BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

PLACE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

4.00pm 22 JULY 2026

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Evans (Chair) Cattell (Deputy Chair), Fishleigh, Goddard, Lademacher, Meadows, Miller, Sykes, Wilkinson and Winder

Other Members present: Councillors

PART ONE

1 PROCEDURAL BUSINESS

1. Procedural Business

1a Declarations of substitutions: Apologies received from Bernadette Kent and George Woodhams.

1b Declarations of interest: Cllr Miller declared that she was Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage and Tourism and was a witness to the Task & Finish Group on Heritage.

Mark Strong made a point of order regarding a space for black and racialised minoritised people on the committee. Giles Rossington, Scrutiny Manager, said that yes in theory there is a place on the committee but he was unsure of the process for electing them.

1c Exclusion of the press and public

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

2 MINUTES

2.1 **RESOLVED–** that the minutes of the Place Overview & Scrutiny Meeting on 24th March 2026 were approved.

3 CHAIR'S COMMUNICATION

3.1 The Chair gave the following communication:

Today we have five agenda items to look at, which we will take in a slightly different order to the published agenda. We will start with the Housing Safety and Quality Compliance progress report that has been regularly presented to this committee following the Social Housing Regulator judgement in 2024.

Following that, we have a presentation giving an update on Devolution with details and plans regarding the new Sussex and Brighton Strategic Authority, which was established earlier this year.

Then we will have an update on City Plan which is one of the most important documents for the city, where we will be informed on the emerging plans for consultation and the proposed timeline.

We will then be looking at the final report from the Task & Finish Group which started back in November 2025 looking at heritage in the city. The group have produced 15 recommendations and will be asking members to agree to refer the recommendations to Cabinet for consideration.

We will finish with the scoping report for our next Task & Finish Group which is on the Visitor Economy as voted for back in March. Members are being asked to approve the establishment of this new Task & Finish Group.

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

4 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

4.1 There were no public engagement items.

5 MEMBER INVOLVEMENT

5.1 There were no member questions.

6 HOUSING SAFETY AND QUALITY COMPLIANCE - PROGRESS UPDATE

6.1 Cllr Williams, Cabinet Member for Housing, presented to the committee. She was joined by Genette Laws, Corporate Director for Homes and Adult Social Care, Mikila Beck, Head of Housing Repairs and Maintenance, and Stephan Scheiner, Head of Housing Safety and Regulatory Compliance.

6.2 Micheal Creedy said that he lived in sheltered housing and thought the process had been productive.

6.3 Cllr Cattell said that there were too many acronyms in the report which made it hard to read. She asked for a glossary in future, such as that provided in the SEND report to People Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

6.4 Cllr Wilkinson welcomed the positive news and asked about resident experience and how it was measured. Cllr Williams said that surveys were always important but that not everyone filled them in, and those that did were often motivated to do so because they were unhappy. She said that estate teams were out door knocking and asking residents what they needed. Genette Laws added that the repairs team and housing generally were very technically brilliant but were now becoming more person centred, which was a good culture change. She said that they had the annual Tenant Satisfaction Survey which had seen a 9 percentage point increase in dealing with repairs. She said that this goes to Cabinet every year and would go to People Overview & Scrutiny Committee for pre-decision scrutiny.

6.5 Cllr Lademacher welcomed the progress and asked how the council was ensuring that temporary housing contractors in the private sector were adhering to fire safety regulations, providing an example of prosecution that was in the news. Cllr Williams said that they worked closely with the fire services on prosecutions. Genette Laws said that it was important to distinguish between council commissioned temporary accommodation and private sector housing which may be used as temporary accommodation that has not been commissioned. She said that they have a responsibility as a council alongside the fire and rescue service on prosecution. She added that she was happy to speak outside of the meeting regarding the specific case mentioned.

6.6 Cllr Lademacher asked about response times related to Awaab’s Law as it was not clear in the data. Mikila Beck said that it was really important that the data was clear and that they were working to improve it. She added that it was important to distinguish between where it is the council not meeting target times and where residents have not provided access to their property within the timeframe.

6.7 Cllr Goddard said that it had been a very low point for the housing service and that this update is fabulous progress. He said that all housing staff deserved congratulations. He asked for further details on the damp and mould work and proactive outreach. Cllr Williams said that damp and mould was a scourge on the city and that no one should have to live with it. She said that they had been prepared for Awaab’s Law with a team contracted. She said that they had requested residents report damp and mould to them. Mikila Beck added that they had written to all residents prior to Awaab’s Law coming into effect. She said that they recognised that some residents felt a sense of shame at having damp and mould and so they approached the issue sensitively. She said that they worked with residents to find the cause and then to find a solution that worked for them to resolve it.

