

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 39

Subject: Written questions from Councillors

Date of meeting: 13 October 2025

Report of: Director of Governance & Law

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Ward(s) affected: All

For general release

The following questions have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answers detailed in a further addendum:

1. Councillor Hill asked:

Residents in my ward on Springfield Road have complained about noise from filming in the early hours of the morning and removal of parking spaces. Added to this has been what they consider insufficient notice and a consultation with residents on this. Would the administration consider changing its policies around this and offer an apology to those affected on Springfield Road?

Reply from Councillor Miller, Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Tourism

In regard to the night shoot in July I'm sorry to hear it caused disruption, and I want to assure you that we take resident feedback seriously.

We have clear guidance for night filming to minimise impact, including:

- No lighting into windows unless agreed in advance
- Keeping noise to a minimum when not filming
- Positioning equipment away from homes or securing agreement with residents
- Ensuring respectful behaviour from all crew, including security and marshals

For more disruptive shoots—typically with over five crew or complex setups—production companies must consult residents in person, usually by door knocking and logging concerns. We stay in close contact with them to ensure issues are addressed. Multiple letter drops are also required to keep residents informed, even with shorter lead times.

Brighton & Hove is proud to be a film-friendly city, and we work hard to balance supporting creative industries with protecting residents' wellbeing.

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Filming brings economic and cultural benefits but must be done responsibly. Your feedback helps us hold production companies to account and improve how filming is managed in residential areas. Thank you again for raising your concerns

2. Councillor Hill asked:

The Clocktower Sanctuary told me Young homeless people in the city under 25 lack specific emergency accommodation. Young people at the sanctuary told me they have been endangered by this. While young people specific accommodation exists for temporary accommodation, would it be sensible to acquire something similar in the context of rising need in both emergency and temporary accommodation?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing

With the permission of the young people who have shared their experiences with you, please share their contact details so that officers can provide the necessary support and support providers of accommodation to make improvements.

Supporting young people experiencing homelessness is a priority for the council.

We commission a wide range of services specifically for young people, such as supported housing and emergency accommodation through Sussex Nightstop, and have dedicated pathways for those aged 16–17 and care leavers.

We recognise the rising demand for homelessness services, with young people aged 16–24 making up 18% of those assessed as homeless or at risk.

We are significantly expanding our supply of council-owned temporary accommodation—purchasing 60 new homes this year and committing to a further 200, backed by an initial £10 million investment. This will improve the quality and stability of temporary accommodation for all, including young people.

Our strong partnerships with local voluntary and community organisations, including the Clocktower Sanctuary, ensure that young people have access to vital support and advice.

Looking ahead, our draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy (2025–2030) continues to prioritise children and young people, ensuring that no young person is left without safe and suitable support in times of crisis.

3. Councillor West asked:

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The unpatriotic 'raising the colours' campaign is leading to an increasing number of unauthorised national flags being attached to street furniture in Brighton and Hove. Many people in the community recognise the nativist, racist, motivations behind this and feel intimidated and offended. I am pleased that the council recognised this and are making efforts to remove these offending articles. I understand that on occasions contractors attempting to remove flags have received abuse, also that in some cases the flags have been swiftly replaced by perpetrators. I am deeply concerned that the council does not allow the phenomenon to become established and normalised. What additional resources are the administration planning to allocate to swiftly clampdown on the appearance of unauthorised flags?

Reply from Councillor Allen, Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Public Realm

The Council have thus far removed over 40 flags and continues to actively coordinate further removals. The Council firmly maintain that it is illegal to attach any items including flags to Highway Furniture such as street lamp columns and want to highlight the dangers of doing so.

Unfortunately, some further planned removals have been cancelled on-site due to threatening behaviour from members of the public. These incidents have been reported to the police. We are currently liaising with the police to determine the best approach to future removals, with the safety of our staff and contractors as a top priority.

Please report unauthorised flags to streetlighting@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

4. Councillor West asked:

In a recent media release Councillor Rowkins celebrates the introduction of plastic Pots, Tubs and Trays recycling by the administration. Looking at the list of plastic items collected for recycling, which includes prepared vegetable and fruit trays, soup and pasta sauce pots, ready meal bowls and pastry trays, I am mindful that all these items are either unnecessary packaging and or can be made of metal, glass or plant-based alternatives. The question then arises whether offering to recycle these single use plastic items is just aiding and abetting the perpetuation of their manufacture and use. Moreover, given the energy required to collect, separate, transport and re-process these low grade plastic materials, is it even sustainable to do so? Just because an item can be recycled doesn't necessarily make it a good idea. Will Rowkins shift focus to promoting waste reduction and the use of non-plastic packaging?

