

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

The following questions listed on pages 39–41 of the agenda have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answer detailed below. The Councillor asking the question may then ask one relevant supplementary question which shall be put and answered without discussion. A second supplementary question may be asked by any other Member of the Council which shall also be put and answered without discussion:

**(a) Councillor Elgood**

“What action does the Cabinet Member for Environment intend to take in light of European Commissioner Loizos Loizou's findings that the process for the joint Brighton and Hove/East Sussex County Council contract for waste incineration was not undertaken correctly?”

**Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.**

“The position is that in 2007 an extension was granted to the original Waste Management Services Contract. This was agreed having taken legal opinion that the process proposed for the extension was reasonable.

The EU Commission has written to the UK Government to advise that they consider at this stage that the extension to the original contract should have been put out to tender. However, the Commission has invited the UK Government to submit its observations on this view. The Councils [Brighton & Hove and East Sussex] are now assisting the Government in responding to the request for further information and observations.”

**(b) Councillor Allen**

“Is the Administration committed to the continuation of the mobile library service?”

**Reply from Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation & Tourism.**

“Yes, the Administration is committed to the continuation of the mobile library service.”

**(c) Councillor Allen**

“Can the Cabinet Member for Culture confirm that income from sales from the Jubilee Library shop covers all the costs (eg staffing, heating, maintenance) of running the Jubilee Street Library shop? If not, what level of subsidy from the library budget is required?”

**Reply from Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation & Tourism.**

“Looking at the budget for 2008-09, the income generated by the Booklover Store covered its trading costs, including staffing costs. The building costs relating to the space occupied by the Booklover Store are fully incorporated in the Jubilee Library costs and have not been disaggregated. The shop generates income that contributes to meeting the income targets for the Jubilee Library as a whole.”

**(d) Councillor Duncan**

“Can the Cabinet Member for Children Services tell us what steps were taken to ensure that the financial collapse of St Mary's Hall School in Eastern Road had no negative impact on the education of the city's children, both pupils at the school and those of other schools which they will attend from next year?”

**Reply from Councillor Mrs Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People.**

“At the time of the announcement of the closure of St Mary's Hall School we communicated with Roedean School to ensure that parents of children affected were aware of the arrangements with regard to admissions in Brighton and Hove Schools. The situation is, of course, outside the direct control of the council but all appropriate action has been taken to minimise the negative impact on the city's children, both pupils at St Mary's Hall School and those attending Brighton & Hove schools.

With regard to school admissions, we have considered around a dozen applications from parents seeking places at maintained schools. In addition to the applications, we have also dealt with a number of enquiries from parents. In accordance with school admissions arrangements, we have only been able to offer places at schools with vacancies. At this stage of the year this is quite limited, given that most schools are full in established year groups.

With regard to the effect on other children in Brighton & Hove, any additional numbers in Brighton & Hove schools will ultimately feed into the council's funding from central government and will be reflected in the delegated budgets that schools receive which are based largely on pupil numbers. This will ensure that in due course maintained schools accepting pupils from St Mary's Hall will receive additional resources commensurate with increased pupil numbers.”

**(e) Councillor Duncan**

“Residents of Rochester Street have reported that an ambulance was unable to access their street last month to administer emergency healthcare to an elderly man who had collapsed following an aortic aneurism.

The man was reportedly told that the street was inaccessible to emergency vehicles because of the haphazard and unmanaged nature of parking in the

Baker's Bottom area: does the Cabinet Member for Environmental Services have any plans to speed up the proposed review of parking arrangements in the area?"

**Reply from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment.**

"I am sorry to hear about the elderly resident in your ward. I can only answer the final part of your question where you ask about future reviews as I am sure that you know that the Police and Emergency Services would be responsible for dealing with the specific issue that you have raised. Any interim measures can only be conducted by the Police. I know that they do as much as they can to enforce against bad parking here, particularly on the road junctions. This has included 3 letter drops, leafleting badly parked cars, polite notices and fixed penalty notices.

Historically I understand that residents opted out of the parking scheme proposed but I can inform you that this is about to be reviewed and officers are intending to conduct parking surveys here later this spring and summer as part of a larger parking review."

**(f) Councillor Duncan**

"Following the tragic death of a newspaper vendor during recent protests in London, and the alleged assault of a Brighton woman at a vigil in his honour, would the Cabinet Member for Community Safety express her support for a different approach to policing protests in Brighton and Hove, and ask Sussex Police to consider how they would plan to approach the policing of any protests within Brighton and Hove, so as not to use the technique of 'kettling' protestors – or confiscating any photographic equipment – at least until the Independent Police Complaints Commission has ruled on the appropriateness of such techniques?"

