

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 21

Subject: Written questions from Councillors

Date of meeting: 23 July 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 Earthey:

In the context of BHCC's Decarbonisation strategy and its response to changes in central government energy policy, please provide an update on BHCC local policy on :

- a) Installation of onshore wind capacity within the City's boundaries, and reaching agreement with the SDNP for suitable sites;
- b) Installation of battery storage capacity on BHCC-owned brownfield sites;
- c) Finding alternative sources of grant funding for domestic insulation, given that the Warmer Homes funding scheme has already reached capacity, risking a huge backlog in applications;
- d) Enforcing BHCC freeholder rights over leaseholders of BHCC properties who refuse to engage with BHCC and the local community for the installation of solar PV arrays on the council buildings they lease.

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

Our decarbonisation pathways study suggests that there are few sites in the city that are unambiguously suitable for onshore wind. Notwithstanding, we are certainly open to conversations to consider suitable sites.

The council is not currently exploring battery storage opportunities in detail, as Brighton & Hove is not currently within a local flexibility market area, meaning the local distribution network operator would not pay for use of battery storage.

Regarding domestic retrofit, the Warm Homes Plan, published in January, includes £15 billion of public investment to upgrade up to 5 million homes and lift up to a million families out of fuel poverty by 2030. It includes

Brighton & Hove City Council

grants and loans for homeowners to install heat pumps, solar panels and batteries; direct support for home upgrades for those on low incomes and in fuel poverty; and new rules to ensure landlords invest. In addition, one of the aims of a Strategic Energy Partnership would be to cross-subsidise retrofit with other projects.

It is unlikely there is any legal obligation for the leaseholder to engage with the council or the community on the installation of solar PV on the buildings that they lease, unless this right was specifically reserved within the lease for the benefit of the council. It would be more appropriate to adopt a consultative and collaborative approach to achieve the lessee's support for such a proposal.

2. Councillor Earthey:

Please provide an update on the City's Glyphosate Weed Control Programme – has it achieved its publicly-stated objectives to date, and what is BHCC's future weed control strategy?

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

The following changes have been made to the weed management programme in 2026:

- 2 main treatment cycles, plus a 'hotspot' treatment for known problem areas. This is a reduction from 3 full cycles in 2025.
- 2 teams moving towards the centre, one from the east and one from the west. Last year it was 1 team moving across the city, meaning slower progress and more disruption due to weather
- 123 street in the opt-out scheme, up from 40 in 2025
- 2 new trials – hot foam and a new e-weeding machine

The objectives have been met in terms of controlling growth while minimising glyphosate use (via Controlled Droplet Application).

The policy is one of reduction and minimisation and will be outlined further in an imminent policy paper due for publication later in the summer.

3. Councillor Barton Ahmad:

With regard to Goldsmid ward and the recent new developments within the ward, what is the council doing to monitor occupancy and ensure that these developments do not remain unoccupied?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing:

Private developers are responsible for actively marketing completed properties for sale or rent. For larger developments, achieving full occupancy may take time as homes are released, marketed and occupied in phases.

Brighton & Hove City Council

Where the developer is a Registered Provider, the council will monitor progress through our regular engagement meetings with them. New rented homes will be let through the Housing Register, and we will engage with them to better understand the challenges associated with shared ownership sales and to identify any barriers that may be affecting the rate of occupation

In April 2024 the council introduced an additional council tax premium on homes that have been empty for over a year and, since April 2025, this premium was also applied to second homes. These financial penalties are intended to encourage occupation rather than leaving homes vacant and apply to new and existing housing. In addition, our Empty Property Team will make contact with owners and discuss their options for bringing the properties into use.

4. Councillor Pickett:

In light of the recent hot weather, and in anticipation of the deluge that will follow, what is the council doing to pre-empt the anticipated flooding that will probably be worse than ever before and in the knowledge that calls within certain areas to clear blocked drains are being ignored eg bottom of Preston Drove?

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

Thank you for your question, Cllr Pickett. In line with the recommendations set out in the Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice, the Council adopts a risk-based approach to gully cleansing to ensure resources are targeted where they can have the greatest impact. Following a detailed review of historic silt levels in 2023, the cleansing programme was enhanced to provide increased attention to higher-risk locations. As a result, gullies near properties with a history of surface water flooding are now cleansed twice a year, compared with every 18 months under the previous regime. Other gullies are cleansed annually, every two years, or every four years, depending on historic silt accumulation and assessed flood risk. The revised approach was presented to Members at the Transport and Sustainability Committee on 6 February 2024.

This targeted programme has enabled the Council to focus maintenance activity where it is most needed, helping to improve the resilience of the highway drainage network across the city. While regular cleansing is effective in many cases, access can occasionally be restricted by parked vehicles, preventing the cleansing equipment from reaching individual gullies. Where this occurs, efforts are made to return and complete the work at a later date. The Council works closely with its contractor and holds regular performance meetings to monitor progress against the programme, review any issues that arise, and identify solutions where gullies have been missed or require additional attention. Despite the significant financial pressures facing

Brighton & Hove City Council

local authorities, we remain committed to maintaining the drainage network as effectively as possible and to prioritising investment where it will deliver the greatest benefit for residents and communities most at risk of flooding. A data-led policy implementation review including gully risk classification and frequency of access will progress where specific concerns are raised.

