

**Public Engagement and
Member meeting**

Agenda Item 7

Subject: Minutes from 16 December 2021 meeting.

Date of meeting: 3 February 2022

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT & MEMBERS MEETING

4.30pm 16 DECEMBER 2021

VIRTUAL

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Robins (Chair) Clare, Davis, Deane, Druitt, Gibson, Heley, Mac Cafferty, Osborne, Powell, Shanks, Allcock, Appich, Atkinson, Bagaeen, Barnett, Brennan, Brown, Childs, Evans, Hamilton, Hills, Janio, John, Knight, McNair, Meadows, Mears, Nemeth, Nield, O'Quinn, Peltzer Dunn, Pissaridou, Simson, C Theobald, Wilkinson and Williams.

1 WELCOME TO THE MEETING

1.1 The mayor welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted that due to the full Council meeting being cancelled, this meeting was being held virtually in order to enable public participation to be facilitated.

2 TO RECEIVE PETITIONS

2.1 The mayor invited the submission of petitions from councillors and members of the public. He reminded the meeting that petitions would be referred to the appropriate decision-making body without debate and the person presenting the petition would be invited to attend the meeting to which the petition was referred.

2.2 Councillor Theobald presented a petition which had been signed by 125 people and called for the reinstatement of City in Bloom.

2.3 The mayor thanked Councillor Theobald and stated that the petition would be referred to the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee for consideration.

2.4 Mr Hanington presented a petition on behalf of Rudyard Kipling School which had been signed by 985 people and called for primary and nursery schools to be kept as a two-form entry school.

- 2.5 The mayor thanked Mr Hanington and stated that the petition would be referred to the Children, Young People & Skills Committee for consideration.

3 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- 3.1 The mayor stated that 6 written questions had been received from members of the public and invited Mr Gunbie to join the meeting and put his question to Councillor Mac Cafferty.
- 3.2 Mr Gunbie thanked the mayor and asked the following question, how will political groups maintain sufficient cross-party unity over several Administrations to deliver on the Carbon Neutral 2030 target?
- 3.3 Councillor Mac Cafferty stated that he was pleased to report that we have shared this intention from the outset and Greens have been clear as have Labour about our intention to work together to tackle the huge challenge the climate crisis presents to our city. When we established the Carbon Neutral Member Working Group, we also won the argument that Conservative councillors should have seats on it too to try and build political consensus on the subject. I take your point fully that we may have our differences as has been evident clearly in the last few months, but I am committed to ensuring that we work together, and I will give you some examples of how we intend to do that:

Firstly, most importantly, this is about budget by understanding that our council has now agreed and signed up to a Carbon Neutral 2030 plan. This forms part of our council's overall plan, and this is something all councillors are engaged to help deliver. The budget process over the last number of years has put significant, lasting funding into carbon neutral projects and in spite of the massive challenges facing the budget setting process our aspirations for the coming year remains that once again we are going to do that

Respecting the outcome of the climate assembly and youth assembly, that gave us clear priorities, to help inform the plan and delivering on these.

To engage with as wide a range of groups as possible and acknowledge the strength of feeling in the city around this. We haven't had climate school strikes and petitions calling for stronger climate action to this council for no reason – it's because people want to see change. Any elected politician should take heed.

I'm also personally committed to ensuring we work together on this. I co-Chair the Carbon Neutral Members Working Group with Councillor Platts. Under my watch this group is a core part of council activity, and I wouldn't want to see it be otherwise. We will be bringing a proposal to the Carbon Neutral Working Group in January that we redeploy the Carbon Neutral Advisory Panel as a critical friend to help the City Council and get us to carbon neutrality.

I would also like to refer back, if you recall we had all those participants in the climate assembly who brought such an amazing resource to the deliberations of the Assembly, and I would want to touch base with them and use them almost like a focus group.

Stepping outside of the Local Government bubble and looking to the recommendations of external bodies in order that we can stay accountable for our actions, and we recently heard back from the independent Carbon Disclosure project that we have been rated at B level and that is acknowledging some of the swift progress we've made.

3.4 Mr Gunbie then asked a supplementary question, I will write to the other party leaders, I know they can't answer here but, obviously, it is a question for all parties. My supplementary is who has specific responsibility for championing Carbon Neutral both within the current leadership and within the Executive and what makes them believe we can actually achieve it? What keeps them positive?

3.5 Councillor Mac Cafferty confirmed that he was the co-Chair of the Carbon Neutral Member Working Group along with Councillor Platts. Over a long period now we have been leading on this and I work very closely with the Co-Chairs of Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee on all of the carbon neutral projects as well. Just as a reminder, so much of this has to do with the money and I work very closely with the finance leads, both Councillors Druit and Gibson on making sure we are trying to put money in overtime and making sure the money keeps getting topped up.

I am more than happy to take the discussion on out of this meeting by email.

3.6 The mayor thanked Mr. Gunbie for joining the meeting and putting his questions to the Leader and invited Mr Bennett-Law to join the meeting and put his question to Councillor Heley.

3.7 Mr Bennett-Law thanked the mayor and asked, the bin collections in Saltdean have been appalling for years, with the same roads being missed week after week. COVID and the recent strikes aside, why can't Brighton & Hove Council organise it better?

One of things that are attached to that is our collections are Thursday and mine is on Friday, so they are often missed if there are problems earlier in the week. Could this be shared across the city? Could we have collections Monday or Tuesday for a few years? We have been six weeks sometimes without bin collections.

3.8 Councillor Heley replied, I am sorry to hear about the ongoing problems. We can look at and we are planning to prepare to complete round readjustments in light of some of the difficulties you have mentioned. This will reconfigure some rounds to ensure there is capacity within the day to complete the work and provide some flexibility should there be any disruption. This work is part of a major round of restructure work which is to be completed in 2022 as part of the Modernisation Programme.

3.9 Mr Bennett-Law then asked a supplementary question,

3.10 The mayor thanked Mr. Gunbie for joining the meeting and putting his questions to the Leader and invited Mr Bennett-Law to join the meeting and put his question to Councillor Heley.

