

BRIGHTON & HOVE CITY COUNCIL

COUNCIL

4.30pm 26 MARCH 2026

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Grimshaw (Chair), Asaduzzaman, Alexander, Allen, Bagaeen, Baghoth, Cattell, Daniel, Davis, Earthey, Evans, Fishleigh, Fowler, Galvin, Goddard, Guilmant, Helliwell, Hewitt, Hill, Hogan, Lademacher, Lyons, Mackey, McGregor, McLeay, McNair, Meadows, Miller, Muten, Nann, Oliveira, Parrott, Pickett, Robins, Robinson, Rowkins, Sankey, Shanks, Sheard, Simon, Taylor, C Theobald, Thomson, Wilkinson, Winder and Williams

PART ONE

95 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

95.1 Councillor Fishleigh declared an interest in Item 98, in relation to the petition concerning annual charging for watercraft at Saltdean Beach, as she kept a kayak on Saltdean Beach.

96 MINUTES

96.1 The minutes of the previous Council meeting 12th December 2025, as set out in the agenda, were approved as a correct record of the proceedings.

97 MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

97.1 The Mayor gave the following communications:

Good afternoon, Councillors, colleagues, and residents. It's a real pleasure to be with you all today, at my last ordinary Full Council as Mayor. This past month has been an absolute whirlwind filled with visits, events, receptions, and of course, plenty of fun.

I began the month cheering on runners at Brighton's Half Marathon in true British style: wind, rain, and unwavering enthusiasm. I was delighted to attend the Sussex Beacon's postrace event at The Grand Hotel and had the honour of handing out medals to the incredible runners who raised thousands of pounds to support people across our city and county living with HIV.

I was equally honoured to speak at our city's Iftar Dinner, hosted by The Dialogue Society. It was a privilege to break fast together as a community, offering a moment to reflect, renew our sense of purpose, and strengthen the bonds that connect us.

I also attended a magnificent fundraising gala hosted by one of my mayoral charities, Rockinghorse. It was an extraordinary evening beautifully organised, full of imagination, and brimming with energy. The Corn Exchange looked stunning, and the atmosphere was truly magical. The event raised thousands of pounds to help ensure Rockinghorse can continue its vital work supporting babies, children, and young people navigating illness.

Other highlights included celebrating Nightcap's first anniversary running the i360; attending the Commonwealth Day Service in London where I laid a wreath on behalf of our city; visiting the team at the Volk's Railway ahead of its reopening for the new season on 28 March; and hosting an event in the Council Chamber with the Pride Community Foundation, aimed at encouraging LGBTQI+ residents to consider a future in politics and public service.

A particular highlight not just for March, but for my entire mayoralty was hosting a reception at Brighton Town Hall to mark International Women's Day. I had the privilege of holding an "in conversation" event with my dear friend and mentor, Baroness Joyce Gould. It was deeply inspiring to hear about Joyce's remarkable career, her influence on public policy, her tireless work advancing the rights of women and the LGBTQI+ community, and the standing ovation she received when speaking about her successful fight to abolish Section 28. The room was filled with women from across our city, aged from fifteen to ninety-six - determined, brilliant, and strong. It was an honour to be in their company.

As I enter the final eight weeks of my mayoralty, I am very much looking forward to hosting a charity dog walk on the seafront with my mayoral charities; attending the Royal British Legion's annual conference; cheering on Brighton & Hove Albion Women at a home match; welcoming various cadet groups, charities, and local champions to the Mayor's Parlour; and, I am sure, enjoying plenty more laughter, dancing, and fun along the way.

98 PETITIONS AND E-PETITIONS

98.1 The Mayor stated that three ordinary petitions had been received.

98.2 Emma Winder presented a petition titled 'Safer crossings on Hollingbury Road'.

Councillor Muten, Cabinet Member for Transport & City Infrastructure, replied:

Thank you for your petition and highlighting your concerns about road safety and a need for a safer pedestrian crossing on Hollingbury Road and Hollingbury Crescent.

