

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CABINET

2.00pm 23 APRIL 2026

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

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

PART ONE

159 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

159a Declarations of interests

136.1 There were none.

159b Exclusion of the press and public

159.2 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.

160 MINUTES

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

161 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

161.1 The Chair provided the following Communications:

Since we last met as a Cabinet, we have continued to focus on what matters most in this city, delivering better outcomes for the people of Brighton and Hove, using our resources well, and working with partners to shape a stronger, fairer and more sustainable city. Just in the last month, among many other things, we've opened the Weller Youth Centre in Hangleton, we've opened the first covered paddle courts in the city, up at Withdean. We have launched our first EV double-decker bus fleet, along with our partners at Brighton and Hove Buses, with 16 new electric buses, electrifying the number 7 route. And we have reopened a refurbished public toilet at Victoria Park in Portslade.

We've been on site at the former Sackville Road Trading Estate, where thanks to past decisions of this Cabinet, we are delivering 306 affordable new homes, including council homes, one, two, three and four bed properties. And last week I had my leader surgery in beautiful Moulsecoomb & Bevendean with Ward Councillors Evans and Taylor, meeting residents and having a look at our other big construction site currently, the building of Moulsecoomb Hub which is delivering hundreds more council and affordable homes as well as new community facilities. This month we have also established the Sussex and Brighton Mayoral Authority, a really historic milestone for our city, following in the footsteps of successful and growing cities like London, Manchester and Liverpool, giving us access to millions of pounds more of funding from central government, which will start straight away, and crucially putting power back into local hands. We've secured more than 9 million pounds of additional government funding to support council housing and temporary accommodation in the city, which is a really significant step for us in responding to housing pressures and improving things for our residents that need housing support. And we've settled 11 more residents into women's-only council-owned temporary accommodation, something that our Labour Council has spearheaded after listening to women's experiences.

Today we'll be discussing a new private sector housing enforcement policy to strengthen this council's ability to act against poor housing conditions in the city and rogue landlords preventing illegal evictions and ensuring that every resident in our city has a safe and decent place to live. We're proud of our Labour government's Renters Rights Act which is very soon to come into force. Nowhere in this country is that Act more important, where the proportion of people privately renting is one of the highest in Brighton & Hove anywhere in the UK and which has risen in the past 10 years. Housing remains one of our most pressing challenges and one of the priorities of this Labour Council, which is why today we are bringing forward the Temporary Accommodation Transformation programme report where we will consider making a decisive shift towards housing sustainability, reducing reliance on costly short-term provision and trying to improve outcomes for our residents who need secure long-term homes. I recognise that the use of 20% of council stock for temporary accommodation over the next year

will have an impact on households that are on our housing register, which is why we've listened carefully to the feedback from the consultation and sought to strike a fair balance to all those currently in an inadequate accommodation, and which is why the house building that I referred to earlier on is so urgent.

Taken together with our asset strategy, which we're also considering today, which sets out how we will manage the council's property portfolio in the months to come. We are supporting more housing delivery, ensuring that our assets are working harder for our residents and for our city's future.

Today, we'll also be discussing and deciding whether to move ahead with an e-scooter trial for Brighton and Hove, potentially another practical step towards cleaner, more accessible travel choices that support our climate goals while keeping safety and public confidence at the forefront of our decision making. This trial can ensure that we approach e-scooters in a sensible, regulated and managed way, while seeking to improve air quality across the city, reduce congestion and enable residents to move around more easily and more quickly. We are a forward-looking city and we must always look to embrace new modes of transport that meet our residents' objectives.

From sustainable transport to community wellbeing, also on the agenda is one of my favourite projects, the King Alfred Leisure Centre regeneration, which represents a major strategic opportunity for the west of the city, delivering public value through

modern leisure facilities, improved health and wellbeing support and wider regeneration benefits. I couldn't be prouder of the pace we are now working at to deliver this project and in fact, the report that we're bringing today is evidence that we are moving ahead of schedule because we know that under the years of no overall control, under the Green and Tory-led minority administrations, this project for King Alfred ran aground and got buried in the long grass. We won't be distracted in our mission to deliver a new leisure centre in the west of the city and we certainly won't be distracted by campaigns that twist the truth by political actors that don't rely on having high quality public leisure facilities available.

Reflecting on these five significant reports that we are now due to discuss, I will say this. No one can ever accuse this Labour Council that I lead of not taking action on the most pressing and urgent issues that our city faces.

We aim to move fast and fix things, improve lives and get better outcomes for our residents. Other parties moan and object to progress or clutch their pearls and say that the council should sit on its asset for sentimentality's sake. We say no. We are here and our public assets are here, to serve the people of this city and serve them, we will.

162 CALL OVER

162.1 All items on the agenda were reserved for discussion.

163 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

(b) Public Questions

1) The King Alfred Leisure Centre Regeneration Project

163.1 On behalf of Diane Montgomery, Carol Wilson read the following question:

After detailed review, it appears that the current proposal conflicts with the City Plan, the Sports Facilities Investment Plan, the Stakeholder Engagement Report, and the Urban Design Framework.

Given this, will the Council grant permission for a full independent structural inspection of the existing building to be undertaken, and agree to pause any demolition, funding, or enabling works prior to the grant of planning permission and until the findings are completed and published?

We would be willing to fund or facilitate this independently, subject to access being granted. This would ensure that any final decision is based on a complete and transparent evidence base.

163.2 Councillor Robins provided the following reply:

Thank you very much and thanks for the question. To be clear, the King Alfred project does not conflict with the City Plan Sports Facility Investment Plan or any other documents cited. As explained at previous Cabinet meetings, the condition survey of the existing facility has been completed, as well as a wider assessment of the suitability of the existing facility to meet current and future needs.

All of that work informed the Green Book business case, the key findings of which were summarised in the July 2024 Cabinet paper. The business case, the condition and condition survey were examined in detail by the cross-party scrutiny committee who

agreed with the paper's recommendation that refurbishment was neither practical nor represented a viable investment option.

That is explained in the Cabinet papers, with details provided in Appendix One of that paper.

