

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL

4.30pm 30 JANUARY 2025

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

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

PART ONE

56 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 56.1 Councillor Hewitt declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a member of UNISON in relation to Item 73, a Notice of Motion concerning supporting Unison's bring it back campaign.
- 56.2 Councillor Atkinson declared a personal and prejudicial interest as a member of UNISON in relation to Item 73, a Notice of Motion concerning supporting Unison's bring it back campaign.
- 56.3 Councillor Hill declared a personal but not prejudicial interest as a member of UNISON in relation to Item 73, a Notice of Motion concerning supporting Unison's bring it back campaign.
- 56.4 No other declarations of Interests in matters appearing on the agenda were made.

57 MINUTES

- 57.1 The minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 December 2024 were approved and signed by the Mayor as a correct record of the proceedings; subject to the following amendments:

61.6 The Mayor put the amendment to the vote and confirmed that it had been ~~lost~~ **carried**

59.1 Question 3 - Councillor Fishleigh asked a supplementary question:

Those people that I've spoken to who stay on Greenways know about ~~Balsdean~~ **Horsdean**.

58 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS.

58.1 The Mayor gave the following communications:

Bismillahir Rahmanir Rahim (in the Name of Almighty the most merciful)

Dear Councillors, ladies and gentlemen and Residents, Assalamualiekum (Peace be upon all of you)

Good afternoon, councillors, colleagues, and residents,
I warmly welcome you all to today's meeting. Before we begin, I would like to take a moment to extend my deepest condolences for the loss of two individuals who have recently passed:

Former Mayor David Smith, and former journalist and Freeman of the City, Adam Trimingham.

Councillor David Smith, began his distinguished public service in 1974 as a member of Brighton Borough Council. Representing Woodingdean for 21 years, he later became a ward member for Rottingdean Coastal when Brighton and Hove City Council was formed in 1998. He became Mayor for the city in 2006. A former estate agent, David played a pivotal role in ensuring the Royal Pavilion remained accessible to the public year-round and secured vital funds for its restoration. His unwavering commitment to our city and its heritage will always be remembered.

Adam Trimingham was celebrated journalist who devoted over five decades to reporting stories across Sussex. Affectionately known as the "Sage of Sussex," Adam was renowned for his kindness, wit, and generosity. Adam embodied decency and professionalism. He was the first recipient of the Freedom of the City of Brighton and Hove—a true testament to his impact on our community.

On behalf of the council, I extend our heartfelt sympathies to the families of David Smith and Adam Trimingham. Let us now stand together for a minute's silence to honour their memories.

ONE-MINUTE SILENCE was observed.

Thank you.

As we have a very full agenda this evening, I will keep my updates brief.

Over the festive season, I had the privilege of connecting with a wide range of people from across our city and beyond. I attended numerous events, including concerts, plays, and the Telscombe Town Council Civic Carol Concert. On Christmas Day, my Consort and I visited Hove Methodist Church to support their Christmas Day lunch initiative, which provided a sense of belonging and warmth to low-income families and isolated community members ensuring no one was forgotten.

Earlier this month, I had the honour of presenting British citizenship certificates to over 60 individuals at Brighton Town Hall. It is always a moving experience to welcome new citizens into our vibrant and inclusive community.

One particularly inspiring visit was to Pelican Parcels, a local charity dedicated to redistributing essential items to families and carers in need. Their vision is uplifting, but it also serves as a stark reminder of the challenges many in our city still face.

Last week, I toured the Adult Education Hub at Ivory Place, learning about the incredible training and opportunities they offer to some of the harder-to-reach members of our community. I also had the privilege of attending the University of Sussex Winter Graduation Ceremonies, meeting professors, honorary graduates, and over 1,000 students from around the globe who have spent their formative years learning and living in our city.

Engaging with young people has been a significant focus this month. I recently welcomed students from a local primary school to the Council Chamber and Mayor's Parlour, where they learned about the Mayor's role and the history of our city. They proudly shared their own initiatives, such as improving nutrition, promoting exercise, and enhancing environmental practices at their school.

Just yesterday, I visited Coombe Road Primary School, meeting their School Council, touring the school, and officially opening their new sensory room. These experiences remind me that education is the cornerstone of Brighton & Hove's future, and I am inspired by the enthusiasm and ideas of our younger generations.

Serving as your Mayor is both an honour and a privilege. Whether it's rain, cold, or even Christmas Day, I am committed to serving our city with passion and dedication. Together, let us work toward building a brighter future in our city.

Thank you

59 LEADERS AND PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

59.1 Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holders' gave the following communications:

Councillor Sankey:

Thank you, Mr Mayor, and I'd like to wish a Happy New Year to all residents and all councillors of our ravishing city, and a special Happy New Lunar Year to all South and Southeast Asian residents who have been celebrating this week. May the Year of the Snake bring good fortune and prosperity to us all.

Mr Mayor, I'm optimistic about the fortunes of our city in the year ahead and we've got off to a good start. Labour councillors and residents campaigned to prevent the academisation of Hove Learning Federation last autumn and so we're pleased that, having engaged extensively with the school governing body over the course of the consultation period, they have decided to remain as an LA maintained school. We are ambitious for the education of all our children in this city and we believe that we have a

strong offer and a track record that can be best built on by keeping as many schools as possible within our wider network.

Our Labour council was straight out of the starting blocks in 2025, publishing cabinet papers on our proposed expression of interest in being part of the government's Devolution Priority Programme. Our Special Cabinet took over an hour of questions from opposition members on the subject and I'm pleased to see that our report will be further debated today.

Following this meeting, I went to Westminster with the leaders of East and West Sussex County Councils to meet Local Government Minister Jim McMahon to pitch Sussex and Brighton & Hove as a devolution priority. Devolution offers so much to our city and wider region, huge opportunities from greater integrated transport, our buses, trains and active travel, to strategic housing that will unlock the inclusive and sustainable economic growth that Sussex can deliver and which will lift up our people out of deprivation, creating more equality and justice in our communities.

I was in Newhaven earlier this week chairing the Greater Brighton Economic Board and the enthusiasm for devolution across the county is palpable. We should be hearing in the coming days whether we've been successful in applying for the priority programme. If so, I welcome the role of all Members in helping to shape and, through our scrutiny chairs, scrutinise proposals as they go forward. But having cast an eye over the Greens, attempt to bring an unconstitutional amendment to our devolution report today. I say this gently to them. You don't have to protest and oppose and call for a referendum on everything. We live in a representative democracy so when government offers more money and more powers to benefit our businesses, it's OK to say yes to get on board and to support progress.

Mr Mayor, we've been busy working on this council's budget for the next financial year. I'm pleased that our projected budget shortfall of £36.7 million last September was slashed by the Labour Government's provisional financial settlement for this city. A huge difference to the real term cut of the Tories that we've experienced over the last 18 years, the masters of managed decline. Pressure mitigations have further closed this gap and I continue to lobby the government for an even better settlement for Brighton & Hove which will be confirmed, I believe, next week.

Difficult decisions will still need to be made this year, and I thank staff for the work that is going on to balance the budget for 2025-26 and over the medium term with support from this government. Despite the challenges, there is progress being made on our priorities in this budget. Our proposals will be published today and we'll be: investing £1.2 million in our food waste programme; maintaining funding for our trailblazing mental health pilot project in secondary schools; investing £78 million capital investment in housing, and freezing parking fees and charges.

Mr Mayor, since we last convened in this Chamber last month, we have still been delivering: we've brought forward our proposals on Park & Ride; we've published our Violence Against Women & Girls strategy; we've updated our Trans Inclusion Toolkit; and we have residents now moving in to new council homes in Whitehawk and Rottingdean. We have a contractor for our Moulsecoomb Hub and Community Centre; and work has started converting offices and Palace Place to temporary accommodation.

We're working on new council homes in Hollingbury; we're opening an outdoor gym in Wish Park; we've extended match day parking permits to residents in Coldean and Moulsecoomb; we've announced a new Seafront Development Board; we've extended the £1 bus fare and we're making public events in the city more sustainable. And for our work on the Brighton & Hove Winter Fuel Payment, we have paid £3500 to pensioners in the city and we've signed up more pensioners to pension credit totalling £350,000. We've launched a Cosy Killer campaign on air pollution and a school attendance campaign. And of course, we've been cleaning up the mess left by the opposition parties on the i360. If only they'd had a referendum on that Mister Mayor.

I'm going to hand over now to Councillor Tim Rowkins for his update.

Councillor Rowkins:

Thank you, Mr Mayor, I'll try and be brief. The issues raised with all of us on the city's doorsteps as election candidates back in 2023 were many and varied. But there was one question that came up time and time again in every corner of the city. That question was: despite having had two Green administrations in the city, why is our recycling amongst the worst in the country? Now we all know what the Greens response to this was, to perpetuate the long-standing myth that our recycling can't be improved because of a long-term contract signed by Labour back in 2003.

Well today, Mr Mayor, I'm busting that myth once and for all. Starting this spring, we will be adding the following materials to the Council's curb side and communal recycling collections: plastic pots, tubs and trays, punnets for fruits and berries, yoghurt pots, margarine tubs, aluminium foil, foil trays, food and drink cartons, soup cartons, things like this, the Pringles tubes, gravy granules, one for Councillor Grimshaw, and the little fruit juice cartoons that you get for lunches and so on. On top of that, I'm also announcing a new budget allocation of £1.2 million for the coming financial year to bring food waste collections to our city for the first time.

These major changes will be a shot in the arm for our long-suffering recycling rates and will significantly reduce the amount of waste going into the city's refuse bins. Mr Mayor, let the record show that while the Green Party's position on expanding recycling was that it couldn't be done, the Labour Party's position is 'oh well, we've done that - what's next on the list?'

Councillor Robins:

Thank you, Mr Mayor, and as they say at the football, it's all gone quiet over there. I'm very pleased to announce a really important milestone in our project to replace the King Alfred Leisure Centre. We've appointed Alliance Leisure as our delivery partners. They've got extensive experience in delivering sport and leisure facilities for local authorities and we'll bring on board the best experts at each stage of the project. Over the next few months, the professional team will work on the design and submit the planning application. They'll be led by GT3 Architects who are working with us on our Sports Facilities Investment Plan so have a good understanding of what we want in the city.

The team's also made-up of Engenuiti, Van Zyl & de Villiers and Hadron Consulting. I've seen what they've delivered elsewhere, including the recently opening Eclipse Leisure Centre in Surrey, one of the first to meet industrial leading energy efficient standards. So, they really understand the challenges unique to this sector better than anyone.

We're still on track to bring the design back to Cabinet in the summer and submit a planning application by the end of the year. We expect work to begin on site in 2026 and it'll be spring 2028 before we open. I know residents have been patient waiting for the new centre to replace the King Alfred, so it's an exciting step forward to give the city a modern, energy efficient sports centre that meets the needs of residents and really makes the most of the sea front location.

While that happens, we will continue to keep the current King Alfred open for as long as it's feasible. So that's it. And remember, shovels in the ground in '26 toes in the water in '28. Thank you very much.

60 TO RECEIVE PETITIONS AND E-PETITIONS

60.1 The mayor stated that he had been notified of two ordinary petitions to be presented today. He advised that petitioners had up to three minutes to outline the petition and to confirm the number of signatories and that the petition would then be responded to by the relevant Cabinet Member.

60.2 Cllr Fishleigh presented a petition titled 'Light Touch Parking Permits for Rottingdean' which had received 82 signatures at the time the agenda was published.

60.3 The mayor thanked the lead petitioner and invited Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport, Parking and Public Realm to respond.

60.4 Councillor Muten responded:

Thank you for bringing your petition requesting to introduce a resident parking scheme in Rottingdean Village.

I do appreciate the difficulties residents are facing. In short: yes. we have added your area to our parking scheme priority timetable.

60.5 Robert Jones-Mantle presented a petition on the subject of Brighton & Hove recycling which had received 1065 at the time the agenda was published.

60.6 The mayor thanked the lead petitioner and invited Councillor Rowkins, Cabinet Member for Net Zero & Environmental Services replied to respond.

Councillor Rowkins responded:

Hello Robert, it's nice to see you in the Chamber. Firstly, thank you for bringing this petition today and I want to take the opportunity to thank you and Magpie for delivering the service that you've provided to the city for so many years. Indeed, I was a Green Box customer myself and, like many residents, was happy to pay for that additional

service to avoid seeing items going into the general refuse when there was an alternative. Certainly, I was gutted to hear you had to stop the collection service at the end of last year, and many many of my residents got in touch to express that, so you're obviously a very valued service, and indeed community, for the whole city so I just want to put that on record.

Reducing waste and increasing recycling is one of the fundamental reasons for me that I decided to stand for election in 2023. Since day one I have been working on improving provision in the city and obviously I'm very pleased to have announced the expansion of our services today, and I'm sure we can all agree that it's long overdue. It's my firm belief that a comprehensive recycling service should be available to all residents free of charge and, indeed, waste and recycling collections are a statutory service and have to work for all 280,000 residents in the city – those who are passionate about recycling, like you and I and many others in this chamber, and also those who simply want to put things in the right bin and forget about it from that point onwards.