3.11 Mr Bennett-Law thanked the mayor and asked,

- 3.12 The mayor thanked Mr. Gunbie for joining the meeting and putting his questions to the Leader and invited Mr Bennett-Law to join the meeting and put his question to Councillor Heley.
- 3.13 Mr Bennett-Law thanked the mayor and asked, I assume what you mean by that is that Saltdean may not be at the end of the week and therefore missing out when there are problems all the time or do you just mean that there will be more bin lorries and more bin collections?
- 3.14 Councillor Heley replied, we will be looking at those issues in the round and hopefully address those issues, I can try and get some more detail for you, but it will be part of the operational program officers will be working on.
- 3.15 The mayor thanked Mr Bennett-Law for joining the meeting and putting his questions to Councillor Heley and invited Mr Harris to join the meeting and put his question to Councillor Gibson.
- 3.16 Mr Harris thanked the mayor and asked, the City's Housing Allocations Policy is a very confusing. I have three active clients who are claiming the council is misusing the policy as a means to force them into homes, even if they were miss-bids and are unsuitable. Officers are spending a lot of time on lengthy administrative tasks destabilising and creating anxiety and stress toward applicants who advise they should be able to do one rejection without the threat being suspended from the service and being found intentionally homeless. Creating even more work. In 2016 Councillor Mears put in an amendment to give a safeguard to the policy, calling the proposed one bid rule "draconian" This effectively gives applicants a safeguard and choice.

Can the council please confirm whether those in Band C and actively bidding are exempt from the direct bidding three month rule?

- 3.17 Councillor Gibson replied, Daniel thank you for all the work you do to support people you know are struggling with issues. You know the homeless and the Homemove situation as a system which I'm hoping will be improving shortly, but the simple response to your question is if Band C accepted homeless priority queue applicants are actively bidding, then we will not apply the three-month rule.
- 3.18 Mr Harris the asked a supplementary question, it is obviously very concerning to hear the Health & Wellbeing Board report into another death at Kendall Court, at the emergency accommodation where the council placed people, in Newhaven. Will the Administration condemn these continued deaths and confirm that they will work actively with East Sussex County Council to bring in change?
- 3.19 Councillor Gibson replied, it is extremely saddening when people die in emergency care accommodation, particularly at Kendall Court where there have been a series of deaths in previous years. Our officers are meeting regularly with East Sussex colleagues and New Haven Community Development to manage the situation with Kendal Court but the sad news this week is, as you know, a reflection that we need to do more.

We have had worries about Kendall court since 2018 we have commissioned, a cross-party working group, a Healthwatch report and they found various things that could be

improved, which has led to the council employing welfare officers and instituting a laundry. People are isolated and I've negotiated with the bus company that they will provide travel cards and it has also led to us moving to recommission emergency accommodation and investing more in the provision of that service.

Importantly, as you know and the campaign for bringing emergency accommodation in house. And I would note that our own emergency accommodation has not seen before eviction or fatality. People in emergency accommodation are at very difficult times and have more than sometimes just homeless issues. We do want to reduce the numbers out of city and bring as many people as we can back into the city. The real long-term solution is to avoid people spending a long time in emergency accommodation at all and to help them move to settled accommodation as quickly as possible. In the past people have had to stay in emergency accommodation for far too long so we have a homelessness transformation programme which is seeking to really reduce that time and therefore reduce the risk. And alongside our program to expand the accommodation that we provide ourselves which is also a better form of provision.

- 3.20 The mayor thanked Mr Harris for joining the meeting and putting his questions to Councillor Gibson and invited Mr Hall to join the meeting and put his question to Councillor Osborne.
- 3.21 Mr Hall thanked the mayor and asked, in relation to Toads Hole Valley consultation, the developer's consultation with the public is appalling. Their website may as well not exist, they don't respond to email questions despite admitting to doing so at consultation meetings where they won't take any questions.

What are the council going to do to persuade the developers to consult properly with the public as outlined in the Brighton and Hove statement of Community involvement?

- 3.22 Councillor Osborne replied, I agree that at this is a key strategic development site and that it is incredibly important that the local community can fully engage in the planning application process. Officers have strongly encouraged the developers at Toads Hole Valley to carry-out a comprehensive consultation with the local community at the earliest stages of the application; as well as making sure the proposals are as clear and as easy as possible to understand. Although this is good practice and is a commitment in the council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement, there is unfortunately no requirement for developers to consult residents. But we do agree this is something that should be happening.

However, in response to these requests, the developer at Toads Hole Valley has undertaken various rounds of consultation and held meetings with residents. I know that officers and councillors have been at some of these public meetings too. The current consultation is on new technical transport documents that have been released. These have been released at a later stage of the application; and I understand that the developers have held a virtual meeting to provide residents with an update and explain the documents. You raise concerns that you couldn't ask the applicants questions at the meeting. I can confirm that we have asked officers to approach the applicants to ensure that any written questions are fully answered. If you have any questions that are unanswered then please contact us and we will ensure that our officers do follow that up and get a response to you.

In terms of our consultation on the new documents, I can assure you, that we do carry out extensive consultation as we are required to. To better explain the documents, officers have also provided a summary document on the public register to help residents navigate this very technical information. I can also assure you officers will be scrutinising the information submitted by the applicants to ensure that the right measures are put in place to ensure the development is safe, accessible and attractive.

