

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.00pm 14 OCTOBER 2025

HOVE TOWN HALL COUNCIL CHAMBER

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Evans (Chair) Cattell, Loughran, Fowler, Mackey, Winder, Sykes, Lyons, Earthey and Shanks

Other Members present: Mark Strong (CVS)

PART ONE

37 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

37. Procedural Business

37a Declarations of substitutions

37.1 Cllr Lyons substituted for Cllr Meadows
Cllr Earthey substituted for Cllr Fishleigh
Cllr Shanks substituted for Cllr Pickett
Apologies were received from Cllr Goddard
Doug Thompson (OPC) was invited to the meeting to represent the Older Peoples' Council as Mary Davies was unable to attend.

37b Declarations of interest:

37.2 There were none.

37c Exclusion of the press and public

37.3 There were no Part Two items so the press and public were not excluded.

38 MINUTES

38.1 **RESOLVED–** that the minutes of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Meeting on 22nd September 2025 were approved.

39 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATIONS

39.1 The Chair gave the following communication:

Today we will be starting off with Our City Transport Plan where we are being asked to comment on the first draft following a period of public consultation that ended in September. The draft plan will be going to Cabinet for approval later in the year.

Next, we will be looking at the evolution of Pride in Kemptown following the changes made to the location of the street party, how successful this was and any learning to come out of it to inform future plans.

Following that, we will hear about the Sports Facilities Investment Programme which is a 10 year plan and we are currently halfway through. This is a look to see the main achievements and what the priorities are moving forward.

Our last presentation will be about tree diseases in the city; how they are being managed, what emerging threats there are and future plans to look after the city's trees.

We will end with a look at the scoping report for the next task & finish group on heritage, which we hope to set up soon.

In the interests of time, can I please request that both those asking and answering questions are as brief and to the point as possible, as we want everyone who wishes to contribute to have the opportunity to do so. We also don't want the meeting to overrun too much into the evening.

40 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

40.1 There were no public engagement items.

41 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

41.1 There were no member questions.

42 OUR CITY TRANSPORT PLAN 2035

42.1 Cllr Muten presented "Our City Transport Plan" to the committee, setting out a 10 year strategic vision of getting around a cleaner, fairer, growing city supported by well-run council services. Key points included: increasing the number of electric vehicles and charging points across the city; making public transport safer, more inclusive and accessible; working towards low emissions, net zero and to improve public health. The plan includes a target for fully electric buses by 2027, making the city more equitable for those living in more deprived areas and for those with disabilities; to introduce a Park & Ride service, neighbourhood mobility hubs, AI driven traffic management, to reduce disruption from utility services and more efficient management of roads, pavements and lighting. The presentation summarised timelines for the transport projects, details of objectives and the results of the recent public consultation.

42.2 Cllrs Fowler, Cattell and Shanks asked questions about electric vehicles and charging units; requesting more lamppost charging points and a more accessible app. There was

a comment about electric vehicles tending to be very large and too big for a normal parking space. Cllr Muten said that there are 500 charging points currently in the city with plans to increase this so every community has access to multiple charging points.

- 42.3 Cllrs Fowler, Sykes and Earthey asked questions about buses; whether the 50U bus that used to serve Hollingbury could be reinstated, that often the screens at bus stops aren't working, that there should be dropped kerbs by bus stops to help those who need them, who decides new X bus routes and whether there is flexibility in the funding for the Bus Services Improvement Plan. Cllr Muten said that Brighton & Hove Buses are very responsive to residents' needs and will make improvements, such as the introduction of the 1X and a brand-new express route, 3X. He said he would raise the issue of the 50U.
- 42.4 Cllr Sykes asked about devolution and the new Mayoral Authority adopting the City Transport Plan, that there are a lot of questions about how this will work and there is the potential that significant elements of the plan could be ditched. A lot of work has gone into this including the Strategic Environment Assessment which costs around £50k, Cllr Sykes suggested adopting the SEA now under the current council so that it's a formal document and will then have more influence over a future mayoral transport plan. Cllr Muten said that the Mayoral Authority will need a regional transport plan, that the SEA will be passed to the regional transport authority, and that devolution will mean better connectivity beyond the city's boundaries. Mark Strong of the Community Voluntary Sector said that he was not as confident as Cllr Muten about the Mayor controlling key route networks.
- 42.5 Cllr Earthey and Mark Strong had questions about the projected costs; that £150k for smart traffic lights seemed too low and there was a conflict between aspirations with £900m allocated for electric vehicles, typically owned by more wealthy people, compared to £200m for dropped kerbs to help those with disabilities. Cllr Muten said that there are 2 junctions being trialled with smart traffic lights and if they are successful, more will be rolled out. Kieran Taylor said that the budget figures are based on anticipated costs and that the details will be confirmed for February which is when the council's budget is approved.
- 42.6 Cllr Loughran asked for a review based on behaviour changes and how people perceive getting around the city quicker, that some college students want to cycle from Prestonville to Surrenden to get to school but the topography and obstruction of the railway tracks makes this very difficult; that the 50+ steps at Lovers Lane need a metal track for bikes; and there needs to be a better cycle lane going north to Patcham. Cllr Shanks said that more people want storage for their bikes and safer protected cycle lanes. Cllr Muten said that new cycle schemes were being introduced such as Valley Gardens.
- 42.7 Mark Strong (CVS) said that "traffic" means walking and cycling as well as road transport and that he would like to see Figure 12 from the report - "household trips by mode and income", done locally rather than nationally. He said that these plans should be co-produced with relevant community groups.