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

This is the second time the Green Party has suggested on record that we should not be recycling these plastics, and I'm beginning to suspect that the failure of the Green administration to expand the city's recycling provision was not actually a failure at all, but a conscious policy choice.

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Clearly, getting away from using unnecessary packaging is the ultimate goal, and we are working to minimise waste in all forms. But with the amount of plastic packaging constantly being circulated, I don't believe we should continue sending it to the Energy Recovery Facility, thereby creating yet more need for new packaging to be produced from virgin materials.

This view is supported by research, including a study by the European Commission that concluded "Recycling (mechanical, physical or chemical) is preferable to energy recovery in all pathways analysed... because the environmental savings from energy recovery are not sufficient to compensate for the environmental impacts from waste incineration and the related CO2 emissions."

The emissions gap between recycling and energy recovery of course continues to widen as the energy system decarbonises.

5. Councillor Shanks asked:

In December 2024 the council appointed a third party company New Timber, to work with city parks in order to undertake rapid reinstatement of damaged green spaces following use by outdoor events. Can the council therefore list the reinstatement fees and bonds each event has paid since the new policy was introduced in December 2024 and where those funds are being held?

Reply from Councillor Miller, Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Tourism

For 2025 season the responsibility for reinstatement of grassed areas has been contracted out to New Timber Ltd. This includes a photographic inspection both pre And post any event in any grassed area in the city. Reinstatement costs are costed against a pre-approved price list on a per m2 basis. This year there has been delay in works being carried out, particularly in the central areas, due to the exceptionally dry summer we have experienced. Reinstatement works are now being started and will continue over the coming weeks.

The level of reinstatement needed is advised by the contractor and agreed with city parks operational teams ahead of the organiser being charged. There is no direct cost to BHCC for the works.

6. Councillor Shanks asked:

Regarding Valley Gardens, can the council confirm when the reinstatement of the grassed areas will take place and give precise details of the nature of the work and a breakdown of the costs? Is the council liable for any shortfalls or will event organisers meet additional charges? Will any underspend be retained by city parks or returned to the event organisers?

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

For 2025 season the responsibility for reinstatement of grassed areas has been contracted out to New Timber Ltd. This includes a photographic inspection both pre And post any event in any grassed area in the city. Reinstatement costs are costed against a pre-approved price list on a per m2 basis. This year there has been delay in works being carried out, particularly in the central areas, due to the exceptionally dry summer we have experienced. Reinstatement works are now being started and will continue over the coming weeks.

The level of reinstatement needed is advised by the contractor and agreed with city parks operational teams ahead of the organiser being charged. There is no direct cost to BHCC for the works

7. Councillor Sykes asked:

In previous responses about Palmeira Square, the administration have referred to the development of a memorial policy under the auspices of the forthcoming Events Strategy, whose draft earlier this year had no mention of a memorial policy in it. Would a public space memorial policy not sit better under our Parks and Open Spaces strategy, which is due for renewal by 2027? Please update on progress of the memorial policy.

Reply from Councillor Allen, Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Public Realm

Officers from City Parks and the Events team are working collaboratively to develop a city-wide Memorials Policy. Where the Policy ultimately sits will be decided in due course and on completion of the draft policy.

8. Councillor Sykes asked:

Will the administration work with ward councillors to seek better protection from utility company contractors, for curtilage infrastructure in our nationally-important heritage streets and squares?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport and City Infrastructure

Thank you for your question, Cllr Sykes, highlighting the importance of the reinstatement by utility companies and their contractors working in our city. Utility companies have certain rights to access their services and work with the council in applying for streetworks notices and permits. There is a very large number of streetworks notices issues to utility companies and contractors. These range from the small-scale individual property service connections to much larger-scale access to mains services many located beneath our major roads. As an administration, we are keen that all such

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streetworks are completed well and reinstatement is of a standard expected by residents.

We seek to work collaboratively with the utility companies on work they complete across all our infrastructure, and where there are larger works we ensure that ward councillors and the local community are informed. It is a good idea for ward councillors to be involved in supporting our collective efforts to protect our nationally-important heritage streets and squares which are important to us as a city and that all have a responsibility to protect. I will ask officers in the transport team to make sure our processes for involving ward councillors are robust. There may need to be further consideration as to how best communicate around the many thousands of smaller scale service connections, and I will discuss with officers as to how best to use digital tools to communicate this going forward. Please do contact the team about any specific concerns.

9. Councillor McLeay asked:

Leeds City Council offers up to 40% discretionary business rate relief—capped at £15,000 per business—for those delivering social or civic value, such as employing local people, paying the living wage, or supporting environmental goals. Could Brighton & Hove City Council consider introducing a similar scheme to support independent businesses, particularly those demonstrating social value and financial need?

