

# BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

## CABINET

5.00pm 5 DECEMBER 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL, NORTON ROAD, HOVE, BN3 3BQ - HTH/CC

## MINUTES

**Present:** Councillor Sankey (Chair) Taylor (Deputy Chair), Alexander, Burden, Daniel, Muten, Pumm, Robins, Rowkins and Williams

**Other Members present:** Councillors

### PART ONE

#### 105 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

##### 105a Declarations of interests

105.1 There were none.

##### 105b Exclusion of the press and public

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

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

#### 106 MINUTES

106.1 **Resolved-** That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as the correct record.

#### 107 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

107.1 The Chair provided the following communications:

I'm really pleased to see all of our cabinet members and advisers wearing their white ribbons today and I'd like to start today's meeting by reflecting on this year's 16 days of activism campaign which seeks to galvanise action for the elimination of violence against women and girls around the world. This year's campaign started on the 25<sup>th</sup> of

November and it highlights the alarming escalation of violence against women, namely the cases of intimate partner and family member femicides. In the UK 2 million women are estimated to be victims of violence perpetrated by men each year in an epidemic so serious it amounts to a national emergency. Crimes including stalking, harassment, sexual assault, and domestic violence affect 1 in 12 women in England and Wales with the number of recorded offences growing by 37% in the past five years. It is on all of us to do everything we can to address this epidemic of violence against women and girls. For our own part here in Brighton and Hove City Council we have been putting on a number of internal events, and we also have a display in the Jubilee Library which is to show our unreserved support for the White Ribbon pledge and the 16 days of activism against gender-based violence in all its forms. In addition, this display also showcases work by a victim and survivor of their experience and the impact of the abuse that they endured. We also flew the white ribbon flag from town halls last week. As a society we need to do so much more to ensure the safety of women, we need to be vocal in our objection of violence, to challenge misogynistic views, and to actively reject the culture of toxic masculinity that is sadly becoming more prevalent. For anyone who is experiencing domestic or sexual violence, stalking or abuse of any form, please remember you are not alone, help and support is available. As a council, our new strategy for ending violence against women and girls will be considered by this cabinet early in the new year.

Turning to World AIDS day, on Sunday I took my children to the positive community lunch in Kemptown, a lovely event to mark World AIDS Day. In the evening, I was able to join our Cabinet Member for Communities, Equalities, and Human Rights, Councillor Leslie Pumm, and the Mayor at a poignant remembrance event to mark World AIDS Day. Where we read the names of all those who have lost their lives too soon. This annual day is an important opportunity for everyone to come together to remember all those in our city who lost their lives to AIDS related illness. But it's also a day of celebration of significant medical advances which allow people living with HIV to do so without a fear of ever developing AIDS or passing it on. As a city we've made great progress towards our goals with new HIV diagnosis continuing to fall and we really welcome the new government's pledge to end new transmissions by 2030. We must however always ensure that we are supporting those who are still living with HIV and AIDS and we must never forget those who have lost their lives.

This week I'm pleased to say that we've published our decarbonisation pathway study which provides our city's route map to a low carbon energy system. Our Cabinet Member for Net Zero and Environmental Services, Councillor Tim Rowkins, commissioned this study when we came into administration last year when we realised that despite all of their rhetoric on climate change, the previous green administration had no practical plan for how our net zero ambitions were to be delivered. The study identifies 110 high impact projects and we're now working with partners to develop appropriate project pipelines and investment vehicles. Currently, just over 13% of households in our city live in fuel poverty. Our approach to decarbonisation will not only help us achieve net zero but will also help households reduce their energy bills. The study makes clear that the deployment of solar is key and yesterday we announced our largest roll out of solar to date. We're in the process of installing 730 solar panels at various locations around the city. Including 292 on the roof of the Prince Regent Swimming Complex. Delivering clean power and reduced costs for a particularly energy intensive building. We're also gearing up to take advantage of government initiatives

such as Great British Energy, a new publicly owned company which will deliver clean power by co-investing in leading technologies, the Solar Rooftop Revolution Strategy to deliver solar power to homes, and the Warm Homes Plan that offers grants at low interest loans to support investment in insulation, solar, and low carbon heating.