5. Councillor Pickett:

It is well documented that older people and children are most at risk of suffering health issues when it comes to pollution. Does the council have any plans to consolidate transport, environment and public health policy, joining up the statistics that prove that a reduction in traffic, woodburning, etc, correlates with improved health outcomes?

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

The Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) and Annual Status Reports (ASR) are the council's primary mechanisms for fulfilment of its duties in relation to air quality. The AQAP is multidisciplinary, with partnership working that addresses road traffic emissions, events, construction, port activities and solid fuel burning.

The ASR covers all of the topics listed, providing a citywide overview supported by charts, tables and trend data. Within the road traffic category, the report includes separate data for buses, Heavy Goods Vehicles (HGVs), Light Goods Vehicles (LGVs) and private cars. The Director of Public Health has also provided a foreword to the report.

The annual report explains how air quality and pollution are monitored across Brighton & Hove, outlines the actions taken by the council to improve air quality, and reports on the progress made against those measures. Information on particulate matter is also available through the Department of Health and Social Care's Fingertips public health data resource.

6. Councillor Hill:

Can papers for the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority meetings be available on the Brighton & Hove City Council website? Currently I have to use the East Sussex County Council site to get information.

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council:

Thanks for the question Cllr Hill. Despite vocal Green opposition to devolution for Brighton and Sussex, I am glad to see you are still taking an interest. We do not publish outside body agendas on our website our system does not permit this for agendas not published by us. SBSA Board papers are currently hosted on the East Sussex County Council website. The SBSA website has now been set up and it is expected that Board papers will be published on the SBSA website in due course.

Brighton & Hove City Council

7. Councillor Hill:

By April 2027, the East Sussex Fire Authority Board will be dissolved and the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority will take over their powers as well as for West Sussex. I do not agree with these proposals as I believe there will be weaker democratic oversight for Fire & Rescue without a bespoke authority dedicated to Fire & Rescue matters. There is a high level of risk involved to ensure day 1 readiness when the transfer completes. As Chair of the Strategic Authority, Cllr Bella Sankey will have some responsibility towards this. How will Cllr Sankey use her new role to ensure this transition is managed as smoothly as possible?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council:

The transfer of Fire and Rescue Authority functions into the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority forms part of the Government's wider devolution agenda. The objective is to place fire and rescue governance under directly elected mayors, improve democratic accountability, support the integration of emergency and public services, align public service boundaries, and simplify local governance arrangements.

These changes, enabled through the Government's devolution legislation, are focused on governance and accountability rather than altering operational command or emergency response activities.

Recognising that the transfer of Fire and Rescue Authority functions is one of the most significant responsibilities the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority will undertake by April 2027, the role of Strategic Authority Board members will be to ensure that robust governance, effective scrutiny, and clear assurance arrangements are established and maintained throughout the transition programme.

SBSA officers are working closely with the existing Fire & Rescue Authorities and Fire & Rescue Services in East Sussex and West Sussex, alongside Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government officials, and our Chief Fire Officers to ensure that the transition is delivered safely, transparently and in a manner that protects service continuity and maintains public confidence.

8. Councillor Hill:

Has Cllr Sankey met with Mark Matthews, Chief Fire Officer for the East Sussex Fire & Rescue service to discuss changes to governance arrangements that affect the East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service since her election as Chair of the Strategic Authority?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council:

I was elected as the Chair of the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority on 1st July and I have not yet held a formal meeting with Mark Matthews

Brighton & Hove City Council

specifically on the governance changes affecting East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service, noting that the transition of Fire & Rescue Authority powers and responsibilities is a collective Board responsibility.

However, the SBSA transition programme includes structured engagement between the Strategic Authority and Fire and Rescue leadership. The Fire & Rescue Transition Plan provides for regular engagement with authority leaders and Fire Authority Chairs, while operational readiness is being led with support from both Chief Fire Officers through the Operational Readiness workstream and the FRA/FRS Transition Board. Their professional expertise and operational independence will remain fundamental to the delivery of fire and rescue services.

9. Councillor Hill:

Park Crescent remains at risk of pluvial flooding, especially this autumn. Has the Council been able to determine if a bump in the road between Park Crescent and Lewes Road would be helpful to push the water towards The Level rather than into Park Crescent? This is different to the previous barrier which was in the middle of Lewes Road.

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

Thank you for your question, Cllr Hill. I most recently visited Elm Grove on 20th July and plan further visits. I am very mindful of residents' concerns, we are listening and taking action.

We acknowledge the ongoing surface water flooding concerns at this location and recognise the impact this can have on residents and highway users. The council's Flood Risk Management and Highway Maintenance teams have been working together to investigate the issue and identify potential solutions.

Following further assessment, it has been concluded that a raised table would not be an appropriate solution for this location, as it does not meet the current design standards required for a junction of this type.