The good news is that we are listening. We are aware of your concerns. We recently assessed this location as part of our Safer, Better Streets programme and we agree there is a need, recognising improvements could benefit vulnerable road users and the wider community. We have recently added Hollingbury Road junction with Hollingbury Crescent to our Safer Better Streets programme, currently No.32 on our published list.

We will continue to work through the list in priority order, considering feasibility, deliverability and resource availability. The location near 80 Hollingbury Road can be reassessed in line with our Safer, Better Streets assessment process. Traffic calming measures already exist, and we apply strict thresholds relating to traffic flow, pedestrian volumes, collision history, visibility standards, and road geometry for these higher-level measures. As at present the location does not meet all these requirements, it is unlikely that the location would meet the criteria required for additional interventions such as a zebra crossing.

However, although traffic calming measures are already in place in this area, we appreciate that some features, particularly the existing road markings on the speed humps would benefit from renewal. We will arrange for these to be refreshed as part of our routine road lining maintenance programme and this site will remain under review as part of our wider road safety programme.

I cannot understate the importance of having ward councillors continued support for proposed Safer Better Streets schemes all the way through completion. For many years, another local community supported by previous ward Councillors called for safety improvements in Hove's Court Farm Road. As on every scheme, I attend the ward councillors' briefings to confirm no concerns and ensure requested design changes are responded to ahead of going to public consultation. Sadly, it wasn't until public consultation was live earlier this year did ward councillors then decide to campaign against the proposed safety improvements in their ward. So may I credit Cllr Fowler for her support for your request. We appreciate the time and effort residents have taken to raise these concerns. Your feedback will continue to inform our future safety planning across the city.

98.3 The petition was noted.

98.4 The Mayor advised that Daniel Cobby was not in attendance to present the petition titled 'Saunders Park View' and had asked to receive a written response.

98.5 Councillor Fishleigh, on behalf of David Marcar, presented a petition titled 'Annual charging for Watercraft owner Saltdean Beach'.

Councillor Miller, Cabinet Member for Culture, Heritage & Tourism, replied:

These fees are formally approved at Budget Council each year, alongside all other council charges and are updated in line with inflationary increases. During the Covid pandemic, active collection of these particular storage fees was paused. The Seafront Office is now reinstating the permit system so that all beach locations are managed consistently and in line with the approved budget framework.

The council also has a statutory duty to ensure value for money in the use of council land. Where individuals make exclusive or long-term use of a defined area of council-owned space, a charge is required to ensure fairness and to avoid subsidising private storage through general public funds. Charging for the storage of small craft is common practice among local authorities, and we are not able to apply charges in one location but omit them in another, as

this would be inconsistent, inequitable and contrary to the council's approved fees and charges policy.

We understand the view expressed by several residents that Saltdean's informal storage area originated from community use and that the craft are kept there at owners' risk. We also appreciate the point that many kayaks are low-cost or second-hand and that users value the affordability of the activity. However, where storage occupies public land on a long-term basis, the council must ensure there is a transparent and consistent permitting structure across all seafront locations. Without this it would be difficult to manage competing uses of space or to address issues that arise from abandoned or deteriorating craft.

Some residents have also raised concerns regarding enforcement. The intention of the permit system is not to create a heavy enforcement presence but to enable clearer management of the beach environment. The previous signage at Saltdean, which asked owners to remove craft during winter, proved difficult to maintain without an accompanying system to identify ownership. A permit approach supports better communication with users, ensures consistent expectations and helps us to address problems such as abandoned or unsafe equipment more effectively.

Regarding the number of kayaks stored at Saltdean, we recognise that the current volume is modest. Nonetheless, the principle of value for public land applies regardless of scale and the council must apply the same policy fairly across all storage sites. The revenue raised forms part of the broader seafront services budget, which supports maintenance, safety and management across the entire coastline.

We acknowledge the disappointment that some residents have expressed, both directly and on social media, and we will ensure all feedback is considered as part of the ongoing review of how the permit system is communicated and implemented. Our intention is not to discourage responsible sea access but to ensure that facilities are managed fairly, consistently and in a way that balances the interests of all beach users.

