

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:

(1) Councillor Inkpin-Leissner – Wild Park:

Could Councillor Mitchell please explain how was the funding that BHCC have been receiving from Natural England to maintain Wild Park precisely been used and why did Rangers not check on the pond in Wild Park, when it was drying out?

Reply from Councillor Mitchell – Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

The council receives agricultural subsidies for some sites in the city, including Wild Park. We receive two payments towards management of these sites; the Higher Level Stewardship (HLS) payments which are designed to offset the increased costs of managing areas of wildlife importance and an area payment from the Basic Payment Scheme (BPS). Overall each year, with the significant help of our fantastic volunteers, the conservation, general management, fencing maintenance and grazing works are able to be covered by the subsidy received.

On the Downland Estate the council has a number of Dew Ponds. The council does not stock these with fish because the ponds dry out and Dew Ponds are not a natural habitat for fish. They are also detrimental to the amphibians and other creatures that we are trying to encourage at these sites.

Dew Ponds will typically dry out periodically and this is a natural occurrence. They are dependent on rain falling into the bowl that the ponds are built within to fill them. Unfortunately, members of the public do deposit unwanted fish and other pets in them and because up till this year we have had a series of wet summers, the ponds have held water for longer and fish numbers have built up. We have no practical or affordable method of filling them up but if we are draining one of the permanent ponds in a park then we do make provision to relocate the fish.

(2) Councillor Phillips – HIV & Sexual Health Services

Since 2015 what has been the annual council spend on HIV and sexual health services, year by year?

Reply from Councillor Barford – Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board

Annual spend on HIV and sexual health budget from the public health budget was:

2015/16	£5,018,582
2016/17	£5,032,375
2017/18	£5,134,041

The budget for 2018/19 is £4,455,624

During the same period (2015/16-2018/19), excluding the funding adjustment for the transfer of health visiting and school nursing from the NHS to Local Authorities, the ring-fenced public health grant for Brighton & Hove has been reduced by £2,815,502 per year*. In response to this funding for HIV and sexual health services was reduced for 2018/19. This reduction was achieved by extending the contract with the provider for two years on the basis of a reduction in the service tariff price paid to the provider and by extending provision of home STI testing.

*PH ringfenced grant reduction

year:	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
grant reductions:	£0	£0	£1,289,945	£1,289,945	£1,289,945	£1,289,945
				£475,786	£475,786	£475,786
					£521,000	£521,000
						£528,771
cumulative total of grant reductions			£1,289,945	£1,765,731	£2,286,731	£2,815,502

(3) Councillor Gibson

Please can you indicate:

- when each of the current contracts with Baron Homes, Helgor Trading, Colgate and Gray to provide temporary/emergency accommodation are due to end?
- when consideration of extension or replacement (recommissioning) of each of these contracts will commence?
- how members of the housing committee will be involved in decisions around future provision?

Reply from Councillor Meadows – Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee

The contracts for Baron Homes and Helgor Trading expire in 2021; the Colgate & Gray contract expires in 2019, each with a six month extension clause.

Preliminary discussions will begin shortly with our colleagues in Corporate Procurement to establish a preferred contract pathway for renting Emergency Accommodation in future. We will also be considering the impact of our strategy

to reduce the use of emergency accommodation in terms of how long we need to procure any further contracts for.

Any further contracts that are required will go through the Procurement Advisory Board. The provision of accommodation for homelessness households is a statutory function and Members delegated responsibility for decisions on leasing for up to 10 years to officers in 2009.

(4) Councillor Gibson - Providing council owned emergency accommodation.

Last year there was unanimous support for looking into providing council owned emergency accommodation as a “matter of urgency.”

To progress this, a subsequent Housing & New Homes agreed to:

“call for a report on the business case modeling for a “spend to save” purchase of emergency accommodation, so that the council may directly provide its own emergency accommodation

That this modeling:

- a) Estimates revenue savings on current expenditure of private provision
- b) Estimates the capital appreciation that would flow to the council through ownership of Emergency accommodation
- c) Explores the potential to offer greater support to residents of emergency accommodation from any savings achieved

Since the provision of council owned emergency accommodation has the potential to save money and improve the quality of provision and the motion received unanimous support in Council and in Housing Committee, can you indicate when the report will come to Housing & New Homes Committee?

