

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The following questions have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answer as detailed below:

(1) Councillor Platts:

I'm pleased the Administration supported Labour's amendment at the recent Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee, calling for local residents and stakeholder groups to be consulted and be able to offer input into the process before the implementation of tranche 2 emergency temporary transport changes. We set out a reasonable timeframe for meaningful consultation. Please can I get an update on that consultation?

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

We are currently still awaiting a response from the Department for Transport on the outcome of our Emergency Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 bid. Despite initial confirmation that this would be in early September, an announcement has still not been made. We are committed to the 6-week consultation outlined in the September ETS committee decision, subject to it not putting the funding stream at risk. A draft consultation plan is being developed and will be brought to the special ETS committee to discuss this item with members, as committed in September.

(2) Councillor Platts:

Labour were pleased to work cross-party with other political groups in order to set up a range of working groups when in administration. We set up a cross-party Community Wealth Building group, as well as Project Boards covering Black Rock, i360, King Alfred, Madeira Terraces and Waterfront. Lots of these have understandably been held due to the public health crisis. Please can I get an update on each of these project boards, as well as the Community Wealth Building Working Group?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

You are correct to identify that most of the project boards have started to meet again after the public health crisis as part of the governance around major projects. The Black Rock project board has looked at the designs for the proposals and considered the public art strategy that will be pursued. The King Alfred project board is looking at options for how the development of the site needs to consider the wider leisure strategy for the city. The i360 Member Working Group has heard positive news about how the i360 is performing relative to other visitor attraction in the city and further afield. Policy & Resources recently agreed the RIBA stage 0-1 report for Madeira Terraces and agreed that officers could move the design on further in consultation with that project board. The Waterfront Project Board is expected to meet in November

to start considering how we will arrive at a specification for a new conference centre and venue in the city.

The Corporate Plan commitment to a Community Wealth Building Programme had started with officers commissioning a report into Community Wealth Building in Brighton by the Centre for Local Economic Strategies. A first draft was received in December 2019, and by the time it had been finalised the public health crisis had started and then member working groups were not meeting. Member working groups were reconvened in July and obviously the focus was initially on restarting the ones that had already been operational – such as the Carbon Neutral 2030 Member Working Group that was already well established. The Community Wealth Building member working group was not brought together before the change of administration.

Officers will now take some time to sit down with members and understand what a Community Wealth Building Programme should cover. It is a broad topic, and a member working group ideally needs to be targeted to be able to deliver real benefits in the city. Officers are committed to work with members to deliver this.

(3) Councillor Platts:

COVID-19 impacts upon all of us, but the evidence suggests it hits disadvantaged families the hardest. We know there is already an attainment gap for children living in areas of disadvantage and I am concerned the public health crisis will cause this gap to widen further. What is the Administration doing to ensure that existing educational attainment gap is not widened due to COVID-19?

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

At last full council, I indicated that disadvantage would be a priority for this administration and I reaffirm that commitment in writing today. This is something that has to go beyond education – looking at the full picture to tackle what creates this gap. Addressing the needs of disadvantage is a thread through our SEN; Early Help and Early Years Strategy. .

As you indicate, there could be a worrying deepening of disadvantage and a 'lost generation' due to the impacts of the pandemic. This is something we cannot let happen. A further strategy on Education Disadvantage will be further developed through a Covid lens later in the Autumn term and Spring term.

I am pleased that both under your administration and since, officers have been working hard to support children and families through the pandemic. Below is some of that detail.

This is not meant to be an exhaustive list of work currently taking place to ensure the attainment gap is now widened but gives key highlights. It should be noted that in summer 2020 no disadvantaged data was available from the DfE

to measure educational progress of these children. As the year goes on we will look to develop new success measures.

Support for Teaching and Learning in Schools:

The LA has written Home Learning guidance and disseminated best practice. In partnership with South Coast Teaching School Alliance provided extensive training program on home learning. There is a benefit both to catch up of disadvantaged and supporting during self- isolation or any possible lockdown.

The LA have actively engaged with schools and the DfE laptops program so over 1800 laptops have been successfully applied for disadvantaged pupils and those with a social worker in the City. The LA now support any application from the DfE when any school has a partial lockdown. This means the number of laptops is increasing.

Guidance has been produced for schools on how to use catch up money (£80 per child) to maximum effect. In conversations with schools we know of many schools who are using this money to employ teacher and teaching assistants to deliver interventions in reading, maths or other parts of the curriculum. Some schools are using funding to produce extra online or catch up packs that can be done outside of school hours. Some schools are commissioning 1:1 tutoring including from organisations such as 'Action Tutoring'. We will seek to support schools to engage with national disadvantaged 1:1 catch up when DfE share offer at end of October.