98.6 The petition was noted.

99 LEADER AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' ANNOUNCEMENTS

99.1 The Leader of the Council gave the following announcement:

Thank you, Madam Mayor, and good afternoon everyone.

I want to start today's meeting by condemning the antisemitic attack on community ambulances in North London. An attack on one is an attack on all, and I know that the impact of this will be felt by our Jewish communities in particular across the city.

Closest to home, I note that the police investigation into the arson attack on Peacehaven Mosque is moving forward and, as previously noted, we will be rolling out antisemitism and Islamophobia training across the Council.

Yesterday, colleagues, the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government wrote to me and council leaders across Sussex to set out the next steps for local government reorganisation.

I am pleased that the Government is supportive of many aspects of our proposal, including our proposed merging with Peacehaven, Telscombe, East Saltdean and Falmer, and also our proposal for a West Sussex Coastal Authority.

The Government has been clear that they have concerns about the complexity of some of our proposals and the disaggregation of services in East Sussex, so they will now be consulting on a four-unitary option.

I welcome the Government's thoughtful approach and hope that we can take this opportunity to find greater consensus and compromise across the region. I am also pleased that we are still on track for unitary elections in May 2027 and vesting of the new unitary authorities in May 2028.

I'm pleased that capacity funding will be provided to councils to implement the final shape of the plans. Key to our thinking is creating evenly balanced unitary authorities to sit as equals around a new mayoral authority, and I think the Government has embraced this principle in its proposals.

On devolution, there is more good news. Our statutory instrument creating a Combined County Authority for Sussex and Brighton has finished its passage in Parliament this week. We have been recognised by Government in their guidance for mayors for our circular economy work.

This week, we have also launched a report commissioned by the Greater Brighton Economic Board, which I chair, on economic opportunities for our region with devolution coming down the track.

They have identified seven priority areas, which include embedding the Sussex Energy Mission as a cornerstone to delivery; ensuring the adequate provision of employment space to meet business needs right across Sussex; raising productivity levels and supporting sectoral growth; developing an investment prospectus for Sussex; delivering a long-term affordable, sustainable housing strategy for the whole of our area; developing a vision for Newhaven and Shoreham ports to lead economic diversification; and leveraging major projects to drive local economic value.

We have responded to the Government's consultation on the proposed overnight visitor levy, arguing that local authorities should retain 100% of the income. And we welcome the Chancellor's May lecture, where she indicated that further fiscal devolution is on the way.

On buses, we have announced that we are applying to the Government for capacity funding to explore bus franchising. We have one of the best bus networks in the country, but currently millions of pounds goes out of our city every year into the pockets of shareholders while fares are going up.

We want to explore taking buses back under public control, with a view to a more integrated bus service across Sussex as we devolve. We have committed to improvements in mobility across the city, with £9 million to be spent in the next 12 months on improving city bus services, keeping fares affordable for families who rely on bus travel and for those most in need of affordable transport.

As part of that, we have announced that from this September our care leavers aged 18 to 25 will travel free on all of our buses across the city. We have protected the free accompanied bus fare offer for under-18s, and we will be doing work now to consider whether we can offer subsidised fares for school travel for children eligible for free school meals.

We have taken forward actions agreed in the Notice of Motion on divestment last autumn, and I have written to all of the East Sussex Pension Fund Committee members — Green, Liberal Democrat and Conservative — to seek their support in divesting from companies operating in the West Bank. Last month, I also visited Palestinian scholarship students at the University of Sussex to welcome them to Brighton and Hove.

Since we last met here in January, we have had a further meeting of our One Voice partnership. I am so pleased to see this forum working well again and giving the opportunity for community cohesion issues to be raised by those most affected.

We have invested almost £2 million in early years and launched our Best Start in Life Strategy so that every child in the city has the best start in life. We have had a very successful National School Offer Day, with more students receiving their first-preference secondary school than last year.

Significant numbers of children used our free school meal priority and our new open admissions option. Interestingly, children in central wards opted for schools in single-catchment areas, so there was movement in both directions, showing, we think, that more choice benefits all.