Reply from Councillor Taylor, Cabinet Member for Finance and City Regeneration

There is an existing discretionary rate relief scheme in Brighton & Hove which covers:

- Charitable rate relief for properties used wholly or mainly for charitable purposes, and occupied by a registered charity, or for registered Community Amateur Sports Clubs
- Community and voluntary sector rate relief for properties used by a club or organisation for the purposes of recreation, or otherwise occupied by an organisation for a non-profit making or charitable purpose, or for social welfare, education, science, literature or fine arts

If further rate relief schemes were to be proposed, the financial implications would also need to be considered. Details of the Leeds City Council scheme are here: [Relief from business rates | Leeds.gov.uk](https://www.leeds.gov.uk/business-rates-relief), which details the priorities and restrictions of the scheme. It was introduced in October 2022. The scheme has a capped budget of £1.75m per annum.

10. Councillor McLeay asked:

The government intends to permanently lower rates for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure (RHL) relief properties from 2026–27. Given this, is Brighton & Hove City Council currently collecting any data or evidence on the local impact of recent business rate changes? If not, could councillors request that such data

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be gathered to better understand how local traders are being affected and to inform future policy decisions?

Reply from Councillor Taylor, Cabinet Member for Finance and City Regeneration

I have requested that data is gathered and analysed. This will include:

- Analysing the status of accounts for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure businesses e.g. how many are paid up to date, how many are “on hold”, how many are in a recovery stage (reminders, summonses, liability orders)
- Reviewing applications for hardship relief and how many were from Retail, Hospitality and Leisure businesses

11. Councillor Lademacher asked:

Residents placed in temporary accommodation managed by Baron Homes have reported experiencing poor living conditions that may pose risks to health and safety. These concerns include issues such as mould, ceiling damage, rodent activity, leaks, structural defects, and potential fire safety breaches. There are also reports of delays in addressing urgent and emergency repairs. What immediate steps is the Council taking to investigate these concerns and ensure Baron Homes meets its responsibilities to provide safe and habitable accommodation?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing

As of June 2024, around 1 in 77 residents - 3,580 people - were experiencing homelessness in Brighton & Hove, with 3,528 in temporary accommodation. This reflects a national crisis, where demand for accommodation far exceeds supply.

Despite these challenges, we are committed to providing quality temporary homes. This year, we expect to purchase 60 additional council-owned homes and committed to acquiring a further 200, supported by an initial £10 million investment.

All landlords providing temporary accommodation on behalf of the council are required to meet strict standards for safety and quality. Any issues or concerns reported by residents regarding our contractors are taken very seriously. There are clear contractual obligations in place outlining the high standards we expect, and we will apply the necessary sanctions if contractors do not make the improvements required of them.

If these standards are not being met, we will act to address the situation promptly. Our priority is to ensure that everyone in temporary accommodation is safe and well supported, and we remain focused on improving both the quality and availability of housing for those experiencing homelessness.

12. Councillor Pickett asked:

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Now that we are at the end of the 'educate and inform' year, whereby it was decided that fines for those ignoring the city's Smoke Control Areas would be commuted, will the administration move on from issuing warnings and restart fining those people, intent on burning solid fuels that poison the city's air?

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

Our policy of educate and inform is not limited to 1 year. Given the low starting point in terms of public awareness in relation to air pollution derived from solid fuels, it is still our intention to focus primarily on education. However, in cases where individuals are found to repeatedly be emitting smoke in a SCA, we may escalate and consider issuing fines.

13. Councillor Pickett asked:

How are housing complaints made by telephone, email or in person logged, and are they recorded as formal complaints and included in the totals reported to councillors? If a resident uses a route other than the webform, what is the standard process to ensure it is captured, acknowledged and progressed?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing

A complaint, according to the Brighton & Hove City Council's corporate procedure and the Housing Ombudsman's complaint handling code, is defined as any expression of dissatisfaction - however it's made - about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the landlord or council, its staff, or anyone acting on its behalf, that affects a resident or group of residents.

Recently, all staff working for the council as a landlord have received clear guidance on how to recognise and respond to complaints, even if the word "complaint" isn't used. This applies to everyone, from operatives working in people's homes to estate staff in the community.

If a resident wants to make a complaint, they can contact the Customer Feedback team directly by webform, email, telephone, or post. Every complaint is logged, acknowledged, and passed to the relevant service for investigation. If a complaint is made to any other staff member, they have clear instructions on what information to gather and how to ensure it reaches the Customer Feedback team.

