

**BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL**

**COUNCIL**

**4.30pm 28 MARCH 2024**

**HOVE TOWN HALL – COUNCIL CHAMBER**

**MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillors O'Quinn (Chair), Davis, Evans, Fowler, Grimshaw, Meadows, McNair, Robins, Sankey, C Theobald, West, Wilkinson, Williams, Alexander, Allen, Asaduzzaman, Baghoth, Burden, Cattell, Czolak, Daniel, Earthey, Galvin, Goddard, Goldsmith, Helliwell, Hewitt, Hill, Hogan, Lyons, McGregor, McLeay, Miller, Muten, Nann, Oliveira, Pickett, Pumm, Robinson, Rowkins, Sheard, Simon, Stevens, Taylor, Thomson, Winder and Guilmant

**PART ONE**

**18 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

18.1 The following Councillors declared personal and prejudicial interest in Item 31, a report concerning the Cost of Living Action Plan and Brighton & Hove Fairness Fund:

Councillor Alexander as Chair of an organisation directly impacted by the Cost of Living Action Plan and Brighton & Hove Fairness Fund.

Councillor Grimshaw as trustee of Hangleton Community Centre.

Councillor Robinson as trustee of Cornerstone Community Centre.

Councillor Daniel as an employee of an organisation directly impacted by the Cost of Living Action Plan and Brighton & Hove Fairness Fund.

18.2 No other declarations of interests in matters appearing on the agenda were made.

**19 MINUTES**

19.1 The minutes of the last ordinary meeting(s) held on the 1 February 2024 and 22 February 2024 and special meeting held on 4 March 2024 were approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings.

**20 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS.**

20.1 The Mayor gave the following communications:

“Firstly, I would like to welcome Jess Gibbons, our new Chief Executive, to her first full Council meeting. As many will know, Jess started with us last week and I am sure you will all wish to join me in warmly welcoming Jess to the Council.

As Mayor of Brighton and Hove I have had a busy couple of months, and I wanted to share some of the themes and highlights with you today. As you all know I have a particular interest in young people as I was a teacher for many years and know how important it is for young people to receive not only an excellent education but also to be involved in groups and activities that develop their sense of community and encourage greater confidence and leadership skills. Thus, it was a great pleasure to welcome a number of Scouts to Brighton Town Hall Council Chamber to receive their Silver Awards. Such a lot of smiling faces and young people who obviously very much enjoyed the challenges they had to deal with in order to receive their award. Lots of very proud parents there too and many photographs were taken. The same can be said of the RAF cadets award night, held at BHASVIC, where awards were given out for a variety of reasons such as Cadet of the year, most promising cadets and those who had completed certain phases of their training. Once again there were many proud parents and family members attending and also the many volunteers who help to train these young people and heartfelt thanks were given to them for their dedication and service.

Visiting the cadets of No 1 Brighton Cadet attachment at the Quebec Army Reserve Centre, Dyke Road, with Cllr Amanda Grimshaw was another inspiring event as we were able to talk with a number of the young cadets, their experiences and their future plans. Such enthusiasm and appreciation of the different activities that they were able to take part in on a regular basis. Parents and potential cadets attended part of the evening and you could see how impressed they were with what was being offered.

A somewhat different event with primary school children from several schools attending a Poetry Festival at Brackenbury Primary School was great fun and engendered a strong sense of community amongst schools. I was there as one of the three judges of a poetry reading competition and there were a number of tongue-twister poems that were quite challenging for the pupils to read aloud but they were magnificent, and it was hard to choose an overall winner, but we did – a young boy called Ed won with his rendition of ‘Time to breathe’. We decided he had a promising career as a Yoga teacher in the future. Again, a big thank you to the teachers who put so much work into this new venture.

This Monday we held a reception for the girls who have campaigned for a statue for Mary Clarke. Not only had they campaigned but they had also donated pocket money, birthday money and baked cakes to raise money. Seriously impressive commitment to a cause they so obviously believe strongly in – commemorating women who fought so hard for the vote for women in the UK. Such support for women not only in the UK but globally was reflected on International Women’s Day 8th March which was celebrated at an event at the Double Tree, Hilton and also at the first showing of ‘Vindication Swim’ at the Duke of York cinema in the evening. A fabulous film about Mercedes Gleitze, the first British woman to swim the channel. I recommend it the film to all of you.

So, let us celebrate the young people in this city who show their willingness to take on challenges, develop teamwork and a sense of civic responsibility. They come from all

backgrounds and capabilities but show how amazing they are when decide to take up a challenge.

Finally, I'm aware that the breaking of the fast for Ramadan is at 6.28pm this evening. Therefore, we will hold a break of 40 minutes beginning at 6.20pm."

## **21 TO RECEIVE PETITIONS AND E-PETITIONS.**

- 21.1 The Mayor invited the submission of petitions from members of the public. She reminded the Council 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.
- 21.2 Laura King presented a petition signed by 516 residents concerning the Referendum to keep the King Alfred Leisure Centre on Hove Seafront.
- 21.3 The Mayor thanked the lead petitioner and stated that the petition would be referred to the relevant decision making for consideration.

## **22 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

- 22.1 The Mayor reported that 6 written questions had been received from members of the public and invited Andrew Mosley to come forward and address the council.

Andrew Mosley asked the following question; "I am the General Manager of The Grand. We plant and maintain BHCC land directly in front of the hotel and I am here to ask the council to please plant, or at least cut down the overgrowth and bark, on land on the south side of the A259. It's been an eyesore for too long on our historic seafront."

Councillor Rowkins replied; "Thank you, Mr Mosley. I understand that you're the General Manager of the Grand Hotel, which is obviously a very important part of our seafront. I want to start just by thanking you for your maintenance, for the section of land outside the hotel that you maintain. I believe your specific question was around the area of land opposite the hotel on the seafront there. I have asked that we visit that site as soon as possible to undertake maintenance and hopefully get some planting done as well. I will update you when that is going to happen."

- 22.2 The Mayor thanked Andrew Mosley for their question and invited Ed Armston-sheret to come forward and address the council.

Ed Armston-sheret asked the following question; "Will parents and carers with children at Bright Start nursery be offered the opportunity to visit the new nursery site at the Tarner Family Hub before the nursery move takes place?"

Councillor Taylor replied; "Thank you for your question. I hope you are well. A short answer - yes. A letter is being sent to parents this week, which will include information on drop-in sessions so they can visit the Tarner Family Hub. Worth noting, this will include a session supported by EMAS so that families where English is an additional language can also visit and ask questions."

Ed Armston-sheret asked the following supplementary question; “I have actually received that communication, it came through some 4 hours before this meeting. It outlines that there's going to be one session offered which is on a Thursday. As this is a weekday, what will the Council do to make sure that parents who are working are able to visit the new nursery site? There's one day being offered on a Thursday.”

Councillor Taylor replied; “Thanks, Ed. We will certainly make efforts to ensure that parents can visit at other convenient times and I will speak to officers to make sure that happens.”

- 22.3 The Mayor thanked Ed Armston-sheret for their questions and invited Gerry Walden to come forward and address the council.

Gerry Walden asked the following question; “It isn't easy to get at the underlying facts about the future of the King Alfred. I found the questionnaire appeared to be slanted in favour of a move to Hangleton. Has the decision to move been driven about past development problems? I sympathise that the council is struggling financially. I am not clear why a decision is being made now that will be started in potentially changed financial circumstances. Why is the council not looking again at a mixed commercial and leisure centre development on the existing site over the medium term with the equivalent financials?”

Councillor Robins replied; “Thank you for your question, Mr Weldon. At this time, no decision has been taken on the choice of site to deliver the new facility. That decision will be taken this summer. The current site has not been ruled out and remains an option that is being considered alongside the alternative site.

The decision will be informed by the outcomes of the recent consultation and by the work we've been doing over the last nine months with experts Consortium Sport and Leisure to examine value for money implications of the delivery options. The work has shown us that delivery on the existing site would be more complex, more expensive, more constrained and carry a greater risk. The three past attempts to deliver the new facility on the site, using mixed commercial and leisure centre development, have all failed, highlighting the challenges of this site. It was therefore important to make sure the questionnaire reflected these key messages so that the responses understood the constraints and challenges.

The urgency to replace the current King Alfred has become especially acute in recent times. Running costs for the facility are high, and between January and April last year we were forced to close the pools as a result of flooding damage to the heating system, illustrating the fragility conditions of this facility. We are therefore looking to take the project forward at a pace now to minimise the risk of having to close the existing facility before the plans are in place for replacement.

A key lesson learned for the past projects is that linking the new Sports Centre facility to other mixed-use developments greatly increases the risk of the project stalling. With that in mind, we have taken the decision to deliver the new facility directly as a distinct separate project to minimise the risk.”

Gerry Walden asked the following supplementary question; “Many of those currently using the current King Alfred's site access it by foot, public transport, and bikes. Given that the Council appears to have decided to demolish the King Alfred Leisure Centre, is the only solution being considered seriously to move to the Hangleton location, with a potential legal limitation on use, that has poor bus services, poor pedestrian access and where it does not appear to be very safe to cycle to, especially for younger and older people. For those who currently use the King Alfred site. Thank you.”

Councillor Robins replied; “Thanks very much Mr Walden. As I've said, there's no decision being made. So at the moment the King Alfred is still looked upon as an as an option. The only thing I will say is that there's quite a good bus service to the site that we've been looking at in Hangleton and all that will be taken into consideration when the final decision is made. Thanks very much”

- 22.4 The Mayor thanked Gerry Walden for their questions and invited David Streeter to come forward and address the council.

David Streeter asked the following question; “We would like to ask the Council about their inconsistency of approach within the planning department towards the privately owned Hippodrome and other Brighton Council owned buildings. As an example, within Pavilion Theatre, Fibrous plaster (Listed Building Consent) application (part retrospective!) BH2020/03419 validated 25 Nov 2020, decided 12 Feb 2021 (11 weeks 2 days). Compared to the Hippodrome: fibrous plaster stabilisation and protective domed roof: BH2021/01079 validated 24 Mar 2021, decided 7 Oct 2021 (28 weeks 1 day) which is 2 and a half times longer to be approved.”

Councillor Allen replied; “Mr Streeter, thank you for your question to my colleague, Chair of Planning Councillor Loughran who is unwell today. Every planning application is assessed on its own merits. The type and complexity of the information required depends on the circumstances of the site and the specifics of the proposal. Application BH2022/02443 was published in August 2022 and amendments to the scheme were received in November 2022, again in February 2023 and then again in March 2023.

Following amendments to the scheme, and consultation in April 2023, the Council received comments from the public, both supporting and objecting to the scheme. The Planning Committee are conducting a site visit to the Hippodrome on Tuesday 2nd of April next week, with a final debate and decision to be taken on Wednesday 3rd of April.

David Streeter asked the following supplementary question; “As I said earlier, a week is a long time in politics and since tabling this question, we've had the chance to see the Council's full planning report, which I'm pleased to say concurs with our long-held view that the Hippodrome, as quoted, its restoration as a flexible events and entertainment venue should be strongly recommended.