In another positive update, we have recently been able to announce that the Black Rock Reading Room is open where we committed as an administration to ensuring continual regeneration and investment in our city. So, it's great to see that the historic reading room has been restored as part of our wider Black Rock project. The reading room transformation is testament to what can be achieved through the collaboration between the public and private sectors. The result is a fantastic improved public amenity and one with spectacular sea views contributing to a rejuvenated eastern sea front.

Moving on to today's business, I'm delighted to see that the Council Plan Performance Update is on the agenda. In particular I'd like to highlight the very positive news that 23/24 saw the highest number of homes delivered, 1075 across the city in the year since 2013. This is absolutely in tune with our administration's commitment to deliver homes for everyone, to ensure a rapid increase in affordable housing options in our city. The update also shows real improvements in air quality both directly and in terms of the improved way of mapping through our real time air quality portal website. And I'm thrilled to say that we've been named the local authority with the best on street electric vehicle charging coverage in the UK outside of London. My thanks to Councillor Muten and to transport officers for all of their work on this. Moving on to City Parks Service Standards Report, which outlines our interim approach for service standards next year pending a longer-term approach to deliver on our vision for City Parks. I'm pleased that this report includes a proposal for digital transformation to improve our data and improve forward planning. This is part of a wider transformative change in this council where we're aiming to be a data lead organisation. I'm particularly pleased to see the new service standard for reducing and removing growth around trees which is not only important for safety and accessibility, but also for the look and feel of the city. The city's parks and green spaces are a key of our city's identity and we're incredibly proud that 7 of our parks received Green Flag awards this year.

Today we will also consider the Targeted Budget Management Report 7. This includes an update on our in year financial position and the actions we're taking to close what still is a large gap of £6.8 million. While we're taking doing everything we can, I'd like to start by saying that the recent news that the i360 has filed for administration leaves a large unpaid amount to the city council, which will have an impact on our overall budget going forward. I'd like to reiterate my call to the Green Group to apologise to the residents of Brighton and Hove as ultimately it will be all of us that will be paying this off for many years to come as a result of a previous Green administration's irresponsible and risk laden approach to the public finances. Our overall budget picture is very challenging, like many councils the combination of increased costs and demand for key services, such as adult social care and homelessness, outstrips our forecasted income. The approach of this Labour Government marks a significant departure from the years of austerity under the last government, but there are still no overnight fixes to the significant challenges that we face. We welcome the government's autumn statement and the new hot off the press yesterday that the Secretary of State for Education is giving more funding for thousands of new specialist places to be created in mainstream schools for pupils with SEND. The £740 million capital investment will really help

councils in this area where demand has increased dramatically in recent years. This is really good news for families and will ensure that pupils with SEND will have their needs better met. Our administration is committed to engaging all councillors, all residents, businesses and council staff in ideas for how we can balance the budget for the next financial year. Councillor Taylor and I recently attended a joint meeting of our overview and scrutiny committees last week where we answered questions on all aspects of our plans for the budget and the approach that we're taking to budget setting this time around. We've also launched an online budget simulator which enables residents to see for themselves how difficult the budget decision making process is. But also gives the opportunity for them for them to tell us which services matter most, which services they would aim to prioritise and protect, and where they would choose to reduce funding. We look forward to hearing ideas from everybody.