The wider Elm Grove catchment has been included within the council's Surface Water Management Citywide Feasibility Study. This work will provide the Flood Risk Management team with a range of options for managing flood risk across the catchment and will help identify the most effective long-term interventions. The outcomes of the study will also be used to develop a business case for external funding, including potential support from the Environment Agency, to enable the delivery of flood mitigation measures throughout the Elm Grove catchment.

This ongoing study represents an important step towards securing sustainable, catchment-wide improvements that will help reduce flood risk both here and across the wider area.

Brighton & Hove City Council

10. Councillor Hill:

The East Sussex Fire & Rescue Service has no statutory responsibility to respond to flooding incidents and therefore is not funded to help with these incidents even though they do. Other strategic authorities provide funding to their Fire & Rescue Services to help fund this although it really should be a government funded responsibility. Can Cllrs on the Strategic Authority consider this in future when they have the relevant powers in future to affect this change?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council:

The creation of the Sussex & Brighton Strategic Authority (SBSA) provides significant opportunities to align our resources with the priorities of our region, and this will include the approach to public safety, which is a core area of competence for the SBSA.

As SBSA assumes Fire and Rescue Authority responsibilities from 2027 and Police and Crime Commissioner responsibilities from 2028, there will be greater opportunity to realise the benefits of regional alignment and coordination of funding for public safety, including emergency responses.

11. Councillor Shanks:

When will the CIL allocations be decided. Residents have been waiting?

Reply from Councillor Allen, Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Public Realm & Local Government Reorganisation:

Following the short listing exercise completed by ward councillors, the various services have been developing cost estimates and checking that proposals are policy compliant. Due to the large number of projects involved and the need for services to maintain a focus on day to day operations, this is taking longer than initially hoped. However, I expect this work to be concluded by early August.

In some wards, all projects have now been costed and the Planning Service is in contact with those ward councillors for them to agree their final shortlist for my delegated sign off as a priority.

In your ward, half of the shortlisted projects have been costed already at approximately £120k, with a budget of circa £50k available. The Planning Service has recently written to you with suggestions on how your shortlist could be rationalised to focus resources on costing a reduced number of outstanding schemes to enable a consensus to be reached as soon as possible.

12. Councillor Shanks:

Brighton & Hove City Council

Why are scrutiny call ins not given full financial information on which to base their decision?

Reply from Councillor Sankey, Leader of the Council:

When a call-in request has been accepted, officers will provide the Overview & Scrutiny Call-in Committee with all the information it requires to undertake its responsibilities. This will always include the original public Cabinet report and its appendices.

In instances where Cabinet also considered confidential (Part 2) information, consideration is given on a case-by-case basis as to whether this information can be shared with the Call-in Committee. This is based on whether the sensitive information is relevant to consideration of the issues identified in the call-in request and the nature of the commercial sensitivity. In some instances to date this has resulted in Part 2 reports being shared with the Call-in Committee in their entirety; in other instances, restricted reports have been shared, but with commercially sensitive information that is not relevant to the call-in request redacted. The aim is to support a robust call-in process whilst respecting the legal principle that exempt or confidential information should not be shared more widely than is required.

13. Councillor Lademacher:

How are improvements to the public realm prioritised fairly across all wards, particularly in the ones that have historically received fewer resources and/or have high levels of socio-economic inequality (like Queen's Park)?

Reply from Councillor Allen, Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Public Realm & Local Government Reorganisation:

I am committed to creating a clean, inclusive, green, and vibrant public realm that reflects Brighton & Hove's unique character and supports the wellbeing of all who live, work, and visit here. That applies to shopping parades on the outskirts of the city as well as the bustling city centre. Interventions are often triggered based upon on requests from the public and their representatives, available funding pots including from external partners such as Network Rail, and political priorities from the administration such as the removal of redundant phoneboxes.

I have joined our fantastic neighbourhood officers on an estate walkabout where public realm issues are identified and logged for action. These are taking place across the city including areas of higher inequality. Queens Park ward last had an inspection on sixteen days ago.

14. Councillor Lademacher:

Given new enforcement powers introduced under the Renters' Rights Act, which allow local authorities in England to issue civil penalties of up to £7,000

Brighton & Hove City Council

where serious Category 1 hazards are found in privately rented homes, how does the Council intend to enforce these new powers?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing:

Cabinet agreed a new [Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy](#) in April 2026. This new policy is important because it provides a clear framework for enforcing the Renters' Rights Act 2025 and other housing legislation in a fair, consistent and proportionate way which is aligned with government statutory guidance. This policy also included our revised approach to setting civil penalty notices.

We will investigate the complaint to determine whether a civil penalty should be issued and will consider the available evidence to reach this decision. We will then consider factors such as the severity of the breach, harm or potential harm to tenants, whether the landlord has a history of non-compliance, whether the breach was deliberate, and any aggravating or mitigating circumstances when deciding the level of penalty. We will take a robust approach to rogue landlords and use enhanced enforcement powers where landlords repeatedly or seriously breach their legal obligations.

