors and the prosperity of our city.

25. Councillor Fishleigh

Subject: Universal Basic Income

It was mentioned in passing in a previous full council that BHCC is exploring introducing a UBI trial. Please would you provide a few details.

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council

The council received an approach from the Head of Corporate Strategy at Camden London Borough Council informing us that Camden is developing a proposal for a Universal Basic Services pilot working with a number of other local authorities and an academic institution. Camden have offered to lead a detailed briefing discussion with city council officers once they have onboarded other interested local authorities and secured an academic partner, potentially University College London who have previously published research in this field. We are awaiting confirmation of the status of the pilot with interest and our Policy Team are ready to engage.

83 ORAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

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

Q1. Councillor Davis asked a question: At Full Council on 14th December the Leader of the Council said, and I quote: “I must be clear, and for the record, that the GMB has contributed nothing to the election of any of our Labour Group members”. In light of

these comments, could the leader clarify if using any of the GMB offices for local election activities counts to a contribution? I draw her attention to a tweet from Councillor Daniels on 9th November of herself, Labour Group colleagues and campaign staff in the GMB offices which states: "Thanks GMB for the loan of the room and the kettle".

Councillor Sankey replied: Councillor Davis is absolutely right, we did use the GMB room during our election campaign. I'll check with Democratic Services as to whether that counts as an election expense. I'm not sure whether it does.

Councillor Davis asked a supplementary question: The Council Leader was categorical about her statement saying GMB has contributed nothing to the election of any Labour Group members. If this is the case, can she please explain the £4200 donation from the GMB to Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP on the 27th April 2024. This donation was declared on the electoral commission and is on the register of interests for, and I quote: "printing and distribution costs - local election material". If the Leader was mistaken previously, will she now correct the record?

Councillor Sankey replied: I have no knowledge of the matter that Councillor Davis has raised but I will of course go and check up on this and revert.

Q2. Councillor McNair asked a question: The Leader of the Council claimed that Labour would listen. But what evidence is there that Labour is a listening Council given that they didn't listen to residents on St Bartholemew's or St Peter's or to consultations on the aquarium roundabout?

Councillor Sankey replied: There are lots of examples of us being a listening council, as we heard earlier this evening, we listened to the students of our city asking for counselling in schools, and despite a horrendous economic management of our nation's economy by your party, and a budget deficit of £30 million this year, we have found the funds to pilot a schools counselling project. We listened last summer when residents were appalled by the parking charge hikes contained in the last Green budget. We slashed the proposed 300% increases around our county hospital. And we've listened again to our residents across the city who said they want to keep their existing light-touch parking schemes and we reduced the proposed resident parking fee baked again into the last Green budget. We listened to parents on low incomes in our city who said that their children have less choice of secondary school and having consulted on a trail-blazing proposal to give children on free school meals priority in secondary school admissions, which has already received national recognition. We are moving forward with that policy. We listened to private renters who told us that they want greater landlord licensing and we've already implemented a scheme to fine landlords refusing to keep their properties in good quality. We listened to the ordinary residents of our city who said that our public toilets are precious to them. We've re-opened them, kept them open, kept them free, refurbished them and, in this budget, committed to reopening Royal Pavilion Gardens' toilets. We listened to small businesses, scrapping fines for small businesses made victims of crime through graffiti tagging and commencing a review of our approach to Fixed Penalty Notices. I listened directly to residents at my bi-monthly Leader's Surgeries across the city and have already taken forward a policy proposal directly from one of these surgeries, extending free school meal-equivalent vouchers to children educated outside of school settings. We listened to the disabled

resident in Gardner Street left trapped in her home by Green ideology. We listened to those with loud voices and we listened to those who don't often hold the microphone, like our care leavers who asked us to set up a mentoring scheme. They asked and we did. We also listened to our staff. Those that blew the whistle on abuse at City Clean and those that asked us to accelerate the resolution of a dispute with two recognised unions to bring forward a settlement on equal pay and to get money into the pockets of over 800 of our valued staff. I could go on and on. We are responsive. We are listening. We are here to serve the beautiful, weird, and wonderful residents of our beautiful city. We won't always please everyone but we will always act with compassion, sincerity and courage.