We're committed to maintaining an in-house service and, as such, I'm not in a position to be able to consider a community-owned model in its entirety. However, and obviously we've been in dialogue for some time around this, if additional services and elements of community-ownership can augment what we provide and work in partnership, as you suggest, then we'd certainly support that. I'd be happy to meet to discuss how that might work, and I understand that there's some developments that have been ongoing over the last few weeks, so very happy to take that up after this meeting.

61 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

60.1 The mayor reported that 7 written questions had been received from members of the public and invited them to come forward and address the council.

1. The mayor proceeded to the next question as the questioner for the first question was not in attendance.

2. Robert Brown asked a question on behalf of Ashley Ridley:

What are the future plans for the land the i360 is currently on and will the local council will have to make cuts to help pay off the loan for the i360 or will it be Brighton residents paying with increased taxes?

Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance & City Regeneration replied:

Thank you, Robert, for asking this important question on behalf of Ashley and thank you to Ashley who can't be here for posing the question. To answer the first part of the question in terms of the land of the i360, what Cabinet approved recently was to allow the administrators to proceed to sell the attraction through administration to a private company, and that's what we hope will now happen. I think if it all goes according to plan that should be announced in the coming weeks and that will see an operator take on the attraction and the land.

As a reminder to the public, the council neither owns the freehold or the leasehold of that land and we hope that that company will make a great go of that attraction and the land on the base. We know that's really important to surrounding businesses, and clearly everyone wants to see that attraction and that space being used properly and so we think that's the least-worst option that we now face.

On the second part of your question, I have to be honest with you Robert and we have to be straight with the public and we have to give the numbers straight to the public. This city council, and therefore this city, will have to pay £2.2 million per year until 2041 and that is the Green party tax in this city. It will be the Green party tax, it will have to be accommodated in every single annual budget until 2041. Tories are shaking their heads, don't get too cocky the Tories because we'll turn on you as well because you voted for it as well. Many Tory Councillors voted for it at Committee.

Robert Brown asked a supplementary question:

Before the local elections I recall being on a BBC Radio Sussex interview with one of your Councillor colleagues who mentioned that Labour had a plan and would work on that to ensure no additional money was lost by the Council. It now appears that you had no plan and in fact we're left with writing-off the debt as mentioned just now, yet are still having to pay that debt back based on the loan obtained. Why was the plan that was promised before the local elections not successful?

Councillor Taylor replied:

Thank you, I'll have a go at the first bit. Of course, to Councillor Meadows by the way, absolutely Councillor Meadows didn't vote for it as at that point she was in the Labour Party who have more sense, and therefore the Labour Party voted against it. So she's quite right on that.

Robert, in terms of the money that has to be paid back, I mean you're absolutely right. That decision in 2014 submitted the Council a vast amount of public money, £36 million, in a casino-style gamble that the Green Party trumpeted. By the way, not only at the time did they say that we'd bet the money back, apparently we're going to get the money back with an additional £1 million a year. That was the promise, including from people who are still sat in this chamber. We're now facing £2.2 million extra, the permanent Green Party tax faced by the city.

So, it is a disaster Robert, I'm really sorry on behalf of the Council that this is the position that we're in. It is difficult for residents to swallow. Where we are now, the least-worst option is to try and make it work and get in a business to run it. But you're absolutely right to be angry on behalf of residents, as I am, at the amount of money that's been lost by the Green Party with this disastrous venture.

3. Elaine Hills asked a question:

I was pleased to see that the Government has reinstated the process that allows local authorities to apply to use automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) cameras to enforce traffic regulations. School Streets programmes reduce pollution by 23% around schools and make roads safer for schoolchildren. However, relying on volunteers has

made them difficult to manage. Research by Mums for Lungs shows that using ANPR cameras to enforce School Streets means they are also self-funding within their first year. Will the administration be submitting an application so Brighton and Hove can be considered in the next round?

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

Thank you, Elaine, for your question. School Streets are important in improving safety and air quality whilst reducing traffic near schools. Our many trial and established schemes have benefited from fantastic volunteer support. Recent guidance from the Department for Transport says CCTV cameras are the most effective way to enforce restrictions. I'll just add in that regard, it's really not about a money-making scheme, it's about a safety improvement. However, this is not something the council currently have powers to do.

Under the Tories, in April of 2024, the Department for Transport indefinitely paused the rollout of enforcement powers that were to be granted under the Tranche 3 Designation Order to 22 authorities across England and Wales. In November 2024, Labour granted these 22 authorities enforcement powers under that Tranche 3 Designation Order. As the previous Green administration here made no effective action to progress towards a Tranche 3 application in 2023, not surprisingly, Brighton & Hove was not included in the Tranche 3 list of authorities.

ANPR is a potential paradigm shift for our School Streets safety. That's why we are supportive to proceed a Tranche 4 application subject to further officer-assessment of resource and financial implications. Noting West Sussex County Council were successful, while East Sussex County Council did not apply, we will look carefully at the timing of such an application in relation to devolution. We will seek steer from government as to how our application best fits within progress towards strategic Mayoral authority for Sussex, be that granted by central government or by the Mayor of Sussex. We aim to be the first administration of this city to bring moving traffic powers into local control to make our city streets safer.

Elaine Hills asked a supplementary question:

I'd like to say thank you for your response, Councillor Muten, and I'm very pleased to see that you will be moving ahead with that because it's something that was talked about a lot in the past. Obviously, you have missed several opportunities to apply for these powers and it will take a long time. You said you were going to wait until after the devolution happens and obviously the sooner the better for our children for their safety. So, can you tell us what the administration will do to support School Streets, particularly at Balfour School, in the meantime until we have those powers?

Councillor Muten replied:

Thank you, Elaine, for your further question. I tend to agree that the previous administrations did not see it as a priority to go and get these moving traffic offences powers which I share your disappointment with, to be honest. I'll just highlight the point that where volunteers have really stepped up, and there's some remarkable volunteers across the city making School Streets work, they are viable and they will continue with

them. We're very supportive of that and we know they have a very significant safety improvement. Sadly, with the Balfour Street Scheme, it launched well in 2023, the volunteers were there, it made a big difference. This academic year we haven't seen the same response from the schools' community, which is a bit of a regret because it was an effective scheme, but it's highly dependent on volunteers for it to work and without those volunteers, effectively it looks like many people do drive into that zone and ignore the restrictions.

As a council we don't have those powers to enforce those restrictions because we don't have moving traffic offences. The police can, but they're stretched and they've got other priorities and so without the ANPR powers we can't really continue with making it effective at this stage. In short, when we get these powers, I think we will revisit that scheme.

4. Gary Vallier asked a question:

Deputy leader Jacob Taylor has reiterated to me a number of times, that the Toolkit is merely guidance; that it is not prescriptive, that it encourages a case-by-case approach, and is simply designed to assist schools in their decision making. With the recently published version (V5), can parents, teachers and governors be assured that version 5 of the Toolkit has been amended, such that it incorporates fully all recommendations of the final report of the Cass Review, and complies with legal safeguarding requirements?

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

Yes, that's all correct. The toolkit has been updated and thoroughly reviewed to ensure it refers to all current relevant statute guidance and legislation. It does reference the Cass Review, with acknowledgement that the Cass Review is based on healthcare rather than education.

Gary Vallier asked a supplementary question:

It does not comply. Why does version 5 ignore Bridget Philipson's statutory directive to follow KCSIE guidance, notably items 206 and 208 on page 55. If the council persists in asserting that the toolkit is compliant, as set out in my question, will the council confirm now in this chamber that if ever a school which has assiduously embraced the toolkit faces legal action from parents or guardians, will this council provide all necessary legal and financial support for the school's defence?

Heads, staff and governors need to know if they are placing their proverbial heads on the block to shield the council from legal liability. If it is not prepared to give such an assurance, then it reveals both a lack of confidence in its own advice and a duplicitous disregard for the faith of school staff and governors.

Councillor Daniel replied:

I refer the member of the public to my previous answer.

5. Diane Messias asked a question:

Would the Council please cite the law which states it's legal for a private company to compel residents to wear wristbands to access their own homes, and charge them to have visitors, as happens during the Village Street Party for those living in the exclusion zone?

Councillor Miller, Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage & Tourism replied:

Thank you Diane for bringing your question and giving me the opportunity to explain why we're able to do this. The Council uses powers under the Town and Police Clauses Act (TPCA 1847) Section 21 which is widely and lawfully used to effect road closures for the purposes of such events as the Pride Village Party.

Under this Act, the Council is entitled to close the "Queen's Highway". In making the relevant Order, the Council has the power to impose such conditions on access as are considered necessary and proportionate. The Council is not closing the highway entirely but restricting access in the interests of public safety. The decision to restrict access is therefore lawful and the associated wristband scheme is proportionate, following the serious safety concerns that first occurred in 2013 and that have been kept under review since that date.

The Council and Pride CIC continue to review the arrangements for the distribution of wristbands to ensure that it is proportionate and justified based on the number of visitors attending the area and the capacity calculations in the event management plan. It is important to ensure that residents and business owners are given the opportunity to receive free access to the Pride Village Party area. The most recent review conducted has identified that distribution of wristbands directly to bookers via Air BnB owners will ensure residents have access to properties while minimizing the risk of wristbands becoming available for resale.

Diane Messias asked a supplementary question:

Thank you for that answer. I'm not talking about closing the road, and I've been engaging a lot with Ian about this -sorry I've forgotten the name. The European Convention of Human Rights Article 1 says that no one should be deprived of their possessions and, as residents, if we have certain items which are perfectly legal in the UK but are deemed illegal for purposes of the village party, they are confiscated. Secondly, Article 8 protects your right to respectful private and family life. It means you cannot stop me from entering my home by having to show identification, and if that is the case for governments and local councils, surely it's the case for private organisations.

Councillor Miller replied:

Thank you, Diane. For the first part of your question, I think it's a very technical question, and I think I need to come back to you with an answer from officers. I don't feel able to answer that right now. But it is the council that's affecting this and we're doing it for reasons of public safety, and we do believe that we have the legal justification to do this, and people are not being restricted from entering their own

homes, because we do have a wristband scheme which gives everyone access to their own homes. So, I personally would dispute that this is actually counter to human rights legislation, but you're welcome to contact me and we can discuss it further with officers should you care to do so.

6. Julia Basnett asked a question:

If we are to protect single-sex spaces for biological women we must first be clear that a woman is an adult human female. The council needs to rescind its 2021 resolution (1), which in-part states, "this council believes transwomen are women". Does the council recognise the potential harms inflicted on women and girls when policy is informed by belief rather than fact? I think we all agree that in situations where biological sex matters blurring the definition of woman is dangerous and this part of the January 2021 resolution should be rescinded. Thank you.

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

No, good practice in policy development is not fettered by this notice of motion and therefore will not be rescinded. It does not, nor did it seek to, undermine single-sex exemptions that already exist in law.

Julia Basnett asked a supplementary question:

Given that you claim to follow a trauma-informed approach, do you expect a rape-survivor like me, who is biologically female, when using counselling services you fund, to be ok with the possibility of males being present.

Councillor Daniel replied:

All of the organisations who work with women in the city who are victims of sexual violence or domestic assault should be offering a single-sex service where that's necessary, and my understanding is that they all do.

7. Theo Vermeer asked a question:

Last year our close, Hawthorn Close, Saltdean was resurfaced although there was no apparent problem with it. The tarmacking was rushed and poorly done. The workmen stated they would return to finalise the job, they didn't. As a result we now have the following problems,

- 1) large puddles forming, particularly outside number 31,
- 2) loose clippings everywhere
- 3) no road markings have been re-instated

Can you tell me why the road was tarmacked and why pavements were not done as they were in a much worse state than the road?

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

Thank you, Theo, for your question. The works in Hawthorn Close in Saltdean were part of the Preventative Maintenance Programme, using a micro-asphalt surface treatment. We target roads where the surface has deteriorated to a point where if they are not treated, they will start to fail and need costly structural interventions. That is assessed by our specialist road engineers and, like I say, there is a preventative and timely intervention. Treating the surface at the right time protects deeper layers in the road structure, without which could incur greater cost over the long term.

The treatment application lays and seals a new surface to the road. This was not a road rebuild but a much-needed road resurfacing improvement in relation to a preventative measure as I described. As a result, large undulations in the road will remain. As we do after each micro-asphalt surface treatment across the city, any large quantities of loose chipping since the works were completed will be addressed as part of the contractors remedial works which may be several weeks or even months after the surface treatment. Again, road markings that have not adhered to the surface and need to be remarked will be noted for remarking as part of the remedial programme. I'm very pleased to hear that the road markings have been done now so thank you for the update.

The footway in Hawthorn Close is ranked 1220 in the Citywide Assessment Management system showing defects in need of repair. We do continue to regularly carry out Highway Safety Inspections and deal with any investigation-level defects as per our risk-based approach to maintain safety.

