

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 71

Subject: Written questions from members of the public

Date of meeting: 29 January 2026

A period of not more than thirty minutes shall be allowed for questions submitted by a member of the public who either lives or works in the area of the authority at each ordinary meeting of the Council.

Every question shall be put and answered without discussion, but the person to whom a question has been put may decline to answer. The person who asked the question may ask one relevant supplementary question, which shall be put and answered without discussion.

The following written questions have been received from members of the public.

1. Phil Grabsky asked:

I have lived on Tongdean Lane – between Withdean Stadium and Dyke Road Avenue – for 30 years and in the past 18-24 months there has been a sharp increase of traffic – often exceeding the speed limit and a large percentage of whom are ignoring the Restricted Access only signs – coming up and down the lane. There is no pavement so this traffic – often as I say at excessive speed – is a danger to adult, child and, not to be overlooked, pets. This has partly been caused by the large increase of attendance at Withdean gym. The building of football pitches, now padel courts and soon a pool, have and will only make matters worse. When we have requested speed bumps (which can be installed at relatively low cost) we are told someone has to be killed or injured first. Is this Council really willing to wait for that eventuality?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport & City Infrastructure.

2. Chris Hartfield asked:

Following 3 tragic deaths in Eastbourne the council made clear statements last year that, due to the lack of local temporary accommodation, “it has no choice but to use out-of- city emergency placements” however, it would “prioritise keeping people within Brighton and Hove wherever possible”. Why then, have they failed, despite 9 requests, to make comment or express interest on the tender submitted March 2025 from a local landlord offering accommodation in a centrally located Hove property of 9 self-contained units, which has incidentally been used by the council as temporary accommodation for Adult Social Care for 15+ years.

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing:

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3. Andy Barker asked:

Rottingdean Croquet Club: I am here as chair of Rottingdean croquet club. We have been trying to sign a lease with BHCC for Rottingdean croquet green and club house since December 2024. When will the final lease be sent to the club?

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

4. Paul Norman asked:

In November 2023 BHCC owned 1,298 homes in EPC Band D, and 88 homes in band E or below. Now that the government is looking at a target for all council homes to achieve an EPC rating of C by 2030, how many residential properties owned by Brighton and Hove City Council currently need work to an EPC of C: and what is the estimated cost of these works?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing.

5. Adrian Hart asked:

At a Cabinet meeting last year, data on child wellbeing and mental health risks were cited in support of policy decisions affecting local schools. Can leader Cllr Sankey or safeguarding lead Cllr Daniel explain what processes and safeguards are in place to ensure that any statistical evidence presented publicly is accurate, verified, and does not inadvertently mislead residents, particularly on sensitive issues such as suicide prevention and safeguarding? I feel certain everyone here agrees that accurate evidence and robust safeguards are essential to maintain public trust and protect children's welfare.

Reply from Councillor Daniel, Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Youth Services.

6. Ross Harper asked:

I represent Leaseholders at The Barrows, the housing development agreed as part in the Open Market development by Hyde Housing. Hyde are the councils chosen housing partner and as such have had many developments agreed. Sadly our experiences of Hyde as a landlord have been dismal. The latest example is a huge hike in our Service Charge, in some cases 300-400%, this includes Hyde trying to change us for Fire Safety measures in relation to new government legislation after the Grenfell disaster. Hyde have increased their management fee to £40 per month per unit and our building insurance to £60 per unit, so before any costs we are paying £100pm each. I personally have seen my service charge go from £66pm to £250pm. If the council intend to keep Hyde as their preferred housing partner what can be done to protect residents from becoming trapped in unreasonable Service Charges?

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Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing.

7. Linda Newman asked:

Pavement parking is a persistent and growing problem in Woodingdean, particularly on council estates built before car ownership was common. This creates serious difficulties for pedestrians who are often forced into the carriageway to pass.

I was very glad to see our Labour Government has now granted local authorities new powers to tackle pavement parking.