Councillor McNair asked a supplementary question: How will residents recognise that you have listened to them regarding the Royal Mail development in Patcham?

Councillor Sankey replied:

As Councillor McNair knows, that issue is subject to a planning application at present so I think it would be inappropriate for me to comment any further.

Q3. Councillor Fishleigh asked a question: What new sites have been identified for Park and Ride, when will they be ready, is the bus company on board, and how much has been allocated in the upcoming budget?

Councillor Muten replied:

Perhaps unbelievably, Park and Ride has been under consideration by Brighton and Hove City Council for at least 20 years. In 2004-5, 107 sites were considered, 58 had more detailed assessments, 13 shortlisted, with one preferred site with a Committee report presented December 2005 with no decision made. In 2008-2010, Park and Ride was revisited with desktop review of the sites shortlisted in 2004, along with site visits. Multiple smaller sites approached, approximately 500 spaces with three new sites added for consideration and it was used to form the 2011 Local Transport plan 3, includes reference to new Park and Ride sites. In 2016, a £5 million funding bid that included Park and Ride was unsuccessful. More recently, following action from the 2021 Climate Assembly, a Park and Ride feasibility study was undertaken between 2021-2023 But the Green administration was not committed to it. Labour on the other hand chose to include park and ride as a priority in our 2023 manifesto and we intend to deliver on it. Twenty years of assessment and inaction is simply not good enough. We know Park and Ride is important for our city and this is why we're currently reviewing potential options for a formal Park and Ride facility. We know that on busy days up to 40% of vehicles driving to our city centre are from out of town. Park and Ride is both good for prosperity and the health of our city, enabling more to come to Brighton and Hove whilst having a lower impact on air quality.

Councillor Fishleigh asked a supplementary question: I was going to ask if Park and Ride would be ready before Valley Gardens 3 starts, but I think the answer's going to be no. I'd like to suggest a new option for a site, which is building a multi-storey on the top of the existing car park at Asda in Hollingbury. Asda is owned by a company that is always looking to sweat its assets. They are open to a conversation. That location is

right by the A27 with no homes in the direct vicinity, bus lanes on the A23 Would you commit to investigating this site please?

Councillor Muten replied: I certainly welcome that proposal as something to investigate further. I'm happy to take that up and come back to you on that. That sounds like something of particular value and there are other sites as well which we are actively exploring because we seriously want to get this resolved. It might be more than one site and it may be working with third parties such as supermarkets and other big spaces and car parks in existence in our city so thank you for that. A report will come to the Transport and Sustainability Committee soon in which we will set out clear options on next steps and budgetary requirements. Potential stakeholders, such as the bus operators, will be engaged as part of this process.

The deputy mayor noted that question 4 had been withdrawn and moved on the following question

Q5. Councillor Hill asked a question: Residents in Round Hill monitor amphibians in a twitten known as the Cat's Creep each year. Last year there were around 400 sightings of frogs, newts and toads between February and March. The amphibians congregate to mate and travel to nearby ponds. There are unobtrusive but clearly visible weeds providing cover both in spring and later in the spring when the young merge into the ponds. As amphibian skin is one of its most vital organs, they are especially vulnerable to glyphosate exposure, even in low concentrations. The report on glyphosate passed last Environment Committee states that it will be applied where weeds are visible. Can the report be amended to ensure that even where there are visible weeds on the Cats Creep, they will be exempted from being sprayed with glyphosate?