Theo Vermeer asked a supplementary question:

The road was redone in July-August, so it's now five months already and the chippings are still there. I don't know how long it takes before the contractors come. There is a large puddle already outside number 31 which wasn't there before the work was done and there is already a crack in the road outside one of the houses in our close. That needs looking at as well.

Councillor Muten replied:

Thank you, Theo, for your supplementary question. I will refer that to our engineering team, and I do understand that the post surface remedial work by the contractor can take up to six months in terms of the loose chippings and surface. That's part of that micro asphalt treatment. However, I will refer this back to our engineering team to notify the contractor of your specific concerns to make a proper assessment. Thank you.

62 DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

- 62.1 The mayor noted that there were no deputations received for today's meeting.

63 CITY PLAN CONSULTATION

- 63.1 The mayor stated that the Council's Petition Scheme provide that where a petition secures 1,250 or more signatures it can be debated at a meeting of the Full Council. There were three petitions which had reached that threshold. The mayor invited Lysander Pierce and Nick Wells to join the meeting and present the first petition.

63.2 Lysander Pierce and Nick Wells presented a petition for debate titled 'City Plan Consultation' which had received over 1600 signatures at the time the agenda was published.

63.3 The Mayor invited Councillor Allen, to reply:

63.4 Councillor Allen replied:

Thank you, Mr Mayor, and thank you to Citizens UK for all your work engaging young people with City Plan. How many of us in here at 16 and 17 would think to answer a consultation about a local authority city plan? And yet it's so vital, it's a vital document for the strategic direction of our city that is so key that it reflects the voice of the people that we aim to support. Especially as someone who has done exactly what you want, Lysander, that's gone away to university and then come back, and I would do exactly the same thing.

So, it's important to say that 50% of local authorities now have an out-of-date local plan and so many authorities around the country are in the same position we are, going out to consultation for their city plan or local plan consultations and it's a fundamental document for the future of leisure employment and housing in our city, amongst many more. Every local authority has its unique challenges. I always characterise ours as being sandwiched between the South Downs and the sea, alongside having significant stock of heritage, which is important to preserve and so we need to find a way to create beautiful places that people want to live in within the limits we've got.

And so, to do that we've got to be efficient, we've got to be effective, and we've got to be bold. And that's a challenge that certainly our administration is keen to take up. Time Out magazine named our city the 34th best in the world. I'm very proud that we pipped Prague to the post, but they were only at number 35. But in terms of the content of your petition, I'll quickly outline that affordability is absolutely fundamental for our administration, both in terms of our own council housing stock and working with registered providers to increase affordable housing in our city. The second is on supporting key workers. Our local plan will reflect a good mix of different types of housing to support those who keep our city running. And third, when it comes to developments, promoting a sense of belonging in the community, we are keen that our public realm should be beautiful, accessible and enjoyable. And so in conclusion, I'd be delighted to meet with you again to discuss the future of City Plan.

63.5 Councillor McLeay spoke on the matter.

63.6 The mayor put the recommendation to note the petition as listed in the report to the vote.

63.7 **Resolved**

(1) That the Petition be noted.

64 CALL OVER FOR REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

(a) Callover

The following items on the agenda were reserved for discussion:

Item 67 - Changes to contract standing orders

Item 68 - Pay Policy statement 2025/26

Item 71a - Devolution update

(b) Receipt and/or Approval of Reports

The Head of Democratic Services confirmed that Items 67, 68 and 71a 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 69 - Budget protocol

Item 70 - Review of Scheme for Member Allowances 2024-28

65 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 65.1 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 West

Many of our residents have been left shocked at the collapse of the Magpie Green box service. This much-loved subscription service predates the council's own door-step recycling service. In fact Green Box showed the way forward, embarrassing the then Labour council to commence its own door-step service. Council recycling rates have always been poor, which comes down to the limited range of items recycled and insufficient communications to explain and incentivise more households to recycle more and better. The City's super-recyclers stayed loyal to Magpie despite being charged as they knew there were better outcomes being achieved. Super-recyclers set the bar, and the loss of Green Box is a loss to the city. Will the Council now set up a subscription scheme for super-recyclers so those standard bearers can continue to show the way to raising recycling rates more generally?

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

The council is not planning to launch a paid recycling service. It is my belief that comprehensive recycling provision should be free and universally available to all residents and that is our focus.

2. Councillor West

I'm sure the Leader of the Council would agree with me, in saying how proud we all are that the Council is endeavouring to create a more respectful environment for its staff and 'customers'. As a council we have long sought to support and share the adoption of good values in the city. The corporate values we see exhibited by Elon Musk's X (formerly Twitter) however, do seem far removed from and at odds with what the City Council stands for. X has been a popular communication tool for reaching residents, but I see there is now a growing movement of individuals and organisations abandoning X and migrating to other platforms like Bluesky. Is it not high time the Council showed its leadership and joined the exodus too?

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

Thank you for raising this important issue. As a council we are proud of the culture we are seeking to create where we value diversity and challenge discrimination. We want to ensure everyone has the opportunity to grow and thrive in our city, and that as a council we are close to our residents, we actively listen and we respond to needs.

Our approach to communications, including our presence across social media is a vital part of remaining close to our residents, and is something we keep constantly under review. As a listening council we must communicate, consult and engage with our residents effectively, and use media and platforms that ensures everyone in our city is included. In 2024 we received 1.7million impressions on X and achieved higher engagement rates than the government's own feed and other city councils. Currently X forms part of our communication strategy, along with many other channels, to reach our communities, particularly in areas of warning and informing residents, but I share your concerns, and I have asked our communications team to keep our approach under review.

We have already proactively taken steps to create new channels including Instagram in 2023 and most recently Threads and BlueSky. I want us to take a values led and data informed approach and we will continue to keep this important issue under review.

3. Councillor Sykes

Would the lead for Environment and Net Zero care to comment on this excerpt from a January 2025 email from a B&A resident, with profanities removed: "The rubbish bin at the top of Lansdowne Place looks like we have had a 2 week dustmen strike and all of ours are overflowing again. Just at what point does the administration get to grips with this?"

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

We are sorry for the issues with the communal bins on Lansdowne Place, which related to a car being parked too closely to one of the bins for the vehicle to empty it. There are often issues across the city with cars parked too closely to

communal refuse bins which, if collected, would result in damage to the parked car. Residents are not always parking illegally, just too close to the bin.

There have been issues with collections over the Christmas and New Year period and this combined with the volume of waste following Christmas has meant it has been challenging to keep on top of communal refuse and recycling, and residents will have seen much more waste across the city whilst the service dealt with the additional volume. The administration is working closely with Environmental Services on service improvements, including accelerating programmes to improve technology and vehicle reliability – these are very large programmes of work and will take time to implement.

We are also looking at the possibility of altering the road markings at this location to prevent the problematic parking we have seen.

4. Councillor Sykes

Can the administration provide Cllr attendance figures on Personnel Appeal Panels since May 2023.

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

13 Personnel Appeals Panels were held since 25 May 2023 to 27 January 2025. Each Panel comprised 3 elected Members.

5. Councillor Sykes

Can the administration provide Cllr attendance figures on Licensing Panels since May 2023.

Reply from Councillor McGregor, Chair of Licensing Committee:

Licensing Panels are a Sub-Committee of the Licensing Committee and membership is taken from the Committee Members. Panels comprise of three members and convened on an ad-hoc basis. 43 Licensing Panels have been held since 25 May 2023 to 27 January 2025.

Member attendance were as follows:

Councillor Alison Thomson attended 9 appeals.
Councillor Andrei Czolak attended 3 appeals.
Councillor Carol Theobald attended 1 appeal.
Councillor David McGregor attended 10 appeals.
Councillor Emma Daniel attended 9 appeals.
Councillor Faiza Baghoth attended 1 appeal.
Councillor Ivan Lyons attended 9 appeals.
Councillor Jackie O'Quinn attended 1 appeal.
Councillor John Hewitt attended 12 appeals.
Councillor Joy Robinson attended 5 appeals.
Councillor Julie Cattell attended 18 appeals.

Councillor Kerry Pickett attended 6 appeals.
Councillor Lucy Helliwell attended 4 appeals.
Councillor Ollie Sykes (appointed Licensing Committee 24 October 2024) attended 1 appeal.
Councillor Paul Nann attended 15 appeals.
Councillor Samer Bagaeen (appointed to Licensing Committee 24 October 2024) attended 1 appeal.
Councillor Theresa Fowler attended 3 appeals.
Councillor Tobias Sheard attended 15 appeals.

6. Councillor Sykes

Parking income: can B&HCC revenue figures be provided for the first seven months of the 2024-25 financial year with respect to (a) parking permit fees (resident and visitor) (b) suspended bay fees (c) Net Penalty Charge Notice revenue from parking infractions (d) off- street parking revenue (e) on- street parking revenue.

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

Thank you for your question, Councillor Sykes. At month 7 the income achieved by parking services are as follows. Permits: £6.978m, Suspensions: £1.117m, Off Street revenue from carparks: £5.198m, On Street revenue: £8.553m, and PCN Revenue: £8.494m though this figure doesn't include contributions to bad debt provisions, as those are accounted at end of year.

Parking permits enable residents to use space on the public highway to park. As there is a limit to the available space for parking on the public highway, it is reasonable for the Council to charge for use of the public highway for parking purposes. Fees tend to be higher where demand for space is highest reflecting the limits of space available and the demand for parking. Further from the centre, tariffs tend to be lower.

Effective parking enforcement is a vital service for our city. It helps establish safer streets. Vehicles illegally parked can cause hazardous obstruction to moving traffic, cyclists, buses and pedestrians. The flow of traffic is improved by ensuring vehicles are not blocking routes. This in turn helps improve air quality, bus times and reduces congestion.

Parking income helps support bus services, including a range of subsidised routes that many in our city rely on but are not deemed commercially viable.

Parking restrictions have evolved over some two decades without a review of how they best work for the city. This is why our administration commissioned a comprehensive citywide parking review in July 2023 which reported last year. We are embarking on the implementation of the recommendations and delivery programme to deliver improvements and ensure our parking service better serves our city.

7. Councillor Sykes

Can Cllr Pumm provide an update on the future of the memorial at Palmeira Square following concerns raised by a Brunswick and Adelaide resident at last Full Council and undertakings made by Cllr Alexander?

Reply from Councillor Pumm, Cabinet Member for Communities, Equalities & Human Rights:

There has been regular dialogue with the Sussex Jewish Representative Council about the temporary memorial at Palmeira Square. We value the discussions we have had and are aware of the sensitivity of the issue in the light of recent developments in the region.

The SJRC have been advised about the Council's legal concerns of having free standing items in the public realm and SJRC agreed to manage this over the winter months, as they work towards removal of the current installation from this location by spring 2025.

8. Councillor West

Springfield Road residents are neighbourly folk and keen to improve their local environment. For many months they have been patiently and tenaciously seeking a replacement street which will also act as a memorial for a lost loved one. A tree pit was created and this month a tree was planted by contractors. Contractors then returned, removed the tree and told residents the pit would be removed too. Following contact with officers and Councillor Muten by ward councillors and residents a new tree suddenly appeared along with a protective cage. It is of course panto season, but can the Councillor Muten please explain what on earth has been going on?

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

Thank you, Councillor West, for your question. Having met residents and ward councillors Hill and Pickett in Springfield Road last year, I am very aware of the value and importance of a street tree at this location. When I visited and spent time listening to residents, I made it clear I understood this and would support the planting of a tree at this location.

I have followed this up with Council officers and communicated with residents and ward councillors by email.

There was a miscommunication as we had asked our contractor to install a tree cage when they planted the tree. The contractor took the action of removing the tree, as the cage was not yet available when the tree was planted, without checking this was the right thing to do.

The tree has now been planted and a tree cage installed at the same time.

It is regrettable to hear that the planting of a tree has taken longer than anticipated and become more convoluted including at the planting stage. I am pleased to now hear that there is a tree with a tree guard is now in place.

May I take this opportunity to thank the residents of Springfield Road for their patience and understanding.

May this tree now planted flourish and grow to become a valued part of the Springfield Road community.

9. Councillor Pickett

With the increased tendering out of various council services to private companies, can the administration please confirm if it is the aim to outsource as much senior adult social care provision as possible, as evidenced by the recent removal of dementia beds at Ireland Lodge at a time when older people are living longer, and people living with dementia becomes more likely?

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

Brighton and Hove have a thriving care home sector made up of providers who deliver good quality care to our residents. Over 90% of Adult Social Care provision is provided by the independent sector, and this includes registered charities as well as for profit businesses – all, like the council, are regulated by the Care Quality Commission.

As part of our ongoing responsibilities, it is important that we continue to consider how and what provision is directly provided by the Council or where others are perhaps better placed to provide these services. Reflecting our person-centred approach, we look at service development, models of delivery, and pathways on a case-by-case basis to reflect the changing needs of our communities, our strategic priorities and making best use of the resources that we have available to us.