Can the Cabinet Member for Transport and City Infrastructure explain how Brighton & Hove City Council intends to implement these new powers in practice, and what approach the council will take to consulting with residents to ensure the enforcement reflects local conditions and priorities?

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport & City Infrastructure.

8. David Tindell asked:

The bus real time information sign at London Road Shops Stop C is not working, It had not been working for a few weeks before I raised the issue with the councils Public Transport Team on the 31 July 2025, I have since followed this up with the Transport Team and the issue has still not been resolved (as of the 17 January 2026 almost 6 months), so when will this be resolved?

This is a council issue in that the latest problem is a power supply issue not related to the display issues (VIX Technology)

Reply from Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport & City Infrastructure.

9. Barry Stierer asked:

Will the Administration provide a comprehensive update on progress made in implementing the two actions mandated by the Notice of Motion passed at the meeting of Council on 13 October 2025 (amended Notice of Motion on Gaza and council financial exposure), including a precise timetable for both actions?

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

10. Christina Summers asked:

In light of events at the October 13th Full Council, where a public rally took place outside the meeting and a resident deputation on community safety and antisemitism was interrupted mid-speech, can the Council explain what risk

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assessments, safety measures, and liaison with the police were conducted to ensure the safety of residents attending the Council chamber and outside the building?

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

11. Jacquelyn Brown asked:

An ever increasing number of tents are occupied in the St. Nicholas Church Rest Garden. I have been in contact with my ward Councillor Alison since November, who has been supportive. I have also written to my local Green MP.

There have been reports of antisocial behaviour, possession of knife and a dog who at times has been aggressive. The number and presence of the occupants is intimidating.

What are the Council going to DO to restore this public park to a place of peace, safety and recreation for the Community?

The notice on the gate clearly states that the Rest Garden is a BHCC park.

Reply from Councillor Alexander, Cabinet Member for Communities, Equalities, Public Health & Adult Social Care.

12. Victoria Bhogal asked:

Following the Full Council meeting of 13th October 2025, officers referred to an external statement issued by Sussex Jewish Representative Council about the impact of that meeting. Can the Cllr Sankey explain how the Council ensures that decisions affecting residents' deputations and public questions are made fairly and independently of such external statements?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council.

13. Daniel Harris asked:

On BBC Politics South East, Helen Grant MP praised Brighton for acquiring "200 in-house units" of temporary accommodation. Bella, you didn't correct this false claim. On 31 December 2025, you signed a £19 million direct award to Base One Holdings—a private contractor incorporated in 2023—for 209 lease/license units, not council ownership. This misrepresentation was broadcast regionally. Part 2 remains confidential, preventing scrutiny of due diligence, alternatives, and conflicts of interest. Bella, will you immediately publish Part 2 of the Base One decision report?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council.

14. David Wilson asked:

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Survey of lamp posts in Saltdean: The Saltdean Residents and Community Association would like to buy and maintain hanging baskets which would hang from lamp posts on brackets installed by a specialist company. The bracket installation would also be paid for by our association.

Councillor Fishleigh was advised by Councillor Allan that lamp posts would need to be tested by BHCC's specialist street lighting contractors for structural integrity. BHCC advised that the cost of this would be around £13,000 for six lamp posts. So around £2,000 per lamp post.

Do you agree this seems extremely expensive for street furniture that should be structurally sound anyway and will BHCC absorb this cost please?

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

15. Sheila Rimmer/Lynora Knot asked:

The answer to Ian Needham's question was not complete, so please can you confirm whether or not existing tenants from the LPS blocks are being guaranteed a like for like offer to return to the new homes at a like for like rent namely at regular council social (target) rents not at the government's new definition of social rents which is much higher?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing.

16. Jerome Cox-Strong asked:

Like so many living under social landlords who care more about profit than people, Southern Housing tenants on Pankhurst Avenue in Hanover are sadly used to severe issues going unfixed. Flooded lifts, broken external doors, leaks dripping through ceilings shutting down community spaces, and a total indifference to the needs of vulnerable residents.

