

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

The following questions have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answer which will be included in an addendum that will be circulated at the meeting. A Member who asked a question may ask one relevant supplementary question which shall be put and answered without discussion.

**(a) Councillor Nemeth**

“How many open cases are on the system presently; how many new cases have been opened in each of the last four years; what is the average case resolution length for each of the last four years; and what is the oldest open case on the system presently?”

**Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee.**

“There are currently 816 Enforcement cases on the system. There was a detailed Enforcement Report that went to Planning Committee this week on 11 January. This sets out the following enforcement case figures for the last four financial years:

- 2015/2016 – 576 cases received
- 2014/2015 – 666,
- 2013/2014 – 658,
- 2012/2013 – 755.

Figures for the current financial year 2016/2017 will be made available in the next Enforcement Annual Report. However the amount so far for this financial year is 680 (excluding over 300 referrals of large HMOs from the Private Sector Housing Team). This already exceeds the number received in the last three years.

In terms of the average case resolution length, there is not currently a way of reporting this. Enforcement cases are very varied in terms of time taken for resolution compared to planning applications. It is expected that in the future Uniform (Planning’s IT system ) will be able to provide more detailed information on this.

In terms of the oldest open case on the system - there are a small number of old cases on the system that are over 10 years old. Now that a full time Principal Planning Officer has been appointed to manage the Enforcement Team it is intended to focus resources on closing older cases.”

**(b) Councillor Nemeth**

“What role did the Chairman play in attempting to prevent members of the public swimming in the sea on Christmas Day?”

**Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee.**

“The dangers of sea swimming particularly in the winter are apparent to us all. It is not possible to prevent members of the public swimming in the sea on Christmas Day. However, measures have been implemented on Christmas Day in recent years as a considered response to the growing number of people entering the sea, many inexperienced and inappropriately dressed for sea swimming, and some under the influence of alcohol. Therefore, barriers were put in place to prevent access to Albion Beach which is the most dangerous due to its proximity to the large groynes, Palace Pier, and its steeply shelving beach. In addition, Seafront Officers patrolled the shoreline to give safety advice to potential swimmers to increase awareness of the dangers. While I did not play a direct role in these measures, I am very supportive of the Seafront Team who do such a good job throughout the year and often in difficult circumstances to make the Seafront as safe as possible.”

**(c) Councillor Nemeth**

“What regular meetings are held between i360 bosses and either the Chairman or senior Council officers to discuss the ongoing performance of the asset?”

**Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee.**

“The i360 Board meets on a monthly basis and the council has observer status at the meeting. A senior officer of the council is therefore present at all these meetings when ongoing and historic performance of the i360 is discussed.”

**(d) Councillor Nemeth**

“Will the Chairman commit to providing a full and frank written update to all tenants and clubs at the King Alfred who are currently in the dark over what the future holds for the building?”

**Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee.**

“We know that there is great interest in the very important King Alfred development. However, as most people understand it is not possible to conduct every step of the hugely complex process of legal and financial negotiations in public, but everyone will get a full say via the planning process, and decisions will be made at committee in the usual way.”

**(e) Councillor Peltzer Dunn**

“What plans does the Chairman have to make use of tourism data much earlier than the current system of looking at a particular summer’s figures over a year after it has ended?”

**Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee.**

“We are very proud of the continuing importance of the city as a national and international tourist destination.

Tourist bodies throughout the UK use either the STEAM model or Cambridge Model to estimate the economic impact of tourism as the most up to date and accurate figures available that enables comparison with other tourist destinations. These figures have been used by the Tourism sector nationally and have been the standard way of assessing the impact of tourism for many years. Brighton, along with other Southern destinations, commissions the research department at Tourism South East to utilise the Cambridge Model to produce our annual Economic Impact figures.

Both models utilise data produced by VisitBritain, VisitEngland and the Office of National Statistics to generate regional statistics. The data produced by VisitBritain, VisitEngland and the Office of National Statistics is based on the Great Britain Tourism Study which surveys 16,000 people, the Great Britain Day Visits Survey which surveys 18,000 people and the International Passenger Survey which surveys 36,000 people. Due to the high volume of surveys, the information takes many months to analyse and collate, so is not published until the following April / May. Tourism South East then use this data to inform the Cambridge Model, which is generally delivered in August the following year.

However, it is important to note that whilst the Cambridge Economic Impact Assessment data gives us an overview of yearly trends, the annual business plan of VisitBrighton, the tourism department of Brighton & Hove City Council, evolves through dialogue with their 550 City-based tourism-related business partners to establish business needs, discussions with the Brighton & Hove Hoteliers Association, ongoing regional liaison with Tourism South East and national discussions with VisitBritain and VisitEngland, who regularly produce inbound research insights.

The strategy of the tourism department is flexible enabling it to embrace opportunities and address challenges which are identified. An example of this is the recent appointment of a Chinese PR company who are representing Brighton to travel agents in China, following a boost to Chinese visitor numbers to the UK following Brexit due to the weakened pound.

VisitBrighton will continue to work closely with stakeholders locally, regionally and nationally to ensure that the Council continues to inspire and drive awareness both to domestic and international visitors.”

**(f) Councillor Taylor**

“What meetings were held by Administration councillors with traders in the run-up to Christmas in preparation for Brighton & Hove’s busiest shopping season?”

**Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee.**

“The council focuses all year round on supporting traders, not just in the run-up to Christmas.

Feedback from previous years’ Small Business Saturdays, and as discussed at this committee last November, included retailers saying that Christmas is already a high footfall period, which is why a key part of the strategy for supporting traders is and should be about providing information to local businesses about business support services all year round.

In general terms the council liaises with the business through business networks in the city, including attending business meetings and events, which is the most effective use of everyone’s time, and how traders as business owners present their views to the council officers and the administration.

As I was unwell in the period right before the Christmas season began, I would like to put on record my thanks to other members of the administration for covering key events for me so with such good will at this time.”