Also, today we will be considering a paper on school admissions. I want to acknowledge the significant interest in the proposals on school admissions, as a Labour administration we stood on a platform driven by our values of creating greater equality and fairness in all aspects of our society. Social segregation in our schools has been an issue in Brighton and Hove for many years and it's something that we're rightly seeking to address. We've already taken action through introducing our free school meals policy and our mental health pilot in schools. The pilot for year 9s has so far seen 63 young people accessing this offer with a further 14 young people to start counselling after the Christmas break. So that we fully understand the impact of our pilot, counsellors and schools are undertaking some reflective work and producing case studies to support our better understanding of the broader needs of the young people that are using this offer. This will provide greater awareness of challenges around access and inform future options. When we took over the administration of this council last year, we promised to be a listening council. We know that with big decisions like changes to school admissions, which will have a wide impact across the city, consultation is key. That's why we decided to opt to an early engagement exercise earlier this year to test some potential options. The report that cabinet is asked to consider today includes a recommendation to now move to formal consultation. This formal consultation recognises the results of the initial engagement exercise where none of the illustrative options received majority support, but where other suggestions came forward, including marginal ballots. The marginal ballots proposal would address a fundamental unfairness in our system at present, which is that some families have only one school in their catchment area whereas other have a choice of more than one school in catchment. It is those in outer lying areas that currently have no choice. Marginal ballots offers a way to help address this unfairness and ensure that some choice is offered, albeit in a more limited way to all parents in this city. We're pleased that one thing that came through the engagement exercise was that our new free school meals admissions criteria seems to have attracted increased support, and we're proud to be the first council in England to have brought this forward. As the Labour Party both locally and nationally, breaking down barriers to opportunity is core to our mission. We're also really pleased to say that Cardinal Newman School is now consulting on introducing the same free school meals policy, which doesn't automatically apply to them as a faith school. I think this demonstrates the role that this council can play in values and place leadership. Also included in the consultation that we will discuss this afternoon, is the proposal to reduce PAN, we have aimed to make this proposal in an even-handed way that includes reducing PAN across the city including Longhill, Hove Park, and Dorothy Stringer. This is in recognition of falling pupil numbers in our city. We're also proposing to increase the

number of school preferences that all families can make for their child's secondary admission, demonstrating how we want to increase and improve agency across the board. If we decide to proceed with this consultation today, we look forward to receiving feedback from families and school communities through the consultation.

And finally, today we are considering a report on our fair and inclusive action plan. Which shows the actions we're taking to diversify the council workforce, improve learning, and develop on our equality and diversity promise for all staff. Also ensuring that the lived experience of our residents is reflected in everything that we do as a council. While it's good to see progress in many areas, it's also important to be honest that we are somewhere way off where we need to be. I'm pleased that we're being transparent on our gaps in these areas and where we need to strengthen our policies in line with our people promise. I also want to acknowledge the incredible work of our Trade Unions and our staff forums for their advocacy which aims to ensure that our workplaces are not just diverse but also truly inclusive. Women are overrepresented in all levels at this council, LGBT staff are also well represented, and the percentage of BME, disabled, and all other staff in the council workforce continues to increase I'm pleased to say. But it's still not representative of the economically active communities that we serve in the city. So, I'm pleased that we're considering this report today and I'm also pleased that the paper considers proposals for the nucleation of socioeconomic data which would be a first for this council.

## **108 CALL OVER**

108.1 All items on the agenda were reserved for discussion.

## **109 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

### **(C) Deputations**

#### **1) Council's analysis of public responses to the engagement exercise on secondary school admissions**

109.1 Cabinet considered a deputation that made observations on the engagement exercise on secondary school admissions arrangements.

109.2 Councillor Taylor provided the following response:

Thank you, Mark, for your deputation and also your work in representing the Parent Support Group. I realise you probably don't want to be doing that, but you've obviously been doing a lot of work with that group and presenting views.

I'll start by, as the chair says, responding to the deputation as written. Many of the other issues we will review substantially when we get to the report. The deputation as written was talking about the presentation and content of the summary of the engagement exercise as we published. I think, to answer that broadly, my sense from parents, both in terms of email discussion and Facebook comments, is that broadly speaking they accepted that the engagement output that we published was fairly representative of views. We published both a summary of the survey result and then we also published a summary of the minutes of the four, I think, public meetings that were held; public meetings of which I attended and listened to all of the content. I think we've been

reasonably transparent as to the level of opposition and concerns to elements of those proposals. That said, further information has been published in recent days, including some obviously anonymised actual detail of the comments that came through in the engagement exercise and the meetings as that's now on the website and partly answers really the thrust of this deputation in terms of being transparent on the feedback that came through.

In terms of the academic evidence, again referenced in the deputation as written, what we published were the things that were submitted proactively to the engagement exercise, including from Professor Dennett, Professor Gorard and other bits of evidence that came through alongside the consultation result. I think we've been reasonably transparent. I think people are fairly clear as to what that engagement exercise told us.