We also make sure that complaints raised through MPs or councillors are logged and addressed. Our aim is to ensure every expression of dissatisfaction is captured and acted upon, so we can continue to improve our services and meet our ambition of becoming a Great Landlord.

14. Councillor Goldsmith asked:

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Is there a clear desire and commitment to improve housing services for tenants? If so, why aren't there any targets being set for tenant satisfaction measures and how can services demonstrably improve without defined targets to aim for and report against.

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing

Yes, there is a clear and strong commitment to improving housing services for tenants. We want to be a Great Landlord for our tenants, and this informs everything that we do.

This is reflected in the 2025/26 HRA budget, which includes a £1.8 million revenue investment in tenancy services. This funding supports more vulnerable tenants, enables a more proactive tenancy management approach, and drives the changes needed to ensure our Housing Service is both compliant and accessible to all.

We've also recently expanded our service delivery through the introduction of Neighbourhood Officer teams across the city, with additional investment over the past year to strengthen local engagement and responsiveness.

Improving tenant satisfaction is a central priority and essential to our ambition of becoming a Great Landlord. While we do not have a single overarching target for tenant satisfaction, we do monitor and report on a range of performance indicators that reflect customer experience. These are published quarterly in our Housing Performance Report for Area Panels and include satisfaction with repairs, complaints handling, and responsiveness to calls and emails. Targets are set for each indicator, and performance is tracked against them, including direction of travel and any corrective actions required.

For example, in Quarter 1 of 2025/26, tenant satisfaction with completed repairs was 98% for the standard of work and 99% for overall customer service - exceeding our target of 96% in both areas. These results are publicly available on our website and shared with Area Panels to ensure transparency and accountability.

In addition, our annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey (STAR) provides a broader view of tenant sentiment across services, repairs, maintenance, and customer service. This survey enables year-on-year comparisons and helps us identify areas for improvement.

As part of continued commitment to continuous improvement, I ask all councillors to encourage all tenants to take part in the next STAR survey which is scheduled for this autumn.

15. Councillor Goldsmith asked:

In the council's 'Homing In' magazine Autumn 25, P8 states that 26.2% (down from 29.9% previously) of residents are satisfied with the council's approach to complaints handling. Whilst this is within the parameters nationally, these

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statistics are shockingly low. Do you think this is acceptable and what is the council doing to improve these statistics?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing

It is regrettable that our satisfaction rate has gone down and it is sadly reflective of the national picture given that our percentage is broadly in line with other landlords of a similar size. In sharing that context, we are not complacent. We are committed to improving our complaints handling across our housing services and recognise that behind every complaint is a resident who feels let down, and that we continue to learn from these experiences to improve our services.

Over the past year, we have taken several steps to address this. Targeted improvements to our Repairs Service have led to a 12% reduction in complaints related to repairs, maintenance, and property improvements. Our response times have also improved: in 2024/25, over 80% of Stage 1 complaints were answered within our 10-day target, and Stage 2 response times improved by 10% compared to the previous year.

We have worked closely with residents and staff through co-produced workshops focused on repairs, complaint handling, health and safety, and customer service. These sessions have shaped our “Creating Great Homes Together” improvement plan, which supports our ambition to become a Great Landlord. We know there is more to do, and we remain committed to further progress.

16. Councillor West asked:

Abandoned bikes litter our streets, often left locked to cycle racks reducing available space and leaving many cyclists to resort to locking to street furniture which results in damage and maintenance cost to the council. There is an abandoned vehicle service responding to reports of abandoned bikes, removing them and getting them recycled all at considerable cost to the council. There is no signage on cycle parking stands communicating that abandoning bikes is a costly nuisance and signposting opportunities for reuse, recycling, or disposal. Surely, we wish to encourage and assist people to do the right thing. I have had a reply from Highways saying the cost of installing signage would be prohibitive, but I have seen no impact analysis of the cost-benefit that signage may have if it reduces abandonment. Can this proposal be properly considered, please.

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport and City Infrastructure

Thank you for your question, Cllr West. You raise a relevant matter, especially where abandoned bicycles are limiting cycle parking spaces.

In the context of pressures on council budget, i am sure you are aware that the Network Management service has limited budget and resources for

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abandoned bike enforcement. However, there is a Contract in place with Environmental Services (ES) for, removing and disposal of up to 30 bikes, the value of the contract is £350. This is a relatively small amount, however should there be a call to increase this, we would need to consider what services would need to be reduced to balance the budget. The Green Group may wish to propose this above other services at Budget Council in early 2026.

