

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 West - Resident Parking Permit surcharges

What additional administrative cost is incurred from offering quarterly or half yearly residents parking permits? Given digital transaction costs are low, is the current and proposed surcharge justifiable? Low income households can experience cash flow difficulties which prevent their paying upfront for longer permit periods. Will the Budget proposal ensure the surcharge is minimised and only covers justifiable cost?

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

(2) Councillor West - Business Parking Permit Surcharges

Is the proposed 15% surcharge on quarterly business parking permits, over and above the proposed annual charge, justifiable on the basis of additional administrative cost?

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

(3) Councillor West - Budget readiness for carbon neutrality

Transport makes up over a quarter of the city's carbon footprint, much of which relates to the use of the city's 100,000 private cars. Private car use needs to be reduced to help tackle air pollution, congestion and road danger in the city; freeing space and supporting more people to travel actively on foot and bike or by public transport. The Council has declared a climate emergency and is committed to the city becoming carbon neutral by 2030. Parking charges are a strong lever the council is able to use to encourage less car use. The Administration's draft budget proposes to raise income from parking charges by a very modest amount, is that sufficient? Will the budget as a whole show strong ambition in readying the city for carbon neutrality?

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

(4) Councillor West - Park and Ride and "EV Car Revolution"

Meeting the challenges of climate change requires bold, community-focused change. So, I am concerned the Chair of ETS is intent on including consideration of Park and Ride in LTP5. Park and Ride is not a solution, it merely shifts toxic car emissions from one part of our city to another – it will not

cut congestion, reduce air pollution or make the option to travel by bike or on foot safer and more attractive. It's also difficult and costly to implement. For decades successive Labour and Council councils have promised Brighton & Hove voters Park and Ride, yet never delivered it. Despite this truth, the Labour Party just can't let go of their fantasy of a 'big solution'. Just last week, we also read the Leader of the Council, Nancy Platts, stating that an 'electric car revolution' is on its way. Emissions from transport equates to more than a quarter of our local carbon footprint, with personal car travel a big contributor. There are 100,000 cars in the city, can that continue? Will changing them all for electric cars make much difference? Given the investment that would be required in electricity generation, transmission and charging infrastructure, as well as the high level of energy embodied in making the vehicles, the answer is probably no. We must acknowledge for many, cars are still the only accessible mode of transport – but that an RAC survey found that people would ditch the car, if public transport was cheaper and more available.

Let's be clear: piecemeal solutions will not meet the challenge of climate crisis. If we agree there is an emergency, we need to shift our conversations towards supporting people to make positive changes. Whether it's pushing for action on dirty air pollution, a boost to public transport, walking and cycling, or a Green New Deal to create jobs in renewable energy sectors, there are important and ambitious ways to create a positive change. We need our leaders to grasp the scale of the problem and lead the way on city-wide solutions – not put all their energy into promoting ineffective sticking plasters.

Will the Chair of ETS make clear that Park & Ride will not aid realising carbon neutrality by 2030, and therefore will not be progressed in LTP5?

Reply from Councillor Pissaridou, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee.

(5) Councillor Heley

At the last full council meeting I was delighted that the Green New Deal Motion that myself and Cllr Hills proposed received unanimous, cross-party support. Will the Leader of the Council provide an update on the Green New Deal report that was requested in the motion, including details on:

- If any stakeholders are involved
- Who the lead officers are that have been assigned to this report
- What the proposed timescale is
- When the city can expect to see the final version.

Reply from Councillor Platts, Leader of the Council.

(6) Councillor Heley

Does the Administration have any plans to change existing emissions-based tariffs for residents parking permits, e.g. to expand beyond the 2 tiers of high and low emission vehicles? In order to tackle air pollution and to incentivise use of low emission vehicles, it would be good to have a further breakdown of emission levels with more being charged for higher emitting vehicles?

Reply from Councillor Pissaridou, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee.

