

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 58

Subject: Written questions from Councillors

Date of meeting: 19 December 2024

Report of: Corporate Director for Corporate Services

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

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

1 Councillor Lyons

Given the previous problems of the ownership of the Woodland Drive Twitten, residents are asking how many other pathways & twittens within the city are not owned by the Council or Highways. We therefore recommend an audit.

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm:

2 Councillor Hogan

What is the Administration's policy about tree replacements in 2025/2026? In some roads it seems that more trees have been felled in recent years than planted?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Cabinet Member for Net Zero & Environmental Services:

3 Councillor Lyons

Why does Brighton & Hove Council lag other councils in PET1 recycling? Is it acceptable that such plastic should continue to be disposed of in household rubbish?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Cabinet Member for Net Zero & Environmental Services:

4 Councillor Hogan

When will the Council allow a resident to donate the cost of a bench or a replacement one in a park, cemetery, seafront or street?

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Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm

5 Councillor Lyons

When will the report be issued about parking in Nevill Ave, Nevill Rd & the surrounding area? It was promised in the autumn.

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm:

6 Councillor Hogan

Air quality readings within the first week of November in the city have been poor, with resident complaints as to increases in asthma. What plans has the council to deal with this?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Cabinet Member for Net Zero & Environmental Services:

7 Councillor Lyons

When will residents in The Martlet be consulted about parking restrictions to reduce traffic at school times?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm:

8 Councillor Lyons

Residents in Eldred Avenue are asking when they will receive a response following the deputation in July as to a soft touch parking scheme/restricted access at the southern end of the road.

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm:

9 Councillor Theobald

How will local councillors be kept informed of progress into finding suitable sites for park & ride? What is the envisaged timescale for consultation and implementation?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm:

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10 Councillor McNair

Residents are concerned about the speed of traffic in Braybon Avenue and Carden Avenue, and how difficult it is to cross the road, especially by the Sainsbury's on Carden Avenue and at the bottom of Ladies Mile Road/Mackie Avenue. Can the council examine traffic calming measures at these hotspots?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm:

11 Councillor Meadows

Can we have an update on the restoration of the cricket pavilion at Patcham Place? Will it be repaired in time for the cricket season in 2025?

Reply from Councillor Robins, Cabinet Member for Sports & Recreation:

12 Councillor Meadows

Can we have any update on progress in improving flood defences in Warmdene Road, Winfield Avenue, Old London Road, Carden Avenue and Surrenden Close?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Cabinet Member for Net Zero & Environmental Services:

13 Councillor Meadows

Are all grit bins across Patcham & Hollingbury ready for winter? Could the grit bin at the junction on Ridgeside Avenue and Overhill Drive be replaced?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Cabinet Member for Net Zero & Environmental Services:

14 Councillor Theobald

The pavement between 88 and 94 Overhill Drive has loose and dangerous slabs which could cause serious falls. What are the plans to relay the paving at this location?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm:

15 Councillor McNair

There is a very large Elm tree in the Peace Gardens which is either due to be removed or has been. Are there plans to replace it? Can residents have a say in the tree replacement? How?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Cabinet Member for Net Zero & Environmental Services:

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16 Councillor McNair

The lights behind flats 38-48 in Bramble Way are extremely dim making walking there after dark extremely difficult. When are the lights going to be fixed?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing & New Homes:

17 Councillor Theobald

Residents in Patcham & Hollingbury have been requesting the bus stop before Churchill Square in Western Road be reinstated, as the distance between the two existing stops is significant. Could the council and Brighton & Hove Buses discuss this?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm:

18 Councillor McNair

Residents are obviously concerned about the impact of the insolvency of the i360 on the city's finances. What practical effects will the insolvency have on the council's finances? What is the council doing to find alternative provision? What is the likelihood of finding an alternative owner? How much longer will the i360 continue as an attraction?

Reply from Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance & City Regeneration:

19 Councillor Bagaeen

Addressing residents' urgent concern about a rogue builder and freeholder

I am grateful to the Leader and her team that the council arranged and conducted a formal inspection under Housing Health and Safety Rating System to Nevill Court in Hove. Following this inspection a Statutory Improvement Notice was issued to the builder/freeholder detailing the works required and the deadline to complete them.