Additional to the removal and disposal of up to 30 bikes, the service do process reports of abandoned bikes, visit, tag, administrate and then collate reports and provide this to Environmental Services as part of the highway enforcement role. The funding available to remove these bikes is unfortunately not sufficient to tackle the number of bikes reported as abandoned. In 2023-2024 the Council received 778 reports of abandoned bikes and in 2024-2025 this increased to 838 reports.

Additional signage and street clutter is unlikely to deter these abandoned bikes as national research suggests abandon bikes are not a conscious decision but more often the result of irregular use then irreparable damage having been left in the open or due to people moving out of the area, particularly students. The costs of such signage are estimated to be in the region of £17,000 for 100 ridged street signs attached near cycle stands.

Officers will look to improve the information on the council webpages to ensure proactive promotion of reuse/ recycle bikes which could help to reduce the numbers of bikes left on the streets. We would encourage ward councillors and communities to assist with this communication and encourage owners of abandoned bikes where know to remove and dispose of their bikes responsibly.

17. Councillor McLeay asked:

Given that the national ban on single-use vapes came into force on 1 June 2025, what specific actions are being taken by Brighton & Hove City Council and the Trading Standards team to enforce this ban locally? In addition, what support is being provided to businesses to help them responsibly dispose of or recycle any remaining stock of single-use vapes, and how are we ensuring they understand the distinction between banned disposable products and legal reusable alternatives?

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

Prior to the ban being put in place, any business selling vapes that the Trading Standards team visited were informed of the ban and advised to reduce as much of their stock as possible and not order more. Any stock held after the ban by businesses was advised to send back to their supplier. If a business cannot do this then we can offer the business to voluntarily surrender the goods to us which will then be recycled. However, we haven't had any businesses that have opted to do this.

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We have been pro-active, visiting all new vape shops identified in the city providing them with advice on regulations surrounding the sale of vapes(attached). Any complaints we receive in relation to underage sales, illegal vapes, illicit tobacco or any complaints, where the business also sells vaping products, they have been visited and given advice.

Following the ban the Trading Standards team within the Council have already seized over 11,000 disposable vapes from 9 businesses. These have all been from shops that are already under investigation for other offences such as illicit tobacco or other non-compliant vapes. Businesses have been provided with advice as part of specific vape, tobacco and age restricted sales inspections as well as Food Standards inspections.

Most retailers are now fully aware of their legal obligations due to the advice received from the Council as well as their own suppliers and trade associations such as the Association of Convenience Stores.

If disposable vapes are found, the initial advice was to return to the supplier for disposal, however, businesses are now advised to dispose of and recycle. All shops of a certain size selling electricals are required to have a takeback scheme for small electricals. This is enforced by the Office of Product Safety and Standards, so if we identify a business not complying then a referral will be made. If there are deliberate attempts to conceal or circumvent the ban these are seized, and we recycle them once any enforcement activity is concluded. Any vapes that we seize are sent to a recycling centre. The lithium batteries are stored in safe fire tubs and covered with fine sand and vermiculite, until they are transported in bulk to a specialist salvage company where they are crushed into fine powders.

18. Councillor Sykes asked:

Should all campaigning clothing and accessories be banned from the council chamber, how is this to be defined (for example concerning colours of flags) and do we need to change our council constitution?

Reply from Councillor Allen, Cabinet member for Customer Services and Public Realm

The standing legal advice is that councillors should not wear clothing or display other material which could be perceived as offensive or politically controversial, as this risks bringing the Council into disrepute and disrupting proceedings. This is not a new position and aligns with the approach that has always been adopted at Brighton & Hove City Council, including in Guidance agreed by Group Leaders in 2021. The Council's Constitution already provides clarity regarding the powers of the Mayor in relation to those obstructing the business of the Council (CPR 16). Therefore, no constitutional reforms are required on this matter.

19. Councillor Meadows asked:

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Despite promises by this administration, and many before, to update and landscape Patcham roundabout, and even getting to the point with officers and sponsor of having a workable solution, no progress has been made. When will Patcham roundabout be landscaped?

Reply from Councillor Allen, Cabinet member for Customer Services and Public Realm

CityParks officers have a landscape design for the roundabout for which we now have approval from National Highways. Officers continue to liaise with the landscaper and have a proposed contract with them to carry out the landscaping and maintenance on the roundabout for free, in return for sponsorship boards.

This requires a planning application and legal sign-offs for the contracts with the landscaper and National Highways. There is progress on these items but there is key issue to resolve as financing enabling works (salt margin and access hardstanding) and the cost of traffic management have not yet been secured.