- 42.8 Cllr Lyons said that he was underwhelmed by the plan and felt the vision should be bolder, suggesting trams or monorails being included and used Bilbao as an example of a city where relatively few people use private vehicles.
- 42.9 Cllr Winder asked about air quality and the live mapping data so that people can see areas that are improving. Cllr Muten said they are improving the air quality monitoring network and that it is publicly available on the website in real time and people can search back in time to see the changes in air quality in a particular area.
- 42.10 Cllrs Cattell, Shanks and Mackie asked about repairs, particularly pavements; that people have had accidents from tripping over poor paving, that they are very icy in the winter and not gritted; and people don't feel safe walking on the pavements, especially where cars are parked on them, some street furniture cause hazards and the use of e-scooters. Cllr Muten said that they have launched a refresh of the highways maintenance policy and that each report is risk assessed and built into the repair programme. He said that there will soon be national policy coming on pavement parking, that they work with partners to ensure street furniture is not hazardous and noted that private e-scooters are illegal. Cllr Cattell said the reporting system needs improvement and Mark Strong suggested using "Fix my Street" service.
- 42.11 **RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

43 EVOLUTION OF PRIDE IN KEMPTOWN

- 43.1 Cllr Miller presented the Evolution of Pride in Kemptown to the committee; they looked into how residents perceived the street party and what their concerns were, which prompted the change of location. Cllr Miller summarised the changes made for 2025; that small LGBTQIA+ businesses in the area benefitted from generating revenue from their normal trading indoors and they were given a share of the proceeds made from the street party without having to contribute to staffing costs. They did have to close St James' St at 3pm on the Saturday but it was open to normal traffic on the Sunday; there were no major reports of antisocial behaviour including public urination, and there was a £10k reduction in cost to environmental services. An all agency debrief has taken place and there are some actions to take when planning for next year; they will be meeting residents and businesses later in the month. Future changes will continue to be led by residents, businesses and the local community.
- 43.2 Mark Strong said that there was a lot of community angst about the changes and he would like to see more data such as policing costs. Ian Baird said that this year had marked a real change for St James' Street as it had previously had a reputation for being the big party area but the changes meant it could be business as usual for the businesses there. There is no data on cost of policing yet as they had recruited more police this year as they didn't know what the reaction would be, therefore next year's data will be more useful.
- 43.3 Cllr Mackey asked about debrief meetings with the St James' Business Alliance and the residents, and how the outcomes will be shared. Ian Baird said that there is now a permanent live portal on the Your Voice platform for people to feed in, they will share the notes from the meetings there and the outcomes will shape the plan for next year.

- 43.4 Cllr Mackey asked about introducing family friendly events on the Sunday. Ian Baird said there is potential for this, but it depends on the feedback from residents and businesses. Cllr Miller said that the organisation of Pride is in collaboration with the organisers and is not solely a Council decision.
- 43.5 Cllr Mackey asked about training for security on diversity and LGBTQIA+ issues. Ian Baird said that they have detailed briefings for security on this but due to the number of security needed for the event, they often draw them from outside the city who do not necessarily have the right training. They need to work with the industry to get this training embedded and become a condition of the license.
- 43.6 **RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

44 SPORTS FACILITIES INVESTMENT PROGRAMME PROGRESS UPDATE

- 44.1 Cllr Robins presented the Sports Facilities Investment Plan (SFIP), key points included: the current sports facilities were showing their age, which prompted the SFIP originally – which resulted in the recommendation to create 3 hubs – in the West, North and East of the city; We are in the process of identifying a location for the east hub which will potentially be in Moulsecoomb or Whitehawk; and a potential replacement for Prince Regent Swimming Complex; The 10 year plan is on track with many projects already achieved by a very small team.
- 44.2 Cllr Shanks said that in Tower Hamlets the council are taking leisure centres back under their control, that the Padel Courts at Hove Beach Park are really busy and the operators are making a lot of money from it. Cllr Robins said that the operators pay the council to run their services, that currently Padel is very popular but that may change over time and it's the operators who are taking on that risk. Kerry Taylor said that 7 sites are managed by Freedom Leisure who are a not-for-profit trust/company, and that procurement for a new contract will be advertised to the market in November. If there is an opportunity and the capacity for the council to operate Padel or another sport within a park, then that will be looked at on a case-by-case basis.
- 44.3 Mark Strong said that the smaller facilities like St Luke's and Stanley Deason are all to the east of the city and that the smaller community based sites are easier to get to. Cllr Robins said they will be looking further east to create the new hub, probably Moulsecoomb or Whitehawk. Kerry Taylor said that they are looking at green ways of travelling to these sites including having electric charging points for bikes on site.
- 44.4 Cllr Loughran asked whether the new pool at Withdean will have windows. Kerry Taylor said they had received feedback for more natural light so plans have been updated to include frosted windows in the pool area.
- 44.5 Cllr Cattell praised the achievements made by the team.
- 44.6 **RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

