

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

CABINET

2.00pm 14 NOVEMBER 2024

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL, NORTON ROAD, HOVE

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Sankey (Chair) Taylor (Deputy Chair), Alexander, Burden, Muten, Pumm, Robins, Rowkins and Williams

PART ONE

91 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

91a Declarations of interests

91.1 There were none.

91b Exclusion of the press and public

91.2 In accordance with Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 (“the Act”), the Committee considered whether the public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any item of business on the grounds that it is likely in view of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during it, there would be disclosure to them of confidential information as defined in Section 100A (3) of the Act.

91.3 **Resolved** That the public are excluded from the meeting from items listed on Part 2 of the agenda.

92 MINUTES

92.1 **Resolved-** That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved as a correct record.

93 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

92.1 The Chair provided the following communications:

I'd like to start today's meeting by addressing the situation at New England House, which I know has caused a huge amount of disruption and upset to tenants of the building, many of whom are small, creative businesses.

Closing the building at short notice last Friday, was not a decision we wanted to take. It was based on information presented to us in the fire engineer's report, which listed the risk as intolerable – the highest risk to a building. While the building reopened on Tuesday, I recognise that a lost weekend in the run up to Christmas is significant for those

businesses affected and behalf of the council, I wholeheartedly apologise for the impact this has had. While there are interim measures in place to mitigate fire risk in the building, we will now be laser focused in planning the longer-term fire prevention measures for the building.

I would like to thank everyone involved in the organisation of the Remembrance events that took place around the city this year and to all Councillors and officers who attended the events on behalf of the city council.

Remembrance Day is a poignant time and an opportunity for us all to remember, reflect and the sacrifice of all those who have lost their lives through conflict. It is also a time for people across faiths, cultures and backgrounds to unite in hope for peace and end of conflict.

We are proud to have allocated extra funding this year to support Remembrance events to make sure our communities continue to mark the occasion with the meaning and dignity it deserves.

This included a special commemoration event at the city's India Gate, led by our Mayor Councillor Mohammed Asaduzzaman, to pay respect to the Undivided Indian soldiers who fought for our country.

Since we last met, the new Labour government has delivered its first Budget and there are so many things in this budget that are positive for our city. It marked a significant shift following more than a decade of underfunding of councils under the last Government. We hugely welcome the additional investment in public services, through the £1.3 billion increase in grant funding to local authorities, including £600 million for social care.

We are also so pleased to see an extension to the Household Support Fund, as we know how vital that fund is for supporting people in hardship in our city. This funding combined with our local Fairness Fund will ensure we can continue to help vulnerable households and those in hardship.

Despite the extremely welcome commitments in the budget for more funding for local government, the NHS, social care and special educational needs, our budget pressures are still significant. We therefore have some very difficult decisions ahead locally, but we are doing everything we can to mitigate the impact on our communities and to ensure our important local services can continue.

Our Chancellor Rachel Reeves has made clear that the government's priority is driving economic growth and this was reflected in the budget by the huge investment in our country's infrastructure.

Growth is also a key local priority for and I was delighted to launch our new Economic Plan on Monday alongside 300 business leaders. The Plan sets out the next three years of our transition as a city, seeking to grow the economy to create wealth for our communities through sustainable employment and business support. The Plan isn't just a Council document. It has been developed for the city as a whole providing a common goal and purpose that partners and stakeholders can work towards.

We are focused on creating a city where everyone can thrive, developing a flourishing local economy that attracts investment and nurtures our businesses and talent.

Last week in my capacity as Greater Brighton Economic Board, I was also delighted to be part of a hosted visit for civil servants in the Department for Business and Trade to come and see what our region has to offer and the opportunities for investment. The two-day event focused on science and innovation and particularly the fantastic work happening on quantum led by University of Sussex, as well as the ecosystem that is well established on tech and innovation.

Before we move on to today's business, I wanted to highlight a couple of important issues that I know are important to residents.

Firstly, we have had a lot of feedback from parents, school leaders and wider communities on our pre-engagement exercise around potential options for changes to school catchment areas. I know that there has been a lot of discussion in community groups and want to reassure all involved that no decision has been made. The exercise was carried out in good faith, going beyond what the council is required to do in terms of consultation, and has been hugely informative. Thanks to everyone who has provided constructive feedback.