So we would, we would therefore hope that the Planning Committee, which meets next week, as you said, will approve the planning application and allow the careful restoration to continue. We'd like to be assured that the Council can maintain a consistency in the planning as obviously is fundamental by the planning committee. So we believe that is essential to maintaining public confidence in the whole planning process.”

Councillor Allen replied; I'd just like to concur with what Mr Streeter has said and just to reassure him and everyone else that there's no particular bias from the planning department in terms of applicants. It doesn't matter whether it's private or the Council itself that's the applicant, the time frames are still statutory and are followed.

- 22.5 The Mayor thanked David Streeter for their questions and invited Nigel Furness to come forward and address the council.

Nigel Furness asked the following question; Could you please confirm to this Chamber, Councillor Sankey, the approximate cost of the two forthcoming By-elections to the City's council-taxpayers and from whence come the funds?

Councillor Sankey replied; "Good afternoon Mr Furness, it's good to see you again, and thank you for your question. I'm really pleased that the by-election's in Queens Park and Kempton have now been called and they've been called for the 2nd of May. Due to the by-elections taking place on the same day as the Police and Crime Commissioner election, many major costs are going to be shared between the Council and Central Government. These include poll card printing and postage, polling station staffing and polling place hire. It's expected that the Council will incur cost of £18,000. Within the electoral services budget is an allowance for one by-election per year. The £18,000 that we are expecting to incur will be covered by this budget."

Nigel Furness asked the following supplementary question; Councillor Sankey, these council prospective candidates that you've announced, you've been making very large of the fact that they are thoroughly local people with thoroughly local connections. Indeed I know them both, so you are telling the truth I'm glad to say. Can I therefore ask, are you prepared to go further with that statement and confirm that you are now in control, or your party is now in control locally, of future candidates who are being selected rather than regional, or worse still, Labour Central Office. Thank you.

Councillor Sankey replied; Thank you for the supplementary question Mr Furness. I can confirm that both of our Labour candidates, selected for both Queen's Park and Kemp Town, were selected by local branch members.

- 22.6 The Mayor thanked Nigel Furness for their questions and invited Angela Vitolo to come forward and address the council.

Angela Vitolo asked the following question; "With the current trend of falling life expectancy resulting from poor nationwide public health plans, what is Brighton and Hove Council doing to improve the health and wellbeing of its residents?"

Councillor De Oliveira replied: "Thank you very much Angela Vitolo. Increasing healthy life expectancy and reducing the gap in healthy life expectancy between people living in the most and least disadvantaged areas of the city are the key aims of the city-wide health and wellbeing strategy. We do this by focusing the health and wellbeing outcomes for the city and across the key life stages of all local residents, with particular focus on those who are the most disadvantaged.

Evidence shows that there are many factors that determine our health. Not just health services, but also the wider socio-economic circumstances of our life such as income,

educational attainment, transport, employment, housing, and community cohesion. These are the building blocks of good and healthy society and wellbeing, and actions to strengthen them sit across the whole system. This includes the Council, the NHS, the voluntary sector and many other partners.

Our work to influence these areas is to be evidence based: looking at our local data, our local communities and their experiences and priorities, what works, and what is cost effective.

There are many examples of our ways of working, one is our programme of working around reducing harm from smoking. Evidence tells that supporting residents to stop smoking would halve the gap in life expectancy between the richest and poorest in the city. I'm pleased to say from April we will have £400,000 of new money, via national grant, specifically aimed to support people to stop smoking. We will be using this money to add to our current work on helping people to stop smoking, working with partners to support all residents to stop smoking and targeting groups with the highest smoking rates.

Our current Brighton and Hove Health and Wellbeing Strategy is informed by our Brighton and Hove Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and runs all the way to 2030 and is published on the council website. I encourage all residents to read it. Thank you."

Angela Vitolo asked the following supplementary question; "Councillor, I would like to know please, what are you doing specifically for mental health?"

Councillor De Oliveira replied: "Thank you very much. So mental health sits at the heart of this Council, of this administration. I'm someone who works on mental health, and we've been working tirelessly with the local NHS, with partners to make sure that we understand mental health. We want to be a Council that supports people. For example, we passed a fantastic suicide strategy to make sure that we reach every single person out there who needs support with that side of mental distress. We need to be a listening Council and make sure that every single resident of this city knows that their Council is trying their best to look after their mental health because mental health, like physical health, is about a holistic being. It's about the person being able to achieve many things in society and we'd like that to be for every single resident in our city, from the richest to the poorest."

## **23 DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC.**

- 23.1 The Mayor noted that the deputation concerning play-space funding had been withdrawn.

## **24 PETITION FOR DEBATE - GLYPHOSATE**

- 24.1 The Mayor stated that where a petition secured 1,250 or more signatures it could be debated at the council meeting. There was one petition which had reached that threshold. The petition concerned Keep Brighton and Hove Free of Toxic Weedkillers and she invited Elspeth Broady on behalf of Clara Usiskin to join the meeting and to present the petition.

24.2 Elspeth Broady thanked the mayor and stated that the petition had been signed by over 1200 people. The petition stated to propose looking at ways to make the school travel free for all children, following example of London where all bus travel for under 16s is free of charge.

24.3 Councillor Rowkins replied.

24.4 Councillor Davis moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Hill.

24.5 Councillor Hogan spoke on the matter.

24.6 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Hogan on her maiden speech.

24.7 Councillor Muten responded to the debate and did not accept the Green Group amendment.

24.8 **RESOLVED:**

1. That the petition was noted and referred to the relevant decision making body for consideration.

25 **CALL OVER FOR REPORTS OF COMMITTEES.**

**(a) Callover**

The following items on the agenda were reserved for discussion:

Item 29 - Review Of Cumulative Impact Policy - Cumulative Impact Assessment 2023 (Consultation Response Report)

Item 30 - Pay Policy Statement 2024/25

Item 31 - Cost Of Living Action Plan and Brighton & Hove Fairness Fund

Item 32 - Proposals for New Governance Arrangements

Item 33 - Accountable Body for Local Enterprise Partnership Legacy Funds

**(b) Receipt and/or Approval of Reports**

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that Items 29, 30, 31, 32 and 33 had been reserved for discussion; and

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that the following reports on the agenda with the recommendations therein had been approved and adopted:

Item 28 - Making the Hove Station Neighbourhood Plan and Rottingdean Paris Neighbourhood Plan

**(c) Oral Questions from Members**

The Mayor noted that there were 12 oral questions.

**26 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS.**

26.1 The Mayor noted that written questions from Members and the replies from the appropriate Councillor were taken as read by reference to the list included in the addendum which had been circulated prior to the meeting as detailed below:

**1. Councillor Fishleigh**

I thought that there is a hiring freeze, however, I keep seeing posts being advertised on BHCC's linkedin profile. Please would you confirm what the situation is with regards to recruitment.

**Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council**

The Council introduced recruitment controls in September 2023 to manage a significant projected overspend. Whilst this has been successful in bringing the Council's budget under control, with a projected balanced or underspent budget, there are some roles in the council that are essential for the safe and effective running of services. These include roles where there are statutory minimum staffing requirements such as in social care, vital roles to keep our most vulnerable residents safe such as social workers, and also our essential front-line services that need the right level of staffing to maintain the look and feel of the city. The council's staff across many teams have continued to work with dedication and commitment, whilst in some areas coping with an increased level of vacancies to support the proper and effective management of the 23/24 budget.

**2. Councillor Earthey**

Bin collection standards are slipping again, and there are fears regarding the outbreak of a strike at CityClean. What steps is the Labour Administration taking to raise bin collection standards to an acceptable level, while at the same time, seeking to maintain good industrial relations with the CityClean workforce?

**Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council**

I am sorry that some residents have recently had disrupted services after a considerable period of improvement. We are absolutely committed to modernising the city clean service and improving the reliability and quality of the cityclean collections service.

The recent disruption to services was due to deliberate sabotage of bin lorries, an increase in vehicle defects as well higher than normal levels of sickness.

I'm pleased to report that most collections have now been caught up. Managers have recently finished consulting our collections staff on new ways of working which is aimed to ensure that staff work more flexibly in order to meet service delivery needs. We will be implementing changes to the way our staff work in the coming weeks and we have conducted positive and constructive discussions with GMB to avoid strike action.

Cityclean is undergoing a culture change programme at present with a view to making it a more welcoming and safe place to work and in doing so improving the resilience of the service to residents.

A number of staff have moved on recently and we will be undertaking a recruitment campaign soon in the new financial year with a view to attracting a more diverse workforce who will be committed to providing an excellent service to residents.

We are also continuing to invest in the fleet and new technology and waste infrastructure to improve the efficiency and reliability of the collections service going forward.

### **3. Councillor Earthey**

Many residents have expressed great concern about BHCC's decision to re-introduce the use of Glyphosphate weedkiller and its consequent impact on biodiversity, even when applied in droplet form. What opt-out mechanism is BHCC proposing to offer residents so that they can choose to eliminate weeds from their pavements using more environmentally-friendly methods, rather than relying on BHCC's strategy?

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

Since 2019, the council has been manually removing weeds. After five years, the problem is out of control and many pavements present safety and accessibility problems for residents.

Some streets are inaccessible to wheelchair users, parents and carers with buggies and those with visual or mobility impairments.

2024 is a reset year to get our city's weed problem back under control. Once the problem is back under control, we will reduce the use of glyphosate to the lowest level possible.

Because this is a reset year, there is not yet an opt-out scheme in place. This is to make sure the deep-rooted vegetation is tackled.

We are keen to establish an opt-out scheme going forward, although obviously this would be conditional on streets being maintained to a good standard by those seeking the opt-out.

It is important to note that the treatment in 2024 will only be applied where vegetation is visible and growing on hard surfaces and not the hard surface generally. If there is no visible vegetation, the treatment will not be applied.

Therefore, if residents want to remove vegetation from their road, they can do so, and this will eliminate the need for treatment.

### **4. Councillor Earthey**

What steps is BHCC taking to align its new Glyphosphate-based weed-killing strategy with the strategies of neighbouring councils? There are cases where council boundaries run down the centre of a road such that one side is in BHCC and the other is in, say, Lewes District Council. It would make sense to agree a common weed-killing strategy along common boundaries, especially where biodiversity projects are nearby or span council boundaries.

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

Thank you for your question. Officers do undertake research when looking at options for strategies and in some cases we do work with neighbouring local authorities to deliver services. The removal of weeds on the highway for Lewes DC is carried out by East Sussex County Council. At present, ESCC use a conventional glyphosate application, not the controlled droplet application agreed at the City Environment, South Downs & The Sea committee in January 2023.

Therefore, our policy approaches do not align and it would not be an option to combine contracts. We would encourage ESCC to adopt the more sustainable approach we are taking, and will happily share details and outcomes with them.

**5. Councillor Earthey**

Looking across all B&H City Council buildings (excluding Council Houses), what percentage of electricity and gas meters have been upgraded to SMETS2?

**Reply from Councillor Taylor, Joint Deputy Leader of the Council.**

The council currently have 812 AMR (Automatic Meter Reading) enabled metering installed across our electricity assets supplying corporate, education and housing sites. These meters provide half hourly consumption data and consumption profiles which is imported into our energy management software for interrogation. The meters currently installed cover 88% of the council's annual electricity consumption and 62% of the total meter assets serving the council. Of the remaining 503 meters which are not AMR enabled, 453 of these are classed as 'de minimis' supplies consuming less than 1,000 kWh per month, the majority of which serve housing communal areas.