20. Councillor Theobald asked:

Can you please tell me why the Council has not repaired the pavement outside Hove Town Hall where I tripped and fractured my arm on the 6th August?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet member for Transport and City Infrastructure

Thank you for your question, Cllr Theobald. I am sorry to hear of your injury. May I trust you are recovering.

Your incident and others highlights the importance of highways maintenance including pavements. For far too many years, central government has granted inadequate funds to keep abreast of the maintenance required for our city. Under the previous government, this shortfall in highways maintenance budgets granted to highways authorities across England has led to potholes, trip hazards and road and pavement assets neglected and in decline. A quite unacceptable position. This is why we very much welcomed the substantive uplift the new government has committed to this year with an additional half a billion pounds more this financial year compared with last nationally for highways maintenance; with some £1.6 million more coming to Brighton & Hove this year compared with last.

With more money, we can get on and do more. This is why we updated our highways maintenance policy earlier this year that deals with inspection frequency, risk assessments and response times. Accepted there is substantial backlog after well over a decade of underinvestment under the

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previous government, we are taking action and getting on repairing our roads and pavements and fixing the potholes.

You may have seen we have taken action on Norton Road, with much of the pavements resurfaced over the summer.

In terms of this incident, an enquiry relating to this was logged on the Council system on 8th August.

In response, a highway inspection was carried out within 10 days on 19th August. During this inspection, a 7-day ticket was raised and the repair was completed on 26th August.

A further inspection was carried out on 29th September. During this inspection another safety defect was identified that met the investigation criteria and a 28-day ticket was raised for repair. This site is just south of the cycle stands adjacent to the taxi rank. This means that a repair will be completed within 28-days of the inspection. I can report that this repair was completed by the Council on 10th October, less than a fortnight after the inspection and 28-day ticket raised.

The next routine inspection is due to take place by 31st October. If any further safety defects have developed by this time then these will be actioned accordingly.

21. Councillor Theobald asked:

Please list the amount collected from owners/developers or contractors over the last three years for reinstating damaged footways/pavements caused by contractors' heavy lorries parking on the same during building works?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport and City Infrastructure

Thank you for your question, Cllr Theobald. The damage to pavements by vehicles parking on them can be substantial. The frequency of movement and the weight of vehicles are an important factor as well as the type of surface. Damage can be pronounced when vehicles park on paving slabs, more so where heavy vehicles or more frequent pavement parking and movement occurs.

Developers and building contractors should take all reasonable steps to protect the public highway including pavements during their planned works. A responsible contractor will have to provide a method statement to the client. We expect measures to be in place to protect the pavement set out within their method statement and site supervisors to ensure that such measures and mitigations are adhered to. Such procedures will need to be considered by the Planning Committee. However, from a Transport and City Infrastructure perspective, I recommend that planning decisions to include reference to good practice and protect our public highways including pavements. I will write

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to the Chair of the Planning Committee to confirm this is taking place and being adhered to.

Officers are actively seeking to recover costs for damages to the public highway (including pavements). Highway inspectors assess the condition of the highway including pavements and can report to the council and the developer / contractor damages caused during a construction phase.

22. Councillor Meadows asked:

Many residents in Greenfield Crescent are unhappy with being included in the Wilder Verges project. Dog owners are unable to walk their dogs in their local green space, and the number of dogs being taken to the vets because of grass burrs buried in their skin has increased. Were residents included in a consultation process? Why weren't local councillors informed of this? Can the council ensure residents are included in future consultations? Why were dog owners' needs ignored?

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

The site at Greenfield Crescent triangle was added to the Wilder Verges project as it already had an alternative mowing programme and was considered suitable to support wildlife. This is the same approach to many of the island sites in Hollingbury, Patcham and Westdene. Incorporating these sites into the Wilder Verges scheme will lead to better and more focused maintenance and oversight, as well as greater uplift in terms of biodiversity.

Public consultation was not undertaken at the time as the site was already outside the more vigorous mowing schedule.

The Greenfield Crescent triangle will have its next cut in October/November. The team is meeting next week to look at mowing regimes and any equipment requirements such as cut and collect machinery, to ensure that sites are managed appropriately and that further information can be provided to ensure residents are aware of cutting regimes.

23. Councillor McNair asked:

When is the long grass at the cemetery at All Saints church Patcham going to be cut back? It was not cut on 30 September. This has not happened despite numerous emails and reassurances it would. Visitors cannot access the graves.

Reply from Councillor Robins, Cabinet Member for Sports, Recreation and Libraries

The work to cut the grass at the cemetery at All Saints church, Patcham, will start on 10th October. The team always seek to stick to timescales that have been communicated, but sometimes operational and resource issues mean

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work is delayed. Thank you for raising this, and we will take on board feedback to continue to improve the service provided, within the constraints we are working to after many years of continued reduction in resources.