Secondly, I wanted to highlight that the council has issued an open invitation to any organisations and businesses in the city who would be interested in partnering with us on park & ride. We have been working on a number of site options but are keen to explore all options, so please do get in touch if this is of interest and you have land or premises in the city that may be suitable.

Moving on to today's business, I am delighted to see the open spaces events programme on the agenda today. We are proudly a city renowned for our events and cultural offer and it is great to see this programme brought forward.

The report on the Corporate Systems Improvement programme sets out how we will modernise and transform our internal processes which are vital to the functioning of the council and ensuring we can provide the best possible service for residents while also providing value for money. Our systems upgrade is overdue and we welcome this proposal.

Finally, on Patcham Court Farm, I am pleased that the report presented today reflects the work that has gone into exploring options for this site, from housing to park and ride, as well as the proposal from Royal Mail. Our administration came into power with an open mind about the use of this site and I am confident that we have explored all options for feasibility. I look forward to the discussions and contributions that we will have today on these issues. We will now move on to today's business.

94 CALL OVER

92.1 All items on the agenda were reserved for discussion.

95 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

(A) Petitions

1) Lack of short breaks, holiday activities and after school care for children and young people with SEND in Brighton and Hove

95.1 Cabinet received a petition signed by 1390 people requesting the council to provide short breaks, holiday activities and after school provision for all children and young people with SEND aged 0-25 and their families, which is suitable for all levels of need including children and young people with complex needs.

95.2 Councillor Alexander provided the following response:

First of all, I would like to thank you for coming today and for tirelessly advocating for disabled children and their best interests, A concern and a passion we share and unless someone has experience of caring for a disabled child they can struggle to understand the worry and concern and exhaustion that simply ensuring they get their fair share in terms of education and childhood experiences causes parent carers. Your petition has raised awareness and understanding.

It is also crucial to acknowledge the value of our PACC – Parent Carer Council who have effectively lobbied, influenced and where possible worked alongside us as a council to ensure that the interests of parent carers and children are heard every day as we make decisions and service changes. It is important to acknowledge that they are a vital part of the successful service delivery we ran this summer which I will outline.

I also know that this was intended to be heard back in May before the summer holidays and our transfer to a cabinet system means that it is being heard now when we will be responding to it having undertaken a summer of activities. I still believe that this gives us an important moment to reflect on what we did have in place. And, going forward we will continue to work with PACC to develop the offer and to develop trust and confidence in the reliability of the offer and that you will be heard when we need to make changes.

During the 2024 summer holidays, a total of 678 sessions were accessed and of those 418 were specialist sessions for children and young people with complex needs, this also included our in-house provisions of Drove Road and Tudor House. This compares to during the 2023 summer holidays when there were 300 specialist and targeted sessions delivered by Extratime.

Parents' wishes and young people's needs have been accommodated as much as possible often in creative and bespoke ways, through 1:1 support and mainstream providers.

Based on feedback we know we need to address the following gaps as we move forward into 2025/26:

- Requirement for longer sessions in the holidays
- More sessions for complex needs, under 8s and over 18s
- Family fun days
- In-house 1:1 support

We are working with our special schools to deliver after school clubs and we are working with the Wraparound Childcare team to develop the offer further stability to families and confidence in that offer.

Thank you so much for bringing this petition to us, thanks to PACC for their hard work with our officers to develop what we had in place and please continue to speak up where you see a need to improve.

95.3 **Resolved-** That Cabinet note the petition.

(C) Deputations

1) Concerns about school admissions proposals

95.4 Cabinet received a deputation outlining concerns in relation to proposed changes to catchment areas and to cut places (PANs) in the city's schools.

95.5 Councillor Taylor provided the following response:

Thank you, Adam, for your deputation but more broadly, thank you for your work on this. I said it on email to you in response, but for those on cabinet who haven't been following the twist and turns of this Adam's a professor at UCL and spending his time doing research and has published three or four pieces on this subject, which is much appreciated by the city.

clearly the deputation was submitted when potentially this was going to come to this cabinet meeting, which is it is not, but it is clearly important to hear the deputations so I'm glad it's been brought.

I will briefly set out where we are which is that we had an engagement exercise, which has closed in which we didn't have proposals. We had a set of principles a set of indicative models or options that could be considered and we had an engaged in exercise that had a very, very high level of response, something like 2,600 responses, which I think is that the highest level of responses in our new your voice system since we launched that system a couple of years ago.