6.8 Cllr Miller asked what category one hazards where and why certain things that seemed very serious were not category one. Mikila Beck said that category one hazards posed a significant impact on health or death and were treated as emergency repairs. She said that the Housing Health and Safety Rating System looked at the likelihood of something happening and the impact of it happening which then produced the ranking.

6.9 Cllr Miller asked if damp and mould was cleaned away and repainted if that counted as a repair. Mikila Beck said that it was a mitigation to the immediate health hazard whilst they looked into the required repairs.

6.10 Cllr Sykes asked about the Personal Evacuation Plans and what was being done about the remaining people without them. He also asked about the relationship between the council and the Building Safety Regulator, and the Bristol Estate buildings being classed as high rise. Genette Laws said that the council had a surprising number of people needing a PEP compared to the number of tenants, potentially over 1000. She said that PEPs were co-produced with tenants rather than done to them. She said that the law requires best endeavours rather than 100% but that they were working as close as possible to 100%. She said that Martin Reid, Director for Homes and Investment had been holding meetings regarding access issues to really understand that and where the council may need to use stick rather than carrot to ensure those residents are safe as well as their neighbours. She said that the Bristol estate was a technical surveying issue and that they were continuing to treat them as high rise in agreement with the fire service. She said that it could take up to 40 weeks to get a decision from the regulator, and that they were focusing on applications for new builds and works towards buildings rather than building safety casework. Stephan Scheiner said that people needed to self-identify their need for a PEP and numbers may fluctuate as people’s needs change, or people move in or out. He said that they were treating all of their blocks over the 18 metres range as high rise and having a cautious approach, exposing them to the long waits of the building safety regulator applications.

6.11 Mark Strong asked about tenant engagement and notice boards that were very out of date. Genette Laws said that she was happy to discuss the issue with tenancy services, but that on some estates notice boards were lead by tenant reps rather than the council. She would like something more digital and were looking at refreshing the tenant handbook with things like QR codes to keep information up to date.

6.12 Cllr Winder asked about the backlog of works and when it could be considered to not be a serious backlog. Mikila Beck said that hopefully they would be at that point in a few months’ time. She said that the outstanding work depended on the number coming in and that their proactive work to encourage reporting had increased the amount of work. She said that they would require under a month of work to not be a serious backlog and at the moment were at six weeks of work, so were getting there.

6.13 Cllr Meadows said that good work was being done with sensible solutions that she would agree with.

6.14 Cllr Wilkinson asked why asbestos compliance had fallen to 89.6% and domestic lift and stair lift servicing had fallen to 66.7%. Mikila Beck said that asbestos was a rolling program where they had re-inspected communal areas, and that it was not a significant concern. She said that they would get back to the committee regarding the lifts.

6.15 Michael Creedy asked about older people in sheltered housing having to self-identify for PEPs. Genette Laws said that it was slightly different in sheltered housing then general housing and that residents in sheltered housing would not be expected to self-identify as the scheme manager should do this.

6.16 Cllr Miller said that there were small pockets of council homes across the city and that councillors should get information of where these properties were so that they could engage with residents. Cllr Williams said that residents were connected via the area panel meetings and that there was a map of properties. Genette Laws said that the acquisitions of council properties have been a success meaning there are more council homes in different areas. She said on request from members they have shared GIS mapping. Mikila said that these tenants were connected to area panels and that they were engaging with them regarding repairs. She said that teams were out in the community in different spaces to connect with people.

6.17 RESOLVED - That the Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee note and comment on the progress made in addressing the issues identified by the Regulator of Social Housing.

7 CITY PLAN UPDATE

7.1 Cllr Jacon Taylor, Deputy Leader of the council and Cabinet member for Finance and City Regeneration presented to the committee. He was joined by, Max Woodford, Director for Place, and Steve Tremlett, Planning Policy and Heritage Manager.