Our supplier, EDF procured by Orbis through a Crown Commercial Services Framework, are currently undertaking an iterative rollout of SMETS2 enabled meters across around 450 of our supplies which once complete would take total AMR coverage up to 96% of total meter numbers.

However, whilst we are aware that there are some SMETS2 enabled meters in the portfolio we do not currently have access to the total installed and the vast majority of our AMR meters are likely to be utilising the original SMETS1 protocol. We will request clarification from our supplier about their progress on the rollout.

Across the gas portfolio there are 160 AMR enabled meters installed at council sites covering 83% of annual gas consumption and 70% of total meters installed. Again, it is

currently unknown what proportion of these are SMETS2 enabled, and we will request this information from our supplier.

**6. Councillor Earthey**

In what position is BHCC in the league table of local government organisations having implemented SMETS2 meters across their portfolio of buildings?

**Reply from Councillor Taylor, Joint Deputy Leader of the Council.**

Whilst we are aware regional statistics for deployment of SMETS2 enabled meters, we are not currently aware of any league tables broken down into the coverage at authority level. We will explore this further with the relevant regulatory bodies and feedback as appropriate.

**7. Councillor Earthey**

If BHCC is below local government norms for fitting SMETS2 meters in its buildings, why has this situation been allowed to occur, and what steps is the Labour Administration taking to improving BHCC's standing in the league table?

**Reply from Councillor Taylor, Joint Deputy Leader of the Council.**

We will investigate further to see if there are available benchmarks broken down by authority. In terms of accelerating the rollout the council can assist by providing timely access for meter operators to attend sites to upgrade the meters.

**8. Councillor Earthey**

Has BHCC investigated what savings in its energy bill it could make if it moved over to 100% SMETS2 meters, and if not, why not? If it has performed this calculation, what are the savings (expressed as both £ per year and percentage saving per year) on BHCC's energy bill? (Note that SMETS2 meter are free on demand from the energy supplier, who will give better prices where SMETS2 meters are implemented.)

**Reply from Councillor Taylor, Joint Deputy Leader of the Council.**

From a customer perspective, it is very difficult to quantify any additional cost benefit attributed specifically to SMETS2 metering over and above our current AMR service which will be majority SMETS1 meters. Whilst the rollout of SMETS2 metering will be integral to establishing a "Smart Grid" and the matching of generation to demand, most of the tangible benefits will be on the supply side. However, the key benefit of the SMETS2 generation meters is the cross compatibility between suppliers, so the council will be able to retain the existing devices in the event that the supplier changes hands. In the future this could save some officer time in co-ordinating supplier engineer visits to upgrade meters, but again this is very difficult to quantify at this time.

Whilst the meters are installed by the supplier free of charge, there are additional attributed costs for utilising these meters such as Data Collection standing charges. Although in most instances these costs would be far outweighed by the benefits of reliable billing information and the ability to identify waste in consumption profiles.

**9. Councillor Earthey**

Due to the criteria used in repairing potholes that focus primarily on the vertical depth of the pothole, subsidence around the pothole is often left unfilled, meaning another pothole appears almost immediately after the initial pothole is repaired (photo evidence can be provided on request). Given that BHCC has an increased budget for pothole-repair, can the repair criteria be broadened to include locational context (e.g. subsidence), because in some cases, the repairs are causing more problems than they are solving?

**Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you, Cllr Earthey, for your question.

When a pothole is identified as meeting the intervention criteria the repair will take into account the whole area as it is important to reduce repeat visits to the same location. It is of course possible the poor structure of the road that is not visible results in additional damage and can lead to further damage. This is difficult to predict and exactly why the council has a wider patching programme to repair roads fully.

**10. Councillor Shanks**

We have been disappointed to see that the organisation has lost two executive directors in quick succession, with no farewell or notification given to all councillors, including former chairs/spokespeople for the portfolios they represent. Announcements have been made about their departure after they have already left. Presumably these officers have left ahead of time and presumably with some level of pay off. What is the estimated cost to the council of the reorganisation of executive senior management and has any assessment been taken of staff morale in the teams where these changes are suddenly and swiftly occurring? In future can fundamental changes of personnel be better communicated so that members have the opportunity to thank these officers and say farewell?

**Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council**

The new organisational directorate structure will come into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> April and will save £177K on a recurring basis through the reduction in the number of directorates from 5 to 4. This saving is part of a wider package of savings totalling over £2 million per year that will be achieved through further redesign of our structures and has been managed through the council's normal management of change and redundancy processes as applied to Chief Officers. There will be one-off costs relating to severance that will be disclosed in the usual way in the annual statement of accounts.

Through our redesign we will become an organisation that has a structure to reflect our vision for a better Brighton & Hove for all, with a stronger 'One Council' ethos, increased collaboration and reduction in duplication. The new Corporate Directors have wider remits and a greater responsibility for working corporately and across the organisation to promote joined up working and a streamlined use of resources. The recent departures of Executive Directors were announced before their departure, and through our

corporate broadcast, as well as following discussions with cross party members and specific communications to those directly impacted. Interim arrangements have been put in place with the full collaboration of senior leaders and this has ensured of stability for the teams involved. As we work through the next phase of our organisational design, we will be engaging with staff across the organisation both on the structures we need in place and our culture and ways of working and will certainly ensure that communication on changes takes place as early as possible, subject to the usual considerations around confidentiality for individuals directly impacted.

#### **11. Councillor Hill**

At the last Budget Council, Cllr Sankey stated that she had spoken with Shadow Cabinet members about the proposal for a National Care Service. My understanding is that Labour have U-turned on this issue as their manifesto will omit funding of social care reform from their manifesto. Without funding coming from national government, rather than local councils, there will be no National Care Service. I am glad nonetheless that it sounds as though myself and Cllr Sankey are of the same mind as to the importance of the National Care Service proposal. Can Cllr Sankey clarify the nature of the conversation she had with shadow cabinet members on this topic and whether there will in fact be a manifesto commitment to fund social care reform to create a National Care Service? As I wished to convey at Budget Council, to leave ballooning social care costs with Local Councils will surely only lead to misery for those who need social care and for the future of council finance.

#### **Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council**

The National Care Service (NCS) is a proposed publicly owned system of social care. It was proposed by the last Labour Government but then abandoned by the coalition government led by David Cameron in 2010. The Labour Party recommitted to the idea in 2023 and Labour's Shadow Health Secretary and Shadow Minister for Social Care have restated the Party's support for this model in 2024, including at the Warwick conference for Labour Party councillors in February 2024 where I chaired Andrew Gwynne's debate and at a recent UNISON meeting on the issue. The proposal contains many strands including a groundbreaking Fair Pay Agreement for social workers and proper professionalisation, progression and recognition of social care workers to put them on a par with NHS workers. More information for on our plans for a decade of national renewal and the development of a National Care Service will made public in due course.

#### **12. Councillor Hill**

How does the council intend to carry out the functions of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee without having one? It is unclear how items usually reserved for HOSC should be carried out under the new Cabinet system arrangements.

#### **Reply from Councillor Fowler, Chair of Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee**

Health Overview and Scrutiny will be a function of one of the new Overview & Scrutiny Committees. All of the statutory requirements for HOSC will be covered in the Terms of Reference for that Committee. There is no requirement to have a stand alone HOSC.

**13. Councillor Pickett**

Fixed Penalty Notices: There has seemingly been a huge rise in the number of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) issued to residents and businesses in the city, which appear to be fined for leaving their recycling by the side of a communal bin because the bin was overflowing, and the recycling would not fit inside. Another, vulnerable resident who says they received an on the spot fine after leaving some recycling temporarily outside of their home as they had to make several trips to the communal bin, and propped cardboard on the private pathway between trips. Considering the current increase in missed collections in the city, which means more people might be tempted to place bags of household recycling next to them. I would like to know whether enforcement officers are being given guidance on proportionality in cases where an 'offence' is related to an inability to place waste or recycling in a communal bin because it has not been collected?

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

When there is disruption to bin collections across a wide area, the Environmental Enforcement team do not issue FPNs to residents who leave waste next to communal bins and where no alternative bins have capacity for residents to dispose of their refuse.

If there are any instances where residents believe this has happened, we will review their case.

**14. Councillor Pickett**

Glyphosate opt out: In light of a recent public meeting in which Cllr Rowkins stated that there was a council document of streets and roads in the city that would be exempt from glyphosate use, can the administration tell me why this opportunity was not afforded to every street in the city – or enough time given before use begins in April to allow streets and residents to contact the council and register their preference for being excluded? Can this documented list be made public so that residents can see if their road is included? Also, what are the barriers to enable residents to opt out before glyphosate is used?

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

The roads to be treated have been identified in two ways: existing Street Cleansing operations and the extent of the problems caused by weed growth.

Roads that are excluded from the treatment are:

- Those that have a daily street cleansing barrow service. This is because these are roads with high footfall which suppresses weed growth. The daily barrow operative also helps suppress weed growth.
- Those that do not have the potential to cause accessibility or safety issues as a result of weed growth.

The aim is to strike a balance between ensuring the problem is brought back under control whilst not using more glyphosate than is necessary.

Cityclean are working with the Communications Team on putting the information about which roads are to be treated on the website.

As I said in response to a previous question, there is no-opt out scheme in place this year. This is to make sure the deep-rooted vegetation is tackled.

The treatment will only be applied where vegetation is visible and growing on hard surfaces and not the hard surface generally. If there is no visible vegetation, the treatment will not be applied.

Therefore, if residents want to remove vegetation from their road, they can do so, and this will eliminate the need for treatment.

### **15. Councillor Pickett**

Funding for recycling improvements: In light of the government timeframe for implementing new recycling improvements, has the council received any clear information about what funds will be available and if so, will there be a shortfall? When will the new PTT recycling be introduced?

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

The council has continued to prepare for the new requirements, due from April 2026, under the newly termed 'simpler recycling', since the consultation outcomes were announced in October 2023.

Government indicate there will be three measures by which costs will be funded for simpler recycling:

1. reasonable new burdens funding for food waste collections
2. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) payments for packaging materials
3. continued ability to charge residents a subscription fee for garden waste collections

Defra wrote to all local authorities in January 2024 with allocations of new burdens capital transitional funding, for food waste collections. The amount allocated is intended to fund costs of food waste caddies, communal food waste containers and food waste collection vehicles. Initial estimated costs indicate there is a shortfall in the allocation to Brighton & Hove.

The council understands that EPR payments will be the mechanism to fund costs of the additional dry recycling materials, which includes the PTT you refer to in your question, and understand further announcements are due this year. This will support the council's planning and decision making on the changes required at the existing Material Recovery Facility which have not been finalised.

Cityclean continues to plan for the changes as far as possible, whilst awaiting further detail on resource/revenue and on-going funding for food waste collections, as well as further detail on the EPR payments.

