

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 Yates – Parking in Coombe Road area:

Since the introduction of the residents parking scheme in the coombe road area (zone U) parking pressures have eased considerably and residents are truly relieved. Could the Lead member please advise how residents can contribute to a review of the impact and have their proposed improvements to layout incorporated into this? These ideas include additional bays, enhanced access for motorcycles and the introduction of paid on street cycle storage facilities.

Reply from Councillor Heley, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**(2) Councillor Platts – Educational Outcomes in East Brighton:**

Class Divide is a grassroots campaign fighting to draw attention to the deeply unjust educational attainment gap for young people from the communities of Whitehawk, Manor Farm and Bristol Estate in East Brighton. East Brighton is an area that is economically disadvantaged with a high level of child poverty. The campaign highlights the lower rates of attainment at GCSE's in a range of subjects including English and maths and the higher rate of exclusions and referrals to special schools. This has a negative effect on children's life chances, embedding disadvantage through to adulthood and perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Will the Council commit to meeting the five demands of the campaign? In summary:

1. An annual report to the Children, Young People and Skills Committee on the school outcomes and attainment of children living Whitehawk, Bristol Estate and Manor Farm.
2. To publish a plan that specifically addresses what actions will be taken to reduce the identified educational inequalities experienced by children, young people and adults this area.
3. To make training on the experiences of working-class children in education compulsory for all school leaders and teachers in Brighton and Hove.
4. To take action to reduce the rate of school exclusions and the placement of children in alternative schools
5. To give local people a second chance by providing local learning and training opportunities and develop advocacy support for parents struggling to keep their children in school.

Reply from Councillor Clare, Chair of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee**(3) Councillor Platts – Safety on Madeira Drive:**

Since the latest lockdown, Madeira Drive has once again become unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists, especially those with small children. The re-opening of Madeira Drive with one-way traffic has led to cars speeding between the Sea

Life Centre, Duke's Mound and Black Rock. Drivers have used this space to speed even when the five lanes on Marine Parade have been clear of traffic. On the weekend of 9th and 10th January, a combination of lockdown and sunny weather saw hundreds of people circulating in this area to get some fresh air and exercise after a week indoors. The volume of people was such that pedestrians were walking in the road to socially distance and were taken by surprise by vehicles. Some drivers were aggressive in trying to get through the crowds and the area was unsafe. Will the Council take urgent action to ensure there is sufficient space for people by either dedicating the area between the Sea Life Centre and Duke's Mound or Duke's Mound and Black Rock to pedestrians and cyclists whilst lockdown continues? From the Council's own figures produced in response to my previous written question, Black Rock car park is little used during the winter months.

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

(4) Councillor Platts – Food Supplies in the City:

Can the Council confirm the dates on which they have written to supermarket managers in our City asking them to take action to prevent panic buying since the start of the pandemic?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(5) Councillor Platts – Food Supplies in the City (2):

Can the Council confirm what action is being taken to ensure the City has a sustainable food supply now that we are experiencing the impact of Brexit in addition to the public health crisis?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(6) Councillor Platts – Disadvantage:

Trade union Usdaw has recently negotiated an increase in minimum pay for Morrison's workers and will become the first UK supermarket to pay at least £10 an hour from April. This is just over the current Brighton & Hove Living Wage of £9.50 per hour. Will the Council write to the Head Offices of other supermarkets with stores in Brighton & Hove urging them to do the same and help tackle disadvantage in our City?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(7) Councillor Platts – Community Wealth Building:

Will the Council commit to writing to all supermarket chains represented in the City to ask them how much local produce they stock; if they will increase their range and ensure such goods are prominently displayed and clearly labelled as being produced locally? This would support local producers to grow their businesses, create local jobs and contribute to a sustainable food supply as well as reducing food miles.

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(8) Councillor Allcock – Estate Development Budget:

The Estate Development Budget (EDB) is a scheme that was set up to respond to suggestions from Council tenants and provides money for ideas that can make a positive difference to their neighbourhood.

The requirements are that EDB projects:

- Involve and be supported by as many neighbours as possible
- Should be completed in the same financial year
- Do not cost more than £10,000 for main bids and £1,000 for quick bids
- Are not be something that could be done as a repair or as part of a larger maintenance programme

What performance management processes does the Council have in place for the EDB scheme?

Since the scheme was established, how many and what percentage of EDB bids/project:

- Have been completed within the same financial year as the bid was agreed?
- Are not completed and still outstanding?
- Could reasonably be construed as being a repair or part of the Council's Housing estate planned maintenance programme?

What is the monetary value of these bids/projects?

Reply from Councillor Gibson/Hugh-Jones, Joint Chair of the Housing Committee

(9) Councillor Grimshaw – Assisted Bin Collection Service:

Can it be confirmed how many residents use the assisted bin collection service and what are the figures regarding complaints? Is there a dedicated officer to coordinate assisted collections and how do the teams ensure that recycling, garden refuse and general waste are all aware of the need for assisted collection?

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

(10) Councillor Williams – SWEP:

There have been concerns raised by community groups that the council are operating what has been termed as 'Secret SWEP'. This is because arrangements for SWEP are not announced publicly thus difficult discover.