Councillor Rowkins replied: Thank you for your question and liaising with your residents. As you know I've also been in touch with them. I'm very well aware of the need to take particular care with regard to aquatic life and I've been in touch with the residents in Round Hill who report the amphibian activity in the year in the alley which I believe connects Round Hill Crescent and Richmond. I'm also very fond of the name of that alley: Cat's Creep. I flagged that particular location with officers, but I think a key thing to say is that we will take into account any areas where there are particular areas of concern around amphibians and aquatic life. Just on a more broad point. The issue of run-off, which is one of the big concerns around aquatic life, is particularly relevant. That's obviously one of the primary reasons we rejected the conventional glyphosate application that's favoured by most other local authorities and opted instead for the controlled droplet approach that will greatly reduce that risk.

Councillor Hill asked a supplementary question: Regarding the carbon neutral programme, this is something which I'm concerned about the harms to because there is a £200,000 cut to this carbon neutral programme which includes the restoration of things like ponds, which are vital to frogs, newts, and toads. So do you share my concern that is: in the council's own budget assessment, that this would lead to a redesigned biodiversity and climate reduction adaption work reduction, due to affordability, complaint with some staff potentially being at risk of redundancy?

Councillor Rowkins replied: I feel that much of that was not following up from the original question. I would say, you mentioned the report that was passed in Committee recently.

The report doesn't need to be amended in order to make particular exceptions or any other derogations within the policy. The report just grants the authority to change the policy. How its applied will obviously take into account the things we've just described.

Q6. Councillor Meadows asked a question: What steps are the council taking to protect and improve drinking water quality in the city given that the Drinking Water Inspectorate has raised concerns about the unwholesomeness of the city's water supply and Patcham's tap water is being monitored for E-coli? Not a standard procedure. Probably connected with the 280+ sewage leaks in the area.

Councillor Rowkins replied: Obviously we've talked already today and continue to do so in many of these meetings about the flood risk. The impact on drinking water, obviously the drinking water that comes from the tap is very much going to be Southern Water's responsibility. I think the more broad point here is that we need to be working much more closely with Southern Water in a more productive and more technical and meaningful way going forward in order to mitigate those issues.

Councillor Meadows asked a supplementary question: How do you feel about the Royal Mail breaking an Act of parliament in 1924 and a Covenant on the land that protects the water supply being filtered at Patcham Court Farm for the rest of the city?

Councillor Rowkins replied: I'd have to seek advice from planning on that. I don't sit on the Planning Committee and obviously planning decisions are subject to the relevant frameworks. I am, just by way of an aside, alongside Councillor Muten, who I always take with me on such matters, going to meet residents in Patcham who I know are concerned about ground water and flooding and all of these issues, and will continue to take this forward as a top priority.

Q7. Councillor Earthey asked a question: In view of the budgetary challenges the council faces, obtaining maximum value for money for Council Taxpayers is essential. So how does the Labour administration justify its latest spending plans on Valley Gardens 3, as opposed to reallocating the budget to hard-pressed front-line services?

Councillor Taylor replied: You're absolutely right, the council faces significant budget challenges. Yesterday we published our budget proposals which sets a balanced budget for this council, and is the first step to avoiding us following the path of many other councils in the country which have issued Section 114 notices and effectively declared themselves bankrupt. We're not in that position. We come from a very difficult starting point, which is that the last Green administration overspent the annual budget 2022-23 by £3.5 million. The first time in the history of this Local Authority, which meant our working balance has gone from £9 million down to less than £6 million. The lowest point for that working balance in decades, which puts the council in a very precarious position. We came in in May after the election, and had to manage the budget that we inherited. At one point that budget was forecast to overspend by £15 million on an in-year basis. I'm really pleased that the papers that have just been published for TBM show we are now breaking even on our in-year budget. That's not by luck, that was done because very early on in our administration we put in place spending controls, recruitment controls, we got hold of agency spend across the organisation, we managed it really tightly and now we're coming in on budget and we perhaps may underspend on this year's annual budget. Now we've set a budget for next year which involves some