In terms of the next steps, that's what we'll be substantively discussing today in the report, including how we conduct the future consultation. But thank you again for your deputation.

109.3 **Resolved-** That Cabinet note the deputation.

## 2) **Class Divide**

109.4 Cabinet considered a deputation that made observations on the proposals for secondary school admissions arrangements.

109.5 Councillor Taylor provided the following response:

Thank you, Carlie, for your deputation and for your work which goes long before this engagement exercise or, indeed, before we introduced the Free School Meals policy last year.

I was going to say it's laudable work, but really it's inspiring work that you and other people at Class Divide have been doing to shine a light on the issues that many of us were aware of in the city, but haven't always been talked about and properly engaged with, so thank you.

Thank you for the content of your deputation. I think there's also something that we need to say that has come out of the engagement, which is that many of the parents that are concerned with the proposals, both in the engagement and now moving into potentially consultation if agreed tonight, have also really engaged with the issue and shown genuine care and compassion for everyone in the city. They don't want to see the gap in attainment that we see and they don't want to see the inequalities more broadly in the city, and I've been really impressed and pleased and happy that parts of the conversation have gone in that direction.

So now what we have to do is take forward a proposal that navigates the issue and brings the city with us. But as you say, that may involve some difficult decisions and may not please every single parent or family. I'm confident we can do that in the next stage by having a real consultation, engaging in the issues and the consequences of what the proposals are, including not having unintended consequences, which is what is being flagged by Mark and Adam and others. That's really important and that's what we will be doing. I know some people feel that this is rushed but, as you say Carlie, in a sense the issues are so important that we have to show some urgency in tackling them and we now have an 8-week statutory consultation to consider all those issues. But thank you again for your deputation.

109.6 **Resolved-** That Cabinet note the deputation.

## 110 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS

### (b) Members Questions

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

#### 1) Councillor Meadows- School Admission Arrangements 2026-27

##### **Response from Councillor Taylor:**

As with our current published arrangements, there is no guarantee that children living in the catchment area will gain a catchment area school although the vast majority do. It is possible that under current and proposed arrangements that there are children who are applying for a place under the 'living in the catchment area' priority and do not gain a place. Where that child then goes to secondary school will depend on other preferences they have made, or the availability of the next nearest school with space should they need to have a place directed. The proposed PAN changes are in recognition of the falling pupil numbers in the city and the council's expressed desire to ensure all secondary schools in the city remain viable and able to thrive.

#### 2) Councillor Meadows - School Admission Arrangements 2026-27

##### **Response from Councillor Taylor:**

It is proposed that the largest size of a community secondary school in the city will be 300 pupils each year so that means a change to the PAN of Dorothy Stringer and Blatchington Mill schools. As with our current published arrangements, there is no guarantee that children living in the catchment area will gain a catchment area school although the vast majority do. It is possible that under current and proposed arrangements that there are children who are applying for a place under the 'living in the catchment area' priority and do not gain a place. Where that child then goes to secondary school will depend on other preferences they have made, or the availability of the next nearest school with space should they need to have a place directed. The proposed PAN changes are in recognition of the falling pupil numbers in the city and the council's expressed desire to ensure all secondary schools in the city remain viable and able to thrive.

#### 3) Councillor Meadows- School Admission Arrangements 2026-27

##### **Response from Councillor Taylor:**

There are areas of deprivation within the catchment areas of the other schools with proposed PAN reductions too. However, in response to this point, Longhill High School has long seen an intake that doesn't match its PAN. In order to allow the school the ability to accurate forecast staffing and curriculum needs it is the council's view that it is appropriate to formally reduce the schools' PAN. The proposed PAN reductions across

all three schools are in recognition of the falling pupil numbers in the city and the council's expressed desire to ensure all secondary schools in the city remain viable and able to thrive.

**4) Councillor Meadows- School Admission Arrangements 2026-27**

**Response from Councillor Taylor:**

Catchment areas remain an important element of secondary school admission arrangements in the city, providing the majority of parents/carers with a level of certainty about which school their child will likely transition to for their secondary education. How many places are taken via other admissions criteria will depend on the preferences parents express.