So good and high level of engagement. Where we are now is that if we were to take something forward for under the current cycle to take effect in 2025, we would take it to a Cabinet meeting in December.

I will draw out a couple of issues that Adam has raised. In terms of further engagement on what's happening now, the engagement has closed is I and officers are meeting with lots of different groups to talk through some of the detail of what came out in the engagement and what the next steps might be and I think it is really important to do exactly that, draw on both the experience, knowledge but views and input of all of those different groups as we start to form the policy.

In terms of some of the concerns that were raised in the deputation, which are consistent with the number of issues that are raised in the engagement and that we will see in the engagement when we publish it. Journeys is clearly one of them in consideration of transport and I'll just say now we're we won't give responses to what's going to necessarily happen, but heard loud and clear that one of the proposed models in particular clearly concerned parents about the implied distances of journey time, which would be in that model and we completely understand that and acknowledge that in terms of data.

What I think we will do, and we may even do this before we get anywhere near a proposal, we might publish everything from the exercise, including further detail on data. We publish all of that, I think, before getting towards a proposal on data. I mean, what the data will show is not particularly inconsistent with what we presented in the engagement, so I would generally disagree that it's a false premise. Actually, the premise where we are starting from is each of us is fairly close, we probably agree broadly on what the problems are in the city. What the data will show is that we were a relatively high performing authority overall with a very large attainment gap, so with 152 local education authorities in the country, we have the 17th highest attainment gap so nearly in the top 10% of attainment gaps. There are different places you can be on that scale. You can be an authority that is a low performing authority with a high attainment gap. In other words, generally the schools are not doing great and your attainment is not very good and within that there's a big gap, so those from non-disadvantage groups doing, you know, much better comparatively to those that are disadvantaged, but within the system that doesn't do very well overall. You can be like us, which as I say, is a high performing authority, but with a big gap, you can also be low performing with a low gap or you can be where everyone wants to be, which is a high performing authority with a low attainment gap, and that's the goal. That's what everyone is trying to grasp for and indeed that's not theoretical, that exists one hour up the road in London, which is a many of the London boroughs have

exactly that they do as well as us overall or better in attainment, but much, much smaller gaps between different economic backgrounds of families, and that's what we're trying to achieve. And that's what we tried to set out in the engagement. I never said we were bad performing authority. I said, very specifically, we do better than average on overall attainment, but we have a gap, but we'll tease out that data that Adam is talking about in terms of exactly where we sit, and we'll publish more of that.

Other things that were mentioned is a systems wide approach I mean, yeah, you are absolutely right. This is a complex question that has an interplay between school admissions, between geography, travel times, school budgets, a socio-economics, generational poverty, it is complex. The fact that we have religious schools and the fact that things can be appealed to the Adjudicator means that the council has to take a system based approach but doesn't control all of the levers in the system. So, it's a tricky question and that's what we're trying to draw out, that's what we're trying to get to. But all I can really say on that is to give a commitment from myself and from Cabinet, that yes, any proposal that comes forward in the future will be well researched, well evidenced and try to take a systems wide view of the issues. And as you are implying, Adam, and as many have said, don't do something that does more damage in trying to correct issues that have existed in the city and that I'm glad that we're now facing up to as a city. I mean, there's been lots of criticism of the engagement in itself, but the engagement has got us to talk in about this issue and it's a deep issue in the city and I really think we need to address it and I've been really pleased that even the parents sort of expressed concerns about some of the proposals have been saying, but we're really invested in trying to tackle these issues. We don't want an unequal city, and we don't want unequal education, so that's what we've got to build on in the next stage.

95.6 **Resolved-** That Cabinet note the deputation.

2) **Transparency concerns over Patcham Court Farm sale**

95.7 Cabinet received a deputation raising concerns about the future of Patcham Court Farm.

95.8 Councillor Taylor provided the following response:

Thank you for your submission and your deputation today and I will start by saying to residents throughout the process that led up to planning and during planning, thank you and well done for raising your concerns. That is a really important part of our democratic process and our planning process and whilst it will have felt to you the decision of planning didn't go your way clearly, it's really important to say that as councillors, whether at the Planning Committee or today at Cabinet, we do listen to residents concerns, we understand them and you're quite right to be raising all of these concerns. So, thank you for bringing this deputation.

