

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 82

Subject: Written questions from Councillors

Date of meeting: 1 February 2024

Report of: Executive Director for Governance, People & Resources

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

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

1. Councillor Theobald

S106 money - In response to my written question at the 19 October 2023 Council Meeting, Cllr Williams kindly confirmed in the written answer, that since 2018 121 units have been provided which have been supported by section 106 commuted financial sums, totalling £4 million six hundred and sixty-seven pounds. I have been informed that the Council collected over 5 times this amount. Is this true? What is the total sum currently being held by the council from developers who have been unable to provide onsite affordable housing?

I am also advised that the Council has not invoiced all developers for the commuted sums that they owe, so that the total sum is even higher. Is this the case and why has this been allowed to happen?
What is the total sum owed to the council by developers?

Reply from Councillor Loughran, Chair of Planning

2. Councillor McNair

Claims - How much money has the council paid out to residents in compensation in relation to potholes and flooding? In the period 01.01.23 - 31.12.23
What percentage of claims are successful?
How is the council planning to improve the ease with which residents can claim?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

3. Councillor Meadows

Dog Poo bins - Recently, many dog poo bins went uncollected across Patcham & Hollingbury for many days and were overflowing. We have waited years for new bins. When will they be provided?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

4. Councillor McNair

CCTV - CCTV at Stanmer Heights has recently been found to be out of focus and providing poor quality footage if any at all. Is all Council-owned CCTV in Patcham & Hollingbury now in good working order?

Reply from Councillor Pumm, Chair of Equalities, Community Safety & Human Rights Committee

5. Councillor Meadows

Flooding in Winfield Avenue, particularly at the junction with Ladies Mile Road, is worsening. What is the plan to reduce flooding in Winfield Avenue, and to reduce the effects on properties near the junction being flooded?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

6. Councillor Theobald

Birch Grove Crescent - Residents report litter to Estates Management only to be told it is Cityclean's responsibility. Cityclean report it is Estates Management responsibility. Can residents be directed to the correct contact to expedite work.

Scaffolding has been there for over a year, but no work appears to have been carried out. If it hasn't been removed yet, when will it be?

Behind no 68 Birchgrove Crescent is a collection of abandoned children's bikes and scooters as well as at least three sheds which people are using to dump their unwanted items (furniture, tyres, toys beer cans etc). When will the sheds be renovated?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Chair of Housing and New Homes Committee

7. Councillor Shanks

What is the total predicted cost of closing St Peters and St Barts schools, including paying the deficit, staff redundancies, extra support for children transferring, cost of moth balling buildings?

Reply from Councillor Helliwell / Taylor , Joint Chair(s) of Children Families & Schools

8. Councillor Shanks

At what point in the budget process has consultation occurred with our city's valued community and voluntary groups on the impact of cuts to their grant funding and other council services, what opportunity was given for them to input into the shaping of the budget papers before the drafts went to committee, and can the council commit to ensuring a longer timeframe for discussion and consultation on the budget in the future, given the scale of cuts and the seriousness of their impact?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council

9. Councillor Pickett

Preston Park velodrome is a well-used and much-loved part of Preston Park. It seems some locals are using the area to train their dogs because it is fenced in, while some families are choosing to take their children there rather than the nearby playground or open spaces in Preston Park. This has created problems for people using the velodrome for its primary purpose of cycling and cricket, with a number of accidents, collisions, and other unfortunate incidents, including one which left a cyclist in hospital. Could the council explore the potential for a) clearer signage urging families with young children to be mindful of cyclists and other velodrome users, b) a potential PSPO preventing dogs from being let off their lead within the velodrome, or c) another practical solution which would enable all users of velodrome to continue to enjoy the area without the added risk of collision and injury?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

10. Councillor Pickett

Will this council be making representations in response to the open consultation from the Planning Inspectorate on the proposals for Gatwick Airport Northern Runway, in line with previous stated opposition to the plans? Given that the Leader of the Council has previously stated that 'any airport expansion must pass our tests on air quality, noise pollution and delivering economic benefits while enabling us to meet our obligations on climate change,' can we have more detail on what the criteria for the 'tests' referred to on air quality and noise pollution constitute in practice?

Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of Culture, Heritage, Sport, Tourism & Economic Development Committee

11. Councillor Hill

Last June at the Culture, Heritage, Tourism, Sport and Economic Development Committee we were told that a draft version of the Council's

new 5 year Economic Strategy would be used to guide the implementation of the new Council budget. Will the draft of this plan be made publicly available? It is important that the public understands what the Economic Strategy of this Council is given the last one expired last year.

Reply from Councillor Robins, Chair of Culture, Heritage, Sport, Tourism & Economic Development Committee

12. Councillor Hill

A recent Local Government Association report raised the alarm over “unprecedented increases in demand” for sexual health services which is partly due to a steep rise in gonorrhoea and syphilis cases. Cases of HIV transmission also have been plateauing despite the government’s goal to end new transmissions by 2030. Cuts to sexual health services have been a key contributor to this, with some Local Authorities elsewhere no longer funding sexual health provision due to budget cuts. Will funding for sexual health services be protected in the upcoming budget in light of a rise in sexually transmitted diseases and a lack of progress in ending new HIV transmissions?

Reply from Councillor De Oliveira, Chair of Health & Wellbeing Board

13. Councillor Hill

How many vacancies exist in each directorate because of the Council’s recruitment freeze?

Reply from Councillor Sankey , Leader of the Council

14. Councillor Hill

Has Councillor Rowkins received a response about the amount of diesel used per annum in the Newhaven Energy Recovery Facility? I was told last October that he requested information pertaining to this.

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

15. Councillor McLeay

What is the average estimated cost per property needed to bring all council properties up to an EPC C and EPC B?

Reply from Councillor Williams , Chair of Housing and New Homes Committee

16. Councillor McLeay

November housing and new homes committee reported 88 council home having an EPC of band E or below. How many of these 88 council homes have an EPC of E, of F and of G?

Reply from Councillor Williams , Chair of Housing and New Homes Committee

17. Councillor McLeay

Quarter 2 2023/24 HRA rent collection returns showed that rent collection was falling and predicted that only 93.66% of the rent would be collected this year against a target of 95.36%. If this prediction proves correct, how much less rent will be collected compared to if the target of 95.36% collection rate were to be achieved?

Reply from Councillor Williams , Chair of Housing and New Homes Committee

18. Councillor McLeay

How much does a by-election cost the Council?

Reply from Councillor Sankey , Leader of the Council

19. Councillor Earthey

What is BHCC's latest position on the use of glyphosphate weedkiller in the city, and how does it reconcile the perceived benefits of using it against the real environmental damage that will be caused to city food chains and biodiversity?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Chair of City Environment, South Downs & The Sea Committee

20. Councillor Earthey

In view of Central Government's increase in the budget for repairing potholes, by when will BHCC be able to claim a share of these funds, and accelerate its pothole repair programme?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

21. Councillor Earthey

Can the Labour Administration confirm a recent BBC report that BHCC faces a Judicial Review over its decision to move from paper parking vouchers to Pay-by-Phone? If yes, how much council-taxpayers' money is going to be wasted defending this action, brought about by the Labour Administration's insufficient attention to detail?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

22. Councillor Earthey

Residents east of the Marina only have one direct bus per hour to the Royal Sussex County Hospital (14C). What pressure can the Labour Administration bring to bear on B&H Buses to improve this service?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

23. Councillor Earthey

BHCC parking fees imposed on visitors to the Royal Sussex County Hospital are outrageously high, and discriminate unfairly against visitors of more modest means. What steps is the Labour Administration going to take to reduce these charges?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

24. Councillor Fishleigh

Subject: Valley Gardens 3

Is it administratively possible to re-allocate to other capital projects the £5m loan and the £1.8m from BHCC funds assigned to Valley Gardens 3, and if not, why not?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee

25. Councillor Fishleigh

Subject: Universal Basic Income

It was mentioned in passing in a previous full council that BHCC is exploring introducing a UBI trial. Please would you provide a few details.

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council