2) **Asset Strategy**

163.3 Malcolm Spencer read the following question:

Section 3.21 states that the land is to be sold for residential development and section 3.20 states that there are issues with access. In light of the ongoing issues with planning application BH2025/01597 (the non council owned part of the site) where it is being argued that access to this site does not meet the National Planning Framework requirements for safe accessibility for all, how can the council justify a proposal to create a situation where more people will need to access this site?

163.4 Councillor Taylor provided the following reply:

Thank you, Malcolm, for your question, for coming in. And from one Ovingdean to another, as I grew up in Ovingdean and know very well, although I no longer live there. I just wanted to take you through the response to your question. First of all, I won't comment on a live planning application, because that's tricky to do and I'm not on Planning Committee, and that's for that to be worked through, although, as you say and imply, access and accessibility are an important part of the overall planning framework and the consideration of any individual site. We should say that this site is allocated in the City Plan for residential development.

In terms of what this report is doing, it is, as you say, recommending for the council as landowner to dispose to try and enable residential development. However, the next stages of that and the working through of any proposal and then any planning application will be for the person that acquires the site, not for the council themselves.

And how they address that, all the different planning issues and considerations, including access, will obviously go through the full planning process and that's where they will be aired out.

So, I get the thrust of your question, but really, they are sort of two distinct processes. There's us choosing to dispose of it because of all the reasons set out in the report and because it is allocated for residential development. And then there's any future residential development, which will go through the separate planning process.

164 **ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS**

164.1 A copy of the questions received was circulated ahead of the meeting. Responses provided both at the meeting and in writing are as follows:

1) **Councillor Meadows - E-scooter trial consultation report**

Does the e-scooter trial run until May 2028 or 30 September 2029? There are different dates in paragraphs 2.3 and 3.3.

Response: Cllr Muten

Thank you for your question, Cllr Meadows.

The trial would ideally run until the end of the proposed contract extension for the operator, which is 30 September 2029. The legal basis for the trials are Vehicle special orders granted under section 44 of the Road Traffic Act. However, the government is planning to bring forward new legislation to regulate new forms of so-called 'Low-speed zero emission vehicles'. If this new bill is included in the King's speech next month, legislation to regulate e-scooters, e-bikes and e-mopeds could become law by May 2028. The Dept. for Transport wants ministers at the time to be able to decide whether a further extension to e-scooter trials is needed or not. If the new regulations are in force by May 2028, it is still possible that Beryl's contract to provide e-scooters could continue until the end of September 2029, otherwise, the expected end of the proposed trial is May 2028.

2) **Councillor McNair - E-scooter trial consultation report**

How can trialling e-scooters align with the council's aim of 'a fair and inclusive city where people feel safe and welcome' when this council is encouraging more e-scooters to terrorise the elderly and infirm by in effect encouraging e-scooters which will inevitably be ridden on pavements?

Response: Cllr Muten

Firstly, may I call out and express concern about the divisive tone of your question and suggest such association with terrorism is completely unacceptable. If any such behaviour is observed or reported, it should be immediately reported to Sussex Police. Riding of private e-scooters on highways including pathways in our city is illegal and will continue to be so under the proposed e-scooter trial. Again, any reports of their use should be reported to Sussex Police.

Our proposed highly regulated legal e-scooter trial proposes several safeguards in vehicle design and trial regulation to prevent excessive speed and pavement riding, two of the things vulnerable pedestrians tell us concern them the most. Each e-scooter will be fitted with geofenced technology which can be set up to prevent their use on pavements and in other defined 'no-go' zones. Timed and 24-hour 'No go zones' and 'go-slow zones' and nighttime curfews will further reduce potential hazard, and these measures have worked in other UK schemes. Furthermore, we will monitor and review these arrangements during the first six months of the trial with the safety of all.

3) **Councillor Meadows - E-scooter trial consultation report**

The part 2 of this report contains a full breakdown of costs and implications with the current provider. Why can't we as councillors and residents know the financial implications of this scheme?

Response: Cllr Muten

Thank you for your question, Cllr Meadows.

The detailed breakdown of costs and contractual implications is commercially sensitive and subject to confidentiality provisions within the existing contract. The inclusion of

scooters within the current Beryl scheme would significantly increase the projected financial return to the Council.

While Cabinet Members have full access to the detailed information in order to inform their decision, to publish this confidential commercially sensitive material would risk undermining the commercial relationship the Council has with the contractor and potentially lead to legal challenge.

4) Councillor Meadows - E-scooter trial consultation report

Is there a concern that due to the increasing cost of bus travel for young people, e-scooters will replace bus travel for many despite it being safer and possibly more environmentally friendly?

Response: Cllr Muten

Thank you for your question, Cllr Meadows.

The tariffs proposed are benchmarked against bus fares but there is no intention to compete for younger customers with the bus companies. Scooters are only available to people who hold a provisional or full drivers' licence. Scooter tariffs over longer distance will not be competitive with discounted passes and fares for students and young people. We are looking at ways to lower bus fares for young people and low-income households. We wish to encourage public transport and micromobility and active travel options and reduce car journeys as much as possible within Brighton & Hove.

5) Councillor McNair - E-scooter trial consultation report

Are these e-scooters made in the UK or shipped from overseas?

Response: Cllr Muten

Thank you, Cllr McNair, for your question.

The majority of scooter parts are shipped from overseas and assembled in the UK. The controller units are made in this country. The e-scooter has had a full lifecycle impact assessment undertaken which takes account of shipping emissions. The methodology is an accredited approach, assessed by 'BCorp' and Science Based Target Initiative.

6) Councillor McNair - E-scooter trial consultation report

Why is it a three-strike sanctions process instead of one-strike? Who is there to enforce the three-strike rule?

Response: Cllr Muten

Thank you for your question, Cllr McNair.

A three-strike rule gives riders a fair warning of the need to modify their behaviour and reduces the likelihood of malicious reporting impacting on individuals. The operator enforces the rules by sending warnings to the account holder identified through the licence plate and will suspend the account preventing future access if these are ignored.