- 3.23 Mr Hall then asked a supplementary question; I have been in conversation with Peter Kyle, and he has agreed to have a public meeting on the 26 February in the morning and I am asking the council to attend and the developer.
- 3.24 Councillor Osborne stated that he was not aware of the meeting, but if you can send me or officers the date and time and I will see if we can attend.
- 3.25 The mayor thanked Mr Hall for joining the meeting and putting his questions to Councillor Osborne. He noted that Councillor Bagaeen would be putting a question to Councillor Davis on behalf of Ms Wrenn who was unable to join the meeting.
- 3.26 Councillor Bagaeen thanked the mayor and asked, on nearby residential roads Hove Park Villas and Wilbury Villas successful measures have been put in place to prevent the constant flow of traffic by blocking off one end of the street. Following their lead could the Council block one entrance to the lower part of The Drove way or make a small section one-way to reduce traffic flow as The Drove way is currently being used as an alternative to Old Shoreham Road by many motorists and is a rat-run.
- 3.27 Councillor Heley replied, the impact of congestion and the increasing demand on the city's roads has resulted in unacceptable levels of rat running on residential areas where cars can use routes to avoid more congested main roads. However, the impact on an area has to be considered as any displacement may well cause an issue on another road. There are many areas of the city suffering from this issue and for this reason the council is looking at how these issues can be addressed, and a report will be presented at a future Environment, Transport & Sustainability committee that will set out how this can be approached.
- 3.28 Councillor Bagaeen then asked a supplementary question, as part of your committee's new projects for a 'Liveable Neighbourhood' and a 'Low Traffic Neighbourhood' these measures would improve neighbourhoods and air pollution and decrease the regularity of collisions at the junction of Shirley Drive and The Drove way. Will the council allocate resources to implement similar strategies in Hove Park?
- 3.29 Councillor Heley replied, you're on the committee as well and you're welcome to join us in your support of low traffic neighbourhoods and a 'Liveable City'. We have a trial of a low traffic neighbourhood running and Hanover will be the first one and of course it's an idea that we would love to run out to other areas of our city because we know it will cure the intolerable levels of rat running traffic.
- 3.30 The mayor thanked Councillor Bagaeen for joining the meeting and putting the questions to Councillor Heley and noted that Ms Casebourne was not present to ask

her question. He therefore noted that the list of public questions had been dealt with and that the response to Ms Casebourne's question would be sent to her and for the record would be included in the minutes.

- 3.31 Question from Ms Casebourne, what is the current and projected housing need in Brighton? That is number of homes needed for single people, families etc.
- 3.32 The response from Councillor Gibson to the question was as follows: The most recent housing needs assessment was completed in 2015 and reported that 30,120 homes are needed in the 2010-30 period (1,506 homes per annum) with the greatest need for two- and three-bedroom properties.

Recommended strategic mix of homes, Brighton & Hove 2010-30

1 bedroom	2 bedroom	3 bedroom	4 bedroom +
25%	35%	30%	10%

The Council's adopted *City Plan Part 1* provides detailed projections on house building in the city. The City Plan states that council will make provision for at least 13,200 new homes to be built over the plan period 2010 – 2030 to help meet the city's needs.

4 DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- 4.1 The mayor reported that four deputations had been received from members of the public and invited Mr Deans as the spokesperson for the deputation to join the meeting and address the council.
- 4.2 Mr Deans thanked the mayor and outlined the reasons for the deputation which was seeking the provision of a 24/7 shelter for homeless people as had been accepted following a petition to the council over a year ago. There was a clear need to address the problem of homelessness and rough sleeping and for early intervention measures but also a clear need for a safe and secure shelter to be provided in the city. He hoped that action would be taken and intended to report back to the various organisations in the city that were involved in helping those in need.
- 4.3 Councillor Gibson thanked Mr Deans for presenting the deputation and for all the work he and others were doing to support the homeless. However, the situation was different from that a year ago and the use of SWEP was no longer a viable solution. The aim had to be avoid having people living on the streets and to house them as quickly as possible and the council has significantly expanded its provision for rough sleepers. It has followed government guidance under the pandemic and accommodated over 800 people with 700 having now moved on. The intention was to verify all rough sleepers and not just when it was cold but 365 days a year and to offer shelter accordingly. There were regular reports to the Homeless Reduction Board and Housing Committee, and it was intended to offer more rooms for the remainder of the winter period. The use shelters and shared facility accommodation was not recommended under the pandemic and could not be supported at this time.

- 4.4 The mayor thanked Mr Deans for joining the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. He explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to the Housing Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed, in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.
- 4.5 The mayor then invited Ms Kinslow as the spokesperson for the deputation to join the meeting and address the council.
- 4.6 Ms Kinslow thanked the mayor and stated that the deputation was asking the council to address the situation whereby the schools on the outskirts of the city were being unfairly impacted by the current proposed changes to admissions to the schools across the city. There was a need to ensure the local community schools were able to retain their current level of admission numbers and that where necessary the larger central schools should reduce their admission numbers to support the other schools. If the current proposals were implemented then they would result in issues of equality, diversity, transport, sustainability and impact local communities all of which went against the council's objective of a fairer city. She believed the matter needed further consideration as it offered no long-term solution to the situation. She therefore urged the committee to delay the decision and to consult further with everyone concerned, schools and parents.
- 4.7 Councillor Clare thanked Ms Kinslow for presenting the deputation and stated that she firstly just want to acknowledge that we understand why you feel this way and to acknowledge that no one wants to be in this position. Yet the context is this. The city is facing a crisis there are too many school places for the number of children in the city. The falling birth rate is a national trend and as an Admissions Authority, the council is faced with having to make some extremely difficult decisions regarding school admission numbers.

Whatever way we propose changes, decisions will upset some school communities. Just yesterday we had further confirmation from the Government's schools' adjudicator that larger schools are untouchable, after they accepted Brunswick Primary's appeal against their PAN. This is now the fourth largest school in a row that we have sought to reduce admissions numbers for, but which has been rejected. We're deeply disappointed about this. The council has been clearly told by the Schools Adjudicator that it cannot reduce the PAN of schools that are oversubscribed – these larger schools are ones that draw children from both their immediate communities and from wider areas in the city as parents chose to send their children there rather than a more local school. This in turn impacts upon other schools' abilities to fulfil their own PAN.

I think there is some feeling that council officers haven't tried to find another way and I wanted to correct that. Rather than take this lying down, we haven't turned to a short-sighted solution, in fact senior officers then went to meet with heads and governors at larger schools in the city and have done so several times. I'm sorry to report that they once again refused to accept a reduction in their PAN. I think it's fair to say that they believe they have valid objections too, and many of the arguments they too made last year were about equality, disadvantage and the climate crisis. We have asked that larger schools still come forward as they have time.

I am actively looking for compromises and I've had a number of productive meetings with schools directly where we have come to some compromises that I will be proposing the school organisation group consider. Following the School Adjudicator judgements earlier this year we also took legal advice which advised us we had no further options. There is of course an option we haven't explored, that is, closing schools. I think we can all agree that this is not something we want to have to do, and it's absolutely something I am committed to doing everything I can to stop happening.