## 16. Councillor Pickett

City's allotments:

Last year, the council gave assurance that the allotment service was back to full strength and that the historic issues would now be addressed. However, a year later and things appear to have got worse: The allotment service has not completed full inspections at any site for at least the past two years, nor has it evicted a single tenant for not looking after their plot, and many plots are now overgrown and unused. The waiting list is at its longest ever (3000+) with people still signing up and paying £18 to join it. Plot vacancies are at their highest level for 10 years despite the demand being at an all-time high. The 10-year Allotment Strategy has now finished with only seven of the 83 recommendations completed. Could residents receive a timeline as to when the above will be achieved and if not, why not?

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

It is agreed that our allotment service is not currently operating effectively. However, a service is being delivered and there are some key outcomes that are set out below.

- The inspection process requires each of the 3000 allotment plots being inspected three times between April and October across 166 acres of allotment land and 37 sites. We are working to improve our site inspections numbers. In 2023 we completed full site inspections at several sites (including The Weald, Roedale Valley, Moulsecoomb Estate, Keston, Horsdean and Patcham), resulting in 72 terminations.
- The Maintenance Team has been working their way across the city preparing vacant plots for letting events. Any that are overgrown have been strimmed back prior to letting. Changes in Hand Arm Vibration laws limits the amount of time this work can be undertaken, we have trialled covering a percentage of vacant plots before reletting them, to minimise this ongoing task.
- Since June 2023, we have done 22 letting events, at 20 sites, resulting in an average 75% plots let per event. 8% of plots are currently vacant, but this includes plots that have been offered and the tenancies are being processed.
- Since January 2023, 253 new tenancies have been processed, this includes new lets, upsizes and downsizes and transfers, plus 26 pending offers. We have an event planned at Horsdean over Easter weekend, with 7 plots available.
- The waiting list is currently at 3,547 and the current admin fee is £18.80. There was a surge in waitlist applications during Covid.

Officers working with the Allotment Federation (Bhaf) have recently completed a full review of the service. This review sets out many recommendations and in many cases

highlights where several of the changes required have been enacted. The review document also sets out recommendations that haven't been delivered against and where improvements are needed, and will inform an improvement plan which will be put in place by 30 April.

We have committed resource to refresh internal leadership and management for the council service, and to look positively at how we can transform the service, working in collaboration with our amazing network of volunteer site reps in the city.

Council staff have met with the Allotment Federation to share plans being put in place imminently to improve the service. Cllr Tim Rowkins will join Officers at the Federation's annual general meeting on Tuesday 26 March to listen to people's views and discuss ideas for how the service can be better delivered in the future.

### **17. Councillor Pickett**

School Closure Criteria: In light of recent school closures will the council commit to publishing detailed criteria which will be used in future to select schools which become identified for closure, or commit to an agreed period of consultation with staff and parents/guardians which will be carried out before any subsequent closures are able to progress? Furthermore, what steps are being taken to mitigate the current fall in PANs for primary schools in the city from impacting the future of secondary schools as those year groups progress through their education?

### **Reply from Councillor Taylor / Helliwell, Joint Chair(s) of Children, Families and Schools Committee**

Cllr Pickett,

Thank you for the question. The Administration have had to take decisive action to address the surplus primary school places in the city which has led to the difficult decision to close 2 primary schools. Both proposals were subject to a public consultation and a representation period in line with government guidance giving all residents including parents and staff the opportunity to comment on the proposals. Having taken decisive action, we hope not to be needing to put forward further primary school closures. If we had to consider this, then we would engage with relevant stakeholders when developing proposals and consult residents, families and staff as part of the statutory process.

We know that the lower numbers of children in our primary schools will move into our secondary schools in future years. Officers continue to project future demand for secondary school places and we will work closely with Headteachers, Governing Boards and Academy Trusts to consider how best to respond to the challenge we can see coming. As an administration we need to work within the government's rules for admissions which means that a Council does not control the admission arrangements for academies or church schools both of which make the council's strategic role harder to implement for the benefit of all residents. However the Labour Party has committed to giving local authorities more control over school admissions across the board should we win the next General Election which is important and welcome.

We will be progressing our thinking on secondary school admissions in the coming months and engaging with the city to hear their views on possible ways forward, at the earliest opportunity.

**18. Councillor McLeay**

The Housing and New Homes Committee meeting benefits from regular public involvement from concerned residents and housing activists. Before the council transitions over to a cabinet system – can you explain how concerned members of the public and Housing Committee members could engage with proposals and decisions brought through this committee? How will progress reports be shared for scrutiny? Will Area Panels continue?

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

Thank you for your question.

Diverse tenant and leasehold voice are vital to ensuring the Council as their landlord is providing quality homes and housing services. Key housing decisions will be reported to Cabinet for decision, which will meet in public and will have opportunities for public engagement. Area Panels will continue as one avenue for residents and ward councillors to hear about progress and discuss issues with Housing Services. The Community Engagement Team will also continue to support tenants and resident groups to have a voice and link them with services in Housing and across the Council to discuss issues. We will also be utilising the council's new engagement platform 'Your Voice' to provide on-line opportunities for people to have their say about housing services.

**19. Councillor McLeay**

What will be the financial investment spent on converting the council from a committee system to a cabinet system? Was this budgeted for in the recent budget?

**Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council**

The financial implications of the proposed move from a Committee system to a Leader and Cabinet system are set out in the 14 March 2024 SFCR report. The proposed move has financial implications across Democratic Services support, Policy, Partnerships & Scrutiny (PPS) support and Members allowances.

For Democratic Services and PPS support, the teams will be restructured to support the new arrangements, including overview and scrutiny, and this is expected to be cost neutral on an ongoing basis. While there is a need for additional staffing resources during 2024/25 to facilitate a smooth transition to the new system (estimated to cost £0.080m) this will be met from holding certain roles vacant within the Governance, People and Resources Directorate and therefore there will be no financial impact overall.

**20. Councillor McNair**

How much money has the council paid out in compensation to residents who have tripped over paving slabs? In the period 01.01.23 – 31.12.23.

What percentage of claims are successful?

**Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you, Cllr McNair for your question.

In the calendar year 2023 BHCC has paid a total of £45,775.00 for compensation payments relating specifically to personal injury claims arising from tripping incident due to paving slabs.

The payment total relates to claims settled within 2023, irrespective of when the claim was received.

**What percentage of claims are successful?**

In the calendar year 2023 BHCC received 34 claims relating specifically to personal injury claims arising from tripping incident due to paving slabs.

Of the 34 claims received, 7 remain open. This means 27 claims have been through the claims handling process and 0 of the 27 claims have been successful. (0%).

We are taking proactive action to improve the state of pavements across the city, including tackling excessive and damaging weed growth, tree roots and protecting pavements from available damage such as from pavement parking.

There was substantive decline over recent years under the city's previous Green-led administration lack of an effective plan without the application of herbicides to tackle unchecked weed growth. Central government have been absent in making a decision about pavement parking after the 2019 consultation and options report published in 2020. Some four years on, it is about time the Tory government make a decision to effectively empower local authorities such as Brighton and Hove to tackle damaging and antisocial pavement parking.

The state of pavements in not helped by regressive public sector cuts affecting all English local authorities. These Tory cuts to public services is causing real detriment to effective maintenance of our pavements and streets and resulting in more and more costly claims hitting our city council budget. The root of this problem lies with some 14 years of underfunding and indecision from the Tory government causing real detriment to our city's pavements and the safety of our residents.

**21. Councillor Theobald**

Scaffolding at Birch Grove Crescent block 61-72 remains despite residents being promised it would be removed in Full Council on 1st February. When will it be removed?

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

Thank you for your question.

This scaffold was erected by our previous Housing heating & hot water contractor and clearly was missed by them when they were closing down their operation for us in the City. We have checked with the new contractor, and they have no outstanding works requiring scaffold at this property. We will contact the scaffold company who erected the scaffold and request that it is struck at the earliest opportunity. We would like to apologise to residents for this oversight and the inconvenience this has caused.

## **22. Councillor Theobald**

Can you please tell me when there are going to be improvements to the Patcham Roundabout on the London Road, Patcham? Patcham councillors were informed last year that there would be a planting scheme in place by the Autumn of 2023. So far yet again nothing has happened.

### **Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you, Cllr Theobald, for your question.

As you will be aware from previous answers to similar questions, there have been a number of conversations between the council and National Highways about this roundabout.

The roundabout is owned by National Highways and no work can be carried out on it without their permission. It is also at a high-speed junction where there are a number of safety concerns and legal requirements to work on the roundabout and so the situation is very complex.

It is a matter that the council has been trying to resolve for many years in order to improve the entrance to the city.

In June 2023 Full Council was informed that an agreement was reached but that some infrastructure work needed to be completed.

Regrettably the contractor who was going to take on the maintenance of the roundabout in exchange for sponsorship has decided not to go ahead with this because of the complexity and cost involved in regularly accessing and working on this roundabout. The contractor will be working with us on the site adjacent to the roundabout instead to improve this and to make a welcome entrance to the city.

We appreciate that this roundabout is unsightly, and we are keen to see it improved to be more welcoming. This is a high-profile location and seen by huge numbers of visitors and residents entering and leaving the city. We are keen to look at options that reflect this roundabout's prominent location. Officers are now actively looking at alternative low maintenance options. Any work to this roundabout will require funding which is not yet identified, will need to be low maintenance and will require the agreement of National Highways.

We will involve ward councillors in any improvement plans and welcome ideas from residents and community groups and businesses interested in working in partnership

with the Council to enhance this area to reflect Brighton and Hove as the welcoming city we know it to be.

**23. Councillor Lyons**

Why are Cityclean not collecting abandoned bicycles within Westdene & Hove Park Ward? More than 4 months after reporting & with regular chasing, nothing is happening. Staff shortages and limited resources can only be given as a reason for so long

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

There are two vacancies in the team which collect abandoned bikes which have not been recruited to due to the recruitment freeze. Recruitment will start shortly.

Abandoned bikes continue to be collected from all wards across the city, albeit at a slower pace due to the limited resources available.

We will visit any reported locations as soon as possible.

**24. Councillor Lyons**

How deep does a pothole have to be before it is repaired within our City roads?

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

Thank you, Cllr Lyons, for your question.

The intervention criteria is an abrupt level difference of 40mm.

**25. Councillor Lyons**

When will the release of the results from ward consultations about the changes in parking restrictions be announced?

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

Thank you for asking your question, Cllr Lyons.

The answer is the results are in the public domain and have been for 10 days now. Perhaps, Cllr Lyons, you do not follow or bother to take the time to follow Council committees. However, the results of the consultation were presented to the Transport & Sustainability Committee on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2024. They were made public on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2024 and are available to view on the Council website under Council and democracy / Councillors and Committees:

[Brighton & Hove City Council - Agenda for Transport & Sustainability Committee on Tuesday, 26th March, 2024, 4.00pm \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/agenda/2024/03/26/transport-sustainability-committee)

As ward councillor, Cllr Lyons surveyed residents using Brighton and Hove City Council logo headed paper as referenced by the Nevill Road and Nevill Avenue residents' deputation as welcomed to the previous Council meeting on 1<sup>st</sup> February. Cllr Muten specifically asked in his full Council meeting response to this deputation, whether Cllr Lyons would make this data available to council officers. Has Cllr Lyons made his data available to Council officers in the Parking Team?

