

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 104

Subject: Written questions from Councillors

Date of meeting: 26 March 2026

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 answer detailed below:

1. Councillor Wilkinson asked:

Subject: Improving Signposting and Promotion of Kemptown

Kemptown is one of Brighton & Hove's most vibrant and distinctive neighbourhoods, with a strong LGBTQ+ heritage, and a thriving independent business community. However, many residents and businesses feel that Kemptown is often overlooked in citywide wayfinding and visitor promotion. Better signposting and promotion could help increase footfall, support local businesses, and ensure visitors are encouraged to explore beyond the city centre and seafront.

Will the administration consider working with local businesses and ward councillors to review how Kemptown is signposted and promoted across the city, and explore opportunities to strengthen the area's visibility as a destination?

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

2. Councillor Wilkinson asked:

Subject: Developing a Kemptown Environmental Strategy

Residents in my Kemptown ward have consistently raised the importance of improving the local environment, including cleaner streets, more greenery, better air quality, and enhanced public spaces. While the council has citywide environmental commitments, there may also be opportunities to work with the local community to develop neighbourhood-level initiatives that support these goals.

Will the administration consider working with ward councillors, community groups, and residents to explore the development of a "Greening Kemptown" environmental strategy to support greener streets, increased planting, and improved public spaces within the ward?

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

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3. Councillor Earthey asked:

(BHCC Rights of Way) What progress has been made on establishing public access rights to the orphan BHCC land by Looes Barn in West Saltdean, and if none has been made, why not? This matter was raised by Dr Richard Stow as a Public Oral Question to December's Full Council following months of resident questions, but despite repeated follow ups by Cllr Fishleigh and myself, no resolution to this case appears to have occurred.

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

4. Councillor Earthey asked:

Large stretches of the Marina to Saltdean Undercliff are frequently submerged under shingle resulting from storms, resulting in danger to pedestrians and cyclists. The shingle is mainly cleared by local volunteers (the "Pebbledasher Project") using manual equipment such as brooms and shovels. Given that under climate change, we can expect more storms and thus more shingle, what steps are being taken to provide the Pebbledasher Project with the resources they are requesting, plus restoring the original Undercliff maintenance team to full strength (personnel and equipment)?

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

5. Councillor McNair asked:

We believe funding is being sought to reduce flooding in Winfield Avenue, Warmdene Drive and Dale Drive/Carden Avenue. Could we have any update on progress and what measures are likely to happen and when?

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

6. Councillor McNair asked:

Patcham Dovecote is an early 17th century dovecote – an extremely rare example. However, it is currently in a very poor state, with a sagging roof, collapsing boundary wall, and its door needing secured. Could we have an update on when Patcham Dovecote will be restored to its former glory?

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

7. Councillor Meadows asked:

It is now two years since the Scape project on Carden Avenue was implemented; could we have an update on its progress, including any successes or shortcomings?

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

8. Councillor Meadows asked:

The caravan at the bottom of Carden Hill is still present despite the court order of 1st October granting the Council the power to move it; can the Council provide a full explanation covering the cost of obtaining that order, why it has not been enforced, how much could potentially be saved annually if court orders are not pursued but left unused, and when the new policy on van dwellers will be published?

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

9. Councillor Theobald asked:

On December 18th, Cllr Theobald was told in a written response that a timeline to re-open Patcham Place pavilion could not be given because a member of staff was on maternity leave. The cricket season is fast-approaching and urgent action is required. Will cricket teams be able to use Patcham Place this season as they will need toilet access?

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

10. Councillor Theobald asked:

In answer to a written question from Cllr Meadows at Full Council on 23rd October 2025, Cllr Allen responded that "officers have a landscape design for [Patcham] 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."

Could we have an update on current timelines for the work to commence?

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

11. Councillor Lyons asked:

In regard to many residents living within Nevill Rd, Nevill Ave, The Closes & Woodland Drive having asked for a Parking Consultation; the response received from Cllr Muten to my question at Full Council in December 2025, was that Officers will arrange to meet with Ward Councillors early in the new year to discuss the

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boundary and details of the scheme. We are now in March and no meeting has yet been forthcoming. Please advise as to when this will be arranged.

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

12. Councillor Lyons asked:

Within Westdene & Hove Park Ward (and no doubt elsewhere within the city), many drains are blocked and haven't been cleared in some cases for years. Wards that are particularly hilly are susceptible to flooding as a result. Residents and I have been requesting for many drains to be cleared – but weeks & months later, these are not being done. What is the policy for drain clearance & timescales for clearances in 2026/27 tax year?

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

13. Councillor Hogan asked:

Why were Christmas trees in some areas of the city not collected until 21st February 2026?

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

14. Councillor Hogan asked:

Residents have contacted me about planting wildflowers in green spaces, but sometimes we're told the space is too small. Is there any criteria for where residents can plant wildflowers and what is the process for applying to do so?

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

15. Councillor De Oliveira asked:

How will the administration set out what actions the council is taking—through commissioning, contract management, and partnership work with the NHS/ICB—to ensure people with learning disabilities and autistic people are proactively supported to access cancer screening on an equal basis?