**5) Councillor Meadows- School Admission Arrangements 2026-27**

**Response from Councillor Taylor:**

We are aware of calls to wait for the full impact of the FSM priority to be understood before advancing these proposals. It is worth noting that these proposals won't come into effect until children are starting in year 7 in September 2026, nearly two years away. The issue of falling pupil numbers and of children in some areas of the city not achieving their potential is an important priority. We have taken a decision to anticipate the rise in FSM eligibility in the city and provide families with a certainty about the percentage of places available under this category.

**6) Councillor Meadows- School Admission Arrangements 2026-27**

**Response from Councillor Taylor:**

Proposed PAN reductions are based on a forecast data approach which had been proved to be highly accurate over many years. We know that the impact of falling pupil numbers will be felt across the city as a whole and therefore feel it appropriate to take PAN reductions across different areas. We are proposing that community secondary schools will not be larger than 300 places as part of a coordinated approach to managing the drop in pupil numbers.

**7) Councillor Meadows- School Admission Arrangements 2026-27**

**Response from Councillor Taylor:**

We are absolutely and categorically not indicating a loss of confidence in any of our schools – quite the opposite. We are proposing to consult on a range of measures that aim to ensure viability of all schools, whilst increasing fairness and equality in admissions.

**8) Councillor Meadows- School Admission Arrangements 2026-27**

**Response from Councillor Taylor:**

You are right in highlighting that the council has a responsibility to ensure that the admission arrangements it is responsible for are clear and understandable. We are proposing a public consultation which will help us understand how well the communities in Brighton & Hove understand the proposed arrangements. We are confident that what we propose will be understood and with any change the Council will undertake to explain what is different and what it means to people in the materials published to support the school admission process.

**9) Councillor McNair- City Parks Service Standards 2025/26**

**Response from Councillor Robins:**

The majority of verges across the City will be cut 6 times a year. I have asked the team to ensure those verges of high biodiversity value continue to be managed for biodiversity so they will not be cut 6 times a year, I have also asked them to look for suitable sites to expand this but these will not be narrow verges where the grass obstructs the footpath. The verges were not cut when they should have been this year in the Hove Park area however this was more than 2 cuts and in the Patcham and Hollingbury area they were cut 6 times.

**10) Councillor McNair- City Parks Service Standards 2025/26**

**Response from Councillor Robins:**

The lawn graves, which to be clear are in Hove Cemetery North, Bear Road Cemetery and Lawn Memorial [Woodingdean] Cemetery will be cut 10 times next year.

**11) Councillor Hill- School Admission Arrangements 2026-27**

**Response from Councillor Taylor:**

Thank you, Councillor Hill. A really important question and I largely agree with you. I'm always disappointed in the consultations that we do that we don't get a perfect representation of the make-up of the city. We know as a council, and we know as public bodies, that there are always communities that aren't always perfectly represented in the way that we consult.

What we are intending to do is do a broader range of meetings in the next stage of the consultation, including meetings in communities. I'm also in contact with a number of our third-sector partners who have agreed to try and help facilitate some of that engagement, including on their premises and with their service users. So we are trying to really meet exactly what you're getting at and I think we will have to admit that the council is not perfect at engaging everyone in consultation.

On the specific first point you raise about younger parents under 35 being underrepresented, it's an interesting point. I do wonder whether that might partly represent the fact that we know people are having children older in life. If you think about the parents and children that are particularly interested in this conversation, it will often be around those that are in years three, four and five and so parents are, perhaps getting on average, older than 35 for that age of children. But it's an interesting question and on all those groups that are mentioned, yes we want to try and do better at engaging those groups.

**12) Councillor Pickett- City Parks Service Standards 2025/26****Response from Councillor Robins:**

This administration is committed to protecting the city's biodiversity. Rather than making blanket decisions across the whole City which cause residents inconvenience, are hard to manage and in extreme weather could create a health and safety issue, we propose to expand and enhance the wilder verges project. This will make more and better natural spaces for wildlife to thrive, that works better for residents and keeps the majority of highway verges cut many of which are narrow and adjoining pavements.