difficult things which this council will be debating and scrutinising in the coming weeks. But also some things that we're really proud of, and that reflect the priorities of residents. We're not closing any toilets in this city, indeed we're investing in reopening a toilet. We're not getting rid of any street cleaners in the city, we're maintaining all of them because we know that residents care about the look and feel of their city. We're going to tackle that. We're not closing any libraries in this city. We're not closing a single council-run nursery. Unlike the previous administration proposed the outright closure of Bright Start. So we do have some very difficult challenges. Your question obviously goes to the heart of the question between revenue and capital expenditure, the two things are linked. People often ask me this question when we talk about the budget in public: how can you possibly have a difficult budget while at the same time investing in a swimming pool or investing in Madeira Terraces, or Valley Gardens 3 or the Kingsway to the Sea? These are big capital projects, some which involve borrowing for the council, which is paid off over a long period of time, usually with relatively small amounts actually coming out each year in terms of capital refinancing. But there's no conflict between setting a revenue budget that supports the services of residents and investing in our infrastructure. Indeed it is vital and it is really important. On Valley Gardens 3, I accept there is a range of opinions as to the merits of that scheme, particularly the roundabout and the junction. I would just say from a personal perspective, Valley Gardens 1 and 2, if you look at those areas of town: St Peters, Victoria Gardens, they're great, they're fantastic. They're great places to walk, they're great places to cycle, they're great places to take a buggy. The next part of that phase around Old Steine doesn't look so great at the moment so I'm pleased we will be investing in making that area of town better. But there's no conflict between the two things. It's part of managing a budget well and investing in our city.

Councillor Earthey asked a supplementary question: In Councillor Muten's response to Councillor Fishleigh's written question, he said that it is possible administratively to reallocate the 5 million loan, the 1.8 million from council funds and the 6 million grant for valley garden. Thus by his own words: there is a choice. It's a total fabrication to say that this reallocation will jeopardise the loan, as Councillor Muten said in his email, so we would appreciate if he doesn't repeat this misinformation again. So my supplemental question is: why do you think it is more important to spend £7 million on a road scheme with glorified traffic lights that it is on Adult Services, schools and other things for needy people in this city? You have a choice so choose to do the right thing.

Councillor Taylor replied: Councillor Earthey is a deeply intelligent Councillor and I genuinely mean that. I would say there is some slight mixing of different streams of funding that this council faces. It's not an either/or between capital investment or schools. Schools are funded by the dedicated school grant that is direct from government and goes to schools on a per-pupil basis. Adult Social Care is a revenue budget and not investing in infrastructure doesn't necessarily mean you can have the equivalent amount of money to go into Adult Social Care. As I've said, a good council that wants to run a city that is going to regenerate for all of our citizens, tries to protect the front-line services in your revenue budget but also invests in the infrastructure that will make our city a better place to live for all our residents. That includes swimming pools, that includes transport, that includes leisure facilities, and that's what we're doing in this budget.

Q8. Councillor Miller asked a question: The issue of dangerous, weed infested pavements was by far one of the most frequent issues raised by residents in Goldsmid during the 2023 local election campaign, the Ward which I represent. I'm sure it was raised frequently by residents in other areas of the city. However, some Brighton and Hove residents are concerned about the proposal to use glyphosate for their removal. Are we able to reassure them that glyphosate will only be used in a limited way, to enable the council to reset the process of managing the weeds in the pavement in a sustainable way?

Councillor Rowkins replied: You're quite right, it certainly was raised as one of the top issues in many other parts of the city. And yes, we absolutely can reassure them that glyphosate will only be used in a limited way. Probably the most helpful thing to do here is just to contrast how this used to be done with what the approach that has now been agreed is. Prior to 2019, how glyphosate was applied: you would have quadbikes essentially driving up and down every street in the city, three times a year, every year, blanket spraying every inch of pavement and road regardless of the extent of weed growth. That was done using a fine, pressurised water-based mist that was prone to drift and run-off, and obviously you can imagine, applied way more glyphosate than was necessary to keep the problem under control. It was also applied in parks, on verges and in other green spaces. That is not what we've agreed at all. The 2024 approach is something entirely new. Firstly, it applies only to hard surfaces, which is roads and pavements, so it will not apply in parks, it will not apply in grass verges or any other green spaces. The total droplet control approach uses a much lower concentration of glyphosate, it will also be applied only to visible weeds. The important thing to say there is: if staff turn up to a place where there are no visible weeds, no treatment will be done. The actual delivery method, rather than being a fine, water-based mist, is an oil solution that sticks to plants and is rain-fast within about an hour. It is released in much larger droplets under gravity alone, so not pressurised and doesn't produce anything that can be breathed in, and there's a far greatly reduced risk of run-off or drip. So we're taking this approach in order to get on top of the problem in what we believe is the most targeted and responsible way possible.