(7) Councillor Ebel

Can you please give us an update on how many of the Non-British EU citizens in Brighton & Hove

- a) have applied for Settled Status so far
- b) have been granted Settled Status so far
- c) have been granted Pre-Settled Status so far
- d) have not yet applied for Settled Status
- e) have used the service in Brighton Town Hall to scan their ID and documents to apply for Settled Status

The New European and other newspapers recently revealed that the Android app that is used to apply for Settled Status can be easily hacked and that sensitive information, such as passport information, passwords and facial scans can be stolen without circumstance. Can you please confirm that the scanners provided by the Council in Brighton Town Hall have been checked following these revelations and that the security flaws do not affect the scanners?

Reply from Councillor Platts, Leader of the Council.

(8) Councillor Rainey - Single-use plastics

Efforts to make Brighton and Hove single-use plastic free have been going on since 2017 when a petition and Notice of Motion from the Green Party, calling for the city to pledge to become plastic free, were passed at full council. Many of the city's large events, and a number of businesses, have now committed to phasing out single-use plastics and earlier this year a campaign was launched for Brighton to achieve Plastic Free Community status.

This autumn Penzance was declared the UK's first town to achieve Plastic Free Community status. This status involves the council eliminating all single use items from their premises and supporting Plastic Free Community initiatives across the town. In Penzance local businesses and communities have been engaged with, and 12 local schools have become plastic free.

Brighton and Hove has the ability to become the first city in the UK to be awarded Plastic Free Community status, and we have already committed to becoming plastic free. However single-use plastic is still being used by many businesses, communities and schools across the city. Please can we have an update on what has been successfully done so far, and when we expect to achieve plastic free status?

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

(9) Councillor Clare

Amendments passed in the 2019-20 budget included £0.022m for City Clean to support Universities with a recycling project to minimise fly-tipping at the end of term. How has this been used?

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

(10) Councillor Clare

Could you supply me with the proportion of CTR recipients in council tax arrears per year from 2015-2019?

Reply from Councillor Yates, Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy & Resources Committee

(11) Councillor Clare

What proportion of events in the city have incurred fines for the state of land at the end of events and of these, are any on Hove Lawns?

Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee

(12) Councillor Hugh-Jones

Since 1 April 2018, private landlords are no longer permitted to let domestic properties on new tenancies to new or existing tenants if the property's Energy Efficiency Certificate rating is F or G (unless an exemption applies). From 1 April 2020, this exemption will apply to all such properties even where there is no change in tenancy.

Enforcement is a matter for the local authority. Local authorities may serve compliance notices up to 12 months after a suspected breach has occurred. Where a local authority confirms that a property is (or has been) let in breach of the Regulations, it may impose a financial penalty up to 18 months after the breach and/or publish details of the breach for at least 12 months. By way of example, penalties for renting out a non-compliant property for 3 months or more are up to £4000 per property.

In light of the above, what steps is the Council taking to prepare to enforce EPC ratings in the private rental sector after April?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of the Housing Committee

(13) Councillor Fishleigh

The i360 says that it will contribute £640million to the local economy over the next 25 years which amounts to £70,000 a day every day, can you give us a breakdown of this figure in terms of financial benefits to hotels and other accommodation, restaurants, cafes and bars, car parks, independent shops and other tourist attractions?

Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee

(14) Councillor Hills

Following the motion put forward by Councillor Amy Heley at the last full council meeting, we've agreed as a council to work towards a Green New Deal policy framework, which means restructuring our economy to work towards eliminating carbon emissions and increasing biodiversity, while boosting local jobs. To do this effectively, we will need to train a high number of workers in a range of skills.

- I'd like to ask the leader of the council if the skills and specialisms needed for this transition have been identified and if so, could this made public?
- What will the council do to make sure that we can recruit enough local people to take up these roles?
- What work is currently being done to ensure local colleges, training providers and employers can provide effective training for these new positions?

Reply from Councillor Platts, Leader of the Council

(15) Councillor Nield

Varndean School has recently sent out plans to local residents showing its proposed expansion. Residents are concerned about the effects on local traffic of an increase in pupil numbers. There have already been serious accidents involving pupils on both Ditchling Road and Preston Drove, and parking at the top of Balfour Road at school pick up and drop off times can already be dangerous and chaotic.

Residents would like to know what plans the council has to mitigate the repercussions of increased pupil numbers on traffic and parking around the school, and what plans they have to improve the safety of those pupils who walk and cycle to both Varndean and the other schools which share the grounds of the Surrenden campus.