Reply from Councillor Meadows – Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee

The council have been investigating providing council owned temporary accommodation and members of HNHs Cttee will be aware of the recent provision of Stonehurst Court which was re-purposed sheltered accommodation that was no longer fit for purpose. The information called for regarding the financial modelling requires significant work and so a report will be forthcoming in June 2019.

(5) Councillor Phillips

How many educational psychologist assessments for primary aged children have been undertaken in the city over the past six months, and of those how many resulted in statements being issued?

Reply from Councillor Chapman – Chair of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee

Over the last six months there have been a total of 172 educational psychology assessments of which 64 were statutory assessments. This resulted in the development of 47 Education Health and Care plans.

(6) Councillor Sykes

Please could a statement be provided on progress this financial year with the negotiations with Network Rail, repairs and refurbishment of Hove Station footbridge, including investment projections for the next 18 months?

Reply from Councillor Mitchell – Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

Thank you for your question – I can inform you that negotiations with Network Rail as to the future maintenance requirements and responsibilities for future maintenance are still on going. As you will be aware the Council has set aside funding from the Capital Pot once the scale and scope of future maintenance responsibilities have been agreed. Further meetings are set to take place in the coming months.

(7) Councillor Sykes

Please could a statement be provided on progress this financial year with Brighton Town Hall Workstyles, including investment projections for the next 18 months?

Reply from Councillor Hamilton – Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee

Options for Brighton Town Hall that fit with the Administration's priorities of supporting business and encouraging inward investment, while also looking to address the issue of an under-occupied and ageing building, have been explored during the current financial year. This work will support the development of a business case, which will be presented back to Policy, Resources & Growth for consideration and a decision at a later date. Until a decision is made by committee, no further investment in the building will be made beyond that identified through the Planned Maintenance Budget.

(8) Councillor Sykes

Please can an update be provided on the status and progress this year of any work being undertaken by BHCC on district heat initiatives, and what is planned over the next year?

Reply from Councillor Meadows – Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee

Initial feasibility works have been carried out in the Hove Station area focussed on the council housing blocks located here. Since the feasibility study was commissioned wider re-development considerations for this area have evolved including the potential to offer greater opportunities by embedding a District Heat approach at the outset of future development. Accordingly this feasibility will be considered alongside major project considerations for the area including any master planning that will include.

(9) Councillor Sykes

Please can an update be provided on the status and progress this year of any work being undertaken by BHCC on a Solar Farm on BHCC land, and what is planned over the next year?

Reply from Councillor Hamilton – Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee

Property & Design are assessing a site in Falmer for the possible construction of a solar farm. Specialist advice is being sought from suitably qualified and experienced consultants to support us in completing a feasibility study. We have gone out to the market twice to local consultants at the end of 2017 and in Spring of this year but although interest was expressed verbally, no quotations were submitted to undertake the feasibility study. The brief has additionally been sent to our rural estate consultants and to the local Lewes & Eastbourne Council renewables framework consultant.

It is thought that this apparent lack of interest may at least be partly due to the impending end of the Feed In Tariff in 2019 and the consequential demands on consultants time. It is now considered that this market activity will have peaked and so our intention is to go out to the market again later this year and we are working closely with the sustainability team to review the brief and draw up a list of suitable consultants and potential framework partners.

(10) Councillor Sykes

Please can an update be provided on the status and progress this year of any work being undertaken by BHCC on food waste collection initiatives in the city, and what is planned over the next year?

Reply from Councillor Mitchell – Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

In July 2015 as part of the Cityclean Service Plan and Priorities Report, opportunities for food waste collection were explored in detail but were not pursued due to the high cost which was in excess of £1 million per year. In light of the reductions in funding it is not possible to introduce a food waste collection at this time.