45 TREE DISEASES IN BRIGHTON & HOVE

- 45.1 Cllr Robins presented the update on tree diseases, he explained the high profile tree removal works, why this is needed and ways to combat threats to nature. Elm and Ash disease are in the city which ultimately results in tree decline and there's a lot of work going on to prevent a rapid spread. The city's woodlands are under threat and becoming fragile due to pests and diseases, which can become a threat to public safety. Biosecurity measures, development of current disease control responses, and a longer-term tree strategy will be worked on in due course.
- 45.2 Cllr Sykes asked about sanctions for privately owned organisations that may have contributed to the spread of tree disease, by not disposing of diseased logs in the appropriate way, and whether tree species that deal better with climate change will be re-planted. Mike Harris said it was about having the right tree in the right place and that there isn't a sanctions policy, but the storing of logs does cause a problem.
- 45.3 Cllr Fowler asked about public safety, that diseased trees become fragile and the branches can fall on people causing serious injury; tree felling had to be done in Hollingbury Woods. She asked what type of tree will be re-planted and whether they will be fast-growing. Cllr Robins said that they have a Woodland Advisory Group with cross party membership and members of the community. They were devastated when the trees were lost but it opened up a space to the sun and now bluebells grow there and there are a lot of butterflies; they are deciding how to design the replanting scheme and the group are coming up with good ideas.
- 45.4 Cllr Fowler said it would be good to include "Friends of" groups and to improve communication so local communities know what's going on. Mike Harris said they liaise with the "Friends of" groups and ward councillors but sometimes they need to be reactive at short notice. Cllr Shanks said that residents need to know why trees are being felled and suggested putting letters through doors or a notice on the affected tree. Mark Strong who represents the community voluntary sector said that they have a rep for environmental issues who would like to be kept informed and they have direct access to the "Friends of" groups and can be used to spread the word.
- 45.5 Mark Strong said that climate change has not been mentioned, and that the loss of trees has a big impact with less of a cooling effect on the area and less carbon dioxide being captured. Cllr Robins said they have some funding for replanting, that it is easy to plant trees in parks and woodland but street trees are difficult due to higher costs, removing stumps and other debris as well as making good the road or pavement afterwards. Cllr Robins would defend cutting down trees over not cutting them down and someone getting hurt.
- 45.6 Cllr Robins said they are trying to save what they can through inoculating trees but they have limited funding and need to prioritise. Mike Harris said that they are leading the way with the largest inoculation programme in the country. Cllr Robins said there is an elm tree in Portslade which is the only mature type of that tree in the world.
- 45.7 **RESOLVED** – that the report be noted.

46 HERITAGE TASK & FINISH GROUP SCOPING REPORT

- 46.1 Cllr Evans presented the scoping report for the Task & Finish Group on Heritage and explained how it will feed into the council's new Heritage Strategy, looking to find new ideas to inform the next one.
- 46.2 Mark Strong asked whether the membership is open to anyone including those involved in local heritage groups. Giles Rossington, Scrutiny Manager, said there is the potential to co-opt someone from the wider community but from a practical point of view, it might be better to have them give evidence.
- 46.3 Cllr Miller said that the previous strategy was titled "Conservation Strategy" and that this was changed to "Heritage Strategy" because conservation is all about keeping a historical record and looking at conservation areas and listed buildings whereas "Heritage" has a wider scope looking at what makes the city what it is, including things like music venues etc.
- 46.4 Cllr Loughran was confused by the areas to investigate and asked for clarification; she suggested speaking to heritage consultants and people from outside Brighton & Hove. Giles Rossington said the group is member-led and the first thing will be to meet with the members to determine who they want to talk to and plan out the project. This will include gathering best practise from other Local Authorities and organisations.
- 46.5 Cllr Evans said that the recommendations from the group will feed into the council's Heritage Strategy which will eventually go out for public consultation.
- 46.6 **RESOLVED** that Place Overview and Scrutiny Committee
- agrees to establish a Task & Finish Group to look into Heritage in the city
- agrees Terms of Reference, membership and duration of the Task & Finish Group as set out in Appendix 2.

The meeting concluded at 7.02pm

Signed

Chair

Dated this

day of