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

16. Councillor De Oliveira asked:

How will the administration ensure that free public assets—such as the Paddling Pool on King's Road, which provides overstretched families with an affordable day out on the seafront—remain open, functional, and protected for long term use?

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

17. Councillor Hill asked:

I feel it was inappropriate for administration Councillors to wish a 'Merry Budgetmas' to each other during budget Council whilst pushing through potential cuts to places like Wellington House. Do you understand why statements like this might be considered inappropriate given the very real fear families like those affected by proposals regarding Wellington House are currently feeling due to cuts from this budget?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council

18. Councillor Hill asked:

Investigations by the Councils Planning Enforcement team are taking longer at the moment than as advertised in the Council's adopted Planning Enforcement policy document as they have had vacancies in the team now for the past year. Is the Council able to provide additional support to this overstretched team? Residents of mine on D'Aubigny Road has complained for a long time now about difficulties to enforce a persistent noise problem which I am told is affected by this staffing issue.

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

19. Councillor Hill asked:

Government policy changes restricting UK social care visas showed that in 2025 there was an over 90% drop in visas compared to 2023. This will cause nationwide severe staffing shortages, including in Brighton & Hove. How does the administration intend to respond to this and will that response include lobbying the government to U-turn again on this policy?

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

20. Councillor Sykes asked:

Please can the Finance Lead provide additional information about the £4.775m Housing Benefit subsidy loss mentioned in the 26th Feb Council Budget papers, section 3.14, including how this loss appeared, what the multi-year impact is, whether back-office cuts may have increased the likelihood of this happening and any lessons on avoiding such in-year shocks in the future?

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

21. Councillor Sykes asked:

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Please can the Finance Lead provide additional information about the 'planning legal challenge' referred to in the 26th Feb Council Budget papers, section 3.14, including the quantum of the loss or the provision made if it has not yet been finalised, and any lessons on avoiding this nature of financial risk to the Council in the future?

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

22. Councillor West asked:

Due to the slow action to remove bird boxes at the King Alfred redevelopment before the start of nesting season, some work will now be delayed by the need to protect wildlife. The administrations' choice to redevelop the King Alfred leisure centre in situ was always going to be a complex process, highly at risk of known and unknown factors leading to delay and cost overrun. We don't wish the project to flounder. We don't want to see the council embarrassed and financially exposed by its own version of the HS2 debacle. What effective risk management is being employed to prevent further delays?

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

23. Councillor McLeay asked:

I am reading increasingly concerning information about BHCC's proposed role as a Primary Authority. My understanding is that other local authorities have chosen not to take on this role due to the potential financial and legal liabilities it can create. Could the Cabinet lead clarify what assessment has been made of these risks, and whether BHCC's legal team has formally reviewed and signed off the proposal?

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

24. Councillor McLeay asked:

In light of the council's substantial overspend on temporary homeless accommodation, approximately £5m above budget and largely benefiting private landlords, will the council agree to pause all asset disposals pending evidence that none of these assets could be used as temporary accommodation to help reduce ongoing financial pressures?

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

25. Councillor Lademacher asked:

Given that only 453 Airbnbs in Brighton & Hove currently pay business rates, can the Council provide a full explanation covering the average amount paid by each of these properties and the additional income the Council would receive if the estimated further 2,000 Airbnbs operating 'under the radar' were also paying their full business rates?

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

26. Councillor Lademacher asked:

What is the current average annual net revenue cost to the council for a unit of each of the following types of homeless temporary/emergency accommodation?

- Spot purchased
- Block booked
- Seaside homes
- Private sector leased
- Manoj House (council owned)
- Bed and Breakfast
- Home purchase scheme council TA units

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

27. Councillor West asked:

Does the administration believe it is appropriate to release a report about a highly controversial matter, a report they know to be poorly informed and partial, into the public domain and then use it for party political purposes?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council

28. Councillor Pickett asked:

With regard to what has happened at Middle Street School, will the administration be calling for an external investigation and report in order to fully understand the complexity of what occurred?

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

29. Councillor Pickett asked:

With regard to the audit report of January 2025, on the KC report, related to Hollingdean depot, it was noted that there were 'lessons to be learnt' and that these should be actioned. Cabinet noted the audit report but what were the lessons learnt and how have these recommendations been actioned in real terms within the council?

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

30. Councillor Goldsmith asked:

I've had an increase in the number of people getting in touch with me over incorrect council tax bills, who have had a lot of trouble getting the council tax team to address the problems, which only seem to get resolved after councillor input. Errors like these understandably cause a huge amount of stress for residents, so it's vital we get it right. Is the administration aware of an increase in issues and what steps are being

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taken to ensure the council tax has the support, capacity, and resources to carry out their role?

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

31. Councillor Goldsmith asked:

What work is being done by the council to support staff, students, and parents at Middle Street Primary School throughout the stressful process of consultation on closing their school, especially after what has already been a period of difficulty for those at the school?

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