Officers have said that they are obliged to provide the freeholder time to complete these and to consider any reasonable representation the freeholder may make. Officers have also said that the freeholder has the right to appeal this notice within 21 days of the notice being served.

Can you please assure the tenants/leaseholders that the Council is also looking out for them and doing everything it can to support them while they are living in flooded, cold and mouldy homes?

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Reply from Councillor Williams, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing & New Homes:

20 Councillor Bagaeen

MODA/BHCC s106 Agreement

In correspondence from March 2024 from Legal Services (Council ref. 105829/Sackville), officers wrote that as of the [then] last financial year, the Council's Local Employment Service had spent £4,715 of the total sum received (£233,560) for the Residential Local Employment Contribution as contained in the MODA/BHCC S106 Agreement dated 5 August 2020. Under Schedule 11 of this s106 Agreement, in paragraph 4, the Council has committed: "... to directly support the delivery of the Local Employment Scheme with direct provision of construction training job opportunities to be provided on-site during the construction phase(s) in relation to the Proposed Development and provide specialist and/or bespoke support that local residents may need or would benefit from whether unemployed, under-employed, or with little or no skills."

Can you please outline how the Council has spent this skills funding and who the providers/beneficiaries were?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council & Cabinet Chair:

21 Councillor Bagaeen

MODA CLG Projects

Community groups and sports clubs, residents, the Hove Civic Society, schools, and the Friends of Hove Park have for months been promised by the Council a S106 workshop to address the unresolved issue of the previously agreed MODA Hove Community Liaison Group s106 project allocation.

The Council has failed thus far to hold this workshop and these groups have only faced obfuscation from the council.

Can you please identify what steps and actions are being taken bring this workshop forward as a matter of urgency so that community volunteers can responsibly continue to manage important community infrastructure?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm:

22 Councillor Bagaeen

Parking woes on Nevill Road, Nevill Avenue and Cranmer Avenue

Thank you for your efforts and unwavering support in addressing ongoing parking issues on Nevill Road, Nevill Avenue and Cranmer Avenue.

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When we agreed in the Autumn 2023 ETS Committee, which you and I sat on, to look at an integrated solution rather than a piecemeal intervention for these three roads, we were advised to wait for the council's parking review.

Can you please detail all of the actions taken by officers relating to addressing severe and ongoing parking issues across these three roads and what solutions have been identified for all three?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm:

23 Councillor Shanks

The area near Sainsburys on New England Road has no street lighting currently, can this be looked into? It's very dark and is difficult to see the steps.

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm:

24 Councillor Shanks

The lift from the back of the station managed by Hyde housing has had many operational problems. It is often out of order but provides a vital means of access to and from the station for local residents. Will the council intervene to ensure it is made permanently operational?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing & New Homes:

25 Councillor Shanks

My ward of West Hill and North Laine has a large amount of CIL money and none has yet been allocated for the vital community use that is needed. The S106 money allocated for London Road/Providence Place has also not commenced. Can we please have an update?

Reply from Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance & City Regeneration:

26 Councillor Shanks

What will the council do to support Magpie to stop them finishing the service?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Cabinet Member for Net Zero & Environmental Services:

27 Councillor Davis

Will the Council work to keep the TRO on Balfour Road School Streets?

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Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm:

28 Councillor Hill

Residents on Springfield Road have expressed concerns regarding parking as the street is filled with parked cars often. How is the council looking to alleviate this problem, particularly in regards to new developments in the Zone J parking zone?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm:

29 Councillor Hill

Sylvan Hall Residents Association has not been consulted as part of the Section 20 notice for Sylvan Hall. I have been sent information by association members that suggests that it should be given formal notice and a right to choose the contractors for the major works. Does the council accept this position?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing & New Homes:

30 Councillor Hill

At last Cabinet meeting, Cllr Taylor rejected the Green Party's suggestions to consider additional measures regarding the proposed catchment policy to give preference in catchments children who do not have an EHCP but are in the process of acquiring one by having to take the council to tribunal. Does Cllr Taylor recognise that the new catchment proposals mean many more children who should really be entitled to an EHCP and have special educational needs will have to travel long distances to school under this proposal? Many of whom struggle with burnout when in education anyway and that is made worse with a long journey to school. Does he not appreciate that a pre-existing problem of the Council denying EHCPs to SEND children will be exacerbated by this? This can be true even whilst the policy has benefits in other areas.