7) Councillor McNair - E-scooter trial consultation report

Can the council guarantee Sussex police will be visible in stopping illegal or dangerous e-scooters? How else will the scheme be policed? Will there be regular meetings between the council and police to exchange updates on the scheme's progress?

Response: Cllr Muten

Thank you for your question, Cllr McNair.

The Council already works closely with Sussex Police's Roads Policing Unit and Neighbourhood Policing teams regarding the illegal or dangerous use of e-scooters. The police have been consulted from the beginning, and we will continue with regular meetings and updates during the trial. We will proactively share trial data to support the targeting of any additional guidance or enforcement activity needed, and the Council has already adjusted proposals to address important issues raised by the police. Any decision on enforcement activity is a matter for the Police, who will balance this against other road safety enforcement priorities which present greater harm, such as speeding, seatbelt compliance, phone use while driving and driving while intoxicated.

8) Councillor Meadows - E-scooter trial consultation report

Why aren't helmets being made mandatory?

Response: Cllr Muten

Thank you for your question, Cllr Meadows.

Helmets are not currently mandatory under the UK Highway Code. Working with our trusted partner Beryl, the proposed trial sets out to encourage and incentivise riders to wear helmets. There will be a particular focus on incentivising and promoting helmet use to the 18-24 age group, who are least likely to wear them. Through such good practice incentives and promotions, wider use of helmets for all those on two wheels may also take place.

9) Councillor Meadows - E-scooter trial consultation report

There were significant concerns about safety, insurance, and helmets among other issues. It may seem to some residents that this scheme was going to be rolled out no matter what the result of the consultation was. What reassurance can residents have that this scheme will be paused or stopped if concerns are realised and insurmountable?

Response: Cllr Muten

Thank you for your question, Cllr Meadows.

The Council has listened carefully to the concerns raised during the consultation and put additional measures in place where these are practical and possible. The trial will be closely monitored and adjusted if significant additional concerns are realised. None of the UK trials have been stopped due to safety concerns, though some have been paused or withdrawn for commercial reasons. If an insurmountable problem arises, we will of course suspend the trial.

Helmets are not a legal requirement but will be incentivised and promoted. Third party insurance is not a legal requirement either, but Beryl will signpost advice to riders on additional cover options from micro-mobility organisations. Beryl's own insurance requirements mean that the minimum age requirement will be 18+ , not 17+ as previously stated. The sign-up requirement of evidence of a provisional or full driver's licence remains.

10) Councillor Meadows - King Alfred Leisure Centre Regeneration Project

Paragraph 2.3 agrees to bring forward the allocation of £3.5m from previously agreed project capital budget to fund these works up to November 2026. How long will this funding last and how much more will the council need to borrow to complete just the King Alfred site?

Response: Cllr Robins

The £3.5million is part of the previously agreed budget of £65million and is not additional funding, and therefore no extra borrowing is anticipated. It represents the next instalment of funding to take the project up to November 2026, and as explained in the paper, will fund demolition and enabling works. We will come back to Cabinet in the Autumn to request the allocation of funding from the agreed budget to take the project forward beyond November 2026.

11) Councillor Meadows - King Alfred Leisure Centre Regeneration Project

Paragraph 3.1 reads: At its meeting on 25 September 2025, Cabinet approved recommendations to (i) agree to the design team progressing the King Alfred design proposals up to the submission of the planning application, (ii) agree the overall project budget of £65m, (iii) agree to increase the initial allocation to £5m for professional fees and surveys, and (iv) approve the demolition of the redundant parts of the site. What is the cost of the demolition? Is this part of the £5m? Where did the £5m funding come from?

Response: Cllr Muten

The £5m cited in the paper comprises the £2.7million agreed at the July 2024 cabinet meeting together with the £2.3million agreed at September 2025 cabinet meeting. The £5million was initially all designated for design work, surveys, and associated fees. However, because the project has progressed at an accelerated pace, some of the £5m has been used for the early enabling works including soft strip and asbestos removal works in the disused bowling alley. The main demolition and other enabling works, along with other fees and survey costs, will be funded from the £3.5million sought in this cabinet paper.

12) Councillor Meadows - Temporary Accommodation - Transformation for Financial Sustainability

Would the council agree that using council housing for temporary accommodation is unfair to those who are on the housing register waiting for a home? What will be done to ensure those with disabilities and other vulnerable future tenants will be able to get

their lives back on track too? Who will take priority? - those from outside the city or those already on the waiting list?

Response: Cllr Williams

We recognise the concerns of people waiting for social housing in the city and very real sense of frustration from people who have often been waiting a long time for a permanent home.

The council's proposed use of some council-owned homes as temporary accommodation is not a move away from our commitment to these households, but a time-limited response to acute homelessness pressures, that are particularly impacting families with children, and escalating costs of providing temporary accommodation. Over the extended period, we anticipate that no more than around 20% of council-owned homes becoming available for letting would be used as temporary accommodation at any one time.

Importantly, specific exemptions apply, including the exclusion of mobility-adapted and other specialist properties, to protect households with disabilities and more complex needs on the housing register.

Outside of this, decisions to allocate social homes will continue to be based on need, in line with the Allocations Policy.

13) Councillor Meadows - Temporary Accommodation - Transformation for Financial Sustainability

Paragraph 12.2 states that the assessment also identifies potential adverse impacts for some households on the housing register, including existing tenants seeking transfers, arising from the temporary reduction in the availability of settled council housing.

Why is the council happy to impact current protected groups on the waiting list and exacerbate their mental health?

Response: Cllr Williams

We recognise that reducing the availability of settled council housing, even on a temporary basis, can cause real anxiety and distress for households on the waiting list, particularly vulnerable households and existing tenants wishing to transfer. These impacts are explicitly identified in the Equality Impact Assessment and are taken seriously.

Cabinet is being asked to consider these impacts alongside clear evidence that the current temporary accommodation system is causing significant and, in many cases, greater harm.

Prolonged reliance on nightly paid accommodation has been shown to adversely affect mental health, family stability, children's education, and wellbeing, while also placing substantial financial pressure on the council that limits its ability to prevent homelessness and support vulnerable residents.