In answer to your question on an equality impact assessment, one was completed regarding undertaking the consultation itself and was made available to councillors ahead of Children, Young People & Skills committee on 8th November and this is available on the council website. A further EIA will be made depending on the final proposals presented to councillors in January.

I also believe consulting on the PANs of larger schools in the future is still something we are likely to have to do again. Our projections show that if the % of applications they currently receive continues in future years, then they will fall under the PAN they currently have.

We are also looking again about whether we have legal avenues, but this doesn't get over the fact that standing still is not an option. This is not the first year of PAN proposals, they have been done since before I was a councillor.

This year we have an £18m budget deficit as a council in our general fund. We are already facing tough choices on what services we save and what services we keep. We also have a role in agreeing licensed deficits for schools that are struggling financially. If those schools are unable to make the changes needed to reverse these deficits, the council's general fund becomes liable for these, and schools face incredibly tough financial decisions that impact upon their pupils.

Whether it's our budget deficit as a council or the unequal decisions from the schools' adjudicator, I have to say this is as a result of poor Tory policy on a national level. As a council we are often trying to put a plaster over appalling government policy and making it as fair as we can be, but we do still have some restrictions.

This evening I will be giving a number of responses on this topic and I am doing so as Chair of the committee, but I want to be clear this is still a consultation and my mind is not made up. What I can provide is background to the current proposals and some answers at this stage.

- 4.8 The mayor thanked Ms Kinslow for joining the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. He explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to the Children, Young People & Skills Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed, in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.
- 4.9 The mayor then invited Ms King as the spokesperson for the deputation to join the meeting and address the council.

- 4.10 Ms King thanked the mayor and stated that there was a need for the council to ensure that council tax revenue was used for statutory services and that other income streams and government funding supported agreed projects and initiatives. It appeared that projects and schemes were being prioritised over the provision of statutory services and cuts being made to these which was making the city an increasingly unwelcome place to live or visit. There have been significant council tax increases and funds set aside for various initiatives such as a climate change and yet necessary services are being cut. The current increase of 4.99% to council tax was exorbitant for a post pandemic situation and increases for parking permits are continuing to be made when the service is failing. In addition parking spaces were being lost in favour of cycle hangers and bike share schemes. There was also a need to understand the impact and cost of the recent bin strike. The council should address the needs of its residents and visitors who supported the local economy rather than investing in initiatives without having evidenced based information to support them.
- 4.11 Councillor Gibson thanked Ms King for presenting the deputation and noted that the current council tax proposal was for a 3.99% increase, which included 1% for adult social care provision. He noted that a number of important points were raised in the deputation and that many could be directed to the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee. He noted that it had been a successful year in terms of the visitor economy which had held up well during the pandemic and suggested that the transport policies were not detrimental to it. He stated that local government finances were complicated and that many initiatives such as active travel were in fact funded by government grants, whilst the council tax contributed less than 20% to the overall cost of running services. There was also a need to consider how investing in projects and initiatives had a benefit, for example the warmer homes campaign which sought to address fuel poverty. Investments to support active travel would have a benefit in terms of people's health which meant less demand on public health services and social care costs. The impact of taxation was recognised, but the council was left with little choice other than to increase council tax. It was doing all it could to protect those on low incomes with various schemes and would continue to do so.
- 4.12 The mayor thanked Ms King for joining the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. He explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to the Policy & Resources Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed, in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.
- 4.13 The mayor then invited Mr Perrin as the spokesperson for the deputation to join the meeting and address the council.
- 4.14 Mr Perrin thanked the mayor and stated that the intention of the deputation was to seek support for the proposal to provide a community sport and leisure facility in the city that would also provide a home for top-flight basketball. The centre would be open throughout the year and offer residents access to an affordable range of sports and community events. It would also be the centre for international and regional basketball events and aim to provide an elite programme for young people. Basketball was a growing sport, and it was hoped that by having the centre further links with local schools could be developed as well as the colleges and universities and other

organisations such as crime prevention groups so that it became embedded in the community. The city was in need of a modern sport centre with the appropriate facilities and investment so that it could help to promote health and fitness of residents. He therefore hoped that the proposal could be supported and the council work with BBL to take this forward.

- 4.15 Councillor Osborne thanked Mr Perrin for presenting the deputation and noted that councillors had taken the opportunity to visit the arena in Leicester. In order to provide a new strategic vision for sports facilities in the City, the Council appointed leisure consultants to undertake comprehensive condition surveys of each facility, a review of the indoor sports facilities' portfolio, and options for their future management. This included the drafting of a Sports Facilities Investment Plan 2021 – 2031, which identified that the public sports centres and swimming pools were indeed showing their age, and a strategic investment plan was required to transform the future leisure provision. The planning and implementation phase of the Sports Facilities Investment Plan is progressing and will be considered through the City Council's TECC Committee.
- 4.16 Councillors and officers will continue conversations with you and would like to meet with the Club to explore the potential opportunities to work together on the provision of improved sports facilities in the City. As such, this deputation will be forwarded to the TECC Committee for consideration.
- 4.17 The mayor thanked Mr Perrin for joining the meeting and speaking on behalf of the deputation. He explained that the points had been noted and the deputation would be referred to the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee for consideration. The persons forming the deputation would be invited to attend the meeting and would be informed subsequently of any action to be taken or proposed, in relation to the matter set out in the deputation.

5 ORAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 5.1 The mayor noted that oral questions had been submitted and that 30 minutes was set aside for the duration of the item. He asked that both the questioner and responder endeavour to keep their questions and answers as short as possible, in order to enable the questions listed to be taken.

(1) Councillor Williams

- 5.2 Councillor Williams asked, what is the administration providing for those subjected to fuel poverty, which there are many considering the huge hike in fuel prices that we are experiencing, and we know that this is hitting the most vulnerable in our city. I do know that there are some government measures, but what are we doing as a Council is what I'd like to know?
- 5.3 Councillor Powell replied, we have asked for a report to go to the Health & Wellbeing Board to spell out the work the Council is doing to support residents in fuel poverty. Do come to this if you can. I'm guessing it's going to be online. But we can also ask where Member briefing on this, but as I say I have quite a lot of information to give you and I can get this as a written response to you.