Q9. Councillor West asked a question: Adult Social Care social workers are striking for pay parity with their colleagues who work with children. Care professionals are experiencing hardship and struggling to pay unaffordable rents, and the service is suffering a recruitment crisis. When will the Labour administration settle this damaging dispute by paying these key workers what they deserve?

Councillor Burden replied: We are continuing to meet with Unison, they have agreed a number of areas where there is potential to negotiate a resolution to the social workers strike. We anticipate negotiations will proceed over a number of months.

Councillor West asked a supplementary question: With budget plans set to slash union facility time, delete 125 roles and put 45 workers at risk of redundancy, many providing vital services to the most vulnerable people in our city, how can the Labour party suggest they are the part of the working people and strong public service? Are they not just a better drilled Tory party?

Councillor Burden replied: I don't actually recognise that that's a question in relation to the first point you made Councillor West.

Councillor West replied: A point of information. I do believe it was connected because I was talking about the plans to cut the facility time and the roles, many of which are, and I described, involved in supplying services to vulnerable people. That is very much directly connected to the original question. It's very much about Adult Social Care and the oral question was entitled Adult Social Care.

Councillor Sankey replied: An accompanying point of information might be made: The latest information we have on the debt of the i360. £15 million has been spent by this council servicing the debt. If we had that £15 million back in this council, that would halve the budget savings that we are seeking to make in this budget. So how on earth the Green Party can pretend to be the party of working people when they have squandered the money of this city on vanity projects and have brought this council to its knees.

Following the end of 30 minutes set aside for oral questions the deputy mayor moved to the next item of business.

84 BUDGET PROTOCOL

84.1 Councillor Taylor introduced, and formally moved the report.

84.2 Councillor Pickett, McNair, Earthey spoke on the matter

84.3 Councillor Taylor responded to the debate.

84.4 The Mayor asked members to note the officer amendment published in Addendum 2 which amend paragraphs 1.3 (ii) and 1.3 (iii) in the Budget Protocol - Appendix 1 as shown below to correct the timelines proposed by officers to accurately reflect the proposals put to the Leaders of the Groups:

“(ii) All proposed amendments must have been received by finance officers no later than 7 working days before Budget Council (i.e. by 12 noon on Tuesday 13 February 2024).
(iii) All amendments will have had to have been assessed and evaluated by finance officers and the relevant Executive Director no later than 4 working days before Budget Council. (i.e. by close of play Friday 16 February 2024).”

84.5 The deputy mayor put the recommendations as detailed in the report listed in the agenda to the vote officer amendment in Addendum 2 which was carried.

84.6 **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the budget protocol outlined in Appendix 1 be approved for use at the Strategy, Finance & City Regeneration Committee on 8 February 2024 and the Budget Council meeting on the 22 February 2024.
- (2) That the Legal Advice Note as set out at Appendix 2 is noted.

85 COUNCIL TAX PREMIUMS ON SECOND HOMES

85.1 Councillor Williams introduced, and formally moved the report.

85.2 Councillor Shanks, Lyons and Fishleigh spoke on the matter.

85.3 Councillor Williams closed the debate.

85.4 The Deputy mayor put the recommendations as detailed in the report listed in the agenda to the vote which was carried.

