

# Brighton & Hove City Council

## Cabinet

## Agenda Item 99(a)

**Subject: Member Questions**

**Date of meeting: 22 January 2026**

A maximum period of fifteen minutes in total shall be made available at each meeting of the Executive for questions from Members of the Council. The questions included on the list of questions referred to above shall be taken as read at the Cabinet meeting. The question will be answered either orally or at the discretion of the Chair by a written answer circulated after the meeting. Officers may assist the Leader or a Cabinet Member with technical answers to questions. No supplementary questions shall be permitted.

The following written questions have been received from Members:

**(1) Councillor McNair- More recycling, less waste – a new collection model**

Have refuse vehicle numbers increased since 2023?

**(2) Councillor McNair- More recycling, less waste – a new collection model**

Have Environmental Services staff numbers gone up since 2023?

**(3) Councillor McNair- More recycling, less waste – a new collection model**

How many vehicle breakdowns have there been since November 2025?

**(4) Councillor Meadows- More recycling, less waste – a new collection model**

Does the 99% collection rate (3.3) refer to the same day or within 48 hours?

**(5) Councillor Meadows- More recycling, less waste – a new collection model**

Residents in Patcham & Hollingbury have not experienced a collection rate of 99% this winter. What is the rubbish and recycling rates in Patcham & Hollingbury and Westdene & Hove Park?

**(6) Councillor Meadows- More recycling, less waste – a new collection model**

Is introducing a fortnightly refuse collection and fortnightly food collection a cost-cutting exercise?

**(7) Councillor McNair- More recycling, less waste – a new collection model**

By implementing a fortnightly refuse collection, is the council admitting that the problems in the Environmental Services department investigated in the KC's report in 2023 are still ongoing?

**(8) Councillor McNair- More recycling, less waste – a new collection model**

Is the council admitting that it does not have the staffing levels or vehicle availability to manage a weekly service?

**(9) Councillor Meadows- More recycling, less waste – a new collection model**

When is this reduced fortnightly service likely to be introduced?

**(10) Councillor Meadows- Council Tax Base and Business Rates Retention Forecasts 2026/27**

By what percentage are business rates increasing?

**(11) Councillor McNair- Council Tax Base and Business Rates Retention Forecasts 2026/27**

How many businesses will be impacted by increasing business rates?

**(12) Councillor Meadows- Council Tax Base and Business Rates Retention Forecasts 2026/27**

Is the council providing any support to businesses under threat of closure?

**(13) Councillor McNair- Circular Economy Routemap and Action Plan 2025-35**

What percentage of council tax is used to help the council achieve Net Zero?

**(14) Councillor Meadows- Circular Economy Routemap and Action Plan 2025-35**

What likelihood is there of the council and the city achieving net zero by 2030?

**(15) Councillor McNair- Circular Economy Routemap and Action Plan 2025-35**

Is the drive to a circular demand the reason why contracts negotiated by the council are more expensive than they otherwise would be?

**(16) Councillor Meadows- Biodiversity Habitat Bank Pilot at St Michael's Field**

Could you please explain what a habitat bank is, what a unit is, and how it can be sold in plain English?

**(17) Councillor McNair- Biodiversity Habitat Bank Pilot at St Michael's Field**

How is a habitat bank at St Michael's Field connected to Patcham Court Farm?

**(18) Councillor Meadows- Biodiversity Habitat Bank Pilot at St Michael's Field**

Despite stating in paragraph 5.4 that ward councillors have been briefed on this, to the best of our knowledge, we haven't. When will we be?

**(19) Councillor West- More Recycling, less waste - a new collection model**

Moving to fortnightly rubbish collections was something the Green administration sought to do over ten years ago as part of a plan to introduce food waste collections. Labour in cahoots with the Conservative Group quashed that plan, leaving the city embarrassed to be one of the last councils in the country collecting refuse every week and without a food waste collection scheme until the previous Government made this mandatory. Would the Administration apologise for all those lost years when recycling would have been incentivised, food waste would have been composted and less 'waste' would have been incinerated?

**(20) Councillor Hill- Sussex and Brighton devolution and Mayoral election**

Despite having a much smaller population than West and East Sussex respectively, our administration has agreed a memorandum of understanding to take on an equal third share of the value of the financial contributions and liabilities for the Sussex and Brighton Combined County Authority of any future debt. While I understand the stated reason of this is due to each authority having equal voting rights, why should our city take on a disproportionate financial risk compared to our neighbouring councils in setting this up? In other words, are those 2 votes on the strategic authority really worth the extra cost for us?