**Reply from Councillor Simson, Cabinet Member for Community Affairs, Inclusion & Internal Relations.**

"Thank you for your question. I am of course aware of the considerable publicity associated with recent events in London but the issues raised in your question are very much operational matters for Sussex Police and not council procedures.

I have no reason to believe that Sussex Police will not ensure that appropriate procedures are in place for any eventuality that may arise within the city. Furthermore, I would suggest that you don't pre-empt the outcome of the ongoing Independent Police Complaints Commission's inquiry into the appropriateness of different policing techniques."

*Note: The question listed above from Councillor Duncan differs from that shown in the agenda papers. A previous version of the question was inadvertently printed rather than the correct one as shown with the written response.*

**(g) Councillor Mitchell**

“Could the Cabinet Member for Central Services please clarify whether it is the council’s policy for their partnering contractors, Mears and Keir, to repair back pathways as well as front?”

**Reply from Councillor Caulfield, Cabinet Member for Housing.**

“I can confirm that it is council repairs policy to carry out Health and Safety repairs to make safe all pathways within the curtilage of council housing buildings. The work is carried out through our partnering contractors. This action is specific to works installed and maintained by the council to facilitate safe access to the front and/or rear entrance of a residential council property.

Where a resident may have installed a patio or hard standing themselves within the curtilage we would recharge the cost of any remedial works required.”

**(h) Councillor Turton**

“Could the Cabinet Member for Central Services please tell us what levels of quality assurance are the council’s contractors, Mears and Keir, measured against?”

**Reply from Councillor Mears, Leader of the Council.**

“In terms of quality assurance, the contractors have a recruitment and training policy that is applied to all trades staff they engage/recruit to work upon Brighton & Hove Council properties.

Trades employed by the contractors, having been required to meet competency, quality and customer service standards at employment stage, are also subject to frequent review/refresher quality standard courses throughout the life of a contract. Staff employed by the council to monitor the contractors are also required to meet competency, quality and customer service standards. The council monitor and control internal staff competencies through the Performance & Development Planning Scheme.

Within the current repairs & maintenance contract, British Standard (BS) of quality is specified in terms of materials to be used and competency qualifications of labour applications applied to the contract.

Work is measured, assessed and inspected to meet current legislation, material usage and the quality of the finished product and surrounding environment. Where a stand alone replacement of works takes place (such as a new kitchen or bathroom) then the measurement of quality is as if it was a new build product.

However, problems do sometimes occur with the aesthetics of finished work. The existing maintenance contract is very prescriptive to the contractors and does not allow or afford them the freedom to seek more acceptable and or more pleasing finished standards. The new housing procurement contract that commences in April 2010 has been developed with a focus upon improving the quality through a zero defects, 'right first time' approach, requiring the contractor to consistently deliver on Quality, Customer Service and overall value for money."

**(i) Councillor Lepper**

"Could the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health, please tell us how far planning with the PCT has got, with regards to the funding being made available by the government for additional breaks for carers, which is estimated at £821,000 over the next two years?"

**Reply from Councillor K Norman, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health.**

"The National Strategy indicated that £150m funding would be included in baseline funding allocations for PCTs to support implementation of the strategy in respect of breaks and other services for carers in 2009/10 and 2010/11. This funding is not ringfenced and is not a specific allocation to individual PCTs.

It is possible for the PCT to estimate its share of the £150m at around £850,000 over the two years – with a greater proportion in the second year. At present, this investment is not explicitly identified in PCT plans – but there is an assumption within plans that the PCT will be releasing resources for targeted investment in priority areas over the year, of which services for carers is one.

The city council and PCT have a jointly funded Joint Commissioner for Carers' Services and joint processes which ensure a co-ordinated approach to carers' issues. The postholder is based in Adult Social Care but works closely with colleagues at the PCT to ensure that effective links are made into all strategic developments. Part of this is the joint council/PCT plan in the form of a new Carers' Development and Commissioning Strategy. A business case for additional funding from the PCT to support the revised strategy has been completed."

**(j) Councillor Harmer-Strange**

"Could the Cabinet Member for Finance state the current level of Brighton & Hove City Council's debt?"

**Reply from Councillor Young, Cabinet Member for Finance.**

The level of Council debt outstanding reduced by 16.2% between 31 March 2007 and 31 March 2009.