The first bit is to make clear is the distinction between the planning process and the cabinet decision, which I know you will understand, but for the public there's two distinct things going on here. There was a planning process which is determined by the Planning Committee, which is a quasi-judicial process, and many of the issues that have been talked about relate to planning and I'll come on to those.

What is before Cabinet today is the decision on the use of the land, which as you say, is owned by the council. We have to be clear on that distinction as we go through. For many of the things you talked about, I will address in my overall presentation later, but I'll pick it out a couple of things.

In terms of us preferring corporate deals over housing, that is very much not true. The evidence of this council is that we're buying and building social houses, we are buying housing that's already been built, we are buying back housing in outlying areas of the city at something like one a day, so we have a very, very strong focus on social housing. So, I don't think it's credible to say we're not interested in housing.

In terms of corporate deals, well, what the council has to do is we have to manage our budget at all points, and as you will see councils all over the country, including this one, are in a difficult financial circumstances and we have to ensure good proper use of our land and our assets.

In terms of jobs in the city, you raised an option is to move to Shoreham and Shoreham is not in the city, so that would be a net loss of jobs to the city. It's not desperately far away, but it's not impossible to see that many postal workers who live in the east of the city may not want to go and work Shoreham. So, it is retaining jobs in the city and that's an important part of consideration.

I also want to address the concerns about the integrity of the Planning Committee process. Now clearly, we are the Cabinet, we don't chair the planning process. I do want to respond on behalf the council corporately. We need to be clear that the council, as the local planning authority, has a proactive duty to work with applicants in relation to planning applications with the aim of identifying mitigations that will enable the council to support applications. That is the national planning policy framework, which is clear that the starting point for applications is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. That's the framework in which the council operates. Negotiation dialogue with statutory consultees is a key part of this process. All of the representations received during a consideration of the application was summarised in the report that went to Planning Committee. Dialogue between Brighton & Hove Bus Company and the local highway authority as statutory consultees are not considered to be inappropriate and considered to be normal exchange to ensure that there are mitigations in place, including the scheme that was presented to Planning Committee.

Southern Water did raise concerns about amending the wording of a number of conditions that they had requested during the application process the conditions in the report were retained as requested by Southern Water and so therefore there was no later objection. The final comments on the national highways reflect the additional information that was received during the consideration of the application. Then just to address the point about time given to those speaking against the application, they were limited speaking rights at committee and residents were afforded three minutes to speak to Planning Committee, which is the same as what the developer was allocated. Following the public participation, which is a section of the meeting, Members are then given the opportunity to seek clarifications, ask questions, and this can be of residents or the applicant. Now clearly, that tends to be questioning of the applicant, and so that's why there was more dialogue towards the applicant, but the same amount of time to present was allocated to each. This is normal in committee process so that members of will be informed and understand all matters when making a decision. Thank you again for your deputation and as I said, the next item on the agenda is the substantive item where we will talk more broadly about the issue.

95.9 **Resolved-** That Cabinet note the deputation.

96 ISSUES RAISED BY MEMBERS

92.1. A copy of the questions received was circulated ahead of the meeting. Responses provided are as follows:

1) Councillor Meadows- Patcham Court Farm

Why is the lease set to last 250 years (paragraph 2.1)?

Response from Councillor Taylor:

Long leases of this nature are usually 125, 250 or 999 years and this is standard market practice.

2) Councillor Meadows - Patcham Court Farm

Let's assume the sale price is £3m. That would amount to an income of only £12000 per year to the council. Aren't we selling this too cheaply for 250 years?

Response from Councillor Taylor:

The city council is selling the property for best consideration, which is usually market value, and we have had specialist surveyors advising us on this.

3) Councillor Meadows- Patcham Court Farm

What will prevent the Royal Mail in 10, 20 or 50 years time selling the lease on, or subletting the land to another organisation or building company?

Response from Councillor Taylor:

This would be covered by the lease. The Heads of Terms are currently being finalised and the details of final lease are yet to be agreed. The details are therefore commercially sensitive and confidential at this time and will be considered in Part 2 of the agenda.

4) Councillor Meadows- Patcham Court Farm

Why are park & ride, housing, and Royal Mail the only three options considered for this site? Why isn't the land being considered as allotments or for growing food as per Cllr Alexander's Notice of Motion from Full Council on 24th October?