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

(16) Councillor Hugh-Jones

When Boots and the Coop closed on London Road in preparation for the redevelopment of that site, it was anticipated that Boots would move across the road. There have since been reports that this has fallen through. Will the Health and Wellbeing Board be raising this serious failure of provision to local residents, particularly as this relates to prescription services?

Reply from Councillor Moonan, Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board

(17) Councillor Hugh-Jones

Also, on the subject of London Road, where can residents find information about the proposed redevelopment? The information on the Council's website appears to date from 2013.

Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee

(18) Councillor Mac Cafferty

Can you please tabulate the quantity of complaints about licensed premises for each street in Brunswick and Adelaide Ward per year in the past five years? In 2019 which licensed premises and the corresponding street; in 2018 which licensed premises and the corresponding street; in 2017 which licensed premises and the corresponding street; in 2016 which licensed premises and the corresponding street; in 2015 which licensed premises and the corresponding street.

Reply from Councillor O'Quinn, Chair of the Licensing Committee

(19) Councillor Mac Cafferty

Can you please tabulate the quantity of fixed penalty notices for environmental offences of littering, littering from vehicles, dog fouling, graffiti, fly posting, unauthorised flyering, industrial and commercial waste receptacle offence, residential fly tipping, commercial fly tipping, disposing of commercial waste illegally, failure of business to produce a waste transfer note per year from March 2016 to December 2019. In 2016, how many FPNs and for which offence; in 2017 how many FPNs and for which offence; in 2018 how many FPNs and for which offence; in 2019 how many FPNs and for which offence. The last time I asked this question I was informed that the council didn't have data before March 2016, why is that given that we have had FPNs since the 1990 Environmental Protection Act.

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

(20) Councillor Mac Cafferty

As records have been kept only by ward since 2018/19, can you please tabulate new reports of, or enquiries regarding, ASB for each street in Brunswick and Adelaide Ward per month. This would mean each street will have a clear record of reports for each month for this period. As reports weren't kept per ward what was recorded prior to this, and how do I understand what incidents, reports or enquiries happened on the streets in my ward before this point?

Reply from Councillor Childs, Lead Member for Community Safety

(21) Councillor Mac Cafferty

At last full council I tried to ask questions about:

- (1) the quantity of complaints about communal bin collections;
- (2) the quantity of complaints about the state of communal bins and;
- (3) the age of each communal bin,

on each street in Brunswick and Adelaide Ward for the past five years?
But was told that this information is not available as complaints have not been recorded in this way. As the area of the city where communal recycling was trialled in 2012 and as one of the first areas of the city with some of the oldest communal waste bins how am I to understand now, not after the audit, how the council understands

- (1) the quantity of complaints about communal bin collections;
- (2) the quantity of complaints about the state of communal bins and;
- (3) the age of each communal bin. Especially as the city does record quantities of missed collections for recycling and this is captured in the KPIs report.

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

(22) Councillor Gibson

Please provide a table showing the additional council homes provided for each year (or part year) 2015/16 through until the part year 2019/20 up till December 15th and for each year (or part year) show the additional annual rent income receivable for these homes at today's rents?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of the Housing Committee

(23) Councillor Gibson

For the home purchase policies operation up until December 15th 2019, please can you provide:

- the number of homes on which a purchase has been completed and of the number used as temporary and as general needs?
- A breakdown of the numbers charging social rents, 27.5% Living wage, 37.5% Living wage and Local housing allowance?
- A breakdown of the number of properties coming from the "first refusal" option when RTB homes are sold on and the numbers coming from other routes?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of the Housing Committee

(24) Councillor Gibson

Please can you explain the “anomaly” experienced with the DWP indicating how this is hampering the councils collection of rent on behalf of seaside homes and when it is anticipated that this anomaly will be resolved (also some details on how the collection procedures are being reviewed and what (if any) changes are being implemented to improve on the 85.6 % collection rate reported to P&R)? (see answers to P&R – 5th December)

Reply from Councillor Yates, Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy & Resources Committee

(25) Councillor Gibson

Of the borrowing taken out at 2.17% (average rate) what percentage of the assumed borrowing was actually taken up? (see written answers to P&R on 5th on December)

Reply from Councillor Yates, Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy & Resources Committee

(26) Councillor Gibson

As of 15th December, how much of the £1m rent reserve created in the 2019/20 budget to support social rents and 27.5% Living wage rents has been spent, and how many additional homes at social rents and 27.5% living wage (living) rents is it projected will be supported during the rest of the current financial year?