With no clear reference given by Cllr Lyons to residents that their data might be passed on to third parties, political parties, other residents or groups not associated with the council; what consent was requested by Cllr Lyons or given by residents as to whether residents views and personal data could be passed on to third parties? With many residents in the Orchards and Nevill Area of his ward now under the false impression that the Council have recently consulted residents on a parking scheme, was their data made available to local Conservative Party members rather than Council officials? In his survey, did Cllr Lyons make it clear to his ward residents as to how their personal data might be used? To what extent did Cllr Lyons protect residents' personal data from a breach of the General Data Protection Regulation (or GDPR) as implemented under The Data Protection Act 2018? How and where is this data stored? Was appropriate consent sought and safeguards in place regarding residents' data?

## **26. Councillor McNair**

Why has the council only given 3 months' notice of works? Namely, filling two arches with concrete and temporarily removing the club from the remaining arch. The club has been at the premises for 80 years.

Are the works necessary? We are told strengthening works are required to enable lorries to use the Dukes mound ramp. The arches are in great condition considering heavy vehicles have used Dukes Mound for years. Have structural and traffic flow surveys been carried out? Would it be better to reinstate access to the Marina slipway via Black Rock?

What provision has the Council made for the longevity of Brighton and Hove Motor Club? Formed in 1904, one of the oldest Motor clubs in the country, it serves 400 members The famous clubhouse has been occupied by the club since 1948 and is an important part of the history of Brighton.

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

The council regular inspects all of its structures across the city and when issues are identified they have to be addressed. In this case the surveys identified issues with movement in the piers not the arches themselves. In principle if the piers collapse then the whole structure would follow including the road. As always with structures it is extremely difficult to place an exact timeline of collapse as this will depend on a number of issues related to use and loadings. The council employed qualified structural engineers to carry out the assessment who using modelling to assess loadings and based upon the movement identified.

This survey indicated that some form of strengthening was needed and following an option appraisal the infilling of every other arch was identified as the preferred approach when considering impact of any work and the associated cost to the council. With the

upcoming works on both the terrace project and seafront replenishment it was considered that the strengthening is a priority due to the increasing number of HGV movements that will have to use Madeira Drive.

Council officers from the Seafront Team have met with members of the Motor Club Committee to explain the proposal to infill every other arch under Dukes Mound in order to strengthen the road above. This approach will reduce the size of the Motor Club premises from 3 interconnected arches down to 1 single arch. Following this meeting, Officers are in active discussion with the club Chairman and Secretary to establish what improvements could be delivered as part of the works to enable the club to remain and thrive in this location. These improvements include, building a new toilet, new doors and upgrade to the facade, upgraded utilities, new flooring, assistance to facilitate the installation of a new mezzanine for storage purposes and a longer lease.

Please rest assured that the council is fully aware of the heritage surrounding the Motor Club and its location on Madeira Drive and is working collaboratively to ensure the club can continue to operate for many more years to come.

#### **27. Councillor Meadows**

The drain and soakaway at the end of Surrenden Close are blocked. Residents' homes are flooded when it rains. Builders pour waste down the drain. When will the drain and soakaway be cleared?

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

Thank you, Cllr Meadows, for your question.

The gully is programmed to be cleansed on 01/08/2025 as part of the cyclical maintenance programme. If there is still flooding 48 hours after the rain has stopped, they will be prioritised and any photos can be sent through to the online reporting form as that would be helpful. The evidence will help with a decision on the need to implement jetting of the pipes before the next cleanse date. If builders are seen pouring waste if residents could please provide details so that we may issue letters to them and recharge for any damage caused to the gully.

#### **28. Councillor Hogan**

When will pavements be de-weeded using glyphosate in Patcham & Hollingbury and Westdene & Hove Park? Will residents be notified of the schedule of spraying to mitigate the risk of their pets being affected?

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

It is anticipated the first treatment will start in late April / early May. The exact timescales will be determined when a contractor has been appointed.

Application of the treatment is weather dependent. Therefore, there may be a need to alter a schedule at short notice if wet weather is forecast, impacting on the accuracy of information communicated to residents.

Controlled-droplet treatments are applied in large droplets released under gravity and adhere to target items. This reduces drift and the likelihood of the application adhering to non-target items, reducing the risk to the environment and pets, when compared to traditional glyphosate.

Application will not take place in parks, green spaces or verges.

The appointed contractor will be required to provide the council Risk Assessment Method Statements setting out the contractor's approach to delivering the treatments, its assessment of risk in relation to this, and the mitigations they will have in place to ensure its effectiveness.

Those applying the treatment will be required to provide proof of PA1 and PA6 certification to demonstrate competence.

### **29. Councillor Meadows**

There are no passing places in Carden Hill. Buses have been known to scrape and damage cars. Could the feasibility of a passing place be investigated to improve the flow of traffic?

### **Reply from Councillor Muten, Chair of Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you, Cllr Meadows, for your question.

Council officers will engage with the bus operator to understand how their services operate on Carden Hill and seek to explore what could be done to address your concerns raised.

### **30. Councillor McNair**

How many host families are currently being sought to house Ukrainian refugees in need of accommodation? East Sussex council has produced a new leaflet and poster campaign. What is Brighton & Hove City Council doing to attract host families?

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

Thank you for your question.

Currently, all our guests are in hosting arrangements or in the private rented sector.

We are grateful for support we have had from our hosts. Most of them have continued to host refugees beyond the initial six months. In turn, we have supported them with topped up thank you payments. We are also in regular touch with hosts for information and advice through our Community Hub.

We recognise we need more hosts available for new arrivals or sponsorship breakdowns. We have taken various initiatives to attract new hosts.

- We started with a video recruitment campaign on Latest TV and Youtube. Our guests and hosts shared their experiences and called for more people to host. The video is still available online: <https://youtu.be/o3QoLb-FC9Y?si=goBostq0rhsfY27>
- We then ran a host recruitment campaign with digital ads on bus stops
- Finally, we ran print ads in Brightonian and Hovarian magazines

As a result, we have seen an increase in our expressions of interests.

We have produced a digital leaflet available for circulation online and we can print it if needed.

While we appreciate the support we have from our hosts, our current approach is to support our guests into independence. We have therefore launched a Private Rented Sector Scheme to help them move into their own homes. Through this scheme we are supporting individuals and families with deposits, first month rents, tenancy support and incentives for landlords.

### **31. Councillor Meadows**

What flood measures are to be put in place for the residents who suffer flooding every time it rains on Winfield Avenue/Ladies Mile Road?

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

It is accepted that flooding within Brighton is getting worse because of climate change, and this is why a Flood Risk Management Strategy and Surface water Management Plan is being developed. I can confirm that £250,000 of grant funding has been applied for from the Environment Agency to undertake a citywide feasibility study for surface water management. This will provide the Council with options for managing surface water flood risk to areas at risk, including the Winfield Avenue\Ladies Mile area. I would urge members and the public that if a property floods, it needs to be reported to the Flood risk management team through the Council website. This is important as the amount of flood management grant we are eligible for is dependent on the number of properties which flood.

We are also working with Southern Water to identify suitable strategic locations around the city for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) that will attenuate surface water, alleviate pressure on the combined sewer system and mitigate flood risk.

### **32. Councillor Meadows**

When is it planned for Vale Avenue Park be able to have new playground equipment?

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

Currently there are no plans for new equipment for Vale Avenue Park Play Area.

This follows feedback from a public consultation, which closed in January 2023. The majority of respondents stated they would like to see the £45,000 funds available to improve play area facilities in Mackie Park, rather than Vale Avenue.

The results of the consultation were shared with ward councillors in June 2023.

## **27 ORAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

- 27.1 The Mayor noted that oral questions had been submitted and that 30 minutes was set aside for the duration of the item. She asked that both the questioner and responder endeavour to keep their questions and answers brief, to enable the questions listed to be taken.

**Q1.** Cllr Davis asked a question: At Full Council on December the 14th, the Leader said, and I quote: "I must be clear, and for the record, the GMB has contributed nothing to the election of any of our Labour group members". At our last meeting, I asked the leader to explain the £4200 pounds donation from the GMB to Lloyd Russell-Moyle on 27th of April. This donation was declared on the Electoral Commission and on the Register of Interest for, and I quote: "printing and distribution costs to local election material". She said she'd get back to me. She didn't.

Councillor Sankey replied: Many thanks Madam Mayor, and I am very pleased to reply to Councillor Davis. He's right to say that at the December Council meeting, I said the GMB has contributed nothing to the election of any of our Labour Group members. It's true to say that no serving Labour Councillor received any direct financial contribution from the GMB towards their election in May 2023. However, in the interest of full transparency, I can confirm a donation was given by the GMB to the Kemp Town Constituency Labour Party, some of which was used towards the May 2023 election campaign and the Labour Party organisers for the local elections also had use of the GMB office for that election. As I was not the Labour Group leader until after the May elections, I was not aware of the GMB donations for Kemptown CLP and have no reason to be aware of it. But I want to stress in clarifying the record: all of the Labour Group are proud members of at least one trade union. You can hear the pride in the room. We are a party proudly born from the union movement. We make no apology for accepting donations from working people and organised labour and believe, in fact, that this is the cleanest money in politics.

Councillor Davis asked a supplementary question: I'm pleased to hear it and hopefully if we do see a new Labour government in the year they will repeal the anti-Trade Union laws that the Conservatives have brought in. I look forward to that. Thank you. As you said in this Chamber, the GMB had nothing to do with election. Could you explain why 17 or your current administration, including the Leader of the Council had their election invoices sent to Labour campaign staff at the GMB office in Hove.

Councillor Sankey replied: This is not a policy question. I don't know what your obsession is with our funding situation, but it seems quite unhealthy to me and I'm not going to be answering that question.

**Q2.** Councillor McNair asked a question: Patcham and Hollingbury has a very engaged population and plenty of meeting spaces. Why was Reimagine, at very short notice, moved from Patcham to Whitehawk?

Councillor Sankey replied: Again, not a policy question, but let me indulge Councillor McNair in the interest of transparency. The Reimagine event, held earlier this week, on Health and Wellbeing is part of this administration's programme to engage better and more often with our residents. It was moved from Patcham to Whitehawk to ensure the best fit between the events focus and its location. The aim of the event was to explore ways of improving access to, and participation in, physical activity in communities experiencing the worst health inequalities.

The acute nature of these issues in East Brighton meant that holding the event in Whitehawk was the most appropriate location to enable Members to engage directly with affected communities. Patcham residents did attend the event I'm pleased to say, in Whitehawk on the 29th of March. Members listened to resident concerns over sewage and flooding, and Officers are now exploring options for further engagement with Southern Water.

Councillor McNair asked a supplementary question: Many thanks to Officers for facilitating the useful event. At the last Reimagine event, there were more Officers and Councillors than residents. There were perhaps 10 residents, 4 from Patcham. If the administration is a listening administration, what plans are in place to increase public engagement at these Reimagine events, especially in North Brighton?