The council has always encouraged residents to compost garden waste at home and provides subsidised compost bins and food waste composters. Since 2007, over 20,000 compost bins have been sold through the council's scheme, further information of which is on the council's website. We have a total of 35 current sites in the scheme supported by BHCC plus another 3 in schools/community gardens that have set up their own schemes based on the model. Of the 35 sites approximately 60% are at capacity and in the 35 sites we have 1005 households involved as users. These sites divert approximately 89 tonnes from landfill each year. The target for new sites is to have a total of 50 sites by 2020 and we have a potential of 6 new sites that we are currently working on.

The council and partners have been developing the Food Strategy and Action Plan 2018-22, and are exploring ways to reduce food waste such as:

- innovative approaches in order to prevent food waste in first place – move to a 'Food use' not a food waste agenda
- better redistribution of surplus food to people (and if not people, then animals)
- failing that, more composting / anaerobic digestion.

(11) Councillor Sykes

Please can a statement be given on the status of and projections for Warm Safe Homes grants, an element of the revised Disabled Facilities Grant?

Reply from Councillor Meadows – Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee

Warm, Safe Homes grant is available to help low income home owners and private tenants where the household is in fuel poverty measured by the Low Income High Cost indicator or in receipt of any one of the pass-porting benefits for DFG.

The funding contributes to delivery of our Housing Strategy priorities - improving housing quality, housing conditions and energy efficiency, and our Fuel Poverty and Affordable Warmth Strategy - effectively targeting vulnerable fuel poor households and those at most risk of the health impacts of cold homes.

The vast majority of referrals have come via Brighton & Hove Energy Services Co-operative (BHESCo.) Warm, Safe Homes grant is a discretionary grant, available subject to funding; the maximum amount of assistance available increased from £5k approved by H&NHC Sept '17 to £7.5k approved by H&NHC Sept '18.

In 2017/18 (Q4) we completed 16 Warm, Safe Homes grants

Projections:

This year to date (Q1&2) we completed 19 Warm, Safe Homes grants, total spend: £39,642.20, average cost: £2,086.43; projected for the year: 38 completions, total spend £80k. Works to date include: providing extended warranties for equipment funded under DFG such as hoists, stair-lifts & closomat toilets (x10), window replacement (x 2), secondary glazing (x 1), boiler replacement (x 3), central heating (x 1), level access shower & stair lift repair/upgrades (x2) .

(12) Councillor Sykes

Please can the lead Councillor state how many BHCC sheltered housing schemes have access to Wi-Fi for residents?

Reply from Councillor Meadows – Chair of the Housing & New Homes Committee

The City council has two seniors housing blocks of flats in which wi-fi is available for residents in the communal lounge - they are Brook Meade extra care scheme and Leach Court.

Council staff are currently looking into the possibility of extending this provision to further schemes, and have requested information from other sheltered housing providers who we can learn from. This has been through the housing benchmarking organisation, Housemark.

The council is very keen to support work that ensures that no-one is digitally excluded, particularly those who are disadvantaged and/or isolated, and who stand to benefit immensely from something that many people in the city are able to take for granted. As well as supporting Digital Brighton & Hove, around 300 seniors housing residents have attended 'Get Digital' events and gadget drop-in sessions.

Some of the issues the council faces with the provision of free wi-fi include data management and ownership, cost, potential recharge or service charge, and suitable contracts with suppliers that do not leave residents with high future participation costs after an initial period. The issues are by no means insurmountable.

Once officers have finalised this accessibility work as part of a digital strategy for Housing, a report will come to the Housing & New Homes Committee with potential proposals.

(13) Councillor Taylor - School Crossing Officers

Can the chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee echo our support for the campaign by Withdean residents in securing the much loved lollipop service for students of Stanford Infants and Junior School and outline what the Administration will do to assist residents and schools in getting this

vital service back up and running?

Reply from Councillor Mitchell – Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

There is a national issue with the recruitment of school crossing patrol officers due to the nature of the role and the unsociable hours. However BHCC are committed to recruiting SCPO's and often appeal to schools and local residents to support the recruitment process.