85.5 **RESOLVED:**

(1) Adopts the recommendation of Strategy, Finance & City Regeneration Committee at para 2.2 in the report formally approves the recommendation that a new 100% Council Tax premium be applied to empty furnished properties (second homes) from 1 April 2025.

86 WEED MANAGEMENT

86.1 The report was referred for information from the City, Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee meeting on 23 January 2024.

87 SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL GROUPS

87.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Earthey on behalf of the Brighton & Hove Independents Group and formally seconded by Councillor Fishleigh.

87.2 The deputy mayor noted that there were three amendments in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.

87.3 Councillor Allen moved the first amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Guilmant.

87.4 The deputy mayor congratulated Councillor Guilmant on their maiden speech on behalf of the council.

87.5 Councillor McNair moved the second amendment on behalf of the Conservative Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Meadows.

87.6 Councillor Davis moved the third amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Hill.

87.7 Councillor Earthey confirmed that they would accept the Labour Group amendment.

87.8 The deputy mayor then put the Conservative Group amendment to the vote which was lost.

87.9 The deputy mayor then put the Green Group amendment to the vote which was lost.

87.10 The deputy mayor then put the following motion to the vote:

This Council:

1. Notes its current financial difficulties and strategic budgetary management the Administration have embarked on since May 2023.
2. Notes that the cost of support for the three largest political groups from April 1st 2024 will be £194,900, spread evenly across the three Groups.
3. Notes that the Local Government and Housing Act requires the largest political groups to be offered equal support if the membership of the group consists of at least 10% of the membership of the authority, in Brighton and Hove's case 6 Councillors in a group.
4. Notes that Councillors may require training and support from Democratic Services on internal protocol and procedures.
5. Notes that political groups can explore alternative approaches to maintain the level of organisational support currently undertaken.
6. Notes that any changes which may have an impact on staffing are required to follow the Council's policies, including the Council's Organisation Change Management Framework.

Therefore, Council resolves to:

1. Request officers to consider including within the budget proposals the £194,900 savings that could be achieved through the cessation of BHCC financial support to political groups from April 1 2024.
2. Express its thanks and gratitude to staff past and present who have aided in commission of civic duties within our city.

87.11 The deputy mayor confirmed that the motion had been carried.

88 PROTECTING PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

88.1 Councillor Shanks moved an amendment under Council Procedure Rule 13.4 to amend their Notice of Motion on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Goldsmith.

88.2 The deputy mayor put the Green Group amendment to the vote which was lost.

88.3 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Goldsmith on behalf of the Green Group and formally seconded by Councillor Shanks.

88.4 The deputy mayor noted that there was an amendment in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.

88.5 Councillor Simon moved the second amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Winder.

88.6 The deputy mayor congratulated Councillor Simon on their maiden speech on behalf of the council.

88.7 Councillors Hogan spoke on the matter.

88.8 Councillor Goldsmith confirmed that they would not accept the amendment.

88.9 The deputy mayor then put the Labour Group amendment to the vote which was carried.

88.10 The deputy mayor then put the following motion to the vote:

This council notes:

- 1) The crucial role child and youth provision, including by the community and voluntary sector, plays in the physical, mental, and social development of young people in Brighton & Hove
- 2) The impact of school and nursery closures in the context of a nationwide crisis in early years, which has caused concern among local authorities about the ability to deliver the extension of the Government's 30 hours free childcare scheme
- 3) The fragile state of central government funding for youth services, and in national funding for children's social care, impacting on the life chances of young people, care leavers, and those needing extra support from 0-25
- 4) The success and hardwork of the council's Family Hubs in supporting children, young people and families across the city

Therefore, resolves to:

- 1) Request a report to the Children, Families, and Schools Committee detailing:
 - a. the full list of CVS organisations in the city in receipt of council funding, so the administration can consider how best to commission them to deliver the policies and priorities of the council plan
 - b. how this council can work more closely with young people, children and families, in particular to review the current minimum consultation period of six weeks on proposals to close or move any early years childcare, schools, or child and youth provision;
 - c. how our communications can more effectively reach all children and young people to ensure minimal impact to their education and wellbeing during periods of change
 - d. sets out the principles the administration adopted for deciding which schools should close, and how this would be applied if more closures are considered in future.