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24. Councillor McNair asked:

Residents are concerned that drains down Carden Hill are blocked – indeed, may have been tarmacked over with the recent resurfacing – and that when it rains water pours down the hill causing flooding in Hollingbury and very probably Carden Avenue. When are the drains in Carden Hill due to be inspected and unblocked?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet member for Transport and City Infrastructure

Thank you for your question, Cllr McNair, regarding the drains on Carden Hill.

All gullies across the city are cleaned on a regular schedule at a risk-based frequency. This can be every 6 months, 1 year, 2 years, or 4 years, which is determined based on historical cleansing data, a risk score and delivered within the limited funding available to ensure public funds are used both responsibly and effectively.

The last inspection in Carden Hill was carried out in January 2025; however, as this road has been part of our surface extension treatment programme, we will be undertaking a visual survey of all the drains and any that are blocked form part of our contractual defect process associated with these works. If there is any damage to the drains this will be picked up and rectified by the contractor. Additionally, we do carry out an ad-hoc cleansing; however, these interventions are limited to situations where there is an immediate risk to public safety or where water is entering a home or building.

25. Councillor Lyons asked:

Why does the Council have so little desire for recycling? One of the last councils in the country to recycle food wastage & has no plans to start collecting used batteries from households. About 25% of councils (roughly 100 out of 391) offer kerbside collections for batteries and small electricals, covering ~23% of households.

Reply from Councillor Rowkins, Cabinet member for Net Zero and Environmental Services

Given how much we have done in the last 2 years to expand our recycling provision, it is absurd to suggest that we have “little desire” in this area.

I do share the sentiment that we should have been further ahead on things like food waste in recent years, but the lack of progress on that is a question for previous administrations, not this one.

Since May 2023, we have:

- Deployed 23 bins for Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and 54 cartons bins at our recycling points

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- Expanded our kerbside and communal recycling collections to include plastic pots, tubs and trays
- Introduced food waste

Lewes District Council has had food waste collections for some time, but apart from Lewes, we are the first council in Sussex to introduce this service.

We don't currently accept batteries in our kerbside collections, in part because there are so many other options for recycling them, including at the major supermarkets.

26. Councillor Hogan asked:

We were given a snapshot of the number of empty homes with a briefing on 3 March 2025. However, when will the 2024 figure be issued?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet member for Housing

In the July Cabinet report about delivery against our Housing Strategy, we reported that in April there were 145 empty homes where we worked with owners to bring them back into use. We will continue to report back on our progress in bringing empty homes back into use through the Housing Strategy monitoring report which is considered at Cabinet annually.

I can report that figures from the 1 September 2025 indicate that 968 homes in Brighton & Hove have been vacant for longer than 12 months and classified as long-term empty. This does not include second homes or those going through the probate process. Of these 32 are council owned properties and we are taking steps to bring these homes back into use.

There can be complex and personal reasons why people leave a property empty, and the council's Empty Properties Team works with private owners to offer advice and support to help them bring their properties back into use. Increased council tax premiums on empty properties are also helping to discourage homes being left unoccupied.

27. Councillor Lyons asked:

Please can you look into improving the facilities at Nevill Park in Hove? There is not a single seating bench which are needed. In addition, can there be a children's playground and other public facilities installed eg gym/climbing equipment etc? There is huge demand due to the number of people and schools here. There are various flats being built in this area so there is a strong case for sil money to be used. It is a forgotten part of Hove that deserves attention.

Reply from Councillor Robins, Cabinet member for Sports, Recreation and Libraries

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Nevill Park is predominantly a sports/recreation ground and hosts many sports events all year round, with local football teams, cricket teams and other sports groups benefiting from the large area dedicated to sports and recreation. Nearby Hove park has a new 300k play area and other facilities and feasibility for new gym equipment is being looked into. As this area of Hove develops, we will continue to review the provision and the mix of facilities needed.

28. Councillor Lyons asked:

Residents in Woodland Drive are requesting additional parking measures as cars are often parked for long periods in the road causing congestion. We will provide residents responses that we have received.

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet member for Transport and City Infrastructure

Thank you for your question, Cllr Lyons, calling for additional parking restrictions in Woodland Drive to be brought in as a priority.

The Parking Scheme Priority timetable was agreed earlier this year and part of this includes a new parking consultation in the Goldstone Valley area. Officers in the Council's Parking Design and Implementation team are working on the detail of the consultation, and we will be contacting Ward Councillors shortly to arrange a meeting to discuss the boundary of this scheme and the inclusion of Woodland Drive to respond positively to this request.