Tenants tell me that for months, they've asked Southern to fix broken lights on the cut-through to Brighton General Hospital, leaving the ramp and stairs pitch black at night. Southern blame the NHS - yet that path is on Southern's property. It's clear from Southern's abysmal maladministration rate - approaching 92% in 2024 - they will not follow their obligations and responsibilities unless they're forced to.

So will the council step in, force them to act, and send a message that social landlords across the city cannot act with impunity and ignore the needs of their tenants?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing.

17. David Gibson asked:

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In the last 3 years over 100 homeless people in Brighton and Hove have died mostly living in privately provided temporary and emergency homeless accommodation. For many years housing campaigners have been pressing for the council to provide emergency and temporary accommodation. The last council made a start by acquiring Gladstone house and thankfully no one has died living in this council run facility. Expanding more council owned temporary accommodation is needed quickly since council owned homeless accommodation costs less and is better quality. This can be done more if council commit to designating at least 80% purchases under the current home purchase scheme as temporary homeless accommodation (for the first few years of its use) Will the council do this?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing.

18. Diane Montgomery asked:

Whilst developers seek to maximise their offer of shared ownership “affordable” homes agreed in planning as Gill Williams points out shared ownership is open to residents living outside the city and does not reduce waiting list, so the quota percentage of shared ownership sought by the council and reflected in the imminent planning note need to be tiny or zero (so as to maximise the benefit to local residents in the greatest housing need) Will you ensure that the quota is very low or zero in the forthcoming planning note?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing.

19. Nigel Furness asked:

As the plans for this year’s Sussex Mayoral Elections have now been postponed until 2028, partly, I understand Councillor Sankey, as a result of your input, what, if any, plans have you advocated to steal our citywide elections next year?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council.

20. Charles Harrison asked:

Procurement: On 02 Jan 2026 the Council entered a 6-year contract spending over £18 million of public funds with a provider, Base one, who were only incorporated as an organisation in 2023 and therefore do not have a proven track record of delivering a service. This award was an “urgent decision” made by the Leader of the Council.

We are aware that homeless numbers have been increasing for the last 2 years and that the surge in the use of costly private nightly placements is not a new trend either.

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Why was this decision to place such a major contract so rushed, without consideration of alternative actions or proper public scrutiny at a council meeting?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council.

21. Adam Dennett asked:

In the papers published on 21st January, in point 3.34 the council saw fit to use as part justification for their changes to the sibling link priority, a petition from the Equity in Education group citing support for the changes. More egregiously these responses were added to a table under 3.30 where they were combined with the overwhelmingly negative responses from the official consultation, to give the false impression of overall support for the proposals. Anyone who has taken an undergraduate class on statistics would be able to explain why it is both wrong and misleading to do this, with double counting of respondents, totally different sampling frames etc. If one of my students handed something like this in for an assessment they would fail, so why do the council officers think it is permissible to mislead Full Council again with more adulterated consultation outputs?

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

22. Lizzie Moore:

Before approving an irreversible merger, what specific financial and educational evidence has the council itself reviewed to satisfy its Best Value duty that merger offers a lower-risk and better outcome than federation, and where can this evidence be seen?

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

23. Alison Woolfenden

The Cabinet report for 13 November stated it was “not possible to quantify” the impact of the expanded sibling link, yet Councillor Taylor told Cabinet it would affect “eight or nine children” and Richard Barker told parents on 3 December “eight or nine children per school;” numbers that are inconsistent, but suggest some modelling was likely already known.

No catchment-level figures were published before the consultation closed on 9 January, yet just 12 days later modelling revealed 15% of Patcham pupils and 20 in the DS/V catchment could be displaced, preventing parents from responding meaningfully, or submitting evidence.

Can the Council clarify when the catchment-level modelling behind these figures was first known, whether it was known before the consultation closed, and if so, why it was withheld, and how this approach complies with the

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School Admissions Code, Gunning principles, and Nolan standards of openness, honesty, and fairness?

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