15. Councillor McLeay:

Residents of Theobald House were told in 2023 that a children's play area could not be provided because major works were imminent, yet those works may now not begin until 2028. At the same time, families with children, including those with additional needs, continue to live in unsuitable conditions (on the 11th floor), alongside ongoing safety and ASB concerns. What is the council doing to improve the safety and wellbeing of children living in tower blocks such as Theobald House?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing:

We recognise residents' concerns about the lack of play space for children at Theobald House and the delay to the major works programme. The project has taken longer than expected due to the specialist surveys, design work and approvals needed, including Building Safety Regulator requirements. We appreciate the frustration this has caused, particularly as residents were previously advised that a permanent play area was not possible because works were expected to start sooner.

While the longer-term works are progressed, the Project Manager will contact the residents by the end of this week [24th July] and arrange to meet with them. The project manager will then explore with residents what temporary improvements can be provided. This will include interim play facilities or enhancements to communal spaces where these can be delivered safely.

We also continue to address concerns about estate safety and anti-social behaviour through estate inspections, responding to reports from residents, and working with Sussex Police and other partners. We recognise that some

Brighton & Hove City Council

families, including those with children who have additional needs, may face additional challenges living in high-rise accommodation and will continue to work with them to understand and respond to their needs.

We will keep residents updated on both the major works programme and any interim measures identified to support families living at Theobald House.

16. Councillor McLeay:

Theobald House has been wrapped in scaffolding for around five years because concrete was falling from the building. Residents are now being told that repairs may still be years away, with a possible start date of 2028. How can the council justify a delay of more than seven years to resolve what is fundamentally a building safety issue, and what assurances can be given to residents that this timetable will be improved?

Reply from Councillor Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing:

We recognise that the continued presence of the scaffolding and crash deck has had a significant impact on residents, particularly as it has remained in place for an extended period. We appreciate the patience and understanding residents have shown as we have kept them updated as part of working through what is a complex and highly regulated programme of building safety works.

The scaffolding at ground floor level forms a safety "crash deck", designed to protect residents and members of the public from any potential risk arising from the building. Although urgent concrete repairs to the lower levels have already been completed, specialist advice confirms that the crash deck must remain in place until the wider programme of works can be carried out safely.

We are currently finalising the design, specification and full scope of works required at Theobald House. To minimise future disruption and avoid multiple applications, we have expanded the project to include all necessary works identified by three separate Housing services within a single submission to the Building Safety Regulator (BSR). This has required detailed input from specialist consultants and technical experts and has taken longer than originally anticipated.

We expect to appoint a Principal Contractor by November and will then submit the full application to the BSR. Regrettably, current BSR approval times remain in excess of 40 weeks, and we must plan on that basis. However, if approval is received sooner, we will be in a position to commence works immediately.

Throughout this process, we have sought to keep residents informed through regular updates and have involved them in discussions about elements of the design and proposed works. We remain committed to continuing that engagement and to delivering the works as quickly and safely as possible,

Brighton & Hove City Council

while recognising the inconvenience and uncertainty that the delays have caused for those living in the building.

17. Councillor McLeay:

Parks for London recommends protecting public access to parks, limiting the impact of large-scale events, and being transparent about how event income is spent. Following two summers of intensive event use at The Level and Valley Gardens, residents have seen significant deterioration of grassed areas, yet the Cabinet Lead confirmed last year there were "no current plans for sprinkler systems or turf replacement, with reinstatement considered only on a case-by-case basis". What is the council's long-term plan to protect these green spaces, how much has been collected in reinstatement fees over the last two years, and how much of that money has been spent restoring The Level and Valley Gardens?

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

The council recognises the importance of protecting public green spaces while balancing the cultural, community and economic benefits that events can bring to the city. Event organisers are required to implement measures to minimise damage to park infrastructure and grassed areas, and post-event inspections are undertaken to identify any remedial works that may be required.

With regard to reinstatement costs, it is important to note that Brighton & Hove City Council does not collect reinstatement fees. Where reinstatement works are required, the costs are charged directly by the council's appointed specialist contractor to the event organiser. Consequently, the council does not receive or retain any of these payments.

The council continues to work with its parks and events teams to monitor the condition of The Level and Valley Gardens and to identify appropriate maintenance and restoration measures where necessary.

Decisions regarding reinstatement works are informed by site inspections, operational requirements, available resources and the condition of the affected areas. The council also reviews event impacts as part of its ongoing management of events within the city's parks and open spaces to ensure that public access and the long-term quality of these spaces are appropriately protected.

As reinstatement charges are paid directly to the contractor rather than the council, the council is unable to provide figures for the amounts collected or spent on restoration works through this arrangement.

18. Councillor Sykes:

Brighton & Hove City Council

Please provide a figure for total spend to end June on the King Alfred Leisure Centre project and the projected updated programme to completion as it stood at end June.