88.11 The deputy mayor confirmed that the motion had been carried.

89 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

89.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Loughran on behalf of the Labour Group and formally seconded by Councillor Thomson.

- 89.2 The deputy mayor congratulated Councillor Thomson on their maiden speech on behalf of the council.
- 89.3 The deputy mayor noted that there was an amendment in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.
- 89.4 Councillor McLeay moved the amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Hill.
- 89.5 Councillors Theobald, Fishleigh and Lyons spoke on the matter.
- 89.6 Councillor Loughran confirmed that they would not accept the amendment.
- 89.7 The deputy mayor then put the Green Group amendment to the vote which was lost.
- 89.8 The deputy mayor then put the following motion to the vote:

This council notes:

- 1) The Council has not been achieving its Affordable Housing supply target in recent years and there can be resistance, actual and perceived, from some developers to the implementation of the Affordable Housing policy in full.
- 2) The proposal for the publication of new Council guidance in the form of an Affordable Housing Practice Note (AHPN) which is intended to inform and guide applicants and their agents, landowners, developers, Homes England, Registered Providers and BHCC's Development Management Officers (DMO's) and the Council's Housing team of the steps that must be taken by all parties with respect to the implementation of these policies and targets.
- 3) A significant proportion of sites coming forward for housing are for small sites where implementing the Council's affordable housing requirements is challenging.

Therefore, council resolves to call for an officer report to Culture, Heritage, Sport, Tourism & Economic Development Committee which addresses the following:

- 4) A proposal for a model draft of an AHPN that can be delivered in Brighton & Hove
- 5) Ways of requiring or encouraging developers of all sizes to meet the affordable housing target percentages set out in relevant Local Plan policies without public subsidy, with the AHPN setting out how this will be done on submission of the planning application in accordance with an AHPN Compliance Statement or, as agreed, on officer assessment of whether S106 Obligations have been met
- 6) Ways of incorporating, as part of this developer model, support for smaller developers such as 'alternative' community-run providers of housing to deliver Affordable Housing (AH) units as part of a stand-alone planning application or as a party to a scheme with another developer. Alternative providers could include community-led development organisations, custom-build or self-build developer schemes
- 7) A process that strengthens all participants' expertise and knowledge around models of delivery

- 8) Incorporating possibilities for affordable units on smaller sites where there is a desire to ensure that such units are provided to meet a Council area's housing need, albeit that the number of units may be very small on such sites.

89.9 The deputy mayor confirmed that the motion had been carried.

90 IMPROVING TEXTILE RECYCLING

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

90.2 The deputy mayor noted that there were two amendments in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.

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

90.4 Councillors Rowkins, Fishleigh and Alexander spoke on the matter.

90.5 Councillor Lyons confirmed that they would not accept the amendment.

90.6 The deputy mayor then put the Green Group amendment to the vote which was lost.

90.7 The deputy mayor then put the following motion to the vote:

This Council:

- 1) Notes the importance of recycling textiles for the environment and for the City, with profits from the recycling currently split 60-40% between the Council and local charities.
- 2) Notes that in November the City Environment, South Downs and the Sea Committee approved 54 additional containers for carton recycling and 21 new containers for WEEE recycling, but it did not also increase the number of locations or containers for textile recycling.
- 3) Further notes that residents have reported textile recycling containers overflowing with the textiles trying to be recycled, increasing the risk of contamination and fly tipping.

This council therefore resolves to:

- 4) Request an officer report brought to the City Environment, South Downs and the Sea Committee outlining options to increase the number of textile recycling points across Brighton and Hove and to increase the regularity of collection of textile recycling to reduce issues of recycling containers filling up.

90.8 The deputy mayor confirmed that the motion had been lost.

91 CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting concluded at 21:10

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2024