**(21) Councillor Hill- Sussex and Brighton devolution and Mayoral election**

Our neighbouring constituent authorities will be potentially run by Councillors serving seven year terms from 2021 until 2028 when vesting day occurs a year after the new shadow authorities are elected in 2027. These long terms are highly undemocratic. The political makeup of them would likely be totally different were it not for the government allowing them to not hold elections year after year. Does the administration agree with me that their lack of mandate harms the legitimacy of their role in creating the strategic authority?

**(22) Councillor Sykes- More Recycling, less waste - a new collection model**

The paper describes 'significant progress made to improve the performance of the waste and recycling service'; yet the next item 104 then shows that residual waste is rising, missed collections are rising, street litter is rising and the percentage of waste sent for reuse and recycling is down and declining, to levels below those achieved 12 years ago. I'm getting emails every week from B&A residents complaining about overflowing communal bins. Will the administration maintain performance monitoring to allow us to continue to see what's really happening in our services?

**(23) Councillor Sykes- 2025/26 Mid-year Council Plan Progress update**

Stage 1 complaints about performance in Environmental Services are upheld in 93.5% of cases; far higher than under other services. How has this been assessed by the administration and what steps are planned to address this?

**(24) Councillor Sykes- 2025/26 Mid-year Council Plan Progress update**

Under key corporate KPIs, business rates collection performance is significantly down and declining against targets, potentially implying an additional shortfall of up to £2.4m in revenue to the council. Has this been looked into and what are the reasons for this?

**(25) Councillor Sykes- Sussex and Brighton devolution and Mayoral election**

How many FTE are now working on devolution and what was spent on devolution in the current financial year against budget?

**(26) Councillor Sykes- Council tax base and business rates retention forecasts 2026/27**

9682 dwellings are estimated to be exempt from council tax. It is assumed the bulk of these are student households; can a breakdown be provided.

**(27) Councillor Sykes- Future model of ORBIS IT&D, procurement and internal audit services**

It appears that political disagreement between Surrey, East Sussex and BHCC is the reason for termination of the bulk of integrated IT&D services, and the paper states "BHCC has no choice but to exit the partnership", at the cost to BHCC of an additional £0.457m in scarce revenue funding. It seems an extraordinary time for this to happen just prior to devo and LGR. This must be seen as a political failure by all three authorities. Can the Administration explain?

**(28) Councillor Shanks- Youth Participation Update**

How will the administration ensure a good geographical representation and include diversity in the youth council?

**(29) Councillor Shanks- Housing Management for Brickfields Development**

This appears a missed opportunity for the council to manage this site and keep council tenants. Will cabinet consider managing Brickfields development itself rather than a 125 years lease?

**(30) Councillor Shanks- Housing Management for Brickfields Development**

Is there a break option for the lease and what would happen if a new provider relinquishes it?

**(31) Councillor Fishleigh- More Recycling, Less Waste- A new collection model**

With some residents in the area I represent not having had a recycling collection since the start of December (ie three collection misses), and the caretaker of the 200+ flats at the Grand Ocean in Saltdean having to call every week to ask when there will be a recycling collection, do you agree that the easiest way to increase our city's recycling levels is to actually empty the bins?

**(32) Councillor Fishleigh- More Recycling, Less Waste- A new collection model**

Paragraph 6.1 of the report is unclear to me. I read it that the cost of doing the various assessments, surveys and employing an independent consultant will be £0.512m and that this money will be taken from the food waste budget. Is this correct and, if so, do you think that buying another lorry that won't break down, or employing more people (internally or agency) is more likely to increase recycling rates?

**(33) Councillor Fishleigh- More Recycling, Less Waste- A new collection model**

Reviewing and improving existing based on feedback from our own drivers and loaders alongside councillors isn't a difficult or time-consuming piece of work. Why isn't this happening anyway as a standard operational procedure?

**(34) Councillor Fishleigh- More Recycling, Less Waste- A new collection model**

Last year when additional items were added to the recycling capacity, I was told that every household would receive a leaflet. However, as far as I know and certainly not in the area I represent, this didn't happen. Why don't you try a campaign to raise awareness before agreeing to spend money on researching a new collection model?