Reply from Councillor Yates, Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy & Resources Committee

(27) Councillor Gibson

What is the proposed (2020/21) CPZ permit increase per week for a full scheme permit and the proposed cost of “surcharge” per week on each of 2nd and 3rd permits?

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

(28) Councillor Gibson

As of December 15th, 2019;

- How many council homes have been sold under the RTB during this financial year?
- What is the current level HRA borrowing and how much is this under the previous borrowing cap?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of the Housing Committee

(29) Councillor Osborne - Possibilities to claim extra support and how the Administration is encouraging this

With the complicated means-tested benefit system that we have in the UK there are millions of people each year that don't realise that they are due extra support and fail to claim. As a result, there is extra demand placed on council run services.

1. What extra support is available for residents to apply for in terms of benefits, tax relief etc both from the council and nationally?
2. What are the take-up rates of these various possible support schemes in terms of number of eligible people vs actual number of claimants (in Brighton and Hove)? How does this compare with other local authorities?
3. Are these figures regularly tracked to see if there are any trends emerging?
4. What actions are the administration currently taking to promote the availability of these schemes and how are they supporting people when applying?
5. Are there any further plans to support people when applying in the future and to help to increase their uptake?

Reply from Councillor Yates, Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy & Resources Committee

(30) Councillor Osborne - Universal Credit

The national government embarked on an overhaul of the welfare system when they started the transition towards universal credit. There have been several delays in the roll out of this but how far through the roll out are we as of December 2019 in terms of the % of claimants who now receive universal credit? When do we expect all claimants to be moved onto this system?

Reply from Councillor Yates, Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy & Resources Committee

(31) Councillor Powell – Tree Planting

In July 2019, the BBC reported that "*Ethiopia has planted more than 350 million trees in a day, officials say, in what they believe is a world record.*"

How many trees were felled by BHCC in the last year? And how many trees were planted in the last year by BHCC? Crucially, what plan has this labour administration committed to (along with ideas such as Plant Your Postcode) to plant even more trees in the next few years, now that our council has declared a climate emergency?

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

(32) Councillor Powell

Since the eligibility age for concessionary bus fares is set to rise to the age of 66 by October 2020, can the ETS Chair please confirm if this has in fact, already been actioned by BHCC? And if not, when?

And importantly, what specifically will the surplus income be used for, going forward? Could Companion Passes for those residents accompanying disabled passengers be an option, as in other authorities? As currently, BHCC do not offer these.

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

(33) Councillor Powell – Blue Badges

BBC in June 2019 reported: *“About 2.35 million people in the UK have blue badge permits because of physical mobility difficulties or are registered blind. People with hidden disabilities are now also being considered as the change came into force on 30 August 2019. Scotland and Wales have already implemented similar rules to include some mental health impairments, (but the criteria is yet to be altered in Northern Ireland). The government said it would provide an extra £1.7m to help councils cope with the expected increase in applications”.*

Has BHCC advertised this change, and informed Service users and community groups (as I am not aware of any such publicity)? And have they seen such applications increase? If not, will BHCC look into this matter forthwith?

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

(34) Councillor Druitt

Recently a small number of councillors from Labour & Green parties visited Tablehurst Farm in Forest Row and experienced what sustainable community farming looks like. By its own admission it was not a perfect example, rather they were ‘on a journey’. However, they haven’t used pesticides or herbicides for over 40 years; the quality of their soil and their biodiversity is outstanding; and the level of employment, community engagement and educational opportunity is second to none.

Bearing in mind most of our city’s water comes directly from our own downland estate and currently the (untreated) water quality in the city is amongst the worst in the whole South Downs, isn’t it high time we stopped allowing herbicides and pesticides on our land and managed the transition to sustainable, community farming practices that do not pollute the environment,

have a much lower carbon footprint and offer far more in terms of employment, community engagement and education?

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