The extension of the use of council-owned homes as temporary accommodation is therefore proposed as a proportionate, time-limited intervention to reduce overall harm in a severely constrained and complex system.

It is tightly controlled through caps and exclusions for certain property types. This approach is intended to balance competing pressures responsibly.

14) Councillor Meadows - Temporary Accommodation - Transformation for Financial Sustainability

Paragraph 2.7 agrees to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Homes and Adult Social Care, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing, to align rents for council owned properties owned or on long leases by the Council and used as TA with any future increases in Local Housing Allowance rates. What are the Local Housing allowances rates now and how do they compare to the government benefits paid for Temporary Accommodation?

Response: Cllr Williams

Local Housing Allowance sets the maximum Housing Benefit that can be claimed for accommodation and is based on factors such as household size and the Broad Rental Market Area. For most forms of temporary accommodation, different and generally lower rates apply than for settled private rented housing.

In Brighton & Hove this results in a consistent gap between what can be claimed for temporary accommodation and standard LHA rates. For example, the temporary accommodation LHA rate for shared accommodation is around £120 per week, compared with a standard LHA rate of £135, creating a shortfall of around £15 per week.

As property sizes increase, this gap widens significantly, rising from over £50 per week for one-bedroom homes to well over £100 per week for family-sized properties. This shortfall is a key contributor to the financial pressures associated with providing temporary accommodation and underpins the need for the approach set out in the report.

15) Councillor Meadows - Temporary Accommodation - Transformation for Financial Sustainability

What is the local Housing Allowance and how far will it go to plugging the gap on Temporary Accommodation?

Response: Cllr Williams

Local Housing Allowance does not, by itself, resolve the funding gap associated with temporary accommodation. As set out earlier, the lower LHA rates that apply to temporary accommodation create a structural shortfall between eligible Housing Benefit and the actual costs incurred, particularly for larger properties in a high-rent area such as Brighton & Hove.

The approach proposed in the report is therefore targeted and limited. It applies only to council-owned and long-term leased temporary accommodation, where the council has direct control over rent setting. By aligning rents with the appropriate standard LHA rate for these homes, the council can reduce avoidable Housing Benefit subsidy loss and improve cost recovery.

As detailed in the Cabinet report and supporting appendices, this measure is projected to generate additional income to the Housing Revenue Account of £0.425m in 2026/27 and a further £0.852m in 2027/28, based on the existing stock of 282 units. While this additional income improves financial sustainability, it is part of a wider package of measures rather than a standalone solution.

16) Councillor McNair - Private sector housing enforcement policy

Has the number of privately rented homes increased or decreased since 2010? Since 2023?

Response: Cllr Williams

Yes—the private rented sector in Brighton & Hove has increased substantially since 2011. At the 2011 Census, 29.6% of households rented privately; by the 2021 Census this had risen to 32.7% (around 40,000 households), well above the England average of about 20%. Council analysis in support of licensing schemes shows the trend continuing beyond the census, estimating the PRS at 35.8% of all dwellings in 2023 (around 48,200 homes), with particularly high concentrations in central wards where over half of homes are privately rented. Since 2023 overall size of the PRS may have broadly plateaued or begun to decline slightly, as due to some landlords exiting the market.

17) Councillor McNair - Private sector housing enforcement policy

Are the guidelines the same as apply to council owned property? How do policies differ if they do?

Response: Cllr Williams

The Private Rented Sector Enforcement Policy does not apply to council owned homes. This is because the council acts as a regulator in the private rented sector and as the landlord and service provider for its own homes, and crucially a council cannot enforce against itself so therefore the measures within the policy could not be applied to our own homes.

PRS enforcement policies therefore exist to secure compliance by independent landlords with minimum legal standards and rely on statutory powers such as inspections, enforcement notices, civil penalties and prosecution.

By contrast, council-owned homes are governed through management and service policies focused on repairs, planned maintenance, asset management and tenant engagement, with failures addressed through internal escalation, complaints processes and democratic scrutiny rather than legal enforcement. Oversight of council housing standards sits primarily with the Regulator of Social Housing (RSH), which sets consumer standards, monitors performance, and intervenes where there is systemic failure, reinforced by the Housing Ombudsman.

18) Councillor Meadows - Private sector housing enforcement policy

The council is unwilling to remove caravans despite court orders and safeguard concerns because of the cost involved in their removal. Why is the council willing to spend money on enforcement of privately rented homes but not caravans?

Response: Cllr Williams

Following a period of organisational change, a new Encampments Team was established in July 2025 to provide a more consistent and coordinated response to

occupied vehicles and tented encampments. This included the recruitment of an Encampments Co-ordinator and the development of refreshed processes, policies and procedures, initially within a limited budget envelope.

Since July 2025, work has focused on rebuilding capability, clarifying practice, and strengthening the legal, welfare and safeguarding framework within which this activity operates. Interim funding has been agreed by the Corporate Director of Families, Children and Wellbeing to address priority pressures and enable progress to continue while a longer-term, sustainable approach is brought forward to Cabinet for approval. This is complex and often longer-term work, as people living in encampments frequently have multiple and overlapping needs. The council's approach therefore seeks to balance proportionate enforcement with appropriate welfare support, recognising the risks of destitution and street homelessness that can arise following the clearance of encampments.

19) Councillor McNair - Private sector housing enforcement policy

There are residents in social housing in Patcham & Hollingbury that have freezing cold kitchens, poor or broken outside lights, damp and inadequate windows. Are the guidelines for social housing as strict as for private landlords?

Response: Cllr Williams

I am sorry to hear of the issues highlighted. The Repairs and Maintenance Service aim to do emergency repairs within 24 hours, and routine repairs within 28 days. Our records show 12 outstanding repairs relating to outside lighting in the Hollingbury and Patcham area. All have appointments booked, with the latest scheduled for 20 May 2026. If any residents have repairs outstanding beyond 28 days, and don't yet have an appointment then please do share their details with the Director for Homes and Investment who will follow this up.