7.2 The Chair sad that it was strange that the city plan was not looking at the new areas that will be coming into the city as part of Local Government Reorganisation and the timing of the new National Planning Policy Framework. Cllr Taylor agreed that it was strange and said that the timing was slightly awkward. He said that they had raised the issue with government and if they were to wait for LGR then they would not even be able to start the process until after vesting day in 2028. He said that they would be in a situation where there were two plans, one for the city on its current boundary and the parts coming into the city would work from the current Lewes District Council local plan. Max Woodford said that Cllr Taylor was right and that there had been lots of noise and complaints about this to the government as there were lots of other areas in the same situation. He said that government were aware of the issue and were working on transitional arrangements. On the NPPF he said that a draft had been published and the final new NPPF was coming in due course, probably after the summer recess.

7.3 Cllr Fishleigh asked what the city's housing target was and how we were getting on with it? Steve Tremlett said that the current local plan had a housing target of 13,200 homes between 2010 and 2030, which averages 660 per year. Actual housing delivery has been below this and the target wouldn't be met by 2030. He said that there wasn't a housing target in policy in the new plan yet. However, they did have a figure from the housing need figure which came from the government's standard method for calculating housing need, which was the starting point they needed to try to meet through the new plan, and this was approximately 2,500 homes per year. This is significantly higher than the target in the current plan.

7.4 Cllr Fishleigh asked about housing targets for the city when the new mayor was meant to be taking a holistic approach across the whole of Sussex and Brighton. Cllr Taylor said that was where we would end up but weren't there yet. He said he would love to be delivering the housing target of 2,500 homes, with a good chunk being affordable, but that most people in the room would know its highly unlikely given land availability in the city. Steve Tremlett said that the new city plan is coming ahead of the spatial development strategy that the Strategic Authority would be producing and that meant they would have to use the government's standard method for calculated housing needs as a starting point. He said that once there is a spatial development strategy in place the Strategic Authority may move those numbers around depending on where there is capacity, which may then give the city a different number to meet and plan for, but that would be for the next review of the City Plan after this one.

7.5 Cllr Miller asked why they could not push the dates back a month if the new NPPF was due to be published shortly. Cllr Taylor said that they were driven by government pushing them to go fast and had funding to do so. Steve Tremlett said that a draft NPPF was published earlier this year and is able to be used for the early stages of plan-making and that a commitment had been made to government to give notice of the intention to prepare a new plan by 30th June in order to secure additional government funding.

7.6 Cllr Miller said that by the time of the consultation between gateway two and three the city footprint would be expanded and asked if the new residents would be able to take part in the consultation. Steve Tremlett said that this was unknown and that they were awaiting transitional regulations from government.

7.7 Mark Strong said that previously there had been engagement with schools and hoped that it would happen again. Steve Tremlett said that it was unfortunate that the deadlines meant that the consultation was over the summer but said that they weren't starting from scratch – input received during the previous consultation with young people would still be considered. Max Woodford said that they would be engaging with school during later stages of consultations on policy.

7.8 The Chair said that the city plan was so important and has a big impact on future development, but that people don't always realise and complaint when planning applications are approved having not engaged in the city plan process has set certain policies or allocated certain sites. Cllr Taylor agreed and said that both he and the Chair had been doing work on this around the number of HMOs in their ward.

7.9 Cllr Cattell stated that having worked in planning she understood that a local plan is a lengthy process and that things changed during that time, including the NPPF and LGR. She said that she was pleased to be a on a member working group looking at the issue. She thanked Steve Tremlett and the planning staff for their hard work.

7.10 Cllr Lademacher asked for the cost of the current plan and extra costs once the city boundaries were expanded. Cllr Taylor said that it may be difficult to estimate the cost of a plan including things like officer time, commissioning studies, and consultation events. He said that expanding the city would not mean a huge increase in costs. Max Woodford said that additional costs once the city was expanded would depend on the evidence coming from the new areas and that the sooner the government gave them transitional arrangements the better. Regarding the total cost of the plan, he said that it was really hard but about £1.6m across the life of the plan (this estimate is in the May 2026 cabinet report).

7.11 Cllr Wilkinson welcomed the progress made. He asked how scrutiny would be involved and how the previous consultation outcome calling for genuinely affordable and social housing would be reflected in the plan. Cllr Taylor said that it was essential that they came back to scrutiny with a draft set of policies and site allocation when they got to that stage. He said that it was great that there was such a desire for genuinely affordable and social housing in the initial consultation and that how that is reflected in policy requires evidence. He said that they could put in a policy that all private development had to include the equivalent of social housing at local housing authority rates but that it wouldn't be upheld as a policy without evidence and studies to support it, and that it clearly wouldn't be viable for all private sector housing. He said that they would be pushing the boundaries of what they could achieve but that all policies had to be evidence based.