Since we've learned of the energy bills crisis which a Green obviously outlines to me the vulnerability of fossil fuels. We've immediately turned to how this will impact, particularly already vulnerable communities, and a number of initiatives are underway each winter. public health commissions the warm for wellbeing programme to help struggling residents better afford their fuel bills and warm up their homes. The Warmth and Well-being program is delivered by the Community and Voluntary sector partners to support those in the greatest need.

With in-depth information and advice, warm home checks with three small measures in depth, debt and benefits advice and small hardship grants. In addition to this, the Council has a Specialist Tenancy Sustainment Officer in post advising our own tenants on energy and bill saving. The Council is also working in partnership with the Local Energy Advisor Partnership (LEAP) a free energy and money saving service that helps people to keep warm and to reduce their energy bills and those lead energy advisors can help with things such as finding a cheaper energy deal, fitting a free energy saving kit in their homes, checking eligibility for insulation or a new boiler. Giving practical advice on heating systems and saving energy and arranging a free Money Advice consultation to help with benefits, debt and other money problems.

We've invested to kickstart a warmer homes scheme for the city and the initial element of this scheme increases the funding available for home improvements such as insulation, anything from £7.5 to £20k. I'm not on the Housing Committee, but you can get further details on this as it doesn't fall under the TECC portfolio, but as a Labour Housing Spokesperson, you will be aware of the newly created Energy Enforcement officer role and that officer will be looking at supporting landlords and landladies and landlay people to comply with the private rental sector minimum energy efficient regulations and will be enforcing standards where landlords and landladies our slow to comply. So in terms of retro fitting our own council stock, I will refer you to a carbon reduction report that went to the Housing Committee in November, and I also have the information on the work public health teams are doing as Public Health & Housing Co chair a cross-sector, multi-agency, fuel poverty and affordable warmth steering group.

There is various support in place and planned across the city. We are currently developing a resource from frontline workers across all sectors working with the most vulnerable households, detailing what is available and clarifying referral routes and options.

- 5.4 Councillor Williams asked a supplementary question, I'm aware of all the initiatives that are going on in the city and I applaud all of them. Well, what I'm asking now is this is happening now. We can't wait for the future. We can't give people an energy efficiency advice when we've got hiking up of the prices that they can't possibly afford. Are we going to enhance that hardship grant, I think that's that the crux of it. That's what people need right now at this moment.
- 5.5 Councillor Powell replied, I will look into it and get back to you.

(2) Councillor Nemeth

- 5.6 Councillor Nemeth asked, lots of local authorities elsewhere have made huge efforts over the Christmas period to attract shoppers into town and city centres, often by easing parking restrictions or backing local trade schemes. Brighton and Hove's offering was to fine around 100,000 people, residents and visitors for contravening incredibly complicated rules on so-called bus gates, in the heart of our shopping areas.

How would you justify this situation to frustrated traders at a time where we are trying to encourage 'shopping local'?

- 5.7 Councillor Mac Cafferty replied, an awful lot of the data that we have on what's happening in the city is positive and we have feedback from places like Churchill Shopping Square that actually sales levels are pretty good. They're at the same level that they were in 2019 in terms of retail vacancy rates we are above at 9.18%. We have lower retail vacancy rates against the GB vacancy rate of 14.5. A recent report produced by Owen Mark Mitchell gave us a predicted general GBA growth in quarter four of 7.5% year on year. there's an awful lot of evidence, saying that we're doing quite well.

Many of the businesses that you've referred to have weathered the storm of the three lockdowns, some have closed sadly, yet this time with Omicron with the cases rising in the words of one of our business representatives trade has fallen off a cliff. We have huge concerns for small businesses now without recourse to any Government grants, access to furlough schemes, self-employment grants and the last-minute measures of something Omicron mask wearing onto the already exhausted retail and service industry workers you might be familiar with the figure from the UK hospitality body, the trade body for UK hospitality has broadcasted that takings are going to be down 40%. My challenge back to you is that we need Government assistance in terms of what is happening to the economy not just here but all around the country. This is this is something that is being raised by a number of different bodies it has been raised by their official opposition in the Houses of Parliament.

- 5.8 Councillor Nemeth asked a supplementary question, visitors have been in touch with me about this topic, one from Heathfield. Reading it very quickly he said he's going to stay away from Brighton & Hove in the future, a lady from Canterbury said, I most certainly will ensure I never visit Brighton again and will advise my friends and associates to do the same. Will the Leader of the Council commit to fixing these faulty junctions so that no one else is fined -as a matter of urgency?

- 5.9 Councillor Mac Cafferty replied, had we been able to discuss the notice of motion this evening, were talking about the different ways in which we were going to understand what was happening with the bus gates and one of the things that we're going to be doing and making sure of is bringing an oral report to January's meeting of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee, where we will be able to reflect on what's happened and be able to reassure not just yourself Cllr Nemeth, but the entire city that we are listening to what's happened, and what action will be continuing in the future, but we do want to make the point - the absolute failure of the Conservative government is what we need to be talking about in terms of supporting small business. And I would like you, Cllr Nemeth to be able to bring that back to Conservative Ministers.

(3) Councillor Evans

- 5.10 Councillor Evans asked, in the wake of the shocking murder of Sarah Everard and the subsequent focus on the safety of women and girls in public, including a survey showing an extraordinary 97% of women saying they had been subject to harassment or worse. P&R committee agreed on July 1st of this year to set aside funds to carry out a study in Brighton and Hove on women's safety, both actual and perceived. The existence of this funding was mentioned in passing in a TECH Committee report update in September, but not that any action had been taken on it.

As I remember this had all party support, this was one of the items officers were due to bring back to the budget Review Group, but I understand that that hasn't happened yet. Could you please update us on when the local study might be designed and commissioned?

- 5.11 Councillor Powell replied, the survey has been designed and will go into the consultation portal in the New Year. It is hoped that the consultation responses will start to inform the development of the Borg strategy and officers have been prioritizing the consultation for the new domestic abuse strategy which, due to legal requirements, will be published in January 2022.

- 5.12 Councillor Evans asked a supplementary question, the same TECC report mentioned Brighton & Hove City Council's application alongside both East and West Sussex and the OSPCC for Substantial Safer Streets. Funding from the Home Office and I wondered what was happening with that and when we might hear the results of that application.

- 5.13 Councillor Powell replied, the bid for the Safer streets, tranche, three funding bid was successful with nearly £1,000,000 awarded across Sussex. Workers already started to spend the funds as per the application to the Home Office a Borg coordinator is being appointed and will work within the neighbourhood policy policing team to deliver the work. The work plan includes healthy relationships sessions in schools, a bystander and upstanders program, the development of a safe space app, and a media campaign.

Funding was also obtained to improve lighting around The Old Steine, Pavilion Gardens, and the War Memorial, and a bid to the safety of women at night fund was also successful, and workers started to deliver those work streams. This also includes the deployment of taxi marshals on Fridays and Saturdays at East St and West St ranks and additional policing patrols.

(4) Councillor Meadows

- 5.14 Councillor Meadows asked, why is the administration proposing to reduce the published admissions number for Council run schools in the outer suburbs of Brighton, where there are a higher proportion of families living whilst leaving the inner-city areas unchanged?

5.15 Councillor Clare replied, I suggest you ask your Government Schools Adjudicator who made it clear when we tried to make reductions at some of the schools in the central city. But we weren't able to do so.

5.16 Councillor Meadows asked a supplementary question, perhaps we should be asking those schools that have been protesting to us this evening that they should go to appeal as well. My question though is why are Labour and the Green Councillors not actively campaigning to support their local schools in their areas?

That would be affected by this proposal. But then I thought, don't bother to tell me, but explain it to the parents of those schools affected.

5.17 Councillor Clare replied, 13 Members of your Group on the school Organisation Working Group, including some who are now campaigning against the proposals. They were there when the School Organisation Working Group put those proposals forward. Your group voted for the consultation. This is a consultation process, and we are committed to working cross party and we are committed to listening to the results of the consultation. I've made it clear already this evening that my mind is not made up as my colleagues will do, so I'm sure if you ask them, the fact is we are being asked to make a number of difficult decisions. Because of the result of Government policy and that is in the hands of the Conservative Party.

(5) Councillor Pissaridou

5.18 Councillor Pissaridou asked, many residents in North Portslade signed up to the scheme for Garden Refuse last summer and I thank the team for the fantastic way they dealt with the flurry of applications, but due to Covid and industrial action collections were missed.

The contract between residents and the Council sets out that 'your garden waste will be collected every two weeks for one year. Some of our residents contacted the service and reported that their bin had not been emptied and they were told that the missed collection would be added onto their allocation meaning they still received the same number of collections for their money, but over a slightly longer period. Many residents didn't report their collection being missed. If one person's collection being missed on a certain round, then all collections would be missed. Can I assure my residents that all those collections that were missed, irrespective of whether they reported it or not will have it added to their allocations?

5.19 Councillor Heley replied, thanks for your question and obviously sorry to hear about the disruption that sounds right to me, but I'd like to double check with the team and get back to you. If you want to email me the specific round and I can ask about the round and the general question.

5.20 Councillor Pissaridou asked a supplementary question, I can't do that, because I don't have the specific rounds. I was hoping that the records would show the number of people that have complained and the rounds so they could be linked. If the team could check that I'd be most grateful.

My residents put their bins out on their specific day, and they were not emptied. The Council's contract sets out at 2 the Council will carry out a collection of our customers containers on the specified collection day and at three, the Council reserve the right to change the customers collection day and will notify the customer of any such change by email or letter at least two weeks in advance.

More recently, the collections were missed without any such notifications. The residents were confused as to what action they should take. Some residents left their bins out on the public pavement, others brought them in. In other words, there was confusion and frustration and the people that left them on the public pavement, they block the narrow pavements here in North Portslade and they had no idea when they could expect their garden waste to be collected. Can I have an assurance that that the undertaking, given by the Council in that contract will be applied and residents will be notified as that sets out please.

5.21 Councillor Heley replied, we always try our best and I know you and everyone here knows the issues that we currently have in City Clean so I won't go into them now, but we always try our best and I'll get back to you.

(6) Councillor O'Quinn

5.22 Councillor O'Quinn asked, the CHAMS service run by Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust was closed earlier this year from January to March, offering only limited online services. Was Brighton & Hove Council informed of this decision and did they hold the Sussex Partnership Foundation Trust to account for this in the months afterwards?

5.23 Councillor Clare replied, I wasn't personally informed, I didn't actually know that. I suggest that might be the sort of thing that we can ask the CCG at the Health & Wellbeing Board. I'll ask my colleague, Councillor Shanks if she's willing to have that discussion there. We of course do what we can around young people's mental health and we do run the schools' wellbeing service. But the CCG commission CAHMS and we don't have oversight of that.

5.24 Councillor O'Quinn asked a supplementary question, for young people on the autistic spectrum, the limited offering from CAHMS earlier this year meant they were particularly affected. Please you could, could you provide an update on when the much heralded, for some years, Neurodiverse facility will come into operation?

5.25 Councillor Clare replied, I don't have that detail so I will get you a written answer.

(7) Councillor Mears

5.26 Councillor Mears asked, can the Chair advise why there has been an overspend on the housing revenue account budget of £1.456 million this year?

Can you chair also advise whether the administration is planning to borrow from the housing revenue account reserves in 2022-23 to plug a shortfall in in the budgets coming forward?

5.27 Councillor Gibson replied, that sounds like two questions, and we've got to give short answers. The reasons for the overspend are many and complex, but in the very short quick answer there was a backlog of works arising in the worst period of the pandemic, and there was a transition of our workforce being brought in-house from Mears and both those things have contributed delays which are being caught up. In terms of the reserves the budget is still being prepared, but we're going to have a Budget Review Group with yourself and Gill and myself and hopefully Siriol and we'll be able to look at it then.

5.28 Councillor Mears asked a supplementary question, why is the Administration, targeting the contributions of the poorest people in the city, council tenants and some leaseholders to balance the Budget Council. Council tenants and leaseholders are already paying a huge price for the Council's failed policy of insourcing the Housing Repair service which has cost millions, more than expected and resulted in a worse service? Why must they now pay again for the Council's poor budget management?

I would also like to thank Daniel Harris for raising the issue of Kendal Court, which has had a very sad death happen very recently and, as he has stated, East Sussex County Council are looking into a legal action against Brighton & Hove City Council. As we are not allowed to discuss our Notice of Motion this evening on the Council's placement of homeless people. I'm pleased he has highlighted this really very serious issue.

5.29 Councillor Gibson replied, it is a complex, question and we could debate at great length the pros and cons of insourcing the costs and how you measure costs and the benefits for the workforce and the benefits of a settled workforce with a future. I could put lots of points and you could put points about the additional cost and I could say well, but actually you know the Mears contract was ending the building costs were going to go up with inflation, so it would get very murky and it's not really something we can do in an oral question, but I'm sure we'll have another opportunity so, thank you for raising that and keep persisting with your questioning on them.

(8) Councillor Fishleigh

5.30 Councillor Fishleigh was unable to attend the meeting and did not put her question to Councillor Heley.

(9) Councillor Childs

5.31 Councillor Childs asked, what action will the Council take and when to engage with British Telecom to arrange for the removal of underused and misused public telephone boxes that scar our city?

5.32 Councillor Heley replied, we already do engage with BT. We've got a long running project where they remove redundant telephone boxes and we as the local planning authority received notification from them about which one should be removed and so there's already a system in place. But if you want to send me any specific ones that are causing particular problem or there's been a delay then let me know.

5.33 Councillor Childs asked a supplementary question, will the Council agree to seek legal opinion on what action and powers it and the police may use to address vandalism, drug crime and befouling of public call boxes should BT fail to remove them?

5.34 Councillor Heley replied, I am sure we can ask our excellent in-house Legal Team, those questions for you.

(10) Councillor Barnett

5.35 Councillor Barnett asked, why following the Democratic decision to remove the Old Shoreham Road cycle lane has the Council now included a cycle lane at Old Shoreham Road as a priority item in its' Local Cycling and Infrastructure Plan. Why does the Council not listen to the residents who were consulted and were against this cycle lane or to the democratic vote of councillors, which calls for the cycle lane to be removed in its entirety?

5.36 Councillor Davis replied, the LCI is a long term cross-party active travel plan that's been around for quite some time, and you're ETS colleagues have had ample time to scrutinize the decisions and the inclusions of various routes in there, and I would strongly suggest that you speak to your colleagues.

5.37 Councillor Barnett asked a supplementary question, the Council is obsessed by cycle lanes, but walking is also important for many residents. Many residents walk across Old Shoreham Road to the Hove Cemetery to the village and graveyard. I have children that crossed the Old Shoreham mode walking not cycling to go through the cemetery to get to the schools. Residents have requested a proper pedestrian crossing and a speed camera at this point for the elderly. With the Council focus on putting it as safe, crossing for those visiting the cemetery into the local cycling and walking infrastructure plan.

5.38 Councillor Davis replied, I implore you to talk to your colleagues on ETS to have this included in the LC whip. I'd be very happy to improve any road safety aspects, but it's a constant that this city is obsessed with cycle lanes. 93% of our roads do not have cycling infrastructure on them and if we are to improve, walking and cycling for active travel in our city we will have more cycle lanes we have to offer people better alternatives. I would gladly look into or try and help you with a pedestrian crossing in the Old Shoreham Road. If you'd like to bring that to your colleagues at ETS, I'd be happy to consider it.

(11) Councillor Wilkinson

5.39 Councillor Wilkinson asked, at Full council in July of this year in response to a question, I asked the administration stated that the Green Party is against Park and ride schemes and its' spokesperson suggested he did not believe such schemes will assist in realizing carbon neutrality by 2030. This despite Brighton & Hove's' first ever climate assembly, having in its top ten recommendations, the introduction of park and ride to minimize car use in the city. Fortunately, the Council agreed that very day to support a Park and Ride Project Feasibility Study. Can the administration please inform the Council today on what work has been done to progress this feasibility study?

- 5.40 Councillor Davis replied, I definitely want to get back to you with a more fulfilling answer with regards to the feasibility study. We are in partnership with Brighton Hove Buses. We have got a park and ride experiment next spring that we are looking into and again the park and ride topic is very tricky. We are 180 degrees city enclosed by national land and National Trust land that's impossible to build on, plus, if we need to build a successful park and ride, we need to close down our city centre car parks. Unfortunately, they're privately owned, and we couldn't possibly buy them off. I am happy to answer you about the feasibility study in a written answer.
- 5.41 There was no supplementary question.
- (12) Councillor McNair
- 5.42 Councillor McNair asked, if Carden primary is reduced to a one elementary school, it would be impossible to operate its specialist speech and language centre. What provision would be put in place to support these children should Carden elementary be reduced in size?
- 5.43 Councillor Clare replied, I've had conversations with the Head directly, we have a compromise proposal which the School Organisation Working group will be asked to consider. I urge you to attend the School Organisation Working Group which you are a member of so that we can discuss that proposal.
- 5.44 Councillor McNair asked a supplementary question, I look forward to hearing this positive sounding proposal. My supplementary was just, can I have reassurance that everything will be done to maintain provision for speech and language, children and other children with particular challenges within the city?
- 5.45 Councillor Clare replied, yes.
- (13) Councillor Bagaeen
- 5.46 Councillor Bagaeen asked, apart from the Government funded Old Shoreham Cycle Lane (OSR) could you confirm advise how much highways and infrastructure funding and where in the Hove Park Ward has the Administration invested since coming to power over a year ago?
- 5.47 Councillor Mac Cafferty replied, no I can't. I need to remind you as well, but oral questions should relate according to 9.8 of the Constitution to matters of general policy only. The Constitution is also clear that when a question is technical or operational and it can be knocked out of order. So unless your supplementary is a general policy question, I'm afraid of not going to be able to answer I'm going to get you a written answer that can be prepared.
- 5.48 Councillor Bagaeen asked a supplementary question, that's fine, officers accepted the question. Councillor McCafferty is so I'll leave that with you and then I'm happy to have a written answer for this one.

I think we both agree that cities should catalyse greater investment in sustainability, also infrastructure, and you went to COP so you will have seen and heard what's it is we are investing in infrastructure. You will have seen at COPs that cities where catalysing greater investment in their infrastructure rather than relying on subsidies or grants. So thinking about 2030, do we have a plan for what the investment gap is in wards such as Hove Park given the amount of investment in building that's currently going on at the moment so that infrastructure can keep up?

5.49 Councillor Mac Cafferty replied, you're absolutely right that where development is happening, we need to ensure that the infrastructure is built to support that development, and one of the key points in the planning paper that was thankfully pulled by the current Secretary of State a lot of the detail that Green councillors around the country responded on was on this point. I agree with you in principle, but there needs to be, if there's going to be development, the infrastructure to support the development. Because we are a city that has signed up to carbon neutrality by 2030 in less than a decade. Obviously, that needs to be done with an eye on all of those commitments as well. I need to get you a written response on this because both the first and supplementary questions were quite detailed.

(14) Councillor Brennan

5.50 Councillor Brennan asked, I think two people spoken about Kendal court and the fact that there was a death yesterday and I was absolutely fuming, I have been unwell, so I haven't really been in my local homeless groups but I'm still very much in touch with people on the on the street and vulnerable people.

Four or five years ago different groups, professional, local Arch health care, Justlife, fulfilling lives have all said that Kendal court was unsuitable for vulnerable people. Why because people would die in there. We're sending people there and they're dying. There is no support there, I think basically the place should be closed.

We have a duty under the Care Act, and we are failing people just the same as our children in care these are vulnerable people that need just as much care.

People have literally been taken there in ambulances; I've got evidence of that. I'm asking the leader that we really should halt any more vulnerable, complex needs people being sent to Kendal Court, that way we won't have any more deaths. We have we have a very good local temporary accommodation facility in Hove it has support for people, to me it's one of the best. In there we have had people from Worthing and Lancing. I know it's spot purchase so it may be more money we really need to look into this. We need to stop it; we need to get to the core of whom it's sending people there who's not really looking into the person that they are sending.

5.51 Councillor Mac Cafferty gave an initial reply, I have met and the leader of East Sussex about at Kendal Court. We've been able to talk quite frankly and as was indicated earlier by Councillor Gibson, our officers have met them and I'm on the matter as well. We are listening on this and I completely hear you and I am really worried about this as well. I know that our housing leads are much closer to the detail so I will hand over to them.

5.52 Councillor Gibson then replied, it is a such a saddening situation and clearly, we need to look at matters, with a very critical eye and we don't want to do and knee-jerk reaction because there's a few media headlines because the sad truth is that people die in in quite a few of the emergency accommodations. It is not a great solution for people but we don't want people to move out this city and we've had Healthwatch reports on Kendal Court and one of the recommendations led to the welfare officers and the laundry, but it clearly is still not sufficient. It's not ideal we are recommissioning, our emergency accommodation and putting more in investment into that.

We've got to recognize that there is a general problem with people in very difficult circumstances often and no Care Act, people should be going to Kendal Court. People in insecure accommodation, we need to support them and move them on as quickly as possible. I recognize that it's not just Kendal court, but really focus on Kendal Court because it saddens me so much that this has happened. We appeared to have made some improvements following the deaths in the previous administration in in 2018. But we all need to work together on this

5.53 Councillor Brennan asked a supplementary question, I'd like to be kept informed up to date with what's going on because it is part of my experience and what I was in the Council for in the 1st place. So I'd like my experience to be respected in that sense.

5.54 Councillor Gibson replied, yes.

A PETITIONS FOR DEBATE

5.55 The mayor noted that the Council's Petitions Scheme provided that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it can be debated at a meeting of the full Council. He noted that he had been informed of three such petitions which he had agreed to take at today's public engagement meeting, in light of the cancellation of the full council meeting. The petitions concerned school places for children across the city and the mayor stated that he intended to call each of the spokespersons to present their petitions before opening the matter up for debate.

5.56 Laura Bissonnet thanked the mayor and outlined the reasons for the petition which sought to keep Carden Nursery & Primary School as a thriving 2-form entry.

5.57 Leila Erin-Jenkins thanked the mayor and outlined the reasons for the petition which sought to keep Bevendean Primary School at its current size rather than reduce the number of places available.

5.58 Gemma Chumnansin thanked the mayor and outlined the reasons for the petition which sought to keep Woodingdean Primary School at its current size rather than reduce the number of placed available.

5.59 The mayor thanked the petitioners and invited councillor Clare to respond as Chair of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee, before opening the matter up for debate.

- 5.60 Councillor Clare thanked the petitioners and stated that this was an important issue of which I know many councillors are considering their response to and I have spent significant time this evening providing responses to. At this present time, there is a consultation open on these proposals and I urge you to fill these consultations in if you haven't already. This is the best way we can ensure that the potential impact of these proposals are thoroughly considered by councillors in the depth they deserve to be.

The timing of these consultations is set by both the school admissions code and the council's democratic timetable. However, I note that the close of the consultation on 2 January ahead of the meeting of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee on 10th January will not give councillors much time to weigh up all the responses to each consultation and consider the impacts of each school.

I am therefore calling a special meeting of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee on Monday 31st January to discuss these proposals specifically.

- 5.61 Councillors Brown, John, Hamilton, McNair, Nield, O'Quinn, Simson, Hills, Meadows, Allcock Knight and Appich all spoke on the issue and expressed their concerns and impact on schools where numbers were reduced. It was recognised that the pupil numbers were reducing and were projected to continue to do so which meant that places had to be reviewed. However, it was also important to take account of the impact on individual schools and on the children and the special meeting for January was welcomed.
- 5.62 Councillor Clare noted the comments and stated that she agreed with a number of them but also noted that the situation was governed by the School Adjudicator who had told the council to look at the option of having mixed-age classes. She also noted that the recent decision concerning Brunswick Primary School would have an impact on the number of places that could be offered across the city's schools. She fully supported the need for smaller classes but there was a budget for schools and the council due to the reliance on school numbers. She hoped that the consultation would have a good response and a full and considered debate could be held at the special meeting in January.
- 5.63 The mayor thanked everyone for their comments and stated that he needed to put the recommendation to note the petitions and refer them to the special meeting of the committee to the vote, which was agreed.
- 5.64 **RESOLVED:** That the petitions be noted and referred to the special meeting of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee on the 31 January 2022.

6 CLOSE OF MEETING

- 6.1 The mayor thanked everyone and formally closed the meeting.

The meeting concluded at 7.29pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2022