Over the past two financial years, the Repairs and Maintenance Service has installed 34 new kitchens in the Hollingbury and Patcham wards, reflecting ongoing investment to improve the quality of our council housing stock. Tenants experiencing issues with damp or mould are strongly encouraged to report these at the earliest opportunity to the Repairs Helpdesk. The Repairs and Maintenance Service is committed to meeting the requirements of Awaab's Law, ensuring prompt investigation and resolution of damp and mould issues so that homes remain safe, healthy, and comfortable.

Following Covid, by June 2024 there were 9,653 open repairs that were over 28 days old, and earlier this year at Overview & Scrutiny we reported 2,641 open repairs of all ages. Additionally, the latest tenant satisfaction measures survey showed a 9 percentage point increase in satisfaction with the repairs service at 77%. The team continues to strive for improvements and in turn satisfaction.

So, whilst the policies differ for private and council tenancies the regulatory framework for social housing is stringent, reflecting the responsibility placed on social landlords to undertake repairs and safeguard tenants' health and wellbeing. For example, Awaab's Law places a legal duty on social landlords to investigate and remedy serious hazards, such as damp and mould, within defined statutory timescales once they are reported.

20) Councillor McNair – Asset Strategy

Could we be given precise details on what the key constraints are regarding ecology, open space and biodiversity net gain at Fawcett Fields (para 3.7) that means the site isn't suitable for an affordable housing scheme?

Response: Cllr Taylor

Any development would be required to comply with Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) regulations, which mandate a minimum 10% measurable improvement in biodiversity, secured for at least 30 years. BNG can be delivered on-site, off-site, or, as a last resort, through the purchase of statutory biodiversity credits. In this case, it is not possible to provide replacement or enhanced habitat on-site, meaning compliance would rely on purchasing off-site biodiversity credits. Given current construction costs and the limited income generated from social rents, the additional cost of securing these credits makes it unviable to deliver a wholly affordable housing scheme.

21) Councillor McNair – Asset Strategy

When is Patcham Fawcett site likely to be made available to developers?

Response: Cllr Taylor

Following an approval to dispose by officer will procure an agent and agree a disposal strategy whilst completing due diligence in readiness for sale. It is hoped these tasks would be completed in a couple of months.

22) Councillor Meadows – Asset Strategy

Which school sites have been earmarked for development?

Response: Cllr Taylor

Cabinet has previously approved development of Homewood College (April 2025) and St Peter's Primary School (October 2025). The report presented to Cabinet April 2026 includes a recommendation for the development of Hertford Primary School.

23) Councillor Hill- E-scooter trial consultation report

In Appendix 3 titled 'Proposed Tariff & Promotions for scooter in BHCC trial', some of the shorter period promotions that are proposed seem either hard to implement or lack any detail. It does not say explicitly, looks to me like these promotions would include e-bike discounts to specific groups. For example, one short term promotion will give a discount to 'LGBTQ+ during week running up to pride weekend at end of July.' Another gives no detail and just says there will be a short-term promotion for 'BME groups'. I would feel uncomfortable getting a e-bike discount during the week before Pride due to being transgender. Can you explain how this would be implemented and why people might find this uncomfortable?

Response: Cllr Muten

Thank you, Councillor Hill, for your question and bring in something of your perspective and concern. The appendix outlines both the tariffs for the pay as you go, the pay as you ride scheme, and how to promote the wider use of e-scooters to everyone in our community. The only tariff reduction we are seeking to implement relate to care leavers, job seekers and those on Universal Credit. We are developing the detail of this targeted approach for those low-income households, reflecting our priority as administration. The e-scooter scheme is to be available and accessible to all, and we will work closely with our trusted partner Beryl and community representatives to develop this where appropriate. We have no plans for tariff reduction associated with protective characteristics. May I therefore apologise where the appendix to this report is slightly confusing on this matter and I wish to thank you for your question which has helped clarify this important point.

24) Councillor McLeay – Temporary Accommodation - Transformation for Sustainability

The EIA acknowledges that using Housing Revenue Account voids as Temporary Accommodation will directly affect council tenants and households on the housing register. What specific risk mitigation and exit plans are in place to prevent disproportionate harm to those already waiting longest for permanent social housing (particularly disabled households, families with children, and lone parents living in unsuitable accommodation), and how will Cabinet ensure that any negative cumulative impacts are being identified and addressed in real time, rather than retrospectively?

Response: Cllr Williams

The council recognises that using council-owned homes as temporary accommodation can affect households on the housing register, including those who have been waiting longest or who have additional needs. These impacts are explicitly identified in the Cabinet report and Equality Impact Assessment and, alongside consultation feedback, have informed the design of a carefully controlled approach. To mitigate risk, the policy includes clear safeguards. These include an overall cap on the number of homes that may be used, a defined and time-limited period, exclusions for specialist and mobility-adapted properties, and flexibility to increase or decrease use on a month-by-month basis, while not exceeding the total cap of 180 homes. By design, the policy is explicitly not intended to be permanent – it is very much an interim measure. It is designed to address immediate pressures arising from reliance on nightly paid accommodation, while longer-term measures are implemented, including the acquisition of additional council-owned temporary accommodation and the development of new models of provision. This sits alongside wider system interventions, such as strengthening homelessness prevention. Impacts are monitored in real time through weekly lettings meetings with senior officer oversight. This enables the council to pause, adjust or tighten use if impacts become disproportionate, rather than identifying issues retrospectively.

25) Councillor McLeay – Temporary Accommodation - Transformation for Sustainability

I note that the Hardship Fund is available only to in scope properties who are not in receipt of full Housing Benefit, a cohort estimated at around 10–20% of households. I also note the guidance that officers should not rely solely on self-referral and should proactively identify households at risk. Given the fund is allocated £203,000 per full financial year, what flexibility or contingency arrangements are in place should demand exceed the estimated 20%, and how will the council ensure vulnerable households are not excluded if need outstrips the allocated funding?

Response: Cllr Williams

The Hardship Fund is intended as a safeguard for households who may experience short-term affordability pressures as a result of the proposed rent changes, particularly those who are not in receipt of full Housing Benefit.