7.12 RESOLVED – Place Overview & Scrutiny notes the progress to date and future timetable for the new City Plan.

8 REPORT OF THE HERITAGE TASK & FINISH GROUP

8.1 The Chair presented the Heritage Task & Finish Group report to the committee setting out what they had achieved, how they confined themselves to protecting heritage assets and working with partners, and how interesting the witnesses were to talk to. She hoped that committee members would agree to pass the report on to Cabinet.

8.2 Cllr Fishleigh asked about the recommendation on a statue to First World War Indian soldiers at the Royal Pavilion, as it didn't really fit with the others. The Chair said that it came from speaking to one of the witnesses who was a trustee of the Royal Pavilion and also the Chatri memorial. She said that the use of the Royal Pavilion as a hospital for Indian Soldiers in the First World War was an important part of the building's history and comparing it with conversations they had on preserving the regency history in aspect or reflecting changes over time, saying that new and old could co-exist side-by-side.

8.3 Mark Strong said that it was a great experience to be part of the Task & Finish Group and said that the report recommendation was to send it to a 'future' cabinet and hoped it would not be forgotten about. He also asked if some of the recommendations that were considered 'quick wins' could be passed straight to departments rather than taking time going through cabinet. Giles Rossington, Scrutiny Manager, said that the term future cabinet just meant not the next cabinet as that might already be planned and there may not be time to go through the recommendations and prepare a report, but that cabinet took scrutiny very seriously and would not forget it. He said that the council could not have a system where departments were doing things at the behest of scrutiny members rather than cabinet. He said that once cabinet had approved or rejected each recommendation there would be regular updates to committee to track the progress of the approved recommendations until committee were satisfied.

8.4 Michael Creedy commented that within the next ten years they would be coming up to a celebration of the founding of the co-operative movement, not just in the north but in Brighton & Hove.

8.5 Cllr Cattell said that she had really enjoyed being a part of the group, had learnt a lot, and really enjoyed hearing some of the micro stories from places like the Pepper Pot. If reference to Cllr Fishleigh's previous question on a statue to commemorate the First World War Indian soldiers at the Royal Pavilion, she said that any statue would require planning permission. The Chair commented that they also needed to raise their own funds for any such statue as the Task & Finish Group was not recommending that the council fund it.

8.6 Cllr Miller commented that having previously been cabinet member for heritage she has really enjoyed being a witness for the Task & Finish Group.

8.7 Cllr Wilkinson said that the report had 15 recommendations, which was a lot and asked if the group put any priority on them. The Chair said that it was an interesting point and that it would go to cabinet after relevant council officers had looked at it and determined which were easier, more difficult, or undeliverable.

8.8 Cllr Miller asked if committee would get to look at the report before cabinet. The Chair said that it would go to cabinet and then they would receive ongoing updates after this.

8.9 RESOLVED - Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the Task & Finish Group report on Heritage attached as Appendix 1.

RESOLVED - Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee refers the findings of the Task & Finish Group on Heritage to Cabinet for consideration.

9 VISITOR ECONOMY TFG SCOPING REPORT

9.1 The Chair introduced the report on the next Task & Finish Group saying that she had sought votes from committee members on the three ideas that had come from the previous discussion on what members wanted to look at. She said that all of the ideas had received some support, and the others may be looked at in the future, but that visitor economy had received the most support and therefore the report sought the committee's approval to establish the Task & Finish Group.

9.2 Cllr Cattell said that there was an overlap with licensing and as Deputy Chair she would therefore like to be on the Task & Finish Group.

9.3 Cllr Goddard said that looking at the scoping report there was not enough emphasis on that nighttime economy was not just about pubs and clubs, but early evening entertainment. He said he wanted greater emphasis on our assets such as Brighton Town Hall, which he felt was an embarrassment unless you wanted to get married there. He highlighted Rochdale Civic Centre as an example of what could be done. Cllr Cattell mentioned that Brighton Town Hall was on the long list of major projects, but that it was a question of money as there was so much wrong with the building.

9.4 Cllr Miller said that she had ideas for potential witnesses that she would send via email.

9.5 Cllr Fishleigh asked about limiting the numbers in the group, and if it would be the same as previously and asked if the scoping meeting could be arranged imminently in case people were on holiday during August. Giles Rossington said that the numbers on Task & Finish Groups roughly reflected the political composition of the council and were three Labour members, one Green, one Conservative, one Brighton & Hove Independent, and co-opted members who were interested in joining. He said that once nominations had come in from all the political groups the meeting would be arranged and they weren't looking to wait until September.