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

As at the end of June 2026, the total capital expenditure on the King Alfred Regeneration project is £6.12m. This spend is well within the £8.5m budget drawdown so far agreed by Cabinet. As a reminder, an initial drawdown of £2.7m was agreed at the July 2024 Cabinet, a further £2.3m at the September 2025 Cabinet, and most recently, £3.5m at April 2026 Cabinet.

This figure reflects all work completed on the project to date, including the appointment of the professional team, development of the detailed designs up to RIBA 4a, and the submission of the planning application which is due to be determined at Planning Committee later this month. In addition to the design work, the expenditure also covers the enabling works completed on site. This includes the asbestos removal works conducted between December 2025 and April 2026, the biodiversity net gain planting works on the adjacent Hove Lawns event space, and the relocation of UK Power Network cables.

The programme continues with demolition scheduled to begin this summer, and construction of the new facility to commence at the start of 2027. Completion is expected for autumn 2029.

19. Councillor Sykes:

Please provide a log of the number of refuse and recycling trucks of all types that were out of action in the month of June, by date and issue.

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

In total the number of refuse collection vehicles defected in June = 12 – workshop have provided the following information and dates:

05.05.26 - WWT – default – Tyres & wiper
09.06.26 - VVL – default – Unidentified noise
09.06.26 - CWP – default – Emergency stop not working
10.06.26 - FZR – default – Bin lift not operating
11.06.26 - BVV – default – Rear light out
17.06.26 - AWG – default – Overheating
19.06.26 - EUZ – default – Bulb out
20.06.26 - LJR – default – Ingress & exit doors not working
23/24.06.26 - BYB – default – various issues identified
24.06.26 - EEW – default – Various issues identified
30.06.26 - BVW – default – suspension collapse on near-side.

Brighton & Hove City Council

20. Councillor Sykes:

The BHCC Perkbox offers savings for council employees. However, all the offers are with multinational companies. What happened to supporting the local economy?

Reply from Councillor McGregor, Cabinet Member for Economy, Culture, Heritage & Tourism:

I agree that supporting our local economy is important, and value contribution local businesses make to Brighton & Hove.

At the same time, we have a responsibility to provide an attractive employment offer for our staff, supporting the workforce to deliver their best for the city. Perkbox offers employees the opportunity to reap discounts and savings. It also provides access to 24/7 mental health support, a GP service and wellbeing resources. These benefits help support our workforce, strengthen our position as an employer of choice while delivering savings for the council.

I would welcome greater participation from local businesses. However, the council does not have the capacity to identify, negotiate and maintain individual offers at this time. Using a provider enables these relationships to be managed on our behalf. Local businesses can register an interest in joining the platform, with participating offers selected independently by Perkbox.

Alongside this, we'll continue to promote local offers to staff to support local spending via the internal Company Benefits section on Perkbox, separate to their marketplace, providing another way to support local businesses while complementing the platform's benefits and wellbeing offer.

21. Councillor Sykes:

Road drains are blocked all over the city and this increases risk of surface water flooding. Please state the in-house and bought-in resource (FTE or cash) planned for drain clearance in 2026-27 and indicate how many road drains are no longer planned for clearance due to resource shortage.

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

Thank you for your question, Cllr Sykes.

The council is taking a proactive approach to reducing the risk of surface water flooding across the city, recognising the increasing impact of extreme weather events and the need to improve resilience to climate change.

Brighton & Hove City Council

In line with the Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure Code of Practice, the council operates a risk-based gully cleansing programme. Following a review of historic silt levels and flooding records in 2023, the programme was strengthened so that gullies in areas with a known history of flooding are now cleansed twice yearly, while all other gullies are cleansed at frequencies determined by risk and historic asset performance. This ensures resources are targeted where they can have the greatest benefit.

The council also continues to work with partners, including Southern Water, to better understand flood risks across the city and identify opportunities for investment in drainage infrastructure and wider flood resilience measures. This work supports the council's longer-term approach to managing the increasing challenges associated with climate change and more frequent intense rainfall events.

In addition to routine maintenance, the council closely monitors contractor performance, investigates reports of drainage concerns and reviews locations where additional intervention may be required. Recruitment is currently underway for a dedicated Drainage Engineer, a role that has been vacant for the last three years. This additional specialist resource will strengthen the council's capacity to manage drainage assets, oversee maintenance programmes and coordinate flood risk activities ahead of the winter period.

While no drainage system can completely prevent flooding during exceptionally intense rainfall, particularly where highway drainage systems, soakaways and the wider sewer network are operating at capacity, the council continues to invest in a targeted, evidence-led approach that focuses resources on the areas of greatest risk and supports the city's long-term flood resilience.

22. Councillor West:

The Government has recognised the mistake of halting councillors pensions and members are now permitted to join their local LGPS scheme. Why has the administration not yet set this up, the delay is unacceptable. Contributions should be back dated. Will they be?

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

We are pleased that our Labour Government has overturned the Tory-Lib Dem Coalition decision to scrap councillor pensions. Councillors were allowed to join the pension scheme from the 11th of May and guidance from the Fund followed in due course. The payroll team did ask whether the contributions could be backdated for those members who have responded and decided to opt in. The scheme has confirmed very recently that for those members who have their first contribution in July 26, contributions can be backdated to June and this will be actioned and communicated to those members.