Demand for the fund will be kept under close review, and if take-up exceeds initial modelling the council will review the position to ensure that appropriate funding is available so that appropriate households are not left without support.

Officers are required to proactively identify households at risk and offer personalised advice and assistance, rather than relying solely on self-referral.

The Hardship Fund operates alongside wider safeguards, including welfare entitlement checks, Discretionary Housing Payments where appropriate, and housing management support.

Crucially, the ultimate safeguard remains the council's statutory duties under homelessness legislation. The council is legally required to provide suitable accommodation to homeless households, and suitability explicitly includes consideration of affordability.

Taken together, these measures ensure that households are protected, support is responsive to need, and no one is placed in accommodation that they cannot reasonably afford.

26) Councillor McLeay – Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy

How will BHCC balance proactive inspections with reactive complaints to make sure enforcement action is not disproportionately complaint led - particularly where language barriers, disabilities, or insecure immigration status prevent tenants from coming forward?

Response: Cllr Williams

The council will continue to undertake targeted proactive action through our licensing schemes which don't rely on tenants coming forward to report issues. Inspections are risk based using a range of criteria to determine when to inspect. In addition, we use other sources of intelligence such as sharing information across teams and using energy efficiency data to target interventions.

In addition, we want to ensure residents are consistently signposted to appropriate support, including housing advice, language interpretation services, and accessible information (such as easy-read, large-print or translated materials), so that barriers related to language, disability or literacy do not prevent issues from being identified and addressed.

27) Councillor Sykes – The King Alfred Leisure Centre Regeneration Project

The extra £3.5m required will it seems take a more than a third of the risk provision of £9.8m for the whole project, before substantive construction has started. Is there a need now to add additional contingency to the project budget?

Response: Cllr Robins

Thank you for your question and interest in the project. You have misunderstood the financials, the £3.5million is not additional funding, but part of the previously agreed budget of £65million. Bringing forward funding reflects the pace at which the project is progressing. In particular, the bringing forward of the early enabling work, including the soft strip of the asbestos removal works in this year's bowling alley. We are working very closely with the design team and contractor to ensure that the project is delivered within the agreed budget.

Later in the year we expect to have an agreed final delivery price with the contractor and at that time we will return to Cabinet to seek agreement to enter into a development agreement based on that price. We are not seeking to increase the project budget at the moment.

28) Councillor West – The King Alfred Leisure Centre Regeneration Project

Given that the recent public meeting held at the King Alfred seemed underwhelmed by the level of leisure facilities this expensive redevelopment will actually provide, and the financial risks associated with the complexity of the site and constraints upon available funding set out in the Risk Implications of this Cabinet report, do Cabinet now regret ignoring the Green Book analysis (18 July 2024 Cabinet report) that clearly showed the benefits achieved for the cost incurred by the redevelopment were not regarded as 'good' and that the alternative of developing the LSS site was stated as the much better option.

Response: Cllr Robins

Thank you, Councillor West. I assume then it is the Green Party policy that we develop on greenfield sites rather than brownfield sites and that we do that against public opinion?

Because that's what we were up against here. And the business case presented to Cabinet in July 2024 demonstrated that the sports and leisure centre on either side would represent good investment as assessed by the government's Green Book methodology.

The decision was taken on the choice of site, took into account the outcomes of the business case and also considered the responses from the public consultation, which was strongly in favour of keeping the development on the existing site. Further in fact, we don't recognise the specification of the new facility as underwhelming.

As set out in the Cabinet papers, a new facility features a much larger fitness suite than the current facility, an extensive soft play area, a larger cafeteria with outstanding sea views and innovative features such as a movable floor for the teaching pool. The project has also been expanded to include the delivery of new public realm in the form of the plaza in front of the main entrance, helping create a compelling indoor and outdoor destination for residents and visitors.

Despite some misinformation that has been circulating, there is a high degree of enthusiasm for the facility amongst local sports clubs, other regular users of facilities, And most residents, the design proposal has been developed, paying close attention to the surrounding heritage of the city to deliver an outstanding piece of placemaking. We are confident the new King Alfred will be an outstanding facility to meet the city's needs for many years to come. Thank you again for your question.

29) Councillor Sykes – The King Alfred Leisure Centre Regeneration Project

What controls has BHCC put in place with Alliance Leisure in respect of their project /cost management of Willmott Dixon Construction as principal contractor for the forthcoming enabling works?

Response: Cllr Robins

Prior to the commencement of any work, a detailed cost plan is being prepared by Willmott Dixon, which will be reviewed by the design team and the project team and reviewed by an independent cost consultants. Once underway, progress and spend will be monitored through weekly project meetings with Alliance Leicester and more detailed monthly meetings with the whole design team and Willmott Dixon.

Some specific points to note are a significant element of the £3.5m approval relates to works undertaken by statutory bodies. For example, the relocation of electrical power cables to be carried out by UK Power Networks.

This work is priced with a fixed fee and is instructed directly by the Council. Any works undertaken by Willmott Dixon will be subject to scrutiny by the Council and their professional team, supported by cost consultants at Abacus, who are Sport England's cost advisors and have specialist expertise in the leisure schemes.

Willmott Dixon are competitively tendering individual work packages to achieve best value from their established supply chain. These work packages will be reviewed in detail by the professional team, with the recommendation then being provided to Brighton and Hove City Council.

Each element of the enabling work will be delivered with the appropriate contract type, subject to close contract management. Thanks again for your question.

30) Councillor Sykes- Temporary Accommodation - Transformation for Sustainability

In the absence of national policy or local advocacy on major contributory causes of the housing crisis such as short term lets, second homes, right to buy etc, are these policy proposals to deal with the housing crisis locally not just an increasingly desperate set of sticking plasters?

Response: Cllr Williams

I wonder what planet people have been living on lately if they can't see what is happening here. And there are national policies, of course, to build more social homes and we're all quite clear about the causes of this national housing crisis, which we've never seen the like of.