Response from Councillor Taylor:

As the report sets out, there is ground contamination dating from the farm use that would need to be cleaned up before the land could have been used for growing, and the cost of doing this would not be recouped by an allotment use. The Patcham Court Farm site already benefits from three large allotments sites within a 500m radius.

5) Councillor Meadows- Patcham Court Farm

During the so-called consultation by Royal Mail and the council it was suggested to residents that this proposal freed up land for social housing. Why were the Hove and North Road sites not financially viable given Royal Mail are getting such a cheap deal for Patcham Court Farm? The lead councillors must have been aware this was not viable before planning was granted.

Response from Councillor Taylor:

Royal Mail are paying the market value for the Patcham Court Farm site. They are, in turn, selling any freed up sites also at the market value. The Royal Mail has a duty to its shareholders to obtain best consideration for any sites sold just as the council has a duty to taxpayers to obtain best consideration for its own land disposals. As the report states, negotiations have taken place on the Hove site, and indications are that there is a viable scheme to build about 120 new affordable homes at an agreed price for the land. The heads of terms propose that the sale of PCF to Royal Mail includes a condition that Homes for Brighton & Hove is given first refusal to buy the Royal Mail site at that agreed land value.

The North Road site is not viable for Homes for Brighton & Hove, but it will still be expected to deliver affordable homes as part of any private sector-led housing scheme.

6) Councillor Meadows- Patcham Court Farm

What justifies the comment in paragraph 5.1 that the “considerable weight of public opinion was considered” given that residents attended and watched the whole process?

Response from Councillor Taylor:

The report prepared by planning officers for the planning committee summarised all the comments received which members of the Committee would have read during their preparation for the committee. All of the responses received are also available to view on the Planning Register. Some residents did also speak at committee outlining their considerations. Whilst the decision to approve the application, may not have been the outcome residents would have liked, this is not an indication that weight was not given to the residents and was something that was discussed during the meeting.

7) Councillor McNair- Corporate Systems Improvement

The council must have known that our corporate systems approach needed renewing. Was the £2.75m for phase one budgeted for this financial year 2024-25?

Response from Councillor Burden:

As noted in the report, a previous review of corporate systems was undertaken and reported to the former Policy & Resources Committee in July 2022. According to public record, Cllr McNair was at that meeting, but allow me to refresh his memory. That report estimated the cost of replacing corporate systems with an integrated Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system to be around £8 million. However, the proposed scheme did not proceed to final approval for the reasons set out in this report, and therefore no budget was created. The report on this Cabinet agenda therefore seeks

approval to create the capital budget to re-procure and develop corporate systems in accordance with a new, better value-for-money approach, and to authorise the associated financing (borrowing) over the period 2024/25 to 2026/27.

8) Councillor McNair- Corporate Systems Improvement

How many additional staff will be required to ensure this back-office operation runs smoothly?

Response from Councillor Burden:

The staffing resources are expected to fluctuate over the implementation period - different skills and expertise are required at different stages of implementation. Some resources will also need to be secured externally, where the council does not have the necessary in-house expertise. This means it is difficult to predict exactly the resources required until the work is underway, but overall staffing of between 12 to 18 staff (including external resources) are expected to work on the programme at any one time over the phase one period. This will largely be achieved by moving existing staff over to the programme and back filling or seconding their roles with temporary staffing. This will also have the benefit of broadening staff experience of different roles and responsibilities, something we're always keen to introduce.

9) Councillor McNair- Corporate Systems Improvement

What's the expected cost saving of the new corporate system?

Response from Councillor Burden:

As set out in paragraph 9.2 and Appendix 2, full-year savings of approximately £572,000 are expected to be achievable by 2027/28 with part-year savings in 2026/27. Appendix 2 also shows that savings will be across corporate services and functions as well as council-wide in terms of reduced administrative and management time and effort.

10) Councillor McNair- Open Spaces Events Programme

What is the makeup of the May festivals forum (paragraph 3.12)?

Response from Councillor Alexander:

The May Festivals forum consists of representatives from the key May events including: Children's Parade, Brighton Festival, Brighton Fringe, The Great Escape, Spiegeltent, The Ladyboys of Bangkok and Land Beyond Festival (Waterhall).

11) Councillor McNair- Open Spaces Events Programme

This approach seems to outsource all outdoor events in the city. Who's responsible when events fail?