Provided the respective residents have given consent to do so, please do share these comments with myself and senior officers in the Transport team. I look forward to discussing this further with you and the other ward councillors shortly.

29. Councillor Fishleigh asked:

The Saltdean charity wanted to put hanging baskets on lamp posts this summer using the same company that Rottingdean In Bloom uses. However, I was advised that this wasn't possible until BHCC has finalised a new policy WRT lamp posts. When will this be ready please?

Reply from Councillor Allen, Cabinet Member for Customer Services and Public Realm

There are restrictions for attachments to street lamps to ensure safety to pedestrians and prevent lasting damage to the units. I would appreciate being forwarded the correspondence referred to so that I can investigate this matter.

30. Councillor Earthey asked:

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The introduction of 'X buses' is clearly very successful, but those of us with long memories say that all you have done is rekindle the demand for limited-stop services identified 15 – 20 years ago under the 'Brighton Metro' debate. Given the major success of the X bus services, can you commit to expanding the X bus programme, and reopening the old bus-based 'Brighton Metro' project, even considering a type of 'Brighton Crossrail' X bus?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport and City Infrastructure

Thank you for your question, Cllr Earthey, and for drawing the connection to the former Brighton Metro concept. The success of the new Express bus services does indeed reflect a long-standing demand for faster, limited-stop connections across the city and region.

In partnership with Brighton & Hove City Council, Brighton & Hove Buses are actively developing a more consistent and easy-to-understand network. The colour-coding of the new Express routes has been particularly well received and is a direct response to the desire for clearer, more legible service branding. In collaboration with Brighton & Hove Buses, the Council are actively exploring how this approach can be expanded and refined.

As part of the Enhanced [Bus] Partnership which, as Cabinet member for Transport and City Infrastructure, I chair and part of our BSIP delivery, Brighton & Hove Buses have expressed a clear ambition to move toward a more "Metro-style" network, and the development of the Express routes represents an important step in that direction, offering faster, more direct journeys with a clearer identity and purpose. The opportunity to explore and develop this concept and place into a strategic citywide transport context has been taken forward as we have consulted on the Our City Transport Plan 2035. Opportunities to connect with neighbouring authorities to enable and enhance such a network into a wider regional context are expected once the Strategic Mayoral Authority for Brighton & Hove and Sussex is set up from next year. An affordable and sustainable integrated public transport plan to include rail, bus, taxi and bikeshare is needed and changes in regional governance may and should enable a stronger network for all.

While a "Brighton Crossrail" concept is ambitious, we remain open to innovative ideas that improve connectivity, legibility, and journey times. The Express bus programme is a strong foundation, and we are committed to building on its success.

31. Councillor Bagaeen asked:

In September, the Leader of the Council urged pension fund bosses in East Sussex to say whether any of their investments are linked to "atrocities taking place in Palestine", specifically asking whether the pension fund currently has any exposure to any companies on the United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner (OHCHR) list.

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Divestment campaigns urge banks, alongside local government pension funds, and universities to withdraw investments from companies that help sustain what is a widely held view of Israel's genocide in the region.

Might the Leader of the Council be open to write to the Vice Chancellors of our Universities and banks operating in our city urging them to divest, and additionally launch a divestment campaign in Brighton and Hove as an effective way of showing solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for freedom?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council

I am cautiously optimistic of the emerging peace negotiations in respect of the war in Gaza and that this will lead to an end to the suffering of the people of Gaza as well as the return of hostages to their families. I have asked the East Sussex Pension Fund to update on their exposure to companies on the OHCHR list, and this is a matter we take extremely seriously as an administration. It is for other organisations to decide how they wish to respond on this matter.

32. Councillor Bagaeen asked:

Brighton & Hove City Council was ordered to pay the developer's full costs after a Planning Inspector ruled in favor of the Gasworks redevelopment scheme, finding the council's reasons for refusal unsubstantiated and that the development's "very substantial" benefits outweighed its "limited" harm to heritage and amenity. The council had refused permission for the mixed-use development due to concerns about overdevelopment, design, and lack of affordable homes, but the inspector and Secretary of State endorsed the scheme's benefits, including site remediation, housing delivery, and biodiversity gain.

In refusing planning permission, against officer recommendations, 7 out of 10 members of the planning committee voted for refusal.

What lessons has the council learnt from this hugely costly mistake in allowing elected members to override officer recommendations for planning?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council

Officers in the legal and planning teams are currently reviewing the appeal decision and costs decision on the gas works application and will be preparing reflections on this with a session for Planning Committee members to be arranged.