Where *others* can provide good quality care in place of the council, we will always endeavour to explore the possibility of commissioning those services, ensuring our available in-house provision matches as closely as possible the demands in the city that can't be met by other providers.

10. Councillor Pickett

Does the administration really not think that a freeze on recruitment may prove counterproductive? What if there isn't the capability within the lower ranks for someone to step up into a role, yet filling that role is essential to realising savings of greater value than that person's salary?

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

The spending controls are in place because of the forecast outturn risk for 2024/25, currently standing at a potential £3.3m overspend. Fantastic work has been done and continues across the council to further reduce this forecast overspend and ensure that we end the year with a balanced position. This does mean that recruitment for many roles must freeze. Where a post is deemed essential or where there would be a negative financial implication such as loss of income, there is an exemption process. As a first step to filling essential roles, we are using our secondment policy to move staff around and reduce external recruitment, but if necessary external recruitment will proceed.

11. Councillor Hill

Does the administration support the merging of East and West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service for the purpose of having both under the remit of the new Sussex mayor? When do you believe this should be achieved by?

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

The English Devolution White Paper expresses the ambition to deliver greater public service boundary alignment in the long term, making more Strategic Mayoral Authorities responsible for fire, police, and engaged in Integrated Care Partnerships.

The programme and plan for what moves into the Mayoral Strategic Authority has not yet started and therefore no further information is available at this stage. Brighton and Hove will seek to ensure the benefits for our communities are front and centre when the programme begins.

12. Councillor Hill

In conversations with Marianne Overton the LGA independent Chair, the Minister for Local Government, Jim McMahon has indicated a willingness to give the powers to call in major planning applications to certain new mayors rather than with the new enlarged unitary authorities. Does the Council lead believe that Mayors should be responsible for the call in of major planning applications?

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

In the English Devolution White Paper, it is stated that Mayors will be given new development management powers. This will include the ability to call in planning applications of strategic importance. This will also include establishing a stronger partnership between Homes England, and the ability to set a strategic direction of any future affordable housing programme.

The range of strategic powers that could be devolved to a Mayoral Strategic Authority could benefit Sussex, and there will be a duty on the Strategic Authority to collaborate with constituent Local Authorities and neighbouring Strategic Authorities in delivering on the areas of competence, which includes housing and strategic planning.

13. Councillor Hill

The new glyphosate contract is up for its annual renewal. When the council prepared to set up an opt out system to ensure a more formal system for communities to revert to using manual weeding?

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

Arrangements for 2025 are not yet finalised. Details will be provided in due course, but the intention is that any use of glyphosate would indeed be accompanied by an opt-out scheme to enable residents to choose manual weeding.

14. Councillor Hill

Rainy weather during glyphosate spraying meant that for a great many places the spraying had little to no effect in removing weeds, will that be taken into account with the new weeding contract?

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

Glyphosate is not applied during wet weather. Where contractors visited on rainy days, manual and mechanical weeding was conducted instead. The principle of not applying glyphosate during rain would remain under any future contract.

15. Councillor Hill

At the emergency Cabinet meeting, the Leader of the Council indicated her support for the supplementary vote election system for the Sussex Mayor. The government has stated that all regional Mayors will be elected through First Past the Post. What is the Leader of the Council doing to lobby the government on this matter? It comes across as though the government isn't listening.

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

The electoral reform act 2022 brought in a number of changes, specifically replacing the supplementary vote (SV) election system with first past the post (FPTP) for mayoral elections. This was brought in by the previous Government.

Pending the outcome of our application to join the priority programme, we will be working in close cooperation with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government and other Government bodies to help shape Devolution.

16. Councillor Hill

Are Cityclean culture change stakeholder meetings still ongoing?

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

A comprehensive Culture Change programme has been in place in Environmental Services (formerly City Clean) for some time now and is showing early signs of success with behavioural standards established and improved productivity and service delivery for residents beginning to flow from that. Sequencing the programme is key to its success.

Having completed the foundational stages in the action plan we have now reached the stage in the process where a stakeholder engagement group will be formed. We are at the beginning of discussions with staff reps and trade union representatives as to how best to take this forward. The aim of this next key phase of the programme is to secure wider involvement and joint ownership of new ways of working together.

17. Councillor Hill

What is the Council doing to protect bus services to Ditchling Beacon?

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

Thank you, Councillor Hill for your question concerning the Breeze up to the Downs bus services.

In short, we are doing a great deal to protect bus services between the centre of Brighton and Ditchling Beacon.

A year ago, as an administration, we took tough decisions to balance the budget. Our priority when making these decisions was to protect communities most vulnerable to the cost of living crisis. Within limited financial resources, we focused our supported bus services budgets on more deprived and isolated communities where bus services support provides a lifeline and the absence of their bus service would have clear detriment to communities. Supporting the 79 bus service to Ditching Beacon out of the general fund would, therefore, be difficult to justify under such circumstances.

This was hindered by the ending of the Breeze up to the Downs Partnership ceasing under the previous administration.

However, we considered the value of the Breeze up to the Downs bus services as they enable many to access the South Downs National Park. A year ago, we successfully sought approval from the DfT to fund the 79 and 77 bus services out of our BSIP fund.

As with a year ago, we remain committed to finding ways to keep the Breeze up to Downs.

The Breeze up to the Downs service 79 to Ditchling Beacon is currently supported wholly through the Department of Transport's Bus Service Improvement Plan grant.

The government has confirmed that there will be a new allocation of BSIP grant for financial year 2025/26.

We are in advanced staged negotiations with the Bus Operator and the Department for Transport to continue this arrangement. A draft programme of schemes and measures is being worked on by officers in the Public Transport team and will be presented to Cabinet on 20th March. It is proposed that it includes continued support for the route 79 until 31st March 2026. An announcement to confirm plans will be made once agreed with all parties.

I trust you can agree this is a good outcome. We will work with the Buss Operators to publicise this service with the expressed aim of making it more sustainable and financially secure.

18. Councillor Shanks

The Level will be used a lot more in the next couple of years for hosting outdoor events due to the VG3 compound being sited at the Level. The site used by the circus at The Level has been left in no fit state since September meaning it can't be used by residents or sports groups. No Fit State event organisers would have paid into a bond. How much and where is the No Fit State Circus Bond money? Has it been returned and when will the site be repaired.

Reply from Councillor Miller, Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage & Tourism:

Due to poor weather and lack of available resources the £3k reinstatement money for the Level has not been able to be fully deployed. The area affected is already prone to waterlogging and therefore major works have been difficult to action. From January 2025 a new external contractor has been procured who will have responsibility for all event reinstatements, which should ensure that similar delays do not occur in the future.

19. Councillor Shanks

Will the council consider introducing a levy for all outdoor events held on The Level, St Peters and Richmond Square, Victoria Gardens, and the Old Steine which would, for example, go into the Level Forum Community trust fund and be used for upkeep of the green areas, and to the benefit of the community groups and users of those areas?

Reply from Councillor Miller, Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage & Tourism:

Currently all event income contributes to the central council budget to assist in paying for key statutory services. The Outdoor Events Team are currently drafting

the new Outdoor Events Strategy to be presented to Cabinet in Spring of this year, which will set out options for future working practice and partnerships. For 2025 a new contract has been secured with a third-party contractor to carry out pre and post event documented inspections, funded by the organisers, which will be used to ensure timely repairs are facilitated and parks are returned to their pre-event condition.

20. Councillor Shanks

Has there been any interest in anyone taking on the Velo Cafe site?

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

Yes. Following the completion of an options appraisal, the site was marketed as an investment opportunity. A preferred bidder has been identified. They are a registered charity that run gym-based coaching programmes for local young people, who are facing barriers to participation in sport and exercise, to help empower and equip them for their futures.

As the property requires significant investment Council Officers are supporting the preferred bidder to draw up a detailed schedule of works and to seek grant funding to cover the cost of refurbishment works.

If funding is secured, the preferred bidder will occupy the newly refurbished building under a lease agreement.

For the avoidance of doubt, the refurbished building will not include public toilets. Toilet provision will instead be at the newly refurbished MacLaren Pavilion.

21. Councillor Shanks

Has a tenant been found for the McClaren Pavilion Kiosk? When will the toilets be open?

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

Thank you for your question. We advertised the MacLaren Pavilion at The Level in the latter part of 2024. Unfortunately, we were not able to engage a tenant. The lease will be readvertised very shortly. Once a tenant is in situ, the toilets will be opened.

22. Councillor Shanks

Will the council consider introducing the requirement of all Event Organisers to produce a publicly available Environmental impact statement as part of the license agreement?

Reply from Councillor Miller, Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage & Tourism:

I'm delighted to inform everyone that the requirement for a publicly available environmental impact statement has already been introduced for this year's outdoor events. In addition, we have made some changes to the sustainability commitment for event organisers for 2025 too, which now includes a greater focus on re-use and refills, waste reduction, fixed power and requires organisers to make commitments across several sustainability areas instead of focussing on one specific aim. Utilisation of fixed power and greater tracking of CO2 production are key to the departments commitment to supporting the Council's Net Zero aims.

23. Councillor Shanks

How does the food strategy align with our allotment strategy?

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

The refreshed Food Strategy Action Plan 2025-30 aligns with the Open Spaces Strategy 2017-27 where allotments are recognised as one of the types of open space in the city. Action 14 of the Food Strategy Action Plan aims to increase land actively used for food growing and to increase the numbers of people growing food in all parts of the city. This action helps implement the Open Spaces Strategy to maximise food growing and aims to progress partnership and collaboration through joint working between the Brighton and Hove Food Partnership with Brighton and Hove Allotment Federation and BHCC Allotments to deliver allotment regeneration.

24. Councillor McLeay

Recently I attended a residents meeting at Theobald House where an update was shared on the progress of major works for the building. Given the complication of the BSR requirements and a delayed application time, as well as further consultation needed with contractors and leaseholders, it was suggested the works would not start until as late as March 2026. This raised concerns for residents regarding the allocated funds for these works and the potential risk of the funds being lost to other projects considering a difficult budget setting period. Could you confirm if the original monetary commitment for these works has been ringfenced for Theobald House, and that it will not be impacted by budget setting over the coming month?

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

The 2024/25 budget paper included budget provision of £7.450m to be spent over two years for the major works project at Theobald House. Due to the need to review project delivery timelines in light of the Building Safety Act requirements the project was delayed and as such the budget through the council's financial management process has been reprofiled according to the revised delivery timeline across 2025/26, 2026/27 and 2027/28. The budget will be included in the

2025/26 HRA budget paper which will be presented to Cabinet on 13 February and subsequently Full Council on 27th February 2025.

25. Councillor Lyons

Will the contract with RNLI provide the same number of lifeguards & cover the same beaches as when the service was in-house? How do the two budgets & costings compare?

Reply from Councillor Miller, Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage & Tourism:

The Contract with the RNLI has been agreed to reflect delivery of the seasonal Beach Lifeguard Service on a like-for-like basis. The service will cover the same 10 beaches which have until now been lifeguarded by BHCC seasonal lifeguards. The council's own operating model detailing the minimum number of lifeguards for each beach will continue with the RNLI. The overall saving to the council by entering into this contract with the RNLI is £110,000 for 2025/26, these savings are made up from staffing and equipment costs.

26. Councillor Hogan

Is the council looking into returning to cleaning up fallen leaves to avoid drain blockages and floods? It must be more expensive to deal with the flooding than collecting the leaves.

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

The council never stopped clearing leaves and will continue to do so. It is a core function within the Streets Cleansing service and a priority during the autumn months.

27. Councillor Lyons

How much has B&H Council paid out to residents in 2024 from damage caused by potholes & flooding?

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

Thank you for your question, Councillor Lyons. According to our records we have not made any payments to residents as a result of damage to property due to flooding.

After year upon years of Tory underfunding of our nation's roads, our highways and pathways are not in the condition they should and could be. With substantially less from national government than has been needed to maintain our city roads and repair potholes, the Tory Party's policies are undoubtedly the root cause.

As a result of this Tory Party failure to motorists, bus passengers, cyclists and pedestrians, I can confirm that the City Council has made compensation payments in relation to potholes, as follows:

- After 14 years of Tory mismanagement of public services and economy, the total compensation payments made by this Council during the 2024 calendar year in relation to vehicle damage is £2,454.45.
- After 14 years of Tory decline and decay because of their underfunding, the total compensation payments made during the 2024 calendar year by this Council in relation to personal injury is £31,250.00.

The total compensation paid within the year relates to the total sums paid within that period, irrespective of when the relevant claims were received.

These compensation sums could have been avoided had our city been properly resourced by central government and are as a direct result of Tory Party failure are further compounding their underfunding and taking money away from our administration's ability to fix the problem.

Each pound paid out is a pound we could have spent fixing the problem. We also know that many residents understand this and would not consider a claim knowing city services and those who rely on them would suffer the most.