Response from Councillor Alexander:

The current strategy does take a low-risk approach to events. In case of an event failing to go ahead, the full responsibility for refunding patrons falls on the organiser. There is a robust system of examination through the SAG process to ensure the safe operation of events, however, if a significant issue was to arise on an event there would be some responsibility on BHCC as the land owner alongside other statutory authorities. To manage this, all medium and large events in the city have a representative from the Council Outdoor Events team within the event control room. We retain the right to close or cancel any event if at any stage we are unhappy with the operation of said event.

12) Councillor McNair - Open Spaces Events Programme

Why do we track Manchester's more expensive site hire fees?

Response from Councillor Alexander:

The Outdoor Events Team benchmark across several key cities in the UK. While we are currently in close alignment with Manchester, we do not specifically track this price point. This is offered only as a comparator to demonstrate the high value we are currently able to realise for our spaces, and that we must charge to maintain income targets.

13) Councillor Sykes- Corporate Systems Improvement

Social value: With increasing sums planned to be paid to global and national tech firms in license fees for software and cloud access, and cashable savings arising it seems from reduced future need for technical, management and administrative roles, is this proposal doing enough to maintain in-house /in-city capacity and resilience to support and possibly help develop new systems?

Response from Councillor Taylor:

Given local government's financial challenges, it is clearly sensible and efficient to have a number of large IT providers developing systems for the sector rather than local authorities individually developing their own solutions. We have done that where we can, and with reasonable but limited success. Our current councillor enquiry system is one example. Although the cost of systems licences have increased in recent years and may seem relatively expensive, the alternative of developing and maintaining such systems in-house would be unfeasible if not close to impossible, given the complex and technologically advanced systems now in use. And curcially it would increase costs by three to five times the amounts we're currently proposing. And in contrast to your claims about reducing future need for technical and in-house expertise, the programme will provide opportunities for local staff to learn about new technologies and develop new skills that could help keep our costs lower and make the best use of the systems in future.

14) Councillor Shanks- Homewood College

What meanwhile use has been considered for Homewood College? Has other educational use been considered as it is an easy to access location?

Response from Councillor Taylor:

At this point in time the school remains open until 31 December 2024 subject to a decision later in this meeting. We continue to undergo a process of reviewing the availability of our education accommodation and the need to meet the demands of pupils in the city. No firm proposals have been considered for Homewood College at this time, but we will review the options available and consider our next steps, noting that permanent change of use or disposal would require the consent of the Secretary of State.

15) Councillor Shanks- Open Spaces Events Programme

Events – Can this be amended to reflect measures suggested in the recent petition by Derek Wright on the use of our public spaces? Does the council support measures to compensate residents for the loss of amenity caused by events by reinvesting some receipts for direct improvements to the area where the event is held?

Response from Councillor Alexander:

The considerations raised by the petition have been taken into account in the report. There were some good points raised by the petition and many of the suggested improvements are already in place. We do recognise the need for as low an impact as possible on the local communities and we work closely with event organisers with this. There is a very robust process in place for the selection of operators and ongoing scrutiny of plans throughout the pre-delivery and live phases from all statutory authorities.

Net income raised does go into the council's general fund, which is of benefit to residents across the city. A decision on changing the allocation of income from events would need to be taken at Cabinet level.

16) Councillor Hill- Corporate Systems Improvement

Phase one of this scheme has a capital investment requirement of £2.75 million from borrowing with a loan period of 10 years. £4-6 million more is estimated in phase 2. Are there proactive steps the council is looking into to ensure that the phase 2 of the procurement is more affordable?

Response from Councillor Burden:

One of the key reasons for the phased approach is a more measured implementation so we can track technological developments very closely. We are in a period of enormous and rapid evolution and improvement of emergent technologies, particularly with AI and machine learning, but also with blockchain and the Internet of Things. The proposed phased approach may well mean that lower cost solutions present themselves as we progress through the programme, and could well reduce the overall cost envelope for the second phase. Put another way, it's to keep costs down and limit financial risks that this is in two phases in the first place!

17) Councillor Hill- Open Spaces Events Programme

Are there ways that the council can help ensure there is suitable space on the Level for football during and/or immediately after events? There is a school group from Fairlight who use it with their headteacher for practice who often raised concerns with Councillors about their lack of access due to events. Sometimes the Level is left in a poor state after events that means it looks like 'a scene from War Horse'.