It is recognised that due to the pandemic, specific strategies to help rough sleepers have been put in place, and a lot of good work is being done. However, it is important concerned people, groups, and councillors are kept informed to enable people to actively help the homeless in bad weather. This is particularly important to make sure no one is left out.

The public wish to know what is the rational for SWEP method of operation at this time, is the everyone in policy being implemented compassionately and

sufficiently to include everyone in need and can we find a way to better inform when SWEP is triggered?

Reply from Councillor Gibson/Hugh-Jones, Joint Chair of the Housing Committee

(11) Councillor Childs – Planning:

I note with alarm the Government's new method for calculating house building targets which place the majority of the burden on the largest 20 English cities to fulfil national needs thus relieving Tory rural authorities of the need to build sufficient housing.

Will the Administration, take up with the Secretary of State, as a matter of urgency the new proposed housing targets that would require Brighton & Hove to increase its new housing target by over a third - placing more Green Field land at risk of development - and will they condemn the blatantly political method proposed by the Government that favours Conservative-led Councils?

Reply from Councillor Littman, Chair of the Planning Committee

(12) Councillor Wilkinson:

What measures are the Council taking to reduce vehicle speeds, improve pedestrian and cycle safety, improve air quality and encourage reduced car use in the Central Hove area?

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

(13) Councillor Mears – Contracts and Accountability (Spend Tables):

The Council's website states that payments over £250 are to be published each month on the council website in 'spend tables':

"Each month we publish all the payments over £250 that we've made. They include payments to suppliers, grants to voluntary organisations and payments to individuals.

We reduced the threshold of publishing payments from £500 to £250, following changes introduced by the government."

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/council-and-democracy/council-finance/payments-over-%C2%A3250>

Despite this policy, the last spend table uploaded by the Council for scrutiny by the public was for June 2020.

At a time when so much Government funding is being provided and spent there is a need for accountability and transparency.

Can the Finance Chair advise why no spend tables have been uploaded since June 2020?

Can the Finance Chair please provide the spend tables for the missing months in the response?

Reply from Councillor Druitt / Gibson, Joint Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy & Resources Committee

(14) Councillor Mears – Housing Repairs

The then Administration made a policy decision to insource the Housing Repairs Budget prior to last election.

Paperwork from the time estimated the cost of this policy decision would be nearly £10 million – to be incurred by the Housing Revenue Account.

What has been the additional cost of this policy to date beyond the original estimate, including costs associated with ongoing industrial action?

Bearing in mind that when this policy was presented prior to an election that very clear indications of the cost were provided, can the Chair confirm that the Housing Revenue Account, which is made up of tenants rent, will not be used to incur any ongoing additional costs going forward.

Reply from Councillor Gibson / Hugh-Jones, Joint Chair of the Housing Committee

(15) Councillor Barnett – Begging in the City

In an article in *The Argus* on 14 November 2020, Brighton Housing Trust's Andy Winter said that begging was the elephant in the room that needed addressing by the council and that a great opportunity has been missed to address these problems.

Mr Winter works very hard in Brighton and Hove and is well respected. He says that unless we actively challenge begging we won't effectively address addictions, and without addressing addictions, we won't end rough sleeping.

I wholeheartedly agree and so would most of Brighton and Hove in my opinion. In my ward of Hangleton and Knoll I often speak to beggars to understand the situation they are in. Several have told me they live in accommodation provided by the council and receive food and benefits but continue to beg on the streets due to their addictions and because they feel nothing will be done to stop them.

We must take heed of Mr Winter's advice.

Please could you provide advice on the following?:

- a) The number of people the council estimates are currently begging in Brighton & Hove
- b) What efforts the council are making to end begging and aggressive begging on the streets of Brighton & Hove City Council
- c) Whether the Council would support a Cashless Donation Scheme such as that recently introduced in the Royal Borough. The Cashless Donation Scheme encourages residents to support a rough sleeper pathway as

opposed to giving spare change to beggars in order to provide more effective help to people.

- d) If so, whether the council would use its Communications programme to support a Cashless Donation Scheme in the City with the aim of providing better care and ending begging on the streets.

Supporting information:

<https://www.sloughexpress.co.uk/news/maidenhead/164657/council-to-launch-cashless-support-for-rough-sleepers.html>

Supporting information: <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18871492.brighton-housing-trust-boss-prevention-key-ending-homelessness/>

Reply from Councillor Gibson / Hugh-Jones, Joint Chair of the Housing Committee

(16) Councillor Simson – Public Space Protection Orders

Can the Chair of the TECC Committee please advise:

- a) Why has the Council not renewed PSPOs on the City's Parks?
- b) When and by whom was this decision taken and was there a vote?
- c) When did PSPOs for city parks expire?

Reply from Councillor Osborne / Powell, Joint Chair of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee

(17) Councillor Theobald – Patcham Roundabout

Thank you for your answer to my written question at the last council meeting.

In your answer you advised the following:

Work is in progress to reach an agreement between Highways England, the council and a contractor for these works to go ahead. The roundabout is owned by Highways England and therefore a 3-way contractual arrangement is required which is agreed by all parties. Negotiations and due diligence are progressing and we hope this will be finalised shortly so that works can start in the New Year.

Can you provide any update since the last meeting on the status of this project including whether negotiations and due diligence have now been finalised?

Is there a start date for works yet?

I have been asking these questions for at least the last five years and had a number of incorrect answers.

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