However, since coming to power, the Labour government has started to reverse the rot of the past decade and a half and began to grant more money into fixing the roads and pathways of our city. We are working through a large backlog and value residents reporting potholes on the Council website. With more we can and now will do more thanks to the new government elected on 4th July last year.

28. Councillor Hogan

Why were none of the main roads out of Brighton gritted when the weather warnings were saying snow was forecast?

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

Thank you for your question, Councillor Hogan. Please be assured that the weather forecast on Wednesday 8th January 2025 was for rain.

I had followed the weather forecast each day from Sunday through to Wednesday on the BBC Weather app and confirm throughout it forecast light rain from 1pm turning to heavy rain from 3pm. The Council purchase more detailed weather forecast information which has proven very reliable. This also clearly forecast rain for that afternoon. A fact confirmed by the Leader of the Conservative Group on this Council who wrote in his Argus column this week

concerning the event “The weather forecast I remember seeing said three degrees and rain.”

The network is treated according to our local weather forecast station across the city. The snow came ahead of the forecast on the day.

It is the case that putting grit on the road when it is raining or forecast heavy rain soon after is counterproductive as the grit is highly likely to wash off. Worse, the grit would not be in place when the temperature was expected to drop to below freezing after nightfall.

On each evening that week and weekend prior to the snow we had also treated the network. I recall seeing grit on the main roads late into the evening on both the Monday and Tuesday evenings so can confirm this was taking place. On the Wednesday, there was residual treatment still showing on the network during the event.

In response to the changing weather conditions, as the rain started to turn to snow from about 3:15pm, the gritting teams that were due to be on the road from 6pm were promptly mobilised and were out on their first round of gritting from 4pm – less than an hour after the snow commenced and two hours ahead of their schedule. They had completed their first gritting rounds by about 7:30 to 8pm and were back on the roads gritting again by 8:30 to 9pm on their second gritting rounds. By mid-evening the main routes were open.

Our winter maintenance teams were active during the day in preparation for icy conditions and the potential for snow into the late afternoon and evening. Grit bins had been checked prior to this cold spell.

The application of salt to treat the network does not guarantee no ice. We put messages out reminding the public to be extra careful and make only journeys that were necessary and be extra vigilant as surfaces are likely to be slippery.

We know many people had disrupted journeys during the evening rush and were also caught by the changing conditions and had based their travel plans on the forecasted rain. Many residents had said that had they known it would snow rather than rain, they would have travelled earlier that afternoon. We very much thank the public for their patience and fortitude whilst we responded rapidly to the changing conditions working hard to grit the main routes and got the network back running within a few hours after the snow started.

29. Councillor Lyons

Thank you for responding in December 2024 as to why Brighton & Hove Council lags other councils in PET1 recycling.

However, why does B&H only accept PET1 in the form of plastic bottles but not in any other shape? How do other councils recycle these materials with no trouble? What equipment do they have which Hollingdean does not have? Why does Veolia provide such limited recycling in Brighton?

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

Identifying the different polymers used in various packaging materials can be difficult, and categorising recyclable waste streams by object type makes it simpler to navigate for residents.

Recycling has been limited compared to other cities for a long time, and it is disappointing that previous administrations did not make the necessary improvements. We are in the process of making the required changes and more details will follow soon.

30. Councillor Hogan

Are plans in place to recycle more of our household items?

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

Yes, we are planning the expansion of recycling provision and more details will follow soon.

31. Councillor Hogan

The parking bays on Shirley Drive are too close to residents' drives and often too close to each other. Would it be possible to have a review of the position of the bays so as to reduce the possibility of an accident?

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

Thank you, Councillor Hogan, for your request to review the parking on Shirley Drive. I do appreciate the difficulties some residents are reporting when accessing their driveways. Therefore, if Councillor Hogan can contact myself and Catherine Dignan who manages the Parking Design and Implementation team then we can arrange a meeting to discuss the issues and consider reviewing the on-street parking to improve and make safe where required.

32. Councillor McNair

There is a building site in Winfield Avenue. There appears to be no work happening. Also, children have been filmed climbing on the roofs of the buildings. This has been reported to the council. What is happening to this building site, and do we know when the housing will be completed? In the meantime, are there plans to make the building site safe?

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

The owner has been contacted and asked about the anticipated completion date of development; however, they are not required to provide this information. The issue regarding the safety of the site has also been raised with the owner, however any concerns need to be reported to the Health and Safety Executive direct as they are the enforcement body for health and safety on construction sites.

33. Councillor Meadows

Why are residents in Birch Grove Crescent unable to report missed recycling via the council's website using the postcode BN1 8DP? Recycling is often not collected in this location.

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

We apologise for the problems you are having reporting missed recycling collections. This seems to be a technical glitch, and we are working with IT&D to get it resolved. I have also informed managers within Environmental Services of the issues with recycling collections.

34. Councillor Meadows

Residents in Patcham will be severely affected by Park & Ride in Mill Road. Will Patcham residents have a consultation?

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

Thank you for your question. The Park & Ride currently operating in Mill Road is for football matchday events at the Amex. This is separate to the proposals discussed at last week's Cabinet meeting for a Park & Ride to serve the city. This report and my presentation explicitly explained that the proposed scheme would use existing car parks. Although no details of locations are currently being discussed, it was made very clear that Mill Road was not part of the list of sites being considered to deliver a Park & Ride using existing car parks within this more versatile scheme. These will come to a future cabinet meeting for review.

I understand that there may be some who, under some unwarranted misunderstanding, are propagating a false or misinformed narrative on social media. I trust this answer along with my statements at the Cabinet meeting on 23rd January will clarify matters to any resident of Patcham who is concerned by such misinformation.

35. Councillor McNair

One side of the clock at the top of Patcham clocktower appears to have lost a hand. Can this be replaced? There is also stonework erosion at the base of the tower. Can this be repaired before it gets worse? Patcham clocktower is an important landmark, built in the 1930s.

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

An updated full structural survey of the tower is due to be conducted shortly to reassess the extent of stonework erosion and also assess any health and safety risks the structure may pose. This follows an inspection in October 2024 that identified more extensive issues. The replacement of the hand would not be undertaken until key structural works have been determined and repairs undertaken and/or the tower made safe if health and safety concerns are identified. However, it should be noted that there is only limited Planned Maintenance provision for this site and the more extensive damage indicates a significant cost that may need alternative funding, for example, capital programme approvals through borrowing, which would be subject to affordability and needs Cabinet consideration.

36. Councillor Meadows

Recycling was not collected in Cedars Gardens for 6 weeks. When it was finally collected residents were told it was put into general refuse. What solutions are being considered so residents can receive the fortnightly service they are paying for?

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

I am aware of the missed collections at Cedar Gardens, and I believe the issue has been resolved. There are only limited circumstances in which recycling would be collected with general refuse, such as when contamination is beyond a certain level. However, we do always investigate any such reported issues to find out what happened and whether any changes are required.

37. Councillor McNair

All Saints Church Patcham has two open-top wire bins in the churchyard which are very unsightly with dog poo bags open to the elements and everyone's view. Cityclean have been contacted with no response. Can these bins be replaced with regular black bins?

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

It is normal to have large open bins in areas where floral tributes are disposed of. Items such as wreathes would not fit into the opening of a standard litter bin. We would need to check what is going in the bins before changing them. If there are a significant number of floral tributes going in the bins then we would likely either leave them in place or look into replacing them with a model that has some kind of cover or lid but that can accommodate the items required. This would be subject to available capital funding.

38. Councillor Fishleigh

When does BHCC anticipate that the Black Rock brief will be presented to the cabinet? Will that be before the budget?

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

Options for the future of Black Rock will be reviewed by the new Seafront Development Board which is currently being established with an announcement this week. A timetable has not yet been set for this work, but the council is focused on progressing this important strategic site.

39. Councillor Fishleigh

Can BHCC give a date for when the new Promenade link at Black Rock will be completed and open to public use?

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

The new pedestrian and cycle link is now open to public use. This new link will transform the experience of those travelling on foot and by bike between the Marina and the eastern seafront. It provides a far more open and welcoming connection that will increase movement and permeability through the area for the benefit of residents, visitors and local businesses.

40. Councillor Fishleigh

Is it BHCC's intention to open the new link without street lighting?

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

The new link is now open and there is lighting installed within the new underpass. The link connects from the northeast side of the ASDA car park to the eastern end of Madeira Drive. There is currently no street lighting along Madeira Drive from Duke's Mound to the underpass. Ducting has been installed along the new link should funding become available for a comprehensive lighting scheme in the area.

41. Councillor Fishleigh

When does BHCC anticipate that the low level lighting on the board walk will function?

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

The low-level LED lighting units are now all installed along the full length of the new board walk. A new feeder pillar, which will provide power to the lighting units is also in place along with the necessary electrical connections. The one outstanding item is connection into the district power network. The order for this work has been placed with the local District Network Operator (DNO). It is anticipated that this work will be completed in eight to ten weeks. This is subject to how the DNO prioritises and programmes their work and is outside of our control.

42. Councillor Fishleigh

Cable has been laid and installation points provided for street lighting along Madeira Drive East. When will BHCC start the installation?

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

Thank you, Councillor Fishleigh, for your question. There is currently no street lighting from the end of Duke's Mound to the Marina. In anticipation of a future lighting scheme for this area the Black Rock works have included elements of future proofing which include ducting and access chambers installed along the new link. This infrastructure will make it easier to install street lighting at a future date should funding become available for a comprehensive lighting scheme.

43. Councillor Fishleigh

Dukes Mound Kemptown is unlit. Please can BHCC supply a timeline to install street lighting?

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

Thank you, Councillor Fishleigh, for your question. Our forward plan includes Dukes Mound. Plans for this area include the introduction of new safety features for vehicles including a new vehicle restrain barrier. Plans also include improving street lighting and providing wider footways for pedestrians. It is likely works will take place in 2026/2027 as part of our planned programme of works for this area.

44. Councillor Fishleigh

Does BHCC anticipate that the events team will use the Black Rock site in 2025 to host community and/or commercial outdoor activities?

Reply from Councillor Miller, Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage & Tourism:

With the completion of Phase One of the Black Rock works we now have an excellent blank canvas on which a new identity for Black Rock can be imagined. In order to begin this journey a limited programme of events for this space has

been put forward for 2025 to begin testing the feasibility of the site for a variety of future uses. We hope this limited but exciting programme can begin the process of collaboration with local communities in reimagining Black Rock for the next generation. However, any further approvals for events, will depend on wider council decisions on the future plans for the site.

45. Councillor Fishleigh

Heritage lanterns on Madeira Drive and Marine Parade street lights were removed for safety reasons several years ago for repair and restoration. Please provide a detailed timeline of the complete replacement programme.

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

Thank you, Councillor Fishleigh, for your question. The current programme of works for this area is progressing as planned. The project is about to embark on the pilot exercise of removing 5 columns from across the frontage for proof of concept. The permits to do the works on the highway have been submitted. Once the details are confirmed with the contractors, public information briefings will be released.

The process will involve the removal of the complete column from the ground. The columns will then be transported to the foundry where the column will be inspected and assessed for damage. Once the columns have been repaired, the column will be returned to the original location. Precision milling will be undertaken on site to ensure a sound fit is achieved.

All the heritage lanterns are to be removed, as they are no longer fit for purpose. When a column is replaced, it will be adorned with two newly manufactured lanterns. This will ensure that all the heritage columns will be back to their resplendent glory.

It should be noted that all works will be undertaken under the supervision of English Heritage.

46. Councillor Fishleigh

Can BHCC confirm that phase two of the Madeira Terrace restoration is funded as per budget meeting in Feb 2021?

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

In the past four years there has been significant changes to the scheme and to the operating environment, not least the inflationary pressures that have been particularly acute across the construction sector.

The costs reported to committee in 2021 were based upon an outline design. Since then, the scheme has been fully developed and market costs

secured via a tendering process. This has meant that the available funds have been directed to deliver a first phase, which is now on site.

There is currently no funding to undertake a second phase of Madeira Terrace. The project team continue to explore funding opportunities that arise. For example, Historic England have made a substantial award to the first phase of this landmark project.

With restoration works now underway and with Historic England providing financial and technical support, the Terrace is expected to become a more attractive proposition to potential funders and the new Seafront Development Board will bring a renewed vigour to developing a complete strategy to regenerate the whole of that bit of the seafront.

47. Councillor Fishleigh

Please provide an update on BHCC's intention for repairing and bringing the Madeira Drive Concorde 2 lift back into use.

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

Thank you, Councillor Fishleigh, for your question regarding the Madeira Drive Concord 2 lift. Repairs to the Madeira Lift need to be undertaken at the same time as renovation of the former shelter hall occupied by Concorde 2. This will be a future phase of the larger Madeira Terrace project. As set out in an earlier response, there is currently no funding identified to undertake future phases of Madeira Terrace. The project team continue to explore funding opportunities that arise.