Brighton & Hove City Council

23. Councillor De Oliveira:

What speed measure are taken to regulate smart paddle bikes and scooters as some can reach up to 40 miles per hour endangering vulnerable residents?

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

Thank you for your question, Cllr De Oliveira.

The maximum legal assisted speed for an e-bike is 15.5mph, and it is illegal to modify or “derestrict” an e-bike to exceed this limit. Some vehicles used by gig economy delivery riders resemble e-bikes but are closer to electric mopeds, using a handlebar throttle that operates independently of pedalling. These vehicles can travel at higher speeds and are often unregistered.

The Government had planned legislation to provide a clearer regulatory framework for these vehicles, but this was not included in the King's Speech in May 2026 due to parliamentary time pressures. In the meantime, the illegal use of these vehicles remains a matter for police enforcement.

Council officers in Trading Standards and Transport are working with Sussex Police to support planned enforcement activity. It should also be noted that privately owned e-scooters remain illegal to use on the public highway.

To coincide with the launch of the city's legal e-scooter hire trial, the council is delivering a public awareness campaign reminding residents that privately owned e-scooters are not permitted on public roads, pavements or cycle lanes. The campaign highlights the safety risks associated with illegal and modified vehicles.

Within the legal hire scheme, e-scooters will be limited to a maximum speed of 12.5mph, with lower limits of 6.5mph in designated areas. The city's hire e-bikes are restricted to the legal maximum assisted speed of 15.5mph.

24. Councillor McNair:

The way residents report missed bin collections has changed. Instead of being able to report a missed collection, residents are now told that the council knows that their bin hasn't been collected, in effect stopping residents from reporting it. After a few days, the default seems to be no collection and no way to report it. Residents are also often told their bin was not out when it was. Or that it was collected when it wasn't. The IT system rarely seems to be accurate. Why has the reporting system changed and when can we expect it to work accurately?

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

Brighton & Hove City Council

When a collection is missed (and logged as such on our system by the crew or operations managers), it is effectively automatically reported. In other words, the team know it has been missed and are already trying to reallocate it. In these cases, there is no need for the resident to report it and so no option to do so is provided. The valuable reports are of missed collections we do *not* know about and if there are a large number of reports of missed collections that we *do* already know about, it only makes getting to the ones we don't know about that much harder.

However, we are reviewing the wording on the website to make this clearer to residents.

The statement that the system is 'rarely' accurate is incorrect. It is accurate in the vast majority of cases. However, the instances where it isn't clearly cause concern and need to be addressed.

The reason the reporting system has changed is that the whole operation used to run on scraps of paper. The operations team was more reliant on reports from residents as there was no direct or automatic link between crews and the operations centre.

Since the digital system has been fully deployed, there is a constant and live link between the vehicles and the operations centre, which includes missed collections being automatically logged and instantly visible to controllers. There is no value in receiving reports of missed collections we already know about – it just creates additional administrative burden.

25. Councillor McNair:

Why is it proving impossible to have yellow lines provided to prevent dangerous parking in Patcham & Hollingbury? We have requested lines where there is risk to pedestrians and motorists due to badly parked cars, e.g. on the corners of roads in Rotherfield Crescent, but we are always told there is a lack of money. This is a typical quote:

"We have advised them that due to limited resources, our current focus is on maintaining existing parking restrictions. Regrettably we are unable to consider any changes to the public highway outside of controlled parking zones, except for disabled bay requests or busy junctions on or near the main road network where safety to all road users is of concern."

However, there is money for red routes in the centre of town. Why is the safety of residents in Patcham & Hollingbury of less concern?

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

Thank you for your question, Cllr McNair.

Officers have investigated the request in Rotherfield Crescent, and a section of new no waiting restrictions have recently been installed at the junction of Carden Hill.

Brighton & Hove City Council

If there are other areas of Rotherfield Crescent or the wider area where residents are concerned about safety at junctions, they can submit a request to the Parking Design & Implementation Team who will investigate.

Requests for new parking restrictions are assessed individually on their own merits and are prioritised according to evidence of safety risk and urgency across the city. Officers use a range of information to inform these decisions, including collision data supplied by Sussex Police, traffic conditions, road layout, visibility at junctions, and the potential impact on all road users.

Red Routes are funded by BISIP funding from central government to improve road safety and reduce congestion by making bus travel more attractive through improved bus travel times. The funding is ring-fenced to improve bus services and scheduling so can't be used for other projects.

Nonetheless, this call for more restrictions and effective enforcement is noted and requests and options for future improvements can assist future planning.

26. Councillor Meadows:

Fly tipping in Orchid View is extremely frequent. Can we have CCTV fitted, as it is in Bramble Way and Birch Grove Crescent, to deter fly tipping and, ultimately raise money for a cash-strapped council?

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

Thank you for raising your concerns about the frequent fly-tipping in Orchid View.