Councillor Sankey replied:

As a listening Council that is determined to engage more often and better with our residents, there are a number of things that we have initiated. One of them is our Reimagined series of which we have held four successful events. We've also initiated Leader surgeries which take place every two months and I go all over the city to hear evidence and to discuss policy issues, strategy issues as well as some case work matters. Those have been very valuable and are ongoing and we currently have a consultation live on our new Your Voice website which is seeking feedback and ideas and views from residents as to how they would like to engage with us as we move our governance system forward. That consultation, as I say, is live and I would encourage anybody that hasn't looked at it to take a look at the feedback, their views and ideas on the type of engagement we can bring forward.

The Mayor noted that Cllr Fishleigh was not present to ask question 3 and moved on the following question.

**Q4.** Councillor Asaduzzaman asked a question: In the last few months I visited many sports facilities. Residents have made clear that they want to see investment in the city's sports and leisure facilities, including provision of swimming pools. Can the Right Honorable Chair of the Culture Committee provide an update on what we are doing to fulfil this?

Councillor Robins replied: The Sports Facility Plan was published and launched as a strategic plan for investing and improving sports facilities across the city. One of the key recommendations of the plan was to create three large multi-sports hubs in the city. In the north, the east and the west, as well as investing in maintaining our network of smaller community leisure centres. This will ensure that a good geographical spread of provision and also help to achieve financial sustainability offered with the larger, more efficient hubs, subsidising the less commercial smaller leisure centres in the local communities. The Council's ambition is clear: residents and visitors should have access to outstanding sports facilities which support year round, healthy lifestyles, and are designed to facilitate inclusion for all. The Council recognises that the significant contribution that sport and physical activity make to the quality of life for residents and the local economy. As a plan, we currently have three capital projects underway at North Hub Withdean Sports Complex, which will enhance facilities there and expand the offer to new activities. There is also plans to add a community swimming pool to this site. This will be a 25 metre 5 lane pool which will it be integrated into the existing sports leisure centre and operated by Freedom Leisure. Plans for the new pool will be developed over the coming months which we will look to engage with the community and swimming clubs. This new pool will help to address the shortfall of pool water space in the city and help to meet the demand for swimming as one of our most popular activities amongst the city's residents. It will also help provide additional capacity to deliver more swimming lessons for children and young people living and studying in the city. This pool could see the first publicly funded swimming pool built in the city for around 40 years. This investment shows the Council's commitment to delivering the Sports Facility Implementation Plan and improving our sports facilities in the city. As you'll be aware, through the recent public engagement, the Council is progressing its plans to redevelop the King Alfred Leisure Centre, the West Hub. The location of the new centre is still to be decided, but the new facility will include improved swimming facilities, especially with a larger 8 lane, 25 metre competition pool, separate teaching pool, learning pool and some fun leisure water for the young people to enjoy. In the meantime, until the new centre is built, the pools of the existing King Alfred continue to be very popular and serve a variety of communities. This is why we continue to invest in the centre and our pools especially in order to maintain and improve them so that people can continue to use them until a new centre is built.

Most recently we have started some major works to invest £800,000 in pool areas to improve the heating and ventilation which will be more modern, energy sufficient and improve the environment for the pool users. The Council has also been successful in being awarded just over £200,000 from Sport England Swimming Pool Sport Fund to replace two of the 40-year-old boilers for new ones: more sustainable and energy efficient models. Again, this £1 million investment in the King Alfred demonstrates the providing improved sports facilities for our residents is a priority. It also sets our longer term plans to provide new swimming pool provisions in the east of the city, as well as making further improvements and developments to our smaller community leisure centres such as Moulsecoombe and Stanley Deason and Portslade. We hope that these new improvement sports facilities, when complete, will provide additional opportunities that are accessible and inclusive to encourage our residents to be physically active and will contribute significantly towards a positive impact and physical and mental well-being.

**Q5.** Councillor West asked a question: I'd like to ask the leader of the Council: what was the exact date on which you personally first found out about the allegations relating to

the two former Labour Councillors who's recent resignations has led to the two costly By-elections?

Councillor Sankey replied: Again, this is not a policy question and I say to opposition Members, take aim at our policy, ask us questions, probe us, hold us accountable. But please focus on policy rather than everything else.

Councillor West asked a supplementary question: It will become a policy question when I ask my supplementary, because I'd quite like an answer from the Leader of the Council to this: Given this entire mess has been a direct result of the failings on behalf of the Labour Party, should the Labour Party, and not the taxpayer, be responsible for paying for the two by-elections, particularly at a time when the authority is making tens of millions of pounds in cuts to local services.

Councillor Sankey replied: I'll be honest, Councillor West, I find this suggestion absolutely shocking. Under our system, it is right and, in my view, essential that when Councillors step down by-elections are held. The alternative, albeit cheaper, option would be that councillors are appointed, maybe by me, as a sort of shadow Council of sorts which would be much less democratic. Under our political system, candidates and political parties are required to fund their own political campaigns, but not to bear the administrative costs of elections. Councillors and MPs stand down, or are required to stand down, for all sorts of reasons, and this is commonplace throughout our country, throughout the year. It is important to ensure access to politics and as level of playing field as possible so that individuals, or political parties, are not required to cover the administrative costs of elections. To reverse this would be a major departure from current practise and not something that we would consider. As a responsible Council, we've budgeted for one by-election per year and as these by elections are being held on the same day as the PCC elections, the required funds are available.

I can confirm that the two Labour candidates that have now been selected to fight these by-elections, and the Labour Party, will be funding the cost of their campaigns. And I'll say this additionally, I've come to expect little better from the Conservative Party. Their attack ads against our London Mayor this week adopted similar tactics, accusing him of seizing power and terrorising residents rather than being democratically elected. I thought the Greens were meant to be the cuddly teddy bears of politics. The ones with principles. Yet locally now you are going in a very odd and unprincipled direction. In a Trumpian direction, and so I'd really ask you to revisit this sort of line of questioning and this line of attack. I don't think it serves our local democracy well.

**Q6.** Councillor Meadows asked a question: What is the likelihood of City Clean workers going on strike?

Councillor Rowkins replied: Members are obviously aware that there's been an ongoing dispute and discussions have obviously been ongoing. I can report that they've been very productive and we will update members in due course and obviously our focus is really on delivering the lasting change that the service needs to see. Thank you.

Councillor Meadows asked a supplementary question: Residents are still experiencing problems with their collections, and we are given the excuses that vehicles have been

sabotaged and we are waiting for new ones. When is the culture change going to happen in City Clean?

Councillor Rowkins replied: It is happening. The service has been poor for residents for too long and unfortunately the previous administration just failed to grasp the nettle. When Councillor Sankey and I first started visiting the depot regularly last year, to be honest, we were met with surprise. Staff at the depot were just not used to seeing senior Councillors, and it seems to me that it was just kept at arm's length. The data from October 2023 to January 2024 shows just how well the service can perform with missed collections way down from where they were in the previous months. Most of our staff just want to do a good job in a safe and respectful environment but as Councillor Meadows points out, there has been some deliberate disruption. There's also been some legitimate vehicle issues, particularly on our communal rounds. Members will be aware that we've got new vehicles incoming. We're expecting to have four new communal vehicles to cover the three rounds in the city and by the end of April, notwithstanding any further unfortunate and events. Some of you may have seen that there was a fire in one of our vehicles due to a battery, probably from a vape, but some piece of electric equipment and these things tend not to happen in our old struggling diesels, they always have to happen in our newer electric vehicles. So that's obviously very unfortunate. But you know I will just reiterate that this administration will not relent in our efforts to fix and deliver what residents deserve and have been deprived of far too long.

**Q7.** Councillor Earthey asked a question: There remains inadequate mobile phone signal coverage in Rottingdean to support the Pay by Phone app. This has been reinforced recently by the phone company EE, who has recently obtained a High Court order to install a temporary phone mast in a local car park on the grounds that there is no mobile phone signal in Rottingdean. So therefore, on that basis, the contract between Brighton and Hove City Council drivers for parking is legally frustrated, right? So my question is, why are parking enforcement officers still ticketing vehicles in Rottingdean car parks where the only payment option open to drivers is the Pay by Phone app but there is no mobile signal? So basically if there's no mobile phone signal according to EE and the High Court says there's no mobile phone signal either, then I think we can conclude there is no mobile phone signal in Rottingdean. Thank you.

Councillor Muten replied: May I firstly take the opportunity to thank many residents and visitors keen to use the mobile phone app or pay for parking by phone or SMS and text message. This is encouraging and reflects the experience of many in Brighton and Hove who once set up in a on the Pay by Phone app, find it an effective, versatile and helpful way to pay for on-street an public car park parking. The app provides a more accessible facility to pay for parking for your vehicle or from a cafe, for instance, without having to stand in the rain or wind beside a parking metre and a handy reminder ahead of parking period running out to add time to your paid parking without having to rush back to your vehicle or fixed location metre. However, it is appreciated that the Rottingdean phone mast signal has not been as good as it could have been recently, and recognise the inconvenience to local residents and visitors, which we are very keen to see mitigated. I now welcome a new temporary mobile phone mast which was installed on the Marine Cliffs Car Park on 18th of March and I wish to specifically thank the Independent Group of Councillors for pursuing better access of pay-by-phone options and consistently calling for improved mobile phone signal in Rottingdean to enable this, which I trust

Councillor Earthey's support for this phone mast is supported by residents to help improve the parking in his ward.

Furthermore, I'm sure Councillor Earthey will be very pleased to hear that Paypoint are in contact with Tesco Express in Rottingdean, and are contacting other potential agents in that area to become Paypoint outlets. With Tesco Express opening from 7:00 AM to 11:00 PM seven days a week, this will enable much improved availability of the option for cash and card parking payments in Rottingdean. Aligned with our ongoing parking review, we're working hard to improve and enable parking for all with appreciable improvements now imminent in Rottingdean.

Councillor Earthey asked a supplementary question: So when is Tesco going to offer this?

Councillor Rowkins responded: In short, Paypoint are in discussions with Tesco we would hope as soon as possible.

**Q8.** Councillor Daniel asked a question: My question relates to an update from the Leader of the Council about the changes she has led in relation to children in care. In particular a commitment to improve the role of Councillors in undertaking our work as Corporate Parents. Please can she update us on the steps she's taken so far to improve that?

Councillor Sankey responded: The Corporate Parenting Board is now co-chaired by myself as Leader of the Council and a care leaver. Alongside this, support has been given to care leavers and Care Leaver's Forums supporting the development of new young people as co-chairs. Every new Councillor was made aware of their Corporate Parenting responsibilities when we set up our administration in May and were offered Corporate Parenting training, which was jointly delivered by Officers and care leavers. All Councillors are now routinely invited to every Corporate Parenting Board, and there is really good Councillor attendance. Councillors led the work on care-experienced people receiving protective characteristics and the Equality Impact Act templates that we have as a Council have now been changed to reflect this.

New reports to Cabinet, should that proposal pass this evening, will ensure that any changes or developments will consider the impact on children in care and care leavers and we're just about to set up a new forum which will involve our Care Leaver's Forum to look at policies in detail to ensure that we are not directly or indirectly discriminating against care leavers or children in care in anything that we do. The Corporate Parenting Board has agreed the new Corporate Parenting Strategy for children in care and care leavers 2024-2028, which was written in conjunction with young people and a pilot is currently under way offering care leavers mentoring and shadowing by Councillors. Shadowing can be for one day and mentoring from six months to one year. This provides care leavers the opportunity to explore and learn the work of Councillors and their Corporate Parents, as well as senior Council Officers. The offer is ongoing mentoring, helping a young person to network and build links to explore career opportunities, develop new skills, knowledge and confidence.