The LA have delivered training to heads and other school leaders and produced guidance on recovery curriculum to include support with wellbeing and assessment. This has been welcomed by leaders.

Every Child a Reader Program has continued as pupils have returned to school. Nine schools in the city with high numbers of disadvantaged pupils continue to deliver Reading Recovery (the most intensive part of ECAR) and hold ECaR School accreditation. Reading recovery teachers in the ECAR schools have been able to advise, mentor and support others in the school with responsibilities for children's literacy as well as run interventions in their own schools. In addition to this, nine further schools (with high numbers of disadvantaged) have been targeted to receive additional training for staff and support with specialist resources. A further offer of training is being made to all schools in the City on running successful ECAR interventions for disadvantaged. This is due to start in January.

Every Child Counts (ECC) could not be started during lockdown and we are now to promote training from January as well as commission a number of direct ECC interventions for pupils.

Attendance is clearly an absolute priority post lockdown. To support the attendance of disadvantaged pupil the LA attendance team have:

- Simplified systems to ensure more responsive online/email/phone support for schools from Attendance Team.

- Brighton and Hove inclusion support rolled out the ATTEND form all schools to explore the reasons for absence and ensure tailored support devised.
- Encouraged all schools to take up Studybugs attendance support IT package to improve systems and free up staff time for casework.

Support for Early Years

Huge emphasis is place on Early Years when addressing the needs of disadvantaged particularly post Covid this includes:

- Focussing on high take up of childcare places by low-income two-year olds including providing council nurseries in disadvantaged areas.
- Rolling out the national Early Years Professional Development Programme to settings with the most disadvantaged children to develop skills of practitioners in speech, language and communication and create communication friendly settings
- Promoting home learning using the Raising Early Achievement in Literacy (REAL) Programme being delivered virtually with the Library Service and EMAS to disadvantaged families including those with English as an additional language.
- Supporting families with parenting, parental conflict, and health needs in partnership with health visitors. Providing Access to Childcare and Employment (PACE) to support disadvantaged parents to access childcare, training, volunteering and employment.

Leadership and Governance

The LA have revised the School Improvement System and all meetings this term with schools focus conversations on disadvantage and catch up through a Covid lens. They are highly supportive and of course challenge schools on provision for disadvantage.

The LA has revised its program to support Headteacher wellbeing so chances are maximised of Heads being able to lead well in recovery phase

Governor training and workshops are taking place that have Disadvantage as part of or their only focus. Training planned includes more emphasis of addressing outcome for disadvantage during Covid

As you will know, Poverty Proofing (PP) audits were carried out in 90% of schools between April 2017 March 2019. To follow this up Children North East has developed a Covid Poverty proofing model. This involves a training session for senior leaders in school, follow up interviews (held virtually) by members of the PP team and a (virtual) staff meeting with the Senior Leadership Team to discuss the findings. Members from the original Brighton and Hove Poverty Proofing team are receiving training in November and the plan is to offer these visits to 20 schools from January 2021. We will target schools and also aim to work with at least one school in each partnership, developing school champions, so the work will reach beyond the schools. We will also create documentation that all schools can use.

Support for Families

Family Learning run a range of online live courses for parents and families to support disadvantaged families <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/families-children-and-learning/family-learning-online-classroom> . One example is “Supporting a child with anxiety” which is due to start next month and proving popular. Other opportunities including “Keeping up with Maths” or “Mindfulness”

EMAS (Ethnic Minority Achievement Service) continue to provide home school liaison and support families and children and families post lockdown. This can involve very practical support helping overcome any barriers in the home or at school that can in any way stop a BAME child thriving. This can be anything from understanding admissions to helping a family access home learning. EMAS run specific intervention for BAME children in Early Years. For example REAL as mentioned previously.

(4) Councillor Barnett:

I refer to the council land comprising Benfield Valley Golf Course that I understand is currently on a long lease.

Can the Leader of the Council confirm?

- a) The extent of the land that has been leased and its definition
- b) The year the land was leased by the council
- c) The term of the long lease
- d) The amount the land was leased for
- e) How much it would cost for the council to buy back the long lease.

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

There is a 225-year lease in place, originally granted in 1992 by Hove Borough Council to J Sainsbury plc. The lease formed part of the Section 106 planning agreement for the Sainsbury development (also the adjacent Wimpey, Meads residential development). In addition to the CPO of the land at that time the objective was for appropriate comprehensive development, restricting uses with ensuring and preserving rights of way. The lease has subsequently been assigned and the current lessee is Benfield Investments Ltd on a pepper corn rent. Any surrender of the current lease back to the council would be subject to negotiation and would be based on the value to lessees, if indeed the current lessees are willing to surrender the lease.