9.6 RESOLVED – Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee agrees to establish a Task & Finish Group to scrutinise the visitor economy of Brighton & Hove.

RESOLVED – Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee agrees the Terms of Reference, membership and duration of the Task & Finish Group as set out in Appendix 2.

10 DEVOLUTION UPDATE

10.1 Cllr Bella Sankey, Leader of the Council presented to the committee. She was joined by Tom Cottam, Head of the Cabinet Office.

10.2 Cllr Wilkinson asked how the committee would receive ongoing updates and how the council's scrutiny committees would compliment the SBSA scrutiny. Cllr Sankey said that it had been sometime since her last update on the issue to scrutiny and that she was happy to come back as often as committee wanted. She said that the Strategic Authority Board would be meeting monthly. She said that councillors from BHCC would be involved in scrutiny at the strategic authority and that it was important that elected members in Brighton & Hove know what is going on and get regular updates.

10.3 Cllr Sykes asked about the funding figures in the slides and how they added up, saying that it seemed very front loaded. Cllr Sankey said that there was a budget they were receiving as part of the investment fund of £1.4bn over 30 years and some of that was being released in the pre-mayoral stage, and that they wouldn't get the full regular amount until the mayor is in place. She said that they were also receiving funding that was being passported to local authorities such as transport and skills, which may be where the discrepancy is.

10.4 Michael Creedy asked about the challenge of treating each part of the large area of Sussex equally. Cllr Sankey said Sussex was made up of clearly varied and unique communities, that they were not all the same and shouldn't be treated the same due to their varying needs. She said that nonetheless they are stronger together focusing on challenges and thinking strategically across Sussex. She said that people across Sussex wanted many of the same things such as good transport, good healthcare, and good jobs.

10.5 Cllr Winder spoke about the huge opportunities and asked how they can stop people feeling that they have lost some democracy or are being left behind. Cllr Sankey said that devolution was happening alongside local government reorganisation, which caused confusion, and meant that they needed to explain this to people. She said that they had not wanted huge unitary authorities in Sussex, which is why they had asked for five in Sussex, and that the government was minded to go for four. She said that people can feel more connected to unitary authorities as there is no confusion about which council is responsible for what, and which councillor to contact. She said that she was pleased that the government had brought back the supplementary voting system for mayoral elections. She said that Greater Manchester was a good example of when it is done right people can feel empowered.

10.6 Cllr Fishleigh asked how it would impact the local plan and whether housing targets would be set by government or the mayor. Cllr Sankey said that the local plan and planning would remain with local authorities.

10.7 Cllr Goddard agreed with Michael Creedy's point about connecting places across the county. He said that it takes a different type of politician and culture to do devolution well. He said that they did not have a decade to do devolution well as other places had. Cllr Sankey agreed that they did not have a decade to do devolution. She said that they had made a lot of progress in the last two years, which showed the accelerated pace they were working at. She said that it was incredible how far they had come, especially with both East and West Sussex County Councils changing administration during the process.

10.8 Mark Strong spoke about the work in other strategic authorities across the country and the need for building capacity with stakeholders such as the county's universities and the national park authority. He also asked about passporting funding and how this would be decided. Cllr Sankey said that it was important that they did not try to copy the work of any one place as there was lots of good work across combined authorities, as well as things that hadn't gone so well that they could learn from. Regarding stakeholders she said that now the SBSA was established there would be more scope to bring people in. She said that there would be associate members of the strategic authority board, including the chair of the South Downs National Park. She said that they were establishing a business board to bring in key businesses and that she would be happy to take away the points about civic society. She said that passporting would evolve and at the moment they were following government formula.

10.9 Cllr Miller asked if fire and rescue services would continue to operate as east and west or if they would merge and asked about growth hubs. Tom Cottam said that the fire services had started the transitional arrangements and were looking at how it would work operationally. He said that the strategic authority was receiving funding and would look at what the needs of businesses are.

10.10 Cllr Miller asked about the ways for overview & scrutiny committees to feed into the strategic authority. Tom Cottam said that he would get back to the committee on that and that the nominations from each local authority to the strategic authority scrutiny roles would provide that connection.

10.11 RESOLVED Place Overview & Scrutiny Committee notes the update to members on Devolution.

The meeting concluded at 6.43pm

Signed Chair

Dated this day of