Unfortunately the site at Millers Road has been vacant since December 2017 but we are continuing to try and recruit an officer for this position and we will be approaching Stanford Governors and Stanford PTA, in addition to looking at alternative design solutions such as pedestrian refuges to assist pedestrians and school children crossing safely.

(14) Councillor Nemeth – King Alfred

Given the estimated £669,000 that has already been expended by the Council on the latest King Alfred project (£409,000 officer costs and £260,000 consultant costs), what further costs are envisaged between now and project completion, and are such funds already in place?

Reply from Councillor Yates, Leader of the Council

As with the expenditure profile to date, activity and therefore cost to the Council is dependent on the phase the project has reached. Subject to completion of the Development Agreement in the coming months, the cost to the Council during the next two years is expected to be akin to that incurred during the past year. As with all projects managed by the Council's Major Projects Team, resource requirements are reviewed at least annually and financial resources are allocated as part of the budget setting process. The King Alfred project is one of the Council's strategic priorities. Appropriate financial provision has therefore been made and this is considered to be sufficient based on the currently anticipated delivery timetable.

(15) Councillor Mac Cafferty

Further to my written question to Councillor Cattell two years ago about the roof audit study of 2014* which found that the equivalent of up to 100 Olympic swimming pools of water could be held back from the city's roads and drains, could I ask how this study is informing the city's future resilience?

*<https://building-green.org.uk/2015/01/24/huge-potential-for-green-roofs-to-improve-the-centreof-brighton/>

Reply from Councillor Cattell – Chair of the Planning Committee

BHCC is the lead partner on The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere programme, for which green and blue infrastructure is one of the main priorities identified for action.

Brighton & Hove City Plan Part One recognises the importance of green infrastructure and green roofs in enhancing biodiversity, energy efficiency and mitigating climate impacts. These impacts include urban heat island effect and flash floods caused by heavy rainfall events. It is recognised that green roofs can offer multiple benefits of helping to reduce surface water runoff, making buildings more sustainable, and enhancing biodiversity and the green network.

There are direct and indirect references to green roofs throughout City Plan Part One which have facilitated and encouraged the inclusion of green roofs within a number of development schemes in the city, especially major developments.

Some examples of where green roofs have been secured through planning consents are:

- Former Texaco Garage (Kingsway/ Victoria Terrace)
- Preston Barracks
- Anston House

This approach is further developed through the design policies of the Draft City Plan Part Two and will also be considered as part of taking work forward on preparing the Urban Design Framework Supplementary Planning Framework.

A high profile green roof was installed on The Level Cafe as part of the HLF-funded project.

As part of the New Homes for Communities Programme, there are green roofs on:

- Robert Lodge, Whitehawk
- Brooke Mead, City Centre
- Rotherfield Crescent, Hollingbury
- And a green wall at Kite Place

The council's Architecture Team also explores opportunities for green roof applications and these have been successfully installed at:

- Downsvie Link College
- Balfour Junior School
- Whitehawk Hub
- Roundabout Children's Centre

(16) Councillor Mac Cafferty

Further to my written question to last full council about the Council Tax Protocol, new figures from debt help charity StepChange tell us that in the first half of 2018, more than 30 per cent of new clients were behind on their council tax - by

far the highest category of debt arrears. Given that paying council tax continues to be a struggle for many in the city can I ask for an update on how this is being understood by the administration the Corporate Debt Board?

Reply from Councillor Hamilton – Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy, Resources & Growth Committee

The Corporate Debt Policy is currently being redrafted and will be taken for approval to the Policy resources & Growth Committee on 24 January 2019. The Corporate Debt Board oversees the collection of debt in the Council and the application of the Policy. It has four stated principles, to:

- establish a proportionate, fair and effective end to end approach to debt management;
- use analytics to understand the debt portfolio and drive best practice for debt management;
- instil an ethos of fairness, built upon principles that recognise the impact debt collection has on the vulnerable; and
- have a proportionate enforcement response to those who do not pay on time.