**Q9.** Councillor Goldsmith asked a question: Over the past few months, we've heard a lot about the difficult situation our city's primary schools are in due to falling pupil numbers. Given that this issue will undoubtedly end up hitting our secondary schools in

the coming years, when will this administration be publishing a plan on how they hope to deal with this? And will that plan make sure that any decisions do not disproportionately hit those from already disadvantaged communities as recently happened with Labour's closure of St Bart's.

Councillor Taylor replied: As you imply, it seems likely that the fall in numbers that we've experienced in primary may feed through to secondary school. The Council forecast's secondary numbers but using a different methodology for primary - clearly primaries is primarily based on birth rates and GP registrations - whereas secondary is really based on feeder primary schools and numbers. As an administration we're currently working through what that means for the city and what that means for our schools and we will be coming back to Council and the public in the coming months.

Councillor Goldsmith asked a supplementary question: In the early 2000s, Labour closed down a secondary school in East Brighton. Earlier this year, Labour councils in this Chamber voted through the only primary school closures in the Council's history. Can this administration confidently say that they won't be proposing to close any secondary schools in the remainder of their term?

Councillor Taylor replied: I would correct slightly the assertion in the previous question that we closed primary schools in the most deprived areas of the city. That's not really borne out by the statistics. The most deprived areas of the city are Moulsecoomb, Whitehawk and Hangleton. Those closures that we very sadly had to propose in response to the really serious situation we have with pupil numbers and deficits, were driven by planning areas and driven by the number of pupils in certain areas and that was very clearly laid out. And I would say respectfully to the Green Party, they never really engaged and got to grips with the seriousness of the issue. They never really offered alternative solutions. They are in opposition, they have to oppose, that's fair enough. As I say on secondary, we're currently working through the numbers, we're looking at the plans and we'll come back to the city and to the Council very shortly.

**Q10.** Councillor Lyons asked a question: Does the administration find it acceptable that the city's bus service attached to the park and ride scheme at Withdean Stadium takes 30 minutes plus and potentially stops at every bus stop to reach the city centre?

Councillor Muten replied: I will just briefly reference what's been happening at the Withdean Stadium and into the parking. Freedom Leisure operated Withdean Stadium and took the decision to start to charge parking there. There's a £3.00 charge for three hours stay for non-leisure centre users, enabling a limited car parking site to manage given the likely increased demand for increased sport facilities which we certainly support and are very positive for the lifestyles etcetera.

We work in partnership with Freedom Leisure and the bus operators. Freedom Leisure did contact the bus company before the implementation of the automatic number plate recognition and PR management to see that they would be able to assist in terms of maintenance costs in relation to car parking operations. However, this was not forthcoming within the timeframes Freedom Leisure wished to introduce pay parking to car park. And the reasons are that the number 27 bus stop outside Withdean Sport's Centre is actually a regular scheduled bus service rather than a dedicated park and ride offer. As such, there is yet to be a dedicated park and ride public service in our city and

in reference to my response to Councillor Fishleigh on the 1st of February at this Committee, there has been a 20 years saga of park and ride indecision and inaction, often with conflicting policy direction and ineffective compromise between the three parties rotating in overall control. As a majority administration we set out to achieve a park and ride, and to resolve that once and for all and so in response, the number 27 bus service is a regular bus service stopping at each stop. We do not have a dedicated park and ride for our city and therefore no dedicated park and ride bus service but we wish to change that and that is what we're going to do.

Councillor Lyons asked a supplementary question: I appreciate your comment about the park and ride, but as soon as you come into Brighton there's directions: Park and Ride down Dyke Road. The very first sign you see is Park and Ride and then at Valley Drive: Park and Ride; London Road: Park and Ride. On the website we've got that Brighton and Hove have got a park and ride service, so I would address that.

But my supplementary is: Can there be consideration for park and ride to include car-pooling, van-pooling and car-sharing with the benefits of high occupancy vehicles being allowed to use a bus or taxi lane to get into the city centre?

Councillor Muten responded: I do accept there is some legacy signs indicating there's park and ride. We have actually updated some of the signage and updated our website. As said, we do not have a dedicated park and ride facility, but we do know some people choose to park in those in those car parks, and we've certainly encouraged them to do that. They are linked to routine bus services, and it does provide a reasonable way to park and come into the city without having to park in the city centre. So, I certainly encourage that. In terms of car occupancy and multiple occupancy, we certainly encourage people to think about sharing cars. Car share is a very positive way to reduce number of vehicles on the roads etcetera and particularly for people want to park up somewhere and choose to car share to somewhere else. That's a really good way to help. In terms of the technology to monitor whether vehicles of multiple occupancy are in a bus lane, for instance, we do not have the technology to do that effectively and also there are questions about the legality of some of that as well and it has been considered carefully in one of our bus routes or bus lanes and it's come to the conclusion that it's not actually a viable route, even the bus companies have expressed quite some concern about that because it's very difficult to regulate. They feel that it'd be abused considerably and very large numbers of vehicles other than buses will be using those lanes and the buses themselves which they're set up for, fast transit for buses will be impeded.

The Mayor noted that question 11 had been withdrawn and moved on the following question.

**Q12.** Councillor McLeay asked a question: So the Council has an ambition for the city to be carbon neutral by 2030 and it has been good to hear Councillor Muten say that they are fully committed to improving air quality across the city. So my question is to ask Councillor Muten to set out what the new administration plan is, to build on the work done by officers during the previous administration to meet this target, and ideally without treating this as an opportunity to simply dismiss previous efforts.

Councillor Rowkins replied: Members will be aware, obviously, that Brighton and Hove City Council is responsible for less than 2% of the city's carbon emissions, and Council is also aware and has heard before, how incredulous Councillor Muten and I were to learn that there was no plan for the remaining 98%. Indeed, it seemed so absurd to me that a Green-led administration would fail to plan for net zero that I've often wondered if it was in fact a hoax, and that one day I'd be sat in a meeting and a senior officer would slide a thick, bound document across the table and safely say of course there was a plan. Here we are though, almost a year in, and I'd all but given up hope. But when I saw the title of this question, to be honest I lit up. I thought at last here at the final Full Council of our first year, the Greens themselves are going to hand it over. Alas, I've been disappointed again. Fortunately, Madam Mayor, we have been making a plan and this administration will be focusing on large-scale, high-impact decarbonization projects that not only help us towards net zero, but also improve the lives of our residents.

Councillor McLeay asked a supplementary question: Do the administration realise that within the HRA, a 6 million sustainability investment a year is woefully inadequate to achieve even EPCB fuel efficiency across our housing stock by 2030? And with Council budgets being so restricted, why is the administration passing up the opportunity to apply for social housing decarbonization Fund 2.2? And if they did apply on a smaller scale to the Green-led Lewes District Council, they would be able to bring in an extra 11 million investment to benefit Brighton and Hove tenants. I heard last week or we have heard that the Housing Committee previously didn't apply because they did not identify a suitable size project that can be delivered within the criteria and time frame of the funding. But Lewes Council did and are managing to, so, you know, will we be able to do the same? And it requires leadership from Councillors to be able to do.

Councillor Rowkins replied: I'm not aware of what Lewes have allocated their funding to, but if the Housing committee or Members or Officers assert that they couldn't find a suitable project for that sort of funding, then I would have to trust that that is accurate. But, you know, again like I said earlier on, even when you take into account our not insignificant housing stock and property portfolio generally, the task I understand it has already been asked at Housing. So, you know, we'll certainly continue to push for any funding sources that we can get. But, you know, we need to be thinking much bigger here. We need to be thinking about national and international investment and strategic partnerships to deliver really high impact solutions to get us on track for net zero.

## **28 MAKING THE HOVE STATION NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN AND ROTTINGDEAN PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN**

28.1 Council considered the report on Making the Hove Station Neighbourhood Plan and Rottingdean Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

### **28.2 RESOLVED:**

1. That Council formally makes the Hove Station Neighbourhood Plan 2019- 2030 as part of the statutory Development Plan and applies the policies within the Plan for the purpose of determining planning applications within the Hove Station Neighbourhood Area.

2. That Council formally makes the Rottingdean Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2030 as part of the statutory Development Plan and applies the policies within the Plan for the purpose of determining planning applications within Rottingdean Parish (outside the South Downs National Park).

## **29 REVIEW OF CUMULATIVE IMPACT POLICY - CUMULATIVE IMPACT ASSESSMENT 2023 (CONSULTATION RESPONSE REPORT)**

- 29.1 Councillor Daniels introduced, and formally moved the report.
- 29.2 Councillor McLeay, Sheard, Theobald, Earthey, Pickett spoke on the matter.
- 29.3 Councillor Daniels responded to the debate.
- 29.4 The Mayor put the recommendations as detailed in the report listed in the agenda to the vote which was carried.

### **29.5 RESOLVED:**

That the report and recommendations of the Licensing Committee be considered and approved.

1. Maintain the current cumulative impact assessment and zone and publish the Cumulative Impact Assessment, and;
2. Conduct a further review of the CIA and special policy, including the matrix as part of the wider statutory statement of licensing policy review to be commenced in 2024

## **30 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2024/25**

- 30.1 Councillor Sankey introduced, and formally moved the report.
- 30.2 Councillor Hill and Meadows spoke on the matter.
- 30.3 Councillor Cattell responded to the debate.
- 30.4 The Mayor put the recommendations as detailed in the report listed in the agenda to the vote which was carried.

### **30.5 RESOLVED:**

1. That full Council formally approved the recommendation of Strategy Finance & City Regeneration Committee that it adopts the pay policy statement for 2024/25 attached at Appendix 1.

## **31 COST OF LIVING ACTION PLAN AND BRIGHTON & HOVE FAIRNESS FUND**

- 31.1 Councillor Daniel, Alexander, Robinson and Grimshaw declared an interest in relation to the item and left the meeting.

- 31.2 Councillor Taylor introduced, and formally moved the report.
- 31.2 Councillor McLeay, De Oliveira, Hogan and Earthey spoke on the matter.
- 31.3 Councillor Taylor responded to the debate.
- 31.4 The Mayor put the recommendations as detailed in the report listed in the agenda to the vote which was carried.
- 31.5 **RESOLVED:**
1. Approved the Cost of Living Action Plan set out in Appendix 1.
  2. Approved the creation of a new Brighton & Hove Fairness Fund as a practical and strategic response to the challenges set out in the Cost of Living Action Plan.
  3. Agreed the proposed allocation plans for the Brighton & Hove Fairness Fund incorporating the council's General Fund resources, reallocated external funds, and the Household Support Fund 2024-25 as set out in paragraph 4.6, having noted the Equalities Impact Assessment at Appendix 2.
  4. Noted that management of the application process for bids against the sum allocated to the 'Fairness Fund for Community Organisations', if approved, will be managed by the Communities, Equalities & Third Sector team.
  5. Noted that any sums identified for allocation at a later date will be brought back to an appropriate member meeting for approval.
  6. Agreed to delegate adjustments to allocations of the Household Support Fund to the Chief Finance Officer in consultation with the Chair of Strategy, Finance & City Regeneration Committee, within the bounds of the council's rules for virement, where the funding available changes, or there is evidence of changing need throughout the 6-month period of the Household Support Fund, to ensure that all of the fund is utilised within the time allowed.