**13) Councillor Pickett- City Parks Service Standards 2025/26****Response from Councillor Robins:**

I'll pick up on a couple of points there. Firstly, the 'number of years ago' you talk about was three years ago, and it was always agreed that we would review this after three years. So we're at the point of reviewing that, we always said we would. We're not doing this out of a sense of bloody mindedness or anything.

Secondly we're not really retuning to the former policy. What we're doing is looking to enhance spaces where we can actually make a difference to wildlife, and we want to protect and enhance natural habitats whilst also ensuring that our streets and highways are safe, well managed and tended.

Many Councils across the country are dealing with the same situation and we are in ongoing conversations with them to learn about ways of approaching this. I think one of the things that's come out of this is that truly valuable wildlife habitats develop over a number of years and should be permanent, not just transient and there for a month then cut away again. I think that's our approach this time, and again, thanks very much for your question and for raising the point with us.

**14) Councillor McLeay- School Admission Arrangements 2026-27****Response from Councillor Taylor:**

It's a really good question and, as you say, it was the suggestion of Dr Ellen Greaves that perhaps we just wait and see the impact of the Free School Meals Policy. I think it's important to say that we should be able to, as Officers and Members, have sight of that data in advance of making any decisions. The tricky bit is that we may not be able to publish it publicly because there are rules around what can be published before national offer day that might imply communicating places. But yes, we should be able to have a pretty good grip of how that policy has worked in the current admissions year to inform what we want to do as a result of the consultation if agreed today, which as I say is a consultation and we may choose to do some of the things, all of the things, none of the things that are currently proposed.

**15) Councillor McLeay- School Admission Arrangements 2026-27****Response from Councillor Taylor:**

Thank you for your question. It's important to state that in the current model, and indeed every other previous model of catchments, the Council has always been clear that from the point we introduced catchments in 2007, there is no guarantee for any parent to get a place at a specific school, including within catchment. Indeed, we have seen in previous years families not securing a place within catchment based on the admissions and the preferences and the demographics of that particular year.

However, clearly the concern being expressed by some parents is: do the proposals lead to a much higher, and possibly intolerable, amount of people not getting places within catchment? That's what we're going to have to consider, including the transport element.

You're absolutely right to say that there are many people who are on low incomes and, I would argue, living with a very low amount of disposable income, who are not on free school meals. So that's an important consideration as we weigh it all up.

It is also important to say that we are planning to, and were anyway, going to review our Home to School transport policy early in the new year which will be good timing, versus these school admissions proposals because we can layer on the learning from the school admissions to set our Home to School transport policy in the new year.

**16) Councillor Sykes- TBM Month 7**

**Response from Councillor Taylor:**

Thanks, Councillor Sykes. It's obviously an important question and neither of us wants to see a low council tax collection rate or a deficit. As you sort of intimated, we think a big driver of that is really the cost of living in the city: high rental markets, high mortgage costs because property prices are high post-pandemic etc in terms of cost of living. I think it's also worth noting that, I understand from officers, that we have seen similar positions throughout the last 20 years. Post-financial crash we had an increased deficit, post-pandemic we had a bit of a spike in deficit and collection rates, and so to an extent it's somewhat to be expected in line with the overall economic conditions.

However, to your question on what we're thinking about in terms of that, we did announce in October that we're going to be reviewing our corporate debt policy which sets out our approach to collection and recovery of debt and arrears and we'll bring back a report to Cabinet in February.

We'll be moving towards a pre-enforcement preventative approach and in some senses we'll be leading the way nationally. Not this administration, but previous administrations have been leading the way nationally on that sort of pre-enforcement preventative approach for some years. We'll explore how we can work to improve this further with partners and other advice agencies to strengthen that approach, particularly as we know that helping people spread and manage debt, access welfare benefits they may be due but not aware of, or provide financial coaching an advice, has a more sustained effect than allowing the debt to grow unchecked. So those are the kinds of things we will need to consider, and as I say we'll bring it back in February for consideration.