All the while, none of the so-called displacement took place — unfounded fears that this Chamber has previously heard much about. Last week at Cabinet, we welcomed the Government's £20 million investment in Whitehawk through their Pride in Place programme, and we are currently recruiting a chair. This is going to be a grassroots, community-led initiative that we will support.

We also paid tribute to the amazing residents in our LPS blocks at Cabinet last week, as we took the decision on the wholesale redevelopment of these blocks.

We have committed to continuing our person-first support for residents as we move through this process, through rehousing and also the right to return once the new homes are complete.

We also paid tribute to teachers, children and families at Middle Street Primary School following the sad but necessary decision to issue statutory notices for school closure, and we have authorised an independent review into the series of events that have led the school to its current position.

On housing, in the last year we have brought 264 empty homes back into use.

We have seen a boost in tenant satisfaction, with repairs now moving from 68% to 77% of tenants satisfied, and on the listening and acting measure we have gone from 53% to 63% — our listening council in action. We have made great progress on building our own temporary accommodation and converting our own temporary accommodation.

We have been changing student HMOs back into family homes, and we can announce that we have just received over £9 million of new funding from Government for more purchase of council and temporary accommodation, recognising that we are making good progress and they want to support us to make more. We have invested £4 million in a new Crisis and Resilience Fund to support families in the city, taking a preventative approach where possible. We have stepped up our action to repair the city's roads and pavements, a problem that has been affecting roads right up and down the country. In January, we repaired over 1,000 potholes. In February, 1,300 potholes, and that is set to increase again in March. We have quadrupled the number of teams repairing our roads.

On look and feel, we have announced an overnight street service tackling graffiti, chewing gum and jet washing. We have reduced the bulky waste charge from £60 to £25 to try and address fly-tipping. We have taken a new approach to environmental enforcement, working with small businesses rather than taking an overly punitive approach.

We have had a big clean-up in Kemptown, with a great impact on the local community there. I had a really successful Leader's Surgery in Kemptown, meeting businesses and residents, and I will be in Moulsecoomb doing the same next month. We have completed the rollout of food waste.

We have applied for planning permission for the King Alfred and committed to replacing the seafront paddling pool. We have started work on the new bus and cycle lane on the A23 and started investment in the maintenance of our seafront arches.

Today, we have got a really important agenda to consider, Madam Mayor, from vital public engagement to considering our Pay Policy Statement, our Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy, and appointments to outside bodies and partnerships.

And through four Notices of Motion, we will debate the kind of city that we want to be, considering affordable housing on the Brighton General Hospital site, the suitable

maintenance of 3G pitches and the use of crumb rubber in the city, the role of community support and food banks, and access to toilet facilities.

I wish everyone a productive meeting tonight.

100 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

100.1 The Mayor reported that 11 written questions had been received from members of the public.

1. On behalf of Robert Brown, Kim Leyland Walker asked:

This current administration promised “Reliable rubbish collection.” where they “will review where communal rubbish bins are placed and consult with residents and business owners on where they could be better sited.” – this is not the case in Kemptown Ward.

Residents frequently have to deal with overflowing bins, a lack of regular collections and a ‘who knows when’ approach to reporting overflowed bins waiting for them to be emptied and not once have we been consulted on where bins should be placed. Instead, Kemptown Ward have had many bins taken away and not replaced.

There also continues to be no KPIs with which to monitor performance. Will this administration confirm when they will:

- a) consult local businesses and residents on where they feel communal bins should be located and;
- b) renegotiate contracts for refuse collections and share what the KPIs are to ensure transparency.

Reply from Councillor Rowkins:

A couple of things to just correct and clarify. First, our waste collection service is not in fact contracted out, but delivered in-house. Also, the KPIs of a whole range of council services, including waste collections, are reported and shared publicly on a regular basis.

We certainly did promise more reliable collections, and we are delivering just that. Sorting this service out after years in the wilderness has been a major undertaking – but the culture change, the investment in vehicles and equipment, the modernisation of systems, the real-time information for residents, are all now contributing to collection success rates of well over 99% that are now routine.