48. Councillor Earthey

The Decarbonising Pathways Study was presented in December, having initially been written in May. Does the delay in opening it to comment from concerned residents, fit well with the urgency implied by declaring a Climate Emergency?

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

The first draft of the completed decarbonisation pathways report was issued by the consultant to the council in late August 2024, but the very final version was not received until 29th November. The report was then published on December 3rd following the launch event on December 2nd.

The three months interval between receipt of the draft report in August, along with full appendices, was spent cross-checking the report data, digesting its contents, going back to the consultant to for clarifications and amendments and developing the council's initial plans for using the data to inform future net zero action.

It is worth also mentioning that the incoming Head of Net Zero did not start in post until mid-September.

With that in mind I'd say that this timeline reflects rather well the urgency with which we are accelerating progress to net zero, particularly given that there were no plans in place to decarbonise the city when we took over the administration from, ironically, the Green Party.

49. Councillor Earthey

Has the 2024 Weed Management Campaign based on Glyphosate been a success in terms of its original objectives and terms of reference?

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

Yes, broadly speaking, the feedback has been that the situation is much improved, although it was a challenging year with rainfall both supporting growth and disrupting the programme.

50. Councillor Earthey

How many areas of the City opted out of using Glyphosate, and tackled the weed problem manually?

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

There was no opt-out scheme active in 2024. However, the council supported 9 volunteers/groups with manual weeding by providing tools and bag collections.

51. Councillor Earthey

Did the results of manual weed removed compare favourably with those using Glyphosate?

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

It is not possible to make a direct comparison. Glyphosate was applied 3 times throughout the year, but there are no streets that we know were weeded manually 3 times.

52. Councillor Earthey

What lessons from the 2024 Campaign can be learned for the 2025 Weed Management Campaign, including the use (or not) of Glyphosate?

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

There was some concern that our decision to use the controlled droplet application method, which uses a lower concentration applied in a targeted manner, might not be effective. However, we are satisfied it was effective and that there is therefore no case for considering the traditional application method.

The programme of treatment started later than ideal in 2024, due to the procurement process, meaning that growth was more established than ideal at the beginning of the programme.

In some cases, residents conflate weed growth with basal tree shoots, and there were some locations where weeds in the footway were cleared but the basal growth, which is done through a combination of council staff and a different contract, was not cut back.

We will be seeking to coordinate this more effectively in 2025 and ensure that basal growth is cut back in line with the City Parks service standards agreed by Cabinet in late 2024.

53. Councillor Earthey

Can and will BHCC commit to ensuring that resident-groups intending to opt out of any 2025 Campaign based on chemical weedkillers will be properly equipped with tools appropriate to manual weed removal?

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

As in 2024, any volunteers wishing to undertake manual weeding in 2025 can ask the council's Tidy Up Team to provide tools and sacks. Waste will also be collected by the council, making it as easy as possible for volunteer activity to take place. I'd like to thank those who did this work in their communities in 2024.

54. Councillor Earthey

Can and will BHCC commit to banning the use of Neonicotinoids pesticides on its parks, green spaces, and other land because of their known toxicity to bees?

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

The council does not currently use neonicotinoids in any of its operations. The new government is progressing a national ban on neonicotinoids, which we support. As such, a ban in the council would be largely symbolic, but we are reviewing whether there is a practical case.

55. Councillor Earthey

How will the rise in Employers' NI contributions impact on BHCC's current staffing costs?

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

The estimated cost of the Employers' National Insurance increase for General Fund council services is £4.1 million. Our understanding of the Provisional Local Government Financial Settlement is that government grant funding of approximately £2.5 million will be provided, which is a shortfall of £1.6 million.

We have raised this as a serious concern in the associated consultation response to the settlement, and are continuing to lobby government for further overall funding for Local Government.

At this point, the shortfall is included in the overall budget position and the calculation of projected budget gap for 2025/26 for which savings proposals to address the shortfall will be brought to Cabinet and Budget Council in February.

For the Council Housing Management (HRA) budget, the impact is expected to be around £700,000. However, the government is not providing protection for HRA's and this cost will therefore be factored into the overall HRA budget proposals to Cabinet and Budget Council. The government's change of policy to allow rents to increase by CPI inflation + 1% over the next 5 years will assist in addressing this cost.

For schools, the estimated cost is circa £3.6m, and we have been making enquiries to the Department for Education on how this will be handled.

56. Councillor Earthey

Will the rise in Employers' NI contributions prevent BHCC from being able to replace current staff lost through natural wastage, and prevent the hire of new staff for expanding areas such as AI and climate change?

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

As noted in a response to another question about the Employers' National Insurance increase, the cost of this has been factored into the council's overall budget projections. The shortfall in funding protection therefore results in additional savings requirements which may impact specific services identified for savings or cost reduction measures. However, these will be clearly identified as part of the budget proposals to Cabinet and Budget Council in February. The rise in National Insurance should not therefore have a council-wide impact and we remain committed to investment in digital services and technological advances as these can help us achieve future efficiencies and economies.

57. Councillor Earthey

The i360 consists of the tower itself and some entertainment space around the base. Is it possible to re-open the entertainment space so that there will be some revenue coming in from events, and lessen the number of staff redundancies?

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

The council does not own the land the i360 is on, nor the lease of the building itself, as such we cannot open or operate the spaces. However, the i360 is expected to be purchased out of administration by a new operator at the end of this month. It is expected that the new buyer will develop plans about how it wants to operate the tower and the facilities at the base – including the land around it. But it is expected to continue to operate in a way that attracts visitors to that part of the seafront and employs staff.

58. Councillor Earthey

Is the level of 2025 BHCC funding for the Brighton and Hove Climate Change, Sustainability and Environmental Education Programme for 'Our City Our World' be increased to at least match inflation?

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

The 'Our City Our World' programme is fully funded by The Aquifer Project (TAP) until August 2025. It is a strategic priority of The Living Coast UNESCO Biosphere, of which BHCC is lead partner, to continue this programme if possible. This will depend on availability of funding after August 2025. This funding is currently being sought. BHCC provides in-kind contribution to 'Our City Our World' through administrative, management and Line Management support.

59. Councillor Earthey

Many if not most schools in the City have ageing fossil-fuel boilers which are coming up for replacement, or due for major servicing involving new parts that are increasingly hard to obtain. The risk of a systemic, large-scale heating-system failure across the City's schools is rising. At the same time, Central Government is committed to phasing out fossil-fuel boilers. Does BHCC have sufficient funds to cover a city-wide programme of fossil-fuel boiler-repair and/or boiler-replacement if requested by the City's schools or caused by systemic failure?

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

As the funds will be derived from the Capital Planned Maintenance Budget, which is to be drafted for 2025-26, there will be a limited amount of funds that will be available. There is, however, a match-funding stream from Central Government, which is the Public Sector Decarbonisation scheme that can be applied for. It may

be possible to replace boilers which are close to complete breakdown. Following a recent survey carried out, two schools have been identified where these are to be replaced. As part of a wider programme, we are enhancing and improving many schools' infrastructure in relation to electrical, mechanical and other building facets.

60. Councillor Earthey

Are any pilot schemes being offered to Brighton schools who wish to trial greener, non-fossil-fuel heating technologies? (By acting as a 'Guinea Pig' for the trial, the school would receive a subsidy for switching to the new heating technology.)

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

We have had one successful application to date, and we are planning to implement low carbon heating in one (Peter Gladwin) school over the Summer 2025. This would effectively be the council's first gas-free school.

We have recently conducted a "look ahead" exercise to identify the expected end-of-life dates for heating systems across our school sites so that we can sequence fabric and other improvements in such a way that means schools will be ready for a low carbon heating system when their gas boiler needs replacing.

61. Councillor Bagaeen

Snakey Hill (King George VI Avenue) in Westdene and Hove Park impassable with a small amount of snow on 8 January 2025. The Toads Hole Valley development site is on Snakey Hill and roads in and out of the site connect into Snakey Hill.

Will the Council open conversations with the new owners of the Toads Hole Valley development site to revisit access roads ahead of the site's planning permission hitting its 3 year anniversary in June 2025?

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

Thank you, Councillor Bagaeen, for your question. The outline planning application for the redevelopment of Toads Hole Valley approved the access to the site. The 3 access points to the site have already been agreed. The assessment of the application was subject to a Road Safety Assessment and was agreed by the council's Highway's team and National Highways. Additional safety measures were approved as part of the application to the main King George VI Avenue including crossings and a downgrading of the speed limit to 30mph.

Given the approved application with the access agreed following careful safety assessment and mitigation measures, to revisit this now is not considered a reasonable course of action.

The highways team also arranged for gangs to grit every footway outside medical / educational establishments, to ensure as much continuity across the network as possible.

62. Councillor Bagaeen

When Hove was hit by snow in early January 2025, Court Farm Road and Snakey Hill Snakey Hill (King George VI Avenue) very quickly became impassable. As a council, we must be better prepared and more resilient. In December 2022, when the delicately put together gritting rota for Brighton and Hove's residential streets fell apart, I challenged the then administration to do better next time. The speed by which chaos descended on 8 January 2025 looks like the snow had taken everyone by surprise.

What went wrong with the street gritting rota on 8 January 2025? And how can the Council do better next time to keep our roads open?

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

The afternoon forecast was for light rain from 1pm turning to heavy rain from 3pm onwards. Applying treatment before or during heavy rainfall is ineffective as it washes off and is not on the road surface when it is needed. We could, therefore, not apply treatment until the rain stopped.

The network had been treated prior to the snow arriving. However the rain that afternoon had washed away much of that treatment. The weather sensors on the gritters still showed residual salt on the network during the snow event.

The gritters were mobilised by 4pm, less than an hour after it started snowing, some two hours ahead of their scheduled 6pm departure. Unfortunately, due to rush hour, and the volume of traffic, the gritters were impeded and were unable to reach their routes in the time they usually do. The gritter fleet continued gritting through the night to ensure that the city received treatment.

The highways team also arranged for gangs to grit every footway outside medical / educational establishments, to ensure as much continuity across the network as possible.

63. Councillor Bagaeen

For residents living off Colebrook Road, by the Withdean Sports Complex, it has become increasingly dangerous exiting from side roads onto Colebrook Road, especially since the introduction of paid parking at the Sports Complex. Most recently, there was an road traffic collision on Boxing Day.

Would the Council agree to installing mirrors on the opposite side of the road to serve the three roads off Colebrook Road?

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

Thank you, Councillor Bagaeen, for your question. It is BHCC Policy not to install mirrors on the Public Highway, with limited exceptions for example where there is a proven collision record.

Colebrook Road is relatively lightly trafficked road and that has multiple driveways along it, generally quite similar in nature. It is important that we approach requests in a fair and reasonable way, adhering to our policy without stretching our maintenance teams' limited capacity within Council resources who would be required to install, maintain and manage the removal of such features which don't tend to have a long shelf life.

Residents can consider installing a white line across their driveways to protect the access / exit from parked cars and therefore improve visibility. There is a cost for this and information can be found [White access protection marking for driveways](#)

I will ensure that officers attend the site to investigate your concerns to see if something could be done.

64. Councillor Bagaeen

The Deneway railway tunnel as you enter Westdene has been heavily targeted with graffiti in recent weeks. Residents have expressed concerns that this could begin to spread into Westdene shops if not tackled more quickly and regularly.

What is the Council's plan for partnering with Network Rail to target graffiti and tagging in Westdene?

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

Thank you for your question and for bringing this to our attention.

The Environmental Enforcement Team have been in contact with Network Rail. They have confirmed that this has been added to their "workbank" which means it will get actioned soon.

If we don't see action soon, we will proceed with issuing a CPW requesting that the graffiti is removed within 28 days. If they do not comply, further action will be taken.

66 ORAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

- 66.1 The mayor noted that oral questions had been submitted and that 30 minutes was set aside for the duration of the item. He asked that both the questioner and responder

endeavour to keep their questions and answers brief, to enable the questions listed to be taken.

1. Councillor Davis asked:

I saw the announcement of Park & Ride being announced and I've got to ask Councillor Muten, how many car parking spaces will be removed from the city centre?

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

Thank you, Councillor Davis, for your question. I would put on record, and I think you may know this because most of these were taken when the Greens were running the administration, but we've moved, over recent years, 500 parking spaces relating to car parks in the Preston Circus area and removed car parking spaces mostly on Maderia Drive and Marine Parade associated with cycle routes etc.

Those car parking spaces have gone, but there was no reciprocal Park & Ride set-up to balance that, so actually the urgency is to get a Park & Ride operational for this city to balance it. So, you're absolutely right, there was a need to remove parking spaces, and that's already been done, but we need to balance that with a Park & Ride that's working to enable more people to visit our city rather than establish a closed-city policy which I don't think works.

Councillor Davis asked a supplementary question:

How long will the designated bus service take from the Park & Ride site to the city centre?

Councillor Muten replied:

At the Cabinet meeting last Thursday we set out that we're looking to start our first site through this more versatile, flexible approach whereby we have identified many car parking spaces which are not used at certain parts of the week, and we're working with third parties and those operators of those car parks to think how we can best use that space.