We will add Orchid View to our list of locations for assessment and consideration. The deployment of CCTV is prioritised based on a range of factors, including the volume of reported incidents, evidence of persistent fly-tipping, and intelligence gathered by our officers and enforcement staff.

We continuously review reports and intelligence across the city to identify locations where CCTV is likely to be most effective in deterring offences and assisting with enforcement action. Your feedback helps inform that process, and Orchid View will be included in future reviews.

In the meantime, please continue to report any fly-tipping incidents, as this information contributes to our assessment of problem locations and helps us target resources where they are most needed.

27. Councillor Meadows:

There were abandoned bike frames left chained to a bike rack in Patcham Old Village for months. They were retagged on 14th May for removal 14 days later – so 28th May – because the original tag for removal had no date. But,

Brighton & Hove City Council

they still have not been removed on 2nd July. If notices are not followed through a) offenders will be encouraged to abandon bikes and vehicles with impunity b) it looks to residents that the council does not care about such 'trivial' matters. Why were the bikes not removed at the expiry date on the notice?

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

The responsibility for investigating, tagging and tracking abandoned bicycles sits with our Highways colleagues. Once bicycles or bike frames have been identified and the appropriate notices have expired, the physical collection and removal are carried out by the Bin and Box Team.

Unfortunately, due to recent staffing shortages within the collection service, removals have been taking longer than usual, which has led to a backlog of tagged bicycles awaiting collection across the city, including those in Patcham Old Village.

We understand your concerns regarding the bike frames that were tagged on 14 May and appreciate that when items remain in place beyond the stated removal date, it can undermine confidence in the process and create the impression that abandoned property is not being actively managed.

To address this issue, we are currently seeking agency cover to support the service and recommence regular collections, with the aim of reducing the backlog and improving removal timescales.

Thank you for your patience and for bringing this matter to our attention.

28. Councillor Theobald:

Rubbish, recycling and garden waste collections have been very inconsistent over the past few weeks. In particular, garden waste collections have been frequently missed despite residents paying extra for the service. Residents are also frequently told they had not left their garden waste out for collection when they have. Why is Garden Waste not being collected regularly and will residents receive extensions to their subscriptions?

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

The service has been suffered with frequent vehicle breakdowns that have impacted significantly on our ability to collect garden waste on the scheduled day. It is recognised that this is very frustrating to customers that have paid for a service. Environmental Services colleagues have a number of initiatives in train that will improve the service. Regarding your specific question about extension on subscriptions, garden waste service has now moved to a fixed April to March subscription period to ensure that all payments and collections align. Missed collections will now be compensated

Brighton & Hove City Council

through adjustments to payments rather than extended subscription periods. We will be writing imminently to subscribers to clarify this.

29. Councillor Theobald:

At a previous Council Meeting I spoke in favour of the retention of Wellington House. On 23 June, Cllr Alexander circulated an email in which she stated that "there are 6 other providers of day opportunities for adults with learning difficulties in the city." Would Cllr Alexander please confirm where each of these centres are located, who operates them and whether all 21 current users of Wellington House would be able to be placed in one of them should the Administration decide to close Wellington House. I am advised that there are no Day Centres in Brighton and Hove to which all the current users can be transferred hence I strongly believe that Wellington House should not be closed.

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

The council is working with six main providers of day opportunities for adults with learning difficulties in the city.

These Providers (see below) support varied needs, some of whom support people with complex needs. BHCC is also in the process of recommissioning to attract new providers and this process is concluding.

There are some places within the current provision but there will also be a need for providers to expand provision to meet need both for Wellington House and future demand. This is because it is usual practice for providers to work to capacity, and not to operate with vacancies, as it would not be financially viable for them to employ staff and run with vacancies.

Commissioning are currently talking to current and potentially new providers about expanding their capacity should this be required following the decision made at Cabinet on 17th September.

This information will be shared within the Consultation report that will go to Cabinet on 17th September to enable a decision to be made based on full current transparent information.

Current Independent Sector Adult Learning Disability Day provision providers:

	Provider	Model
1	Ambito	Building based. Supports those with complex physical and behavioural needs, can provide additional 1:1 support. Strong PBS offer. Can provide some transport.
2	Aspirations Active	Building based. Supports those with complex behavioural needs who require focused support. Strong PBS offer.

Brighton & Hove City Council

3	Down Syndrome Development Trust	Building based at Falmer University. Supports YP to increase their independence, work with students. Provide focused support sessions.
4	Grace Eyre Foundation	Building based in a range of locations across the city. Support people with moderate needs who can be in a small group. Wide range of activities offered.
5	Team Domenica	Supports young people to increase their independence through learning of skills and experience – ie café/pub. Support into work placements.
6	Rockets	Very small building base. Arts offer on 1:1 basis.

30. Councillor Lyons:

A number of residents in Woodlands have contacted me, requesting an additional lampstand (at least one) at the end of the close, as it is very dark at nighttime. The response that they and I have received to their requests is that 'The Street Lighting Team are not funded for the installation of additional lighting requests across the city & are only funded for the maintenance of the existing stock. Funds would need to be found to finance the new installation then the team would be able to adopt the new lighting assets and add them to the inventory and maintenance regime.' Can I ask that the close is added for consideration for additional street lighting at next year's budget?