Principles of fairness are at the centre of the Council's approach to debt collection. Within this the Council Tax service takes an approach to debt recovery that is proportionate, fair, recognises the impact that debt collection has upon the vulnerable, and is aimed at preventing long term debt. Under the direction of the Board a newly formed corporate debt team is analysing the council's debt portfolio to identify residents who have large debt or multiple debt and instigating early intervention, recognised universally as most effective way to support people in debt. The team will provide the appropriate direct support to people in debt including signposting to voluntary organisations who can offer specialist and independent assistance for people in debt. This work builds on the support mechanisms that are already extensively used across Council services. These include the Council Tax Debt Prevention team, the Welfare Rights Team, the Discretionary Help and Advice Team (including Local Discretionary social Fund) and the Homeless Prevention Trailblazers.

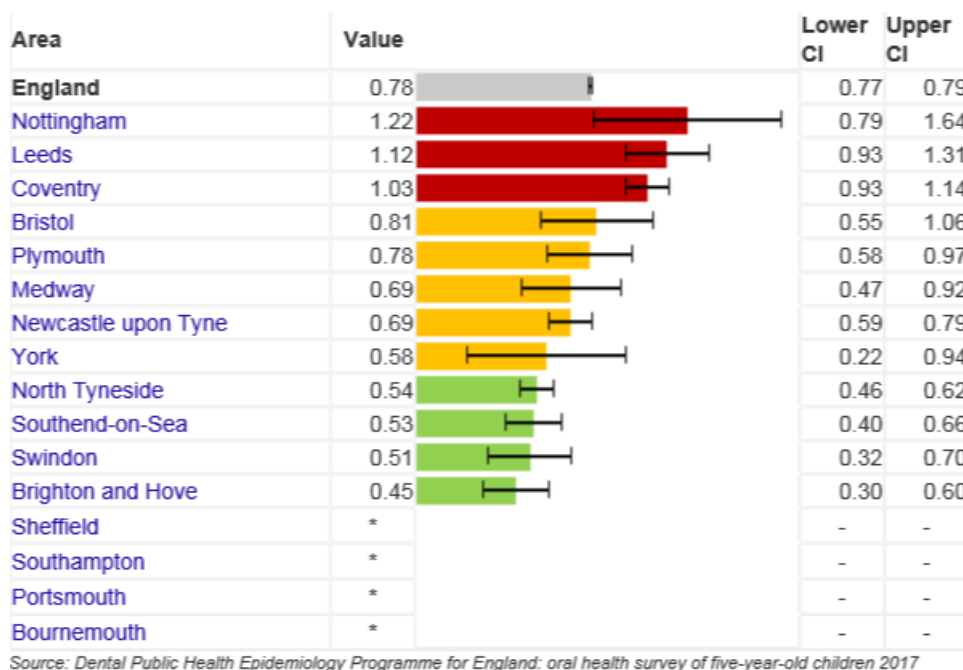
(17) Councillor Mac Cafferty

A survey this month by childcare.co.uk reveals that 3 in 4 teachers have daily teeth brushing sessions for primary pupils who do not do it at home. In Brighton & Hove 131 of the 305 children admitted to hospital for teeth extraction in 2015 /16 were aged 5-9 years. Given the importance of dental hygiene and increased knowledge about its connection to heart conditions later in life, can the administration inform me of what work they are doing to bring down this number of largely preventable hospital admissions and improve dental hygiene for primary pupils?

Reply from Councillor Chapman – Chair of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee

Brighton & Hove Oral Health Programme for Children

Brighton & Hove local authority has lower levels of dental decay than the average for England. The most recently reported survey of 5 year old children's dental health took place in 2016/17, when the average decayed, missing and filled teeth per child was 0.45. This is lower than the England average of 0.78 and CIPFA comparators.



Not all childhood admissions to hospital for dental extractions will be due to dental decay (caries), which is preventable. Eighty-eight children aged 5-9 years were admitted to hospital for dental extractions due to decay in 2016/17, and the rate is comparable to the England average.