Reply from Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance & City Regeneration:

31 Councillor Hill

In the last 5 years the Brighton & Hove only won 7 out of the 64 cases that actually went as far as a SEND Tribunal. Is it not time that the Council looks at changing how it approaches applications for an EHCP to stop so many families being dragged into expensive legal processes?

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Reply from Councillor Daniel, Cabinet Member for Children, Families, Youth Services & for Ending Violence Against Women & Girls:

32 Councillor Hill

I have been told by constituents that the stress of SEND Tribunals has been compounded by the catchment proposal. Will the council make a particular effort to listen to families in this situation as part of the consultation process? They feel their voices are not being listened to.

Reply from Councillor Daniel, Cabinet Member for Children, Families, Youth Services & for Ending Violence Against Women & Girls:

33 Councillor Hill

Regarding the sibling link, can the council reassure families in Round Hill who have written to me worried that they will be more likely to have to send their children to different secondary schools due to the catchment proposals?

Reply from Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance & City Regeneration:

34 Councillor Hill

The Council have promised in writing to me that to help mitigate flooding risk on Park Crescent writing to me that 'We are going to install a kerb along the centre of the road. This meets the desires of the residents, it returns to a solution which was in place 7 years ago. As this is only a kerb, this shouldn't affect the operators'. When will the kerb be put in place?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking & Public Realm:

35 Councillor Hill

Will additional street cleaning be considered to accompany the introduction of a food waste collection in the city next year? In my experience of living in Cardiff, I found that food waste bins there tended to cause a lot of mess in student areas. This led to rats and seagulls in the streets. While secure caddies do help, they don't always get used correctly and mess is inevitable with a new system like this.

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Cabinet Member for Net Zero & Environmental Services:

36 Councillor West

At a public meeting held on 23 June 2005, residents were assured by experts that the Waste Transfer Station and Materials Recovery Facility to be built at Hollingdean, would be "a modern facility, designed in such a way that odour

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releases are thoroughly trapped and filtered... and it was guaranteed that “you won’t see odours or anything else which would offend you”. This is taken from a transcript of a recording made at the meeting (which is still available). Far from being a state-of-the-art facility fit and able to contain odorous organic waste, this facility, agreed to by the Labour administration, has from day one blighted residents' lives with the stench of waste; forcing them to keep windows shut and unable to enjoy their gardens in summer. Does the Council recognise this is an unacceptable state of affairs?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Cabinet Member for Net Zero & Environmental Services:

37 Councillor West

Despite the best efforts of Veolia to ameliorate smells at the WTS, it has proved impossible to find a technical solution to the smell. In 2014 the Environment Agency identified the problem as “the design of the building and the nature of the waste received. The primary source is the food waste contained within domestic refuse. The only possible way for the council to remove that is for the local council to instigate separate waste collections for food waste”. So, with the advent of universal food waste collections, we have a once in a generation opportunity to resolve the 20 year problem created by the inability of the WTS to contain the odour of rotting food, by ensuring this is organic matter is taken directly and separately from door-step caddies to a different location away from homes. Where will that new food waste handling facility be located?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Cabinet Member for Net Zero & Environmental Services:

38 Councillor West

I understand that the i360 may be closing for maintenance in January. Given the attraction is in administration, has the council sought assurance that it will reopen again? If no one else will take it on, it is surely vital the council keep it going to avoid the significant costs of mothballing or demolition. No one could have predicted the changes to the way people live their lives that covid brought, the impact this would have on visitor attractions, and all manner of public gatherings. From the outset Labour have talked the attraction down, encouraging public derision, which has impacted visitor numbers, and will now be discouraging potential buyers. If no buyer is found, and the council is left to operate the attraction, will Labour finally find the good sense to start talking the i360 up?