Response from Councillor Alexander:

No event on the Level currently utilises all three of the north lawns of the Level. It is a deliberate decision to ensure that one lawn is always left available, whenever possible. However, there will be a period of 2 weeks in the 2025 programme where this has not been possible, due to the lack of available space elsewhere in the city. This is not usual though. The new framework contract which is now in place will ensure that all reinstatement is carried out as quickly as possible and likely to be significantly more efficient than previous years.

97 MATTERS REFERRED TO THE EXECUTIVE

92.1 There were none.

98 REPRESENTATIONS FROM OPPOSITION MEMBERS

92.1 There were none.

99 PATCHAM COURT FARM

99.1 Cabinet considered a report that set out options for the future use of Patcham Court Farm as shown on the plan at Appendix 1 ("the site") and proposed the sale of a long leasehold interest in the site to Royal Mail for the development of a new Delivery Office. Draft minutes from a Place Overview & Scrutiny Panel held on the matter were circulated to Cabinet ahead of the meeting.

99.2 Councillors Taylor, Rowkins, Muten and Sankey asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.

99.3 Resolved-

- 1) Cabinet agrees to enter into an agreement for lease and grant a lease for a term of 250 years of the site at Patcham Court Farm to Royal Mail for the provision of a new Delivery Office, in line with the Heads of Terms set out in the Part 2 report.
- 2) Cabinet delegates authority to the Corporate Director for City Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance and City Regeneration, to negotiate and complete the agreement for lease and lease together with all necessary ancillary legal agreements that accords with the Heads of Terms set out in the Part 2 report.

100 THE FUTURE OF HOMEWOOD COLLEGE

92.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought approval to close Homewood College, a community special school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)

needs, with effect from 31 December 2024. The proposal follows a period of consultation and the publication of statutory notices.

92.2 Councillor Sankey contributed to the debate of the report.

92.3 Resolved-

- 1) Cabinet notes the responses received during the representation period following the publication of Statutory Notice on 7 October 2024 proposing the closure of Homewood College.
- 2) Cabinet agrees to the closure of Homewood College with effect from 31 December 2024, subject to the Secretary of State having exercised their discretion to revoke the Academy Order which the school is currently subject to.

101 CORPORATE SYSTEMS IMPROVEMENT

92.1 Cabinet considered a report that sought one-off capital investment to improve the council's core HR/Payroll, Financial and Purchasing systems and associated applications.

92.2 Councillors Robinson and Sankey contributed to the debate of the report.

92.3 Resolved-

That Cabinet:

- 1) Agree the Outline Business Case for the Phase One capital investment requirement of £2.75 million from borrowing with a loan period of 10 years.
- 2) Agree the re-procurement of the HR/Payroll and Finance/Purchasing systems and associated modules for a maximum period of up to 5 years, including extensions, and delegate authority to the Corporate Director Corporate Services (or a successor role) to take all steps necessary to secure best value and award the contracts.
- 3) Agree to delegate authority to the Corporate Director Corporate Services (or a successor role) to procure other intermediary products, applications and licences during Phase One to support the improvement programme.
- 4) Note the expected requirement for further capital investment of £4m to £6m (at current prices) for Phase Two to fully realise the vision and that a further business case will be submitted to Cabinet for this phase of the programme.

102 OPEN SPACES EVENTS PROGRAMME 2025

92.1. Cabinet considered a report that sought approval of the Open Spaces Events Programme for 2025.

92.2. Councillors Williams, Pumm, Muten, Rowkins, Robins and Sankey asked questions and contributed to the debate of the report.

92.3. Resolved-

That Cabinet

- 1) Support the strategic policy approach taken to make Brighton & Hove a vibrant city and a city to be proud of in delivery of the open spaces events programme for 2025 in line with the Outdoor Events Strategy (Apx n2)
- 2) Delegates authority to the Corporate Director, City Services, after consultation with the Cabinet Member for Culture Heritage and Tourism, to grant landlords consent to the annual programme (Apx n1) and make any alterations to the published events programme as necessary, including approving new applications in accordance with the Outdoor Events Strategy and cancelling events if required.

103 PATCHAM COURT FARM (EXEMPT)

As per the Part One report.

104 PART TWO PROCEEDINGS

- 104.1 **Resolved-** That Cabinet agreed that the confidential items listed on the agenda remain exempt from disclosure to the press and public.

The meeting concluded at 4.10pm