But yes, communal bins are a problem. We know all too well the impact they can have on residents in Kemptown and elsewhere when a collection is missed, and indeed we saw that impact in January. Let me spell out why that was: The communal bins in Kemptown, like most others, are the large 3200L units. These bins can only be lifted and emptied by specialist vehicles. We currently have 3 communal refuse rounds, and 5 vehicles to cover them. Even with the 2 spares, when you factor in planned maintenance as well as just the law of averages, there will be times when we are not able to field all 3 rounds.

We have an increasing range of mitigations in place for when that does happen, but ultimately for me, that is not an acceptable level of vulnerability and, as such, we are currently looking at options to reduce our reliance on these bins and the vehicles needed to empty them.

As for the locations of individual bins, I am certainly aware of conversations currently underway with individual businesses and residents, and we will look at locations as part of the broader review. But I want to be really clear about what our priorities are – what I have been working on is the big picture, the fundamentals, the structural and cultural issues that have plagued the service for so long, and I believe that is exactly what residents want us to be doing.

Kim Leyland Walker asked a supplementary question:

Could the published KPIs be shared with Robert Brown, and is there a particular collection schedule for the area going forward?

Councillor Rowkins replied:

The KPIs would be forwarded. Councillor Rowkins clarified that earlier website wording had wrongly suggested communal bins were only emptied when reported full. Communal rounds visit bins routinely, with most locations visited daily, and residents do not need to report a bin before it is emptied.

2. Daniel Harris was not present at the meeting to ask the question.

3. Helen Dawson asked:

Avenue Bridge Club is looking for a permanent base in Hove. Our activities fit exactly with the Council's objectives for the King Alfred re-development area. Is it possible for the club to lease dedicated space within the new building and how could this happen?

We have been based in Hove for over 50 years, largely in Third Avenue premises which were sold in 2022. We are now a registered charity, with 180+ members and open to anybody who has an interest in bridge. We cater for all levels of expertise and run playing sessions and a comprehensive teaching programme.

Reply from Councillor Robins:

In addition to its larger swimming pools, extensive new health suite, and six court sports hall, the new King Alfred facility will feature a range of flexible spaces to meet community needs. The plans feature a community room on the ground floor which can be hired for activities such as the bridge club's meetings. For larger scale events there are two studios on the first floor, which will also be available for sports clubs and community groups to hire.

Helen Dawson asked a supplementary question:

The Club was seeking a permanent home rather than a room hired alongside other users. If dedicated space was not possible in the new development, could the Club discuss other council-owned spaces?

Councillor Robins replied:

He was happy to continue the discussion and would speak to the relevant sports officers about whether another suitable space might be available, although he could not make any commitment at that stage.

4. Mike Goodrich asked:

The only public toilets between the Volks railway station by the marina and the pier Volks station are located within the children's Peter Pan playground. Those toilets are not set up for adult use. The promenade is heavily used day and night and the lack of toilets has led to fouling on the beach. What are the council's plans to change this?

Reply from Councillor Rowkins:

Well we love toilets in this administration – and with 13 reopened, the 14th reopening next Thursday, 9 refurbished, plus major accessibility improvements, I think we have a pretty decent record.

But I absolutely hear the concerns about the lack of public toilet provision along the stretch between the Volks Railway Marina Station and the Pier Station. The toilets at the Peter Pan Playground are obviously handy for families with kids, but not really suitable for general adult use, and of course that part of the seafront does experience high footfall, particularly in the summer.

The public toilets at Black Rock have now been fully refurbished and reopened, following a £366,000 project delivered jointly by Brighton & Hove City Council and Southern Water.

Whilst there are no specific plans to open additional toilets between the Marina and the Pier at this stage, it is certainly something we'll consider as part of the broader vision and regeneration of the Eastern Seafront.

Mike Goodrich asked a supplementary question:

Was there any indicative timescale for providing an additional public toilet on this stretch of the seafront?

Councillor Rowkins replied:

There was no specific timescale at present. The first stage of the Madeira Terraces work was focused on restoration and attracting further investment, but additional toilet provision remained an issue