So, I'm not really sure what that means and why you're saying that and I'm really pleased that you've given me the opportunity to showcase and show off what I'm very proud to say of what we have achieved so far as an Administration.

I haven't even got time to list them all, so I'm going to be as quick as possible. Apart from the hundreds of new homes we're building, and I mean hundreds, we're also taking firm action and we've introduced a pilot project to circumvent the right to buy, where we're going to provide a grant for people who are eligible to the right to buy programme to buy off the private market, therefore saving council homes. More than any Green Council has ever done anywhere else. We've brought back into use 149 empty homes this year that would be left empty, a down sight higher than any previous, shall I say, Green Council has achieved. And for our short-term rights, I'm really pleased to say that our working group was successful in recommending their findings to government and we're about to take part, I do believe, in a pilot project from government to register short term let. And these are just a few of our achievements. I could go on forever, but I am just really surprised at the question.

31) Councillor Shanks – Asset Strategy

What consultation has been done with residents and ward councillors on the sale of assets generally and specifically regarding the sale of open space at Fawcett Fields and Rowan Avenue.

Response: Cllr Taylor

The council's Asset Management Plan sets out principles for the council's strategic management of its assets to support the delivery of the Council Plan and the MTFs and was approved at Cabinet in October 2025. The Asset Management Plan was not subject to resident consultation.

In identifying assets for potential disposal officers follow the principles set out in the Asset Management Plan. Ward councillors were advised of proposals for Rowan Avenue in advance of the proposal presented to Cabinet. The recommendation to Cabinet for Fawcett Fields is a decision in principle and ward councillors will be advised should a disposal progress.

32) Councillor Shanks – Asset Strategy

How were rent arrears allowed to accrue on the property in Meeting House Lane?

Response: Cllr Taylor

Thank you for your question, Councillor Shanks. And obviously, me more than anyone doesn't want to see any rent arrears on the commercial portfolio because we want the income and obviously, it is disappointing whenever that happens. It does happen across the commercial sector, as you'll be aware, and we're just one landlord in the city. In this specific example, the arrears accrued for a number of tenants, including this one through COVID.

Action was put in place to try and mitigate that risk, including putting a payment plan together with this tenant and other tenants. The risk was clearly identified that non-payment was a possibility, although it was deemed to be a lower risk given the tenant was in the process of negotiating a new lease. And that obviously fell through and we're left with the arrears, which is, as implied, is disappointing, but it is part of overall commercial portfolio.

33) Councillor Shanks – Asset Strategy

Why is the land at Downsview not being developed in house with the council as provider as I think the original intention was?

Response: Cllr Taylor

We think it's really positive and exciting that this site could be used for much needed accommodation for people with learning disabilities or disabilities in the city. The view from the department is that any such facility, those with complex needs, would be best suited to one of the many excellent registered providers that have expertise in this area. The current proposal versus previous attempts to look at this site are looking at a much lower density development, which officers believe will be better in line with the overall planning policy and planning requirements for the site. But overall, I think it's a really positive outcome that we'll talk about in the report later, that we're using this site potentially to build purpose-built new accommodation for residents with disabilities in the city.

34) Councillor Lademacher – Asset Strategy

Given the extreme housing pressures in Brighton & Hove, how will the asset strategy ensure that opportunities for actually affordable housing are maximised?

Response: Cllr Taylor

Thanks for the question, Cllr Lademacher – it's a really important one and goes to the heart of our overall strategy. When we think about our assets: it's "housing first". Can we find ways to use existing assets for the provision of new social housing, or in some cases, higher quality and less expensive temporary accommodation. Examples below (and in this report: Hertford school site).

Where housing is not possible for some reason (planning allocation, scheme viability) - we then consider the best use for the asset, which may include releasing a capital receipt for other purposes: protecting front-line services, transforming the council, or indeed investing in other housing projects.

- Former Oxford Street Housing Office – refurbished to provide 10 homes
- Palace Place – being converted to provide 11 Temporary Accommodation units
- 8 Shenfield Way – To be converted to provide 3 units
- 10 Hangleton Way – To be refurbished to provide a family home
- Slipper Baths – To be converted to provide 11 Temporary Accommodation units
- Land at Mile Oak – To be developed to provide 20 units
- Land at Southdowns Riding School – To be developed to provide 15 units
- Portslade Village Centre: To be developed to provide 28 new homes and a Community Centre
- St Peters Primary School - Feasibility work underway and architects appointed to work up proposals for up to 20 new homes

35) Councillor Lademacher – Temporary Accommodation - Transformation for Sustainability

The report notes that while the council's housing delivery programme will not address short-term pressures, it will increase overall system capacity over time. How does BHCC plan to manage immediate demand for temporary accommodation in the interim, and given the broad support expressed in the consultation for the principle of using of empty council homes for temporary accommodation, will it expand and prioritise the use of empty council homes for this purpose?

Response: Cllr Williams

The council is clear that increasing housing supply is essential to addressing the homelessness in Brighton & Hove. Through the council's Housing Strategy, we have committed to delivering at least 2,000 affordable homes and already have a strong delivery pipeline. This includes the next Homes for Brighton & Hove development at Sackville Road, which will deliver 306 new homes, 60% of which will be at social rent. The report is clear that these supply measures will take time to have a material impact. In the short term, the council is managing demand through strong homelessness prevention performance, the targeted and interim use of empty council-owned homes as temporary accommodation and decisions such as the direct award to Base One. These decisions were taken to move away from unsuitable, high-cost provision and to improve quality and stability for residents.

As set out in the report, the council intends to continue to use empty council-owned homes as temporary accommodation within the agreed caps and safeguards. Consultation responses showed support for this approach, particularly where it improves safety, quality and stability and reduces reliance on costly nightly paid and out-of-area placements.

This activity forms part of a wider transformation programme to stabilise the system in the short term while longer-term supply, prevention and move-on pathways are strengthened.