	Brighton & Hove	England
	% and number of dental extractions in 5-9 year olds with a primary diagnosis of caries	% of dental extractions in 5-9 year olds with a primary diagnosis of caries
2016/17	0.6% (n 88)	0.7%
2015/16	0.8% (n 110)	0.7%
2014/15	0.8% (n 115)	0.7%

Source: Public Health England Dental Public Health Intelligence Programme. Hospital Episodes Statistics. Extractions data: 0-19 year olds, 2011-12 to 2016-17.

Good oral hygiene practices need to be adopted as soon as a baby's milk teeth start to appear, this includes regular tooth brushing with the appropriate amount of fluoride toothpaste, as well as healthy eating and drinking, with low sugar consumption and regular dental check-ups. BHCC are working with our

providers Sussex Community Foundation NHS Trust, to protect children's teeth through a range of oral health programmes.

Oral health promotion (OHP) interventions take place in a range of children's settings. These include Early Years Nurseries, Children's Centres, Child Health Clinics, Primary Schools, and Special Schools. In 2017/18, one hundred and twenty one OHP sessions took place across these settings, reaching approximately 5,000 people.

Tooth brushing schemes are running in the eight Children Centre hubs, and Moulsecoomb and St. Nicholas Primary Schools. These reach approximately 500 children per week. The primary school schemes are linked to breakfast clubs. All nurseries are supplied with a toolkit to support supervised tooth brushing. Child Health Clinics are supplied with toothbrushes and toothpaste, together with six monthly visits by the OHP Team.

The OHP Team is piloting a "Link Champion" programme with the Health Visiting Service to encourage dental attendance by young children in line with the national campaign of "Dental Check by One" and providing parents with oral health information and a checklist for their baby's teeth.

The OHP Team also target vulnerable children through home visits to families at the request of health visitors; delivering healthy eating and tooth brushing sessions in Special Schools; supporting the Pre School Special Educational Needs Service and making monthly visits to Gypsy and traveller sites to give oral health advice to parents, as well as distributing tooth brushes and tooth paste.

Other work that has targeted young children's oral health has included the delivery of Sugar Smart Assemblies as part of the Public Health Schools Programme. Twenty-eight sessions were delivered by the OHP Team in 2017/18. Public Health has also piloted a Sugar Smart Dental Toolkit with 19 dental practices. This included tooth brushing charts, sugar smart challenges and sugar swaps and colourful stickers, leaflets and posters supporting the national Top Tips for Teeth campaign. It is currently being evaluated.

General Dental Practitioners (GDPs) are also preventing decay in young children through the application of fluoride varnish to teeth.

(18) Councillor Mac Cafferty

According to the Grimsey Review* from July this year, lease lengths for high street shops have decreased and will continue to do so creating increased uncertainty for investors "which will have an impact on investment decisions." What assurances can I have the Administration will absorb this information in good time for any major development decision involving retail?

*<http://www.vanishinghighstreet.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/GrimseyReview2.pdf>

Reply from Councillor Robins – Chair of the Tourism, Development & Culture Committee

The Administration are in continual discussion with Aberdeen Standard Investments regarding the Waterfront project, and ASI have been sharing their thinking about the future of retail. We will also be continuing to have these discussions as the project is progressed, including receiving from ASI regular updates in the financial viability of the project, as required within the legal agreement. It is ASI's contention that Brighton remains their top performing asset in the UK and for this reason they remain very confident about its future. They also have pent up demand from retailers, particularly overseas retailers, to be part of the city's retail offer. As a shopping centre trust, ASI are very aware of the issues affecting retail and will not be choosing to continue with this proposal if they believe the risks from the retail sector are going to have a detrimental impact. ASI believe retail is changing rapidly and they will be embracing these changes as part of their new offer.

The Grimsey report also talks about the importance of community spaces and places to dwell. ASI will be focussing on this in terms of their final mixed use development and we fully expect to see leisure, food and beverage and retail as part of the new spaces, albeit in new forms that will provide a new offer in new ways. We all accept this is a time of transition for retail and we fully expect to see ASI communicating their ideas about this as the project begins to shape during next year. We must remember this is at their risk, so the council are not taking development risk on this project.