**17) Councillor Fowler- School Admission Arrangements**

**Response from Councillor Robins:**

Thank you Councillor Fowler. I know you've been having extensive discussion with your residents and I know they bring it to your surgeries and contact you and, obviously, well done for bringing questions on their behalf to Cabinet.

In short, yes it will be a genuine engagement. We will genuinely consider these issues and consider whether the proposals have struck the right balance. Clearly you're going to continue to advocate for your residents in that discussion, and we will certainly consider it deeply and listen to the feedback that we get in the consultation, and factor that all in with anything that we decide to take forward.

## 111 MATTERS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE

There were none.

## 112 REPRESENTATIONS FROM OPPOSITION MEMBERS

112.1 Cabinet received a representation from Councillor Hill on Item 113: School Admission Arrangements 2026-27.

112.2 Cabinet received a representation from Councillor Pickett on Item 114: City Parks Service Standards 2025-26.

## 113 SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2026-27

113.1 Cabinet considered a report that detailed the proposed school admission arrangements for the academic year 2026-27 for the schools in the city where the council was the admission authority.

113.2 Councillor Taylor moved a motion to amend the recommendations as shown in bold italics and as struckthrough below:

2.3 Cabinet agrees to consult on making a change to the admission priorities for secondary schools to include a change in the application of a criteria for pupils with Free School Meals and the introduction of a criteria for pupils outside the catchment area. ***The application of the Free School Meals priorities should align with the intention of allowing additional access to pupils on Free School Meals where a school would otherwise not meet the city-wide average figure for their overall intake.*** The proposed admission arrangements are detailed below and in Appendix 5.

### 2.9 Cabinet agrees to amend paragraph 5.9 to read:

5.9 The scheduling of public meetings will include:

- ~~Monday 9 December – Online 18:00 – 19:30~~
- Thursday 12 December – Online 10:00 – 11:30
- Tuesday 7 January – In-person 18:00 – 19:30, Hove Town Hall (TBC)
- Saturday 11 January – In-person 10:30 – 12:00, Jubilee Library
- (TBC)

Further meetings will take place and the details for these will be

available when the public consultation launches on 6 December 2024.

113.3 Councillor Daniel formally seconded the motion.

113.4 Councillor Rowkins, Taylor, Muten, Sankey, Alexander and Robins asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.

113.5 The Chair then put the motion to the vote that passed.

113.6 The Chair then put the recommendations as amended to the vote that were agreed.

**113.7 Resolved-**

- 1) Cabinet agrees to make no changes to the Council's admission arrangements other than the proposed changes listed below.
- 2) Cabinet agrees to consult upon a change to the Published Admission number (PAN) of Rudyard Kipling Primary School from 30 pupils to 45 pupils.
- 3) Cabinet agrees to consult on making a change to the admission priorities for secondary schools to include a change in the application of a criteria for pupils with Free School Meals and the introduction of a criteria for pupils outside the catchment area. The application of the Free School Meals priorities should align with the intention of allowing additional access to pupils on Free School Meals where a school would otherwise not meet the city-wide average figure for their overall intake. The proposed admission arrangements are detailed below and in Appendix 5.
- 4) Cabinet agrees to consult upon a change to the PAN of Longhill High School from 270 pupils to 210 pupils, Blatchington Mill School from 330 pupils to 300 pupils and Dorothy Stringer School from 330 pupils to 300 pupils. The proposed PANs are detailed below and in Appendix 1.
- 5) Cabinet agrees to consult on making changes to the catchment area of Longhill High School and the catchment area of Dorothy Stringer and Varndean schools. The proposed admission arrangements are detailed below and in Appendix 5.
- 6) Cabinet agrees to consult on increasing the number of preferences that families can make from three to four.
- 7) Cabinet agrees to consult on the "relevant area" remaining the same. The "relevant area" is the area which describes the geographical area of consultation that any school proposing a change to admission arrangements must use. This is currently defined as the area within the city boundary.
- 8) Cabinet agrees to make the changes to the wording of the admission arrangements for 2026/27 as advised by the Schools Adjudicator in recent written decisions, namely how a pupil's main address is determined if they live at more than one address, how parents apply for admission out of the usual year group and updated notes and the definition of

the random allocation process. These changes will ensure the requirements of the School Admissions Code are met. Admission arrangements are detailed in Appendix 5.