So rather than go forward and concrete a brand-new site, we're looking to get going on Park & Ride because, after 20 years or more of trying to work out how to get a Park & Ride in the city, for some reason that has not been done. We're looking to get things done in this city and make sure we've got Park & Ride set up and started. Once you approve the concept, get visitors familiar that there is a Park & Ride and how to best use that and access it, it will get going and we're looking to grow it so we get more spaces for Park & Ride in the future.

2. Councillor McNair asked:

Snow fell on Wednesday 8th January. We have snow most years. Gritting did not take place. This resulted in the 46 bus service not serving Rotherfield Crescent and Hurst Hill for at least five days leaving elderly and frail residents isolated. Do you agree that hilly streets that serve bus routes should be gritted much more than other streets to ensure bus services can keep serving the most vulnerable in our communities?

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

Thank you, Councillor McNair, for your question and I wish to firstly thank all residents who braved the sudden heavy snowfall late afternoon on January 8th. The weather and road surface conditions rapidly changed. Special thanks to our winter maintenance team for their swift response.

The weather forecast predicted rain, not snow. From Sunday to Wednesday I noted that the BBC weather app consistently forecasted rain. The council purchased more detailed, reliable, proven, weather forecast information and, from our local weather forecast stations across the city, rain was clearly forecast that afternoon. As confirmed by the leader of the Conservative Group out of this council, Councillor McNair, who wrote about the event in his most recent Argus column and, I quote, 'the weather forecast I remember said three degrees and rain'. So, I thank you for putting that in print Councillor McNair because I think that's clear.

So, we were watching that forecast. I just want to give credit, because our gritting teams were out every night before that from 6 o'clock through to the late evening, and I can confirm that because on Monday night and Tuesday night it was quite late, and I saw grit on the roads. So that's been done. They were due to go out at six o'clock, the snow started at quarter past/ten past three that afternoon after heavy rain. Putting grit on the road when it's rained, particularly when heavy, is counterproductive, it simply washes off. It has no value.

However as soon as the weather changes, our gritting teams quickly got out and were on the road by four o'clock. That's two hours ahead of their schedule. They've got through and they've got back to depot by half past seven/eight o'clock and were back out on their second round by half past eight/nine o'clock. By mid-evening we had the main routes on our network fully restored and so the buses were able to move, and the main routes were open, and people could get around.

So, I do thank all those residents who were inconvenienced and did amazing work to help others, particularly neighbors, and those getting home. But we did our best under very changing weather conditions and we followed through with best practice.

Councillor McNair asked a supplementary question:

Councillor Muten did not answer the question. It was five days we had no bus service. Do you agree that hilly streets should be gritted much more than they

were? You didn't say a yes or a no. Actually, three degrees and rain you'd think 'let's get out and grit', because it could fall and plunge very quickly, which it did. Would you commit to working more closely with Brighton & Hove Buses to ensure bus routes in hilly areas are targeted and that this does not happen again?

Councillor Muten replied:

Thank you, Councillor McNair. I again reiterate that we don't put grit down ahead of heavy rain, forecast rain. It was forecast to rain from one o'clock, light rain, and it was forecast heavy rain from three o'clock. We knew that if we put it down on that surface, it would be washed off. So, I want to just highlight that fact and I want to thank you for putting it in the Argus, in your column, that you confirm it was above freezing, for three degrees and for rain that afternoon.

But yes, we do work with our bus operators and many other stakeholders in our city. We have a winter readiness plan. We plan that all the way from the summer and we work hard on that. I've visited the depot in November. We bought brand new gritters, we had 300 tons of grit in the depot and 1000 tons available at short notice as well. We were prepared for icy conditions and our winter readiness team were out there every day that week, I know from Saturday, probably Friday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and residual grit was on the road from Wednesday as well. We were out there; we did our best with this. Thank you.

3. Councillor Fishleigh asked:

Rottingdean High Street is 114 on the list for resurfacing and apparently there is no chance of it being done any time soon despite its terrible condition and not having been resurfaced for 20+ years. Will you please review the list and ensure that roads that are major through-roads in the city, including the high street which is a B-road, are prioritized?

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

Thank you, Councillor Fishleigh, for your question. I set out earlier in this meeting that the previous government had stripped public authorities of sufficient funds to fully maintain highway networks. After 14 years of Tory decay and decline, it is widely known that our roads and pathways are not what they could be or should be, with Tory potholes reported nationwide.

We are very grateful to the Labour Government increasing our highways maintenance grant by £1.3 million more to £5.83 million for 2025-26. We do need to address the backlog. So, the current capital budget for footways and carriageways are insufficient to carry out the city-renewal program. However, we are setting that out, so our budget can be spent prioritizing and targeting worse sections that need treatment across the city. So, the priority is determined on regular visual surveys, as well as technical surveys by our engineers, to check surface deterioration and skid resistance and assess the structural conditions of the road. This allows officers to determine the state of the base layers of the material making of the road.

Currently Rottingdean High Street is not as high a priority as other key roads in the city for treatment or major works. However, in anticipation of future increases in funding, officers are continually assessing this road alongside other roads as part of the asset maintenance strategy. After a decade and a half of underfunding, the council has a large combined carriageway and footway maintenance backlog. Thanks to the Labour Government, we now have an uplifted annual capital maintenance for carriageways and for footways. With more we can now do more.

Councillor Fishleigh asked a supplementary question:

Officers have met myself and Rottingdean Parish Council twice to discuss Rottingdean High Street's road and pavement which are also in poor condition. After this meeting, will you please provide the cost of work for both the road and the pavement, and would the council support a crowd-funding campaign which I will lead if money can't be found.

Councillor Muten replied:

Thank you, Councillor Fishleigh, for your supplementary question. I can confirm that officers have visited the site, made assessments and visited your residents as you state. I have, prior to this meeting, confirmed that officers can provide a cost to evaluate the work necessary so I'm happy to move on that. We support any additional funding that can be spent on the network and certainly support such initiative, although we may not have the council resource to drive that initiative. So, you've got local support from yourself or from the parish council and others, we would do our best to help with that.

We need to make it clear that this was raised by the communities specifically for Rottingdean High Street and that Brighton & Hove City council have not prioritized this in place of other roads, if that's clear. It is understood that the parish council may have some money, however, the cost of rebuilding brick paving in this conservation area are very large, so I think we need to go forward with our eyes wide open in relation to how much that cost is and whether crowd funding is likely to meet that type of cost. Thank you.

4. Councillor Simon asked:

The recent sudden snowfall seemed to take all services by surprise this month. Such weather events hit higher areas, particularly Woodingdean, much harder. A bus was stranded at the crossroads blocking the road; vulnerable residents were stuck in their cars for hours; and confusing advice coming from police on the ground, who advised residents to abandon cars, resulted in a resident being fined £320 for doing so. I'm glad to report that this has since been rectified and an apology issued to this resident.

So, my question is: can the administration please outline how they work in collaboration with transport stakeholders and the emergency services to ensure communities on the outskirts of the city are supported?

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

Thank you, Councillor Simon, for your question. I just want to pick up on the point referenced of that particular case. Brighton & Hove City Council do not tow vehicles away, I'd suggest it was the Sussex Police doing that, and I believe a full apology has been given and that cost has been returned. I just want to put that on record.

As many residents of Brighton & Hove, we look ahead at weather forecasts and plan accordingly. Rain was clearly forecasted for that afternoon of 8th January, as confirmed by Councillor McNair in his Argus column. Gritting roads in, or ahead of, heavy rain is ineffective and counterproductive as it washes away. Worse, the grit would not be in place for an expected temperature drop below freezing at nightfall.

During periods of adverse weather, the outlying areas are connected by a resilient network, which is treated as per the forecast received throughout the day and night on changes in weather. In this case we anticipated rain, that changed very quickly and we were out on the roads less than an hour after it started snowing. This network includes five ground car sensors in locations across the city, in Hangleton, Woodingdean, Fiveways, Saddlescombe.

Forecast is provided periodically each day across the winter season by MetDesk and is updated continuously throughout the day. We use route-based forecasting during the winter maintenance period to make decisions on gritting and reacting to localized needs. We liaise with and receive reports from the emergency services and various stakeholders, such as transport providers, buses mainly, and trains, police, neighbouring councils (in Woodingdean's case it would be East Sussex County Council and Lewes as well) on changing weather conditions and updates from local incidents throughout the event period. Further, this year we ensured schools and medical establishments had grit spread across the footways ahead of the snow event. We made arrangements to keep as many people connected as possible. Thank you.

Councillor Simon asked a supplementary question:

I am grateful to the gritting teams and that major roads were all flowing freely in time for the morning rush hour. However, many residents expressed outrage at being cut off from the city and exert a view that the council are not interested in those of us on the city fringe. So could the administration look at how they proactively communicate to all of these communities, ensuring that they understand what the council can and will do to mitigate disruption and ensure their safety?

Councillor Muten replied:

Thank you, Councillor Simon, for your supplementary question. I really respect those residents that were stuck in the severe weather on the 8th January. I know it

did cause a very big problem to many many people, particularly those travelling home or getting around the city and many people didn't anticipate the change in weather. Its very likely that had they seen a weather forecast, a more accurate one, because they forecasted that it was going to rain that afternoon, they might have rearranged their own days as well. So, we have got a number of reports that some residents perhaps would have gone home earlier and worked from home that afternoon, or perhaps cancelled other planned journeys. But I do know it's been difficult for many residents, notably in Rottingdean, so I appreciate that point.

We are constantly looking at improving our service and work with neighbouring authorities as well. This year we have replaced our aging fleet of gritters with three new gritters brought in 2024 ahead of this winter; grit stocked 300 tons at the depot, 1000 tons stored off site ahead of the winter months; upgraded our weather forecast equipment so web stations and sensors provide more accurate reporting; rationalized our routes for efficiency, primary and secondary routes; replaced and increased number of grit bins around the city for 400 locations and local needs. But I'm more than happy to make sure that there is a review of the events of the 8th January and to ensure we have good communication with all parts of the city and we do ensure that we respond as quickly as we possibly can to make sure that no area of the city is left behind on this.

So, we need to ensure that the gritters get to those areas that need the grit as soon as possible and I do want to reiterate that on the 8th January that our gritting teams moved very quickly on the changing weather conditions.

5. Councillor McLeay asked:

It was great to see the announcement that the council are officially starting to implement a zero-tolerance approach on landlords. But as far as I'm aware, this commitment is made verbally rather than written into policy. The Private Rental Sector Enforcement Strategy document seems to be unchanged, and it also does not seem to be written into the Housing Strategy.

So, while this is a very welcome measure could the cabinet member, or the private rented sector leave member, expand on what the new approach entails and how this differs from the previous approach, and could there be a commitment to bringing a report explaining bout this or issuing a public statement about the approach?

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

Thank you for raising this. Absolutely correct, we've been very very clear in our housing strategy action that we are going to be reviewing our private sector housing enforcement policies and we're going to use that information to reduce the threat of tenants being exploited and ensuring homes are well managed and safe to live in.

I'm really pleased that you've given me the opportunity, yet again, to celebrate what we've achieved as an administration which never was achieved before. Very little was done, and you've given me the opportunity so I'm going to have to say it, very little was done in the previous administration to help private sector rents. So, thank you. I'm happy to show off as long as you allow me, so thank you very much for the opportunity.

But I will reassure you that we are reviewing our Private Sector Policy as we stated in our Housing Strategy, and this work is spearheaded by our wonderful lead in PRS, Councillor Sheard, who's also updating our website for private renters and that's going to be wonderful when it's finished, and we can't wait for that.

But I can say, we are already taking a zero-tolerance approach to rogue landlords. We were the first council, and please forgive me those who've been here before, the first administration to actually implement a council prosecution of a landlord and we are implementing more prosecutions of landlords and that's what we mean by a zero-tolerance approach. We will not tolerate rogue landlords in our city and we're proving that that's exactly what we're doing. While there are many good landlords in our city, please don't let me forget to say that, those few who are behaving in a criminal way will be prosecuted by us and are being prosecuted. So, I hope that reassures you.

Councillor McLeay asked a supplementary question:

Just to say, on the comments just made, that the previous administration was committed to this and wanted to properly to review the Private Rental Sector Enforcement Strategy first and then bring in a new version which had that approach embedded into it. It's taken 18 months to get this done under this administration. If it was so easy, and the Greens should have done it, then why has it taken up until now to implement it? But that aside, it is great to hear that you are looking at reviewing the strategy and that hopefully this will be written into it. I guess that's the main concern. All good strategies should be tracked to ensure the delivery is implemented. So, I just wanted to know, does the cabinet member have any targets for this, how do you intend to monitor this, and how will this be written into the strategy?