165 MATTERS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE

165.1 There were none.

166 REPRESENTATIONS FROM OPPOSITION MEMBERS

166.1 Cabinet received a representation from Councillor Shanks on Item 169: Temporary Accommodation - Transformation for Sustainability

167 E-SCOOTER TRIAL CONSULTATION REPORT

167.1 Cabinet considered a report that set out the outcomes of the public consultation on a proposed e-scooter trial and the Council responses and sought approval under delegated powers to add an e-scooter trial to the existing Beryl BTN Bike hire scheme.

167.2 Councillors Allen, Rowkins, Muten, Alexander and Williams asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.

167.3 **Resolved-**

- 1) Cabinet agrees to note the outcomes of the public consultation on the proposed e-scooter trial and the Council responses for the trial as set out in section 5 of the report and Appendices 1& 2.
- 2) Cabinet delegates authority to the Corporate Director City Operations in consultation with the Cabinet Member, Transport and City Infrastructure, to implement and run a new e-scooter trial in accordance with Department for Transport requirements.
- 3) Subject to the matters set out in the Part 2 report Cabinet agrees to delegate authority to the Corporate Director City Operations in consultation with the Cabinet Member Transport and City Infrastructure, to enter into the necessary contractual arrangements with the current Bikeshare scheme operator Smidsy (trading as Beryl) for the implementation and operation of the escooter trial and to enter into an extension of the existing Bikeshare scheme (incorporating the escooter trial) for up to two years to cover the period to 30 September 2029.

168 THE KING ALFRED LEISURE CENTRE REGENERATION PROJECT - PROGRESS UPDATE

168.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought agreement to progress the King Alfred Regeneration Project to the next stage of implementation following the completion of the technical design stage (Royal Institute of British Architects Plan of Work Stage 4 or RIBA 4) and the submission of the planning application.

168.2 Councillors Taylor, Daniel, Robinson and Sankey asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.

168.3 Resolved-

That Cabinet:

- 1) Agrees that the Council enters into Development Management Agreements with Alliance Leisure for enabling works on the new King Alfred leisure facility site including the demolition of the disused bowling alley area.
- 2) Agrees to delegate authority to the Corporate Director City Operations in consultation with the cabinet member for Sports, Recreation and Libraries to finalise the terms of the Development Management Agreements and enter into the Development Management Agreement and any ancillary documentation.
- 3) Agrees to bring forward the allocation of £3.5m from previously agreed project capital budget to fund these works up to November 2026.

169 TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION - TRANSFORMATION FOR FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY

169.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought various approvals to transform its temporary accommodation portfolio, shifting away from costly and unplanned nightly paid provision towards a more sustainable mix of better quality council-owned, leased, block-booked and supported accommodation over the Medium Term Financial Plan.

169.2 Councillors Allen, Robinson and Sankey contributed to the debate of the report.

169.3 **Resolved-**

That Cabinet;

- 1) Agrees to continue the use of using Housing Revenue Account voids as Temporary Accommodation from 19 January 2026 up to 1 May 2027, subject to the exemptions described at paragraph 4.4 and 4.5, with a maximum of 180 properties in scope over that time period.
- 2) Agrees the amended policy on the use of Housing Revenue Account voids as Temporary Accommodation as set out at Appendix 1 of the report.
- 3) Notes the Equality Impact Assessment in relation to the use of voids as detailed at Appendix 2 to the report.
- 4) Agree the new rent review policy as set out in paragraph 5.1 to 5.8 which will set council-owned and long-term leased Temporary Accommodation rents at the appropriate Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Rate for the type of accommodation.
- 5) Note the findings of the Equality Impact Assessment as detailed at Appendix 3 to the report.
- 6) Agree to the establishment of a new hardship fund for households who are in the relevant council-owned, and long-term leased properties who may otherwise be adversely financially impacted as a result of the rent review not in receipt of benefits. The scope, purpose and operation of the hardship fund are detailed in Appendix 4, with the intention of providing support during the transition to the new rent arrangements.
- 7) Agree to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Homes and Adult Social Care, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing, to align rents for council owned properties owned or on long leases by the Council and used as TA with any future increases in Local Housing Allowance rates.
- 8) Agree to delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Homes and Adult Social Care, in consultation with Cabinet Member for Housing to finalise the supporting documents and operational guidance for the hardship fund in accordance with the scope set out in Appendix 4.
- 9) Agree the principle of working with Registered Providers to develop an Exempt Supported Temporary Accommodation model that reduces reliance on high-cost spot-purchased placements and provides vulnerable residents with stable accommodation and embedded support.
- 10) Agree the creation of a nomination process and Service Level Agreement with Registered Providers to govern delivery of the model, clarify roles and responsibilities and establish an appropriate approach to risk-sharing.

170 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY

170.1 Cabinet considered a report that set out and sought approvals for updates to the Council's Private Sector Housing (PSH) Enforcement Policy.

170.2 Councillor Muten contributed to the debate of the report.

170.3 Resolved-

- 1) Cabinet agrees that the amended Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy, as set out in Appendix 1, is adopted from 1 May 2026.
- 2) Cabinet delegates authority to Corporate Director Homes & Adult Social Care in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Housing to make such amendments to the policy as may be required following adoption as outlined in paragraph 3.6 of this report.

171 ASSET STRATEGY

171.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought approval for the repurposing or disposal of various assets to support delivery of the actions and objectives of the council's Asset Management Plan.

171.2 Resolved-

- 1) Cabinet agrees to the appropriation for housing purposes or disposal of the properties identified at paragraphs 3.4-3.21 of this report and the Part 2 report in the manner set out in the reports.
- 2) Cabinet delegates authority to the Director Property & Finance in consultation with the Director Governance & Law and the Cabinet Member for Finance and City Regeneration to approve terms and take any necessary steps to facilitate and complete the appropriation for housing purposes or disposals of the properties identified and achieve best consideration.

172 E-SCOOTER TRIAL CONSULTATION REPORT (EXEMPT CATEGORY 3)

As per the Part One minutes.

173 ASSET STRATEGY (EXEMPT CATEGORY 3)

As per the Part Two confidential minutes.

174 PART TWO PROCEEDINGS

174.1 **Resolved-** That Cabinet agreed that the confidential items listed on the agenda remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 4.20pm