9) Cabinet agrees to amend paragraph 5.9 to read:

5.9 The scheduling of public meetings will include:

- Thursday 12 December – Online 10:00 – 11:30
- Tuesday 7 January – In-person 18:00 – 19:30, Hove Town Hall (TBC)
- Saturday 11 January – In-person 10:30 – 12:00, Jubilee Library
- (TBC)

Further meetings will take place and the details for these will be available when the public consultation launches on 6 December 2024.

#### **114 CITY PARKS SERVICE STANDARDS 2025/26**

114.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought approval for revised interim approach to key City Parks service standards for 2025/26.

114.2 Councillors Pumm, Muten, Robinson, Alexander, Rowkins and Sankey asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.

#### **114.3 Resolved-**

- 1) Cabinet approves the proposed interim approach to service standards for 2025/26 as set out in sections 3.15– 3.35, and supports the wider improvements as set out in sections 3.36-3.45.
- 2) Cabinet delegates authority to the Corporate Director- City Services to procure the works referenced in sections 3.29-3.32 of the report where budget can be allocated from current core budgets.
- 3) Cabinet notes the need for additional budget to deliver to the tree basal works, additional GIS mapping works and the development of a proactive communications campaign as referenced in sections 3.28, 3.42 and 4.3 of the report.
- 4) Cabinet notes that a further report will be brought to Cabinet to outline the longer-term approach to Cityparks Vision and delivery in 2025.

The meeting adjourned at 18:55 and reconvened at 19:10

#### **115 COUNCIL PLAN PERFORMANCE UPDATE**

115.1 Cabinet considered a report that provided an update in relation to delivering the Council Plan in 2024/25.

115.2 Councillors Williams, Robins, Alexander, Muten, Rowkins and Sankey asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.

**115.3 Resolved-**

- 1) Cabinet notes the progress made in relation to delivering the Council Plan in 2024/25 as outlined in section 3 and with full details in appendix 1.
- 2) Cabinet notes current strategic risks, tabled in section 4, which are managed in line with the Risk Management Framework (appendix 2). Full details of strategic risks are provided in appendix 3.

**116 TARGETED BUDGET MANAGEMENT (TBM) 2023/24: MONTH 7 (OCTOBER)**

116.1 Cabinet considered a report that set out an indication of forecast risks as at Month 7 on the council's revenue and capital budgets for the financial year 2024/25.

**116.2 Resolved-**

- 1) Cabinet notes the forecast risk position for the General Fund, which indicates a potential forecast overspend risk of £6.808m.
- 2) Cabinet notes the forecast outturn includes a forecast overspend risk of £1.735m on the NHS managed Section 75 services.
- 3) Cabinet notes the forecast breakeven position for the separate Housing Revenue Account (HRA).
- 4) Cabinet notes the forecast overspend risk for the ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant, which is an overspend of £1.158m.
- 5) Cabinet notes the forecast position on the Capital Programme which is an underspend variance of £1.296m.
- 6) Cabinet approves the capital budget variations and re-profiling requests set out in Appendix 6.
- 7) Cabinet notes the Treasury Management mid-year review 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 7.

**117 FAIR AND INCLUSIVE UPDATE INCLUDING PAY GAP REPORTS**

117.1 Cabinet considered a report that set out a Fair and inclusive Action Plan update including workforce equalities and pay gap reports.

117.2 Councillors Sankey, Williams and Pumm asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.

**117.3 Resolved-**

- 1) That Cabinet notes the report and progress made to date.

- 2) That Cabinet agrees the data-driven approach to prioritise actions and allocate resource where there is greatest need, as set out in the report, for example, to improve the experiences of disabled staff and better understand the impacts of different intersecting identities.
- 3) That Cabinet notes the proposal set out at paragraph 3.13 to explore the collation of socio-economic background data to provide further insight ahead of the government's proposal to enact the socio-economic duty of Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010.

The meeting concluded at 7.50pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of