## **32 PROPOSALS FOR NEW GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

- 32.1 Councillor Daniel, Alexander, Robinson and Grimshaw rejoined the meeting.
- 32.2 Councillor Sankey introduced, and formally moved the report.
- 32.3 The Mayor noted that there was an amendment in relation to this report as set out in the addendum papers.
- 32.4 Councillor Davis moved a joint amendment on behalf of the Green and Conservative Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Meadows.
- 32.5 Councillor Goldsmith, West, McLeay, Pickett, Hill, Hewitt, McGregor, Stevens, Robins, McNair, Theobald, Lyons, Hogan and Earthey spoke on the matter.

32.6 Councillor Sankey responded to the debate.

32.7 The Mayor then put the amendment to the vote.

		For	Against	Abstain			For	Against	Abstain
1	Alexander		X		27	McGregor		X	
2	Allen		X		28	McLeay	X		
3	Asaduzzaman		X		29	McNair	X		
4	Atkinson	Not Present			30	Meadows	X		
5	Bagaeen	Not Present			31	Miller		X	
6	Baghoth		X		32	Muten		X	
7	Burden		X		33	Nann		X	
8	Cattell		X		34	O'Quinn		X	
9	Czolak		X		35	De Oliveira		X	
10	Daniel		X		36	Pickett	X		
11	Davis	X			37	Pumm		X	
12	Earthey			X	38	Robins		X	
13	Evans		X		39	Robinson		X	
14	Fishleigh	Not Present			40	Rowkins		X	
15	Fowler		X		41	Sankey		X	
16	Galvin		X		42	Shanks	Not Present		
17	Goddard		X		43	Sheard		X	
18	Goldsmith	X			44	Simon		X	
19	Grimshaw		X		45	Stevens		X	
20	Guilmant		X		46	Taylor		X	
21	Helliwell				47	Theobald	X		
22	Hewitt		X		48	Thomson		X	
23	Hill	X			49	West	X		
24	Hogan	X			50	Wilkinson		X	
25	Loughran	Not Present			51	Williams		X	
26	Lyons	X			52	Winder		X	
						<b>Total</b>	11	34	1

32.8 The Mayor confirmed that the amendment had been lost by 34 votes to 11 with 1 abstention.

32.9 The Mayor put the recommendations as detailed in the report listed in the agenda to the vote which was carried.

		For	Against	Abstain			For	Against	Abstain
1	Alexander	X			27	McGregor	X		
2	Allen	X			28	McLeay		X	
3	Asaduzzaman	X			29	McNair		X	
4	Atkinson	Not Present			30	Meadows		X	
5	Bagaeen	Not Present			31	Miller	X		
6	Baghoth	X			32	Muten	X		
7	Burden	X			33	Nann	X		
8	Cattell	X			34	O'Quinn	X		
9	Czolak	X			35	De Oliveira	X		
10	Daniel	X			36	Pickett		X	
11	Davis		X		37	Pumm	X		
12	Earthey			X	38	Robins	X		
13	Evans	X			39	Robinson	X		
14	Fishleigh	Not Present			40	Rowkins	X		
15	Fowler	X			41	Sankey	X		
16	Galvin	X			42	Shanks	Not Present		
17	Goddard	X			43	Sheard	X		
18	Goldsmith		X		44	Simon	X		
19	Grimshaw	X			45	Stevens	X		
20	Guilmant	X			46	Taylor	X		
21	Helliwell	Not Present			47	Theobald		X	
22	Hewitt	X			48	Thomson	X		
23	Hill		X		49	West		X	
24	Hogan		X		50	Wilkinson	X		
25	Loughran	Not Present			51	Williams	X		

26	Lyons		X		52	Winder	X		
						<b>Total</b>	34	11	1

**32.10 RESOLVED:**

That Council:

1. Approved the recommendations of the Strategy, Finance & City Regeneration Committee as set out below:
  - 1.1 Formally resolved to change its governance arrangements by ceasing to operate a committee system and instead operating a leader and cabinet executive system on 16 May 2024, during the annual Council meeting at which it is proposed the new Constitution shall be formally adopted;
  - 1.2 Approved the Notice and Summary of Proposals set out in Appendix 1 and instructs the Executive Director Governance, People & Resources to publish the Notice in accordance with Section 9KC of the Local Government Act 2000;
  - 1.3 Noted the planned consultation and engagement as described at paragraphs 3.13-3.17 of the report and Appendix 3;
  - 1.4 Noted that a new Constitution will be submitted to full Council on 16th May 2024 and, if adopted, will come into force on 16th May 2024.

**33 ACCOUNTABLE BODY FOR LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP LEGACY FUNDS**

- 33.1 Councillor Goddard introduced, and formally moved the report.
- 33.2 Councillor Hill, McGregor, Meadows, and Earthey, spoke on the matter.
- 33.3 Councillor Goddard responded to the debate.
- 33.4 The Mayor put the recommendations as detailed in the report listed in the agenda to the vote which was carried.

**33.5 RESOLVED:**

That Council:

1. Agreed that Brighton & Hove City Council should continue to provide Accountable Body services, acting as agent for the Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (DLUHC) and on behalf of relevant UTLAs, in respect of legacy funds previously managed by C2CLEP for the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025.
2. Delegates authority to the Executive Director Governance, People & Resources, following consultation with the council's Chief Finance Officer, to make all arrangements necessary for Brighton & Hove City Council to deliver the

Accountable Body services, including resourcing, finalising relevant agreements with the UTLAs and determining any outstanding agreements required relating to the transfer with the Coast to Capital company.

### **34 INTEGRATION OF LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP FUNCTIONS**

34.1 The report was referred for information from the Culture, Heritage, Sport, Tourism & Economic Development Committee meeting held on 7 March 2024.

34.2 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### **35 ADVANCING HEALTH EQUITY IN BRIGHTON & HOVE**

35.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Burden on behalf of the Labour Group and formally seconded by Councillor Galvin.

35.2 The Mayor congratulated Councillor Galvin on their maiden speech on behalf of the council.

35.3 The Mayor noted that there was an amendment in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.

35.4 Councillor Hill moved an amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor West.

35.5 Councillors Hogan and Theobald spoke on the matter.

35.6 Councillor Burden confirmed that they would not accept the amendment.

35.7 The Mayor then put the amendment to the vote which was lost.

35.8 The Mayor then put the motion to the vote and confirmed that the motion had been carried.

### **35.9 RESOLVED:**

This council notes:

1. The health of Brighton & Hove's population is one of our most vital assets.
2. Since 2010, the amount of time people spend in poor health has increased across England.
3. In our city some areas are in the 20% most deprived areas in England, while others have double the amount of average income, and these extremes of affluence and deprivation create significant disparities in health outcomes, wellbeing and qualities of life.
4. People in the most disadvantaged parts of Brighton & Hove spend more than twelve years longer in poor health than people from the least disadvantaged areas.
5. More policy interventions can mitigate health inequalities across our city.

Therefore, Full Council resolves to call for an officer report to the Health & Wellbeing Board which addresses the following:

6. How the council can advance their work on health equity across the city.
7. Results of continued work in close partnership with the NHS to enhance health equity with targeted place-based models .
8. Explorations of the frameworks and policies that Coventry introduced to become a Marmot city and how Cheshire and Merseyside became a Marmot Region.
9. How more policy interventions can be explored to mitigate health inequalities across our city, and an exploration of new performance indicators to ensure measurable progress.
10. Implications of embedding new health equity considerations into all council policy to ensure the best health outcomes for Brighton & Hove's most vulnerable and deprived populations.

### **36 FAMILY BASED POLICIES**

- 36.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor McNair on behalf of the Conservative Group and formally seconded by Councillor Meadows.
- 36.2 The Mayor noted that there was an amendment in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.
- 36.3 Councillor Nann moved the amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Miller.
- 36.4 Councillors Hill and Earthey spoke on the matter.
- 36.5 Councillor McNair confirmed that they would accept the amendment.
- 36.6 The Mayor then put the motion as amended to the vote and confirmed that the motion had been carried.
- 36.7 **RESOLVED:**

This Council:

1. Notes that the Administration has taken the necessary action to protect school numbers through reducing admissions numbers and closing two schools.
2. Notes that there has been a 22% drop in children aged 0-4 living in the city between the 2011 and 2021 censuses.
3. Further notes that Brighton & Hove's population profile had fewer children & young people aged 0 to 19 (20.5%) compared to the South East (23.1%) and England (23.1%).
4. Calls on the Government to assist the council through increasing funding, enabling the council to facilitate:
  - Development of affordable family sized houses rather than flats
  - Improving infrastructure, including NHS services and GPs, that is needed alongside new developments for both new and existing residents
  - Improving leisure facilities and parks

- An end to making councils compete for small pots of money

This council therefore resolves to:

1. Request officers to bring a report to the next Childrens, Families & Schools Committee (or the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee should the new governance system be approved) outlining options for:-
  - (a) a holistic approach to city wide policies to make Brighton and Hove an attractive place for families and young people to live in;
  - (b) keeping families with children under the age of 18 as part of a holistic strategy to ensure that the impact of future policies on families are given serious consideration

### **ZANE'S LAW**

- 36a.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Pickett on behalf of the Green Group and formally seconded by Councillor Davis.
- 36a.2 The Mayor noted that there was an amendment in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.
- 36a.3 Councillor Rowkins moved the amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Allen.
- 36a.4 Councillors Lyons, McNair and Earthey spoke on the matter.
- 36a.5 Councillor Pickett confirmed that they would accept the amendment.
- 36a.6 The Mayor then put the motion as amended to the vote
- 36a.7 The Mayor confirmed that the motion had been carried.

### **36a.8 RESOLVED:**

This council notes:

1. The need to address the crisis of contaminated land in the UK, reinstating legislative provisions removed by government from the 1990 Environment Protection Act.
2. The Human Right to a Healthy Environment, approved by the UN General Assembly.
3. Findings in the British Medical Journal which estimated 80 per cent of people in the UK live within two kilometres of landfill.
4. The potential for hazardous waste contained on some landfill sites to cause significant harm to residents.

Therefore, resolves to:

5. Make clear the council’s support for Zane’s Law.
6. Request the leader of the council work in partnership with other local authorities, including via appropriate entities such as the LGA and ALC, to meaningfully compel the incoming government to implement Zane’s Law following the next general election, including all necessary funding for local authorities to meet these requirements.
7. Request an officer report to the relevant decision making body to consider proposals to:-
  - (a) Compile a register of land within Brighton and Hove which may be contaminated which is easily available to residents, and
  - (b) Enforce remediation of any land which poses harm to public safety, or which pollutes controlled waters, and
  - (c) Conduct an assessment of flood risk in relation to potential contaminated sites in order to aid prioritisation of any future actions.

**37 CLOSE OF MEETING**

The meeting concluded at 10.25pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this      day of

2024