Reply from Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance & City Regeneration:

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39 Councillor West

The Cabinet has decided to increase verge mowing in the quest for a 'neat and tidy' appearance. For the past 10 years or more City Parks have been operating a single annual autumn cut on many broad verges, for example those alongside Carden Hill and the south side of Surrenden Avenue along to Ditchling Road. This low mow approach has been of great benefit to biodiversity as native species have re-colonised these areas, and the approach has been well respected and understood by the public. These areas are not currently included in the Wilder Verges scheme which are protected from frequent mowing. Will they be added to the scheme or face being trashed by the Councils mowers?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Cabinet Member for Net Zero & Environmental Services:

40 Councillor McLeay

It has been reported that over the past year, the Combatting Drugs Partnership has closed down 38 county lines, which led to 99 arrests and over 8,000 drug seizures and added 80 young people to prevention programmes. These are impressive numbers. However, residents communicate that drug related ASB is more prevalent than ever. If drug dealing and drug misuse continue to take place on the doorsteps of residents, and residents are told by officers and police that "a lack of resource" prevents them from taking further action to resolve the situation - what would the administration recommend residents do next? What more can be done to "reduce harm caused by drugs and alcohol for everyone who lives in, works in, or visits Brighton & Hove" if there is a lack of resource?

Reply from Councillor Burden, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Service Transformation:

41 Councillor McLeay

I have been advised by officers that the Council will only consider a gating PSPO measure if there is "evidence of serious violence, including violence against women and girls (VAWG)". With a rape reported on Zion Gardens back in July of this year (2024) – why are the council still refusing to issue a gating PSPO to the Air Street end of the alleyway [Zion Gardens]? How many more people need to get hurt before this measure will be implemented?

Reply from Councillor Daniel, Cabinet Member for Children, Families, Youth Services & for Ending Violence Against Women & Girls:

42 Councillor McLeay

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We have heard that the council is committed to transparency to accountability. I have been made aware by Brighton Pavilion's MP, that despite Caroline Lucas requesting over 18 months ago that fire risk assessments (FRAs) be made available to tenants online, they are still not accessible online. Residents in my ward have been reaching out to their MP for help. Can we get a commitment that fire risk assessments, in particular for high-rise and medium-rise buildings, will be published online and made accessible to residents before the end of January 2025?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing & New Homes:

43 Councillor McLeay

In 2019, planning committee granted permission for the development of Longley Industrial Estate. At that time the s106 amount committed was in the region of £1.3M. In 2022 a project manager was appointed to support with the disbursement of these funds in the local area. The local community (residents and businesses on Elder Place, Providence Place, London Road and New England Street) have not seen the disbursement of any of these funds - they are understandably getting anxious over the number of years that have passed and how much of the fund will remain for projects they have communicated are needed. Can we get an update as to how much of the s106 funding from this development remains in the pot? Can we also get a confirmed date for when we will see plans and proposals for the disbursement of this s106 funding?

Reply from Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance & City Regeneration:

44 Councillor McLeay

I have received a number of messages from residents in the past year alerting me to used needles found discarded in public walkways - Brighton Greenway, Valley Gardens, Frederick Gardens, and Zion Gardens specifically. Fortunately, these discarded sharps were found by adults who reported them for collection. In Sydney, Australia, the local authority introduced "council sharps bins" installed in community centres, libraries, parks and public toilets to encourage responsible discarding of sharps and for them to be managed separately from general waste. While I'm aware there are some community sharps bins located in parts of the city, what would be the administration's appetite to explore rolling this out more broadly, making them more visible in public areas across the city?

Reply from Councillor Burden, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health & Service Transformation:

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45 Councillor Pickett

In light of the high proportion of Armed Forces Veterans that end up homeless in Brighton & Hove, when will the council enable a Veterans Hub to be set up that will provide assistance to these people, who we know are hesitant to engage and admit if they have problems. A hub (as set up in other cities) would provide a contact point and help this particular and vulnerable group find a way off the streets.

Reply from Councillor Williams, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Housing & New Homes: