

Brighton & Hove City Council

Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

Agenda Item 93

Subject: Brighton & Hove In Bloom

Date of meeting: 15 March 2022

Report of: Executive Director: Economy, Environment & Culture

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

1. Purpose of the report and policy context

1.1 At its meeting on 18 January 2022, the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee received a petition calling for the return of Brighton & Hove In Bloom. This report provides further information in response to the petition.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the Committee notes the report.

3. Context and background information

3.1 Brighton & Hove City Council ran a very successful City In Bloom campaign for many years, working alongside residents, communities, businesses and schools across the city. Two large celebration events were held each year and the team organized the Floral Clock Christmas Lighting event. The team also coordinated entries for South East in Bloom, RHS Tatton and Britain in Bloom.

3.2 As stated in the response to the petition at Committee on 18 January 2022, the way In Bloom used to operate was not inexpensive and required a lot of leadership and coordination. Officer support included a part-time Project Officer and admin support from City Parks, alongside support from managers across the service. There was also involvement from other council services such as Cityclean, highways and street lighting.

3.3 A working group was in place all year round and the City Parks resources were involved in:

- Supporting the working group and meetings
 - Organising all promotions, including website, leaflets and posters
 - Organising all competitions, including the Allotment Coronation Bowl and organising the judging
 - Organising all sponsors, including competitions and flower beds and roundabouts
 - Coordinating and submitting entries to South East In Bloom and Britain In Bloom
 - Coordinating and managing the hanging basket contract and overseeing all resident groups and business orders
 - Organising two prize giving events: the launch and end of year prize giving events
- 3.4 The council has had to implement austerity measures to most departments following the economic downturn. This has meant that the City Environment department that includes City Parks has been operating with a reduced revenue to what it was ten years ago. It is estimated that Cityparks has seen a reduction in its revenue spend from £4.2m to around £3.8m since 2010.
- 3.5 In 2007/2008, the year before funding was reduced, the budget was £61,810. In 2012/13, transitional funding of £25,000 was provided to a voluntary City In Bloom group to continue to lead and coordinate these efforts. All funding to support In Bloom – both directly and to the voluntary group was removed from City Park’s budgets in 2013/14, resulting in no council resource to support In Bloom activities.
- 3.6 City In Bloom was organised by the voluntary City In Bloom group until 2020, running competitions for businesses, residents, allotment holders and all relevant administration. They carried out their own promotion and sponsorship of competitions and events. The City In Bloom voluntary group had a Special Meeting of Dissolution on 24 February 2020.
- 3.7 In their [Facebook post announcing the dissolution](#), Brighton And Hove City In Bloom stated: “The theme of the model we worked on had become outmoded and whilst we updated and worked to exclude less sustainable categories and embrace more ecologically sound practices, as volunteers we have found the running of City in Bloom to be complex and unsustainable. Whilst we are saddened that we can't continue we are very pleased with our achievements over the seven years that we have been running as a voluntary organisation. Our sponsors have supported us and allowed us to award many community groups for their outstanding work and achievements. We wish to thank everyone unreservedly for the terrific work done within local groups and the wider community and wish everyone every success in the future. Keep gardening and spreading the joy”.
- 3.8 In Bloom competitions are not what they used to be. It is no longer about summer bedding displays, hanging baskets and window boxes, partly due to the unsustainable nature of bedding plants. In Bloom is now about caring for the environment and encouraging communities and volunteers to become involved in caring for their neighbourhoods – there are many ways in which

the council already supports this. This includes the Green Spaces Forum and the Tidy Up Team.

- 3.9 Encouragingly, communities in Brighton & Hove have taken it upon themselves to coordinate entries, without the need for support from the council or the city's voluntary working group. In 2021, South East In Bloom received independent entries for the RHS It's Your Neighbourhood Campaign, including: Norfolk Square, The Triangle Plot, Friends of Brunswick Square & Terrace and Friends of Palmeira & Adelaide. Saunders Park also entered into the Park category.
- 3.10 In response to the petition, it is important to remember that the council continues in its efforts to tidy up the city. Cityclean and City Parks staff work very hard to maintain Brighton & Hove's appearance. This is supplemented by regular deep cleans and additional seasonal staff throughout the year. As described in the report, the involvement from City Parks was deeper than coordination and leadership; it was time consuming and comprehensive, something which is reflected in the comment in 3.6. Whilst the prizes were funded through sponsorship, it was City Parks who sought this year-on-year in order for the event to continue.
- 3.11 Without additional resources, the council is unable to bring back the support and coordination to reintroduce Brighton & Hove In Bloom. The council can look to include relevant content on the council's website to promote [South & South East In Bloom](#), but beyond this, there is little more that can be done. If the council decided to become involved in In Bloom again, an indicative budget of at least £60,000 would be required based on the resources provided when City Parks were involved.

4. Analysis and consideration of alternative options

- 4.1 Without additional resources, the council is unable to bring back the support and coordination to reintroduce Brighton & Hove In Bloom. Services across the council will continue to support volunteers and communities to take care of the city, such as through the Green Spaces Forum and the Tidy Up Team.

5. Community engagement and consultation

- 5.1 Engagement forms an important role for City Parks, enabling the team to provide high quality maintenance in parks and open spaces and to deliver high quality projects. This is achieved through involving residents and businesses in ongoing design, planning and management, which results in informed and engaged residents and businesses that feel better connected to their city and their environment.
- 5.2 City Parks work very closely with the Friends of Groups, community and voluntary grounds and businesses across the city, to ensure that the service works to engage with people who live, visit and work in the city.
- 5.3 City Parks work in partnership with the Brighton & Hove Green Spaces Forum (BHGSF), which is volunteer led and was set up to provide an

independent voice and communication hub for community groups working in Brighton & Hove's parks and open spaces. BHGSF currently engage with over 70 groups in the city.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 This report provides further information in response to a petition presented at the previous Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report. Should a decision be made for the council to be involved in In Bloom again, budget of at least £0.060m would need to be identified.

Name of finance officer consulted: John Lack Date consulted: 14/02/2022

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 There are no legal implications arising from the recommendation in the report.

Name of lawyer consulted: Hilary Woodward Date consulted 15/02/2022

9. Equalities implications

- 9.1 There are no equality impacts resulting from this report.

10. Sustainability implications

- 10.1 Communities that participate in South & South East In Bloom benefit in a variety of ways, including:

- Cleaner and greener surroundings
- Safer environments for the enjoyment of local people
- Long term improvement for the environment by addressing issues such as sustainability, conservation, litter, graffiti etc.
- Regeneration of run down and/or disadvantaged areas

- 10.2 The council is already addressing these and will continue to do so by, for example:

- delivering the [Open Spaces Strategy](#)
- delivering the [Graffiti Reduction Strategy](#)
- [tackling environmental crimes](#)
- supporting communities through the [Tidy Up Team](#)