Councillor Williams replied:

Yes, we are actually in the process of reviewing it right now. As I said our lead Councillor Sheard, is heavily invested in that process so I can guarantee that is happening right now. You must know, when it's a policy we do have to be very careful, there will be stakeholder consultations and we're setting out the timeline to hold those consultations very shortly and you'll be one of the first people to know. Thank you.

6. Councillor Meadows asked:

Yesterday, Council workers changed seven external lights in Bramble Way. It took three hours. The trouble is, five of these lights already worked, with no one

checking which ones worked prior. Now six work. One still doesn't. It was done during the day and not checked at night.

So why did all the working lights have to be changed? Don't you agree this is a waste of taxpayers' money, especially if the practice is mirrored across the city?

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

Thank you for the question. This is really casework, but I'm happy to help out. If you want to email me tomorrow, I'll certainly investigate.

Councillor Meadows asked a supplementary question:

When will the other 34 exterior lights that have not worked in Bramble Way for two years be changed? How many other exterior lights across the city are not working? The Council has been sent a map of Bramble Way's 40 lights. However, if the Council are not looking at their emails and dealing with the work, I can understand why they haven't been completed.

Councillor Williams replied:

I will repeat that this is a casework matter and email me tomorrow and I'll happily deal with it and investigate on your behalf. Thank you.

7. Councillor Earthey asked:

The quality of the bin collection service of recycling waste, both household and garden, in our ward has nosedived back to 2023 levels. Many roads have not seen collections for weeks and resident anger has reached boiling point. The poor excuses from the city and City Clean remain the same and it's clear that there remains major systemic resourcing and management problems, including vehicle reliability. So exactly what is the Labour Group going to do in 2025 to improve collection service levels and assuage residents' justified anger?

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

Thank you, Councillor Earthey, for the question. Firstly, I'd like to apologise to your residents for the disruption to recycling collections in recent weeks. The festive period inevitably produces a significantly higher volume of recycling and, unfortunately, we had a combination of vehicle and staffing issues shortly afterwards and when that situation stabilised, there was of course a big backlog.

I don't want to wander back into the familiar day-to-day, I'm going to call for explanations rather than excuses of why a given street was missed. I'd just like to zoom out a little bit. As many people here will be aware, there were some fundamental and far-reaching problems within the service when we took over in 2023. There were some legacy working practices which meant the service couldn't operate flexibly: rounds were organised, allocated and managed entirely

on paper; when residents report a missed collection, there was no automated or digital system that flags it to another crew or indeed managers. Everything was done manually by cross referencing paper documents and the Fleet Procurement Strategy did not ensure reliability was maintained.

We're in the process of changing all of those things. In the last two weeks, we've been able to reduce the number of vehicles regularly off the road by 50% and we're bringing forward proposals shortly to retire the oldest parts of our fleet with newer and more reliable vehicles. We're replacing outdated manual communication systems with the technology that will improve efficiency and flexibility and, crucially, enable us to provide much better real-time updates for residents.

I totally understand the frustrations of your residents and, indeed, my street had some disruption in in January too. But let me just reassure them that what we are doing here is trying to make fundamental and lasting changes to the service. To modernise systems and its practices and to make it an excellent and inclusive workplace; to deliver the outstanding service that this city deserves on a permanent basis; and that the ultimate goal here is that we get to near-zero missed collections and that when they are missed, we already know about it and have sent another crew to collect it before the resident has even noticed.

But this is going to take time and, as you intimate in your question, we have begun to see the improvements we know are possible. In fact, we've received a lot of feedback from residents who say that generally they've noticed the difference in the last year or so. But we are clearly not there yet. This will remain a top priority for us and I want to thank you, other Members and indeed residents of the city for their patience and their understanding of the scale of the challenge that we inherited. Thank you.

Councillor Earthey asked a supplementary question:

As you probably know, with the kind of recycling where bin collections are missed, the residents are entitled to an extension in their subscription. In our ward, so many of these collections have been missed that it must be starting to cost the council quite a lot of money in compensation because of the extended subscriptions. So, my question is: have compensation payments to residents for missed recycle bin collections been factored into the 2025-26 budget, as I should imagine across the city that must be quite considerable?

Councillor Rowkins replied:

Thanks for the follow up. What you're referring to there by subscription is the Garden Waste Service, and thankfully you did forward me an unfortunately quite long list of addresses that had been missed which I've been following up with officers today. I believe many, if not most of them, have been collected already. You're quite right that because it is a subscription-based service, where there is disruption to service we do extend residents subscription renewal dates in order to compensate, at least by way of gesture.

Obviously within a budget of the size of an organisation like Brighton & Hove City Council, there's flex with these kinds of things and actually the commercial bit of our of our waste collections that deals with garden waste and trade waste has been over performing in the last year in terms of its income target. So, there's leeway in there to absorb that kind of thing, but clearly it's not ideal, we don't want to be having that disruption for residents and, of course, we don't want to be losing even those smallish bits of income because every little bit helps.

8. Councillor Allen asked:

Does the Leader of the Council agree with me that as we embark on this exciting devolution journey in our historic county, that Brighton & Hove should embrace and celebrate Sussex Day on the 16th June 2025?

Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Chair replied:

Thank you, Councillor Allen, for an excellent question and I absolutely agree with the premise. I think that we should, in Brighton & Hove City Council, be celebrating Sussex Day. We have so much to be proud of as a city and as a wider region. We have a beautiful coastline, a national park, three leading universities, a premier league football club, international gateways including the UK's second largest airport in Gatwick and obviously the ports of New Haven and Shoreham, both of which I visited this week. There's a reason why we welcome over 60 million visitors each year to this very fine county of ours and I think we should all be celebrating living in such an extraordinary and unique place.

Councillor Allen asked a supplementary question:

Does Councillor Sankey also agree with me that the golden martlets on the flag of Sussex should be flying atop the town hall, yes plural, and if the Council does not own one, I'd be honoured to personally donate one for civic use.

Councillor Sankey replied:

Thank you, Councillor Allen, for this very kind offer. I'm very happy to reassure you that we do have the Sussex flag which we do fly on Sussex Day each year and we will be flying again from both town halls this year. And just to really echo and support everything you've said about the importance of celebrating Sussex Day in 2025. Thank you.

67 CHANGES TO CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS

67.1 Councillor Robinson introduced and formally moved the report.

67.2 Councillor Sykes spoke on the matter.

67.3 Councillor Robinson responded to the debate.

67.4 The mayor put the recommendations as detailed in the report to the vote which was carried.

67.5 Resolved -

- 1) That the report, recommendations and Minutes Extract of the Audit, Standards & General Purposes Committee held on 28 January 2025 be noted.
- 2) That full Council approved the proposed new Contract Standing Orders at Annex 1 with effect from 24th February 2025.
- 3) That full Council delegated authority to the Council's Monitoring Officer to amend the council's Constitution to incorporate the proposed Contract Standing Orders when the new Procurement Act 2023 comes into effect, and to make amendments to Appendix 1 of the new Contract Standing Orders as legislative, technical or organisational changes require.

68 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025/26

68.1 Councillor Cattell introduced and formally moved the report.

67.6 Councillor Hill and Earthy spoke on the matter.

67.7 Councillor Cattell responded to the debate.

67.8 The mayor put the recommendations as detailed in the report to the vote which was carried.

67.9 Resolved -

- 1) That Full Council adopts the pay policy statement for 2025/26 attached at Appendix 1.

69 BUDGET PROTOCOL

69.1 Resolved:

- 1) That the budget protocol outlined in Appendix 1 be approved for use at the Budget Council meeting on the 27 February 2025.
- 2) That the Legal Advice Note as set out at Appendix 2 be noted.

70 REVIEW OF SCHEME FOR MEMBER ALLOWANCES 2024-2028

70.1 Resolved:

That full Council

- 1) Noted the proposed review of the members allowances scheme to take place in March 2025;

- 2) Approved the appointment and re-appointment of IRP Panel members for a period of 3 years as set out at paragraph 3.7 – 3.8 of the report.

DEVOLUTION UPDATE

- 71a.1 Councillor Thomson introduced and formally moved the report.
- 71a.2 Councillor Davis moved the amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Hill.
- 71a.3. Councillor Shanks, Goldsmith, Sykes, Meadows, McNair, Lyons, Fishleigh, Atkinson, McGregor, Grimshaw, Sheard, Galvin and Goddard spoke on the matter.
- 71a.4 Councillor Sankey responded to the debate.
- 71a.5 The mayor then put the amendment to the vote and confirmed that it had been lost.
- 71a.6 The mayor put the recommendations as detailed in the report to the vote which was carried.
- 71a.7 Resolved:

That full Council

- 1) Noted the report, recommendations and Minutes Extract of the Special Cabinet meeting held on 9 January 2025.

72 MAINTAINING QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

- 72.1 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.
- 72.2 The mayor noted that there was an amendment from the Labour Group in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.
- 72.3 Councillor Helliwell moved the amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor O'Quinn.
- 72.4 Councillors Shanks and Hill spoke on the matter
- 72.5 Councillor McNair responded to the debate and did not accept the amendment by the Labour Group.
- 72.6 The mayor put the amendment to the vote and confirmed that it had been carried.
- 72.7 The mayor put the motion as amended to the vote and confirmed that it had been carried.

Resolved to:

- 1) Prioritise children receiving the best education possible either within the Local Authority or as part of an academy chain or free school as it works to develop its “family of schools” and all other policies relating to education.
- 2) Acknowledge the legal right of schools to enter into discussions with academy chains and urge that they do so with information that is fair and balanced on the benefits of the high quality offer that the local authority provides to help ensure our children do continue to receive quality education and parents do have choice.

73 SUPPORTING UNISON’S BRING IT BACK CAMPAIGN

- 73.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Sykes on behalf of the Green Group and formally seconded by Councillor Shanks.
- 73.2 The mayor noted that there was an amendment from the Labour Group in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.
- 73.3 Councillor Taylor moved the amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Burden.
- 73.4 Councillor Sykes responded to the debate and did not accept the amendment by the Labour Group.
- 73.5 The mayor put the amendment to the vote and confirmed that it had been carried.
- 73.6 The mayor put the motion as amended to the vote and confirmed that it had been carried.

Resolved to:

- 1) Continue fighting for the best funding deal for local government and residents in Brighton & Hove.
- 2) Ensure that staff are made aware of the opportunities open to them to join a Union
- 3) Welcome the recent increases in funding to local government, and the significant reduction in the budget gap faced by this authority for 2025/26.
- 4) Continue to make the case for sustainable long-term funding for local government in the upcoming spending review.
- 5) Welcome the reintroduction of public engagement in the budget setting process this year, including an online budget simulator, and to encourage further such activities in future budget years.

74 GRITTING & HIGHWAYS WINTER SERVICE PLAN

- 74.1 The joint Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Hill on behalf of the Green Group and Brighton and Hove Independents and formally seconded by Councillor Earthey.
- 74.2 The mayor noted that there was an amendment from the Labour Group in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.

- 74.3 Councillor Muten moved the amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Allen.
- 74.4 Councillors Lyons and Davis spoke on the matter
- 74.5 Councillor Hill responded to the debate and did not accept the amendment by the Labour Group.
- 74.6 The mayor put the amendment to the vote and confirmed that it had been carried.
- 74.7 The mayor put the motion as amended to the vote and confirmed that it had been carried.

Resolved to:

- 1) Request the Administration to undertake its annual review of the city's 400 grit bins, while looking at additional sites for some relocated grit bins and grit drops as requirements necessitate.
- 2) Thank officers for their prompt response as the council dealt with the sudden heavy snowfall across Brighton and Hove this month when heavy rainfall was forecast.
- 3) Thank members of the community who came out to help others as well as to clear snow and ice, such as farmers who rescued cars in Woodingdean, school communities who helped colleagues, and residents who helped assist their neighbours in a wonderful show of solidarity.

75 ROYAL SUSSEX COUNTY HOSPITAL ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT

- 75.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Miller on behalf of the Labour Group and formally seconded by Councillor Grimshaw.
- 75.2 The mayor noted that there was an amendment from the Green Group in relation to this motion as set out in the addendum papers.
- 75.3 Councillor Hill moved the amendment on behalf of the Green Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Shanks.
- 75.4 Councillors Hogan, Atkinson and Theobald spoke on the matter
- 75.5 Councillor Miller responded to the debate and did not accept the amendment by the Green Group.
- 75.6 The mayor put the amendment to the vote and confirmed that it had been lost.
- 75.7 The mayor put the motion to the vote and confirmed that it had been carried.

Resolved to:

- 1) Request that the Leader of the Council write to the University Hospitals Sussex NHS Trust to request that :-

- a. A contingency plan is put in place for adding short-term capacity while redevelopment is in progress.
 - b. A detailed analysis is shared with the Council of the planning, specification and futureproofing of the new look A&E, with updated time scales for delivery.
- 2) Request officers to consider, alongside local NHS providers, how to reduce demand through enhanced signposting and redirection, as well as through increased take up of vaccinations against flu, covid and other respiratory diseases.

76 CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting concluded at 10:08pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

2025