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

Thank you for your question, Cllr Lyons. The council is responsible for maintaining over 22,000 street lighting columns across the city, together with the associated energy and operational costs. Given the significant pressures on existing maintenance budgets, current investment is focused on maintaining and renewing the existing network.

The council takes a forward-looking planned approach to the installation of new street lighting columns. In most cases, new lighting is delivered as part of new developments, highway improvement schemes or wider regeneration projects.

Requests for additional lighting are recorded and considered as part of future budget-setting and capital investment processes, alongside other competing priorities across the transport and highways service. The location identified will be added to the team's records for consideration within future funding opportunities.

31. Councillor Lyons:

21 households in Artists Corner have contacted me, requesting a review of the parking situation in their streets. The preferred solution is to reduce the 4-hour parking paid bays to 2 hours, which may deter residents in other roads

Brighton & Hove City Council

taking up spaces from 16:00 or alternatively, extending the paid bay service to beyond 20:00. Can this be investigated further?

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

Thank you, Cllr Lyons, for raising this issue with me. Parking Services has previously been contacted by a resident of the Artists Corner area requesting a reduction in the maximum stay period for the paid parking bays. The current parking arrangements were introduced following extensive consultation with local residents and other stakeholders and were designed to reflect the balance of views expressed at that time.

We recognise that parking pressures and local circumstances can change over time and can, therefore, reconsider existing arrangements where there is clear evidence of strong local support.

This call for extending parking restrictions beyond 8pm as option requiring further review is noted. Officers advised that, before any changes to these restrictions could be considered, the Council would need such evidence of broader support from those residents and stakeholders likely to be directly affected. A petition or deputation from local residents and stakeholders is an effective way of demonstrating the level of local support for a review.

32. Councillor Hogan:

A typical working day ends between 4 and 5pm so why are the council phonelines only open between 9 and 1.30pm?

Reply from Councillor Allen, Cabinet Member for Customer Services, Public Realm & Local Government Reorganisation:

We are committed to providing accessible services that meet residents' needs.

In 2015/16, around 45% of customer contact was received by telephone. Today, telephone enquiries account for around 20%, with most customers contact us through online forms and email. We have invested in improving these digital services to make access easier and more convenient and meet our customer needs.

Customer feedback highlighted delays in responding to digital enquiries as a key area for improvement. In response, and within the context of ongoing financial pressures and wanting the most effective service, we have aligned resources to reflect how residents now contact us.

Key service telephone lines remain available between 9.30am and 1.30pm. The afternoon period enables staff to process digital enquiries and complete follow-up work arising from telephone conversations. This

Brighton & Hove City Council

approach maintains access to telephone support while helping teams respond more effectively across all contact channels.

33. Councillor Hogan:

Could any damage to grass verges (mainly caused by workmen digging them up) be repaired by the council. Some of the damage is very unsightly and potentially dangerous as can be a trip hazard?

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

Thank you for your question, Cllr Hogan. I would expect competent contractors working in our public highway or grass verges to undertake a pre-condition assessment including photographs of verges they are working on and ensure restatement restores the grass verge, subject to seasonal planting and watering, to match or improve the condition prior to the works. If details and evidence of damage caused to the public highway or grass verges are provided, then the Council can do repair works and charge the building contractor or utility company.

34. Councillor Fishleigh:

Title: Protecting trees

In December 2022 Full Council agreed a Notice of Motion about protecting trees in the city. It was agreed that "This Council therefore resolves to request: A report to TECC Committee which outlines a. Details on the council's and national planning policy in relation to trees with TPOs that are removed without BHCC's permission and lawful conditions the council can make on applications regarding trees; b. A draft communications plan for residents and developers to support the Council's enforcement approach."

Please would you tell me if these actions took place as I can't find any details. Thank you.

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

Work started following the Committee report in 2023 to produce a defensible and deliverable policy on TPO enforcement. This did not result in a finished document and has not been revisited in the interim. City Parks Arboriculture have conducted a number of enforcement actions for TPO/CA breaches since the report, one of which resulted in a first prosecution in over 10 years. Work will recommence in finalising a policy document which reflects and details the process which is employed

35. Councillor Fishleigh:

Title: Better Brighton & Hove Fund

Will BHCC honour the costings given in the first consultation which were £10,000 for a bus shelter and, I think, £1,000 for a bench?

Brighton & Hove City Council

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

The initial phase consultation for the Better Brighton and Hove Fund included some indicative costs of an assortment of infrastructure items that residents might want to suggest as ideas for their neighbourhood. It was provided to help residents understand the relative costs of different items, both in the context of the sums available in each ward and the lack of knowledge that residents may have about how much these items cost. The purpose of the costing exercise with services is to establish the likely full costs of each item shortlisted so that ward councillors can agree their final project lists. These will need to be within the funding available in each ward and ensure that new items do not result in future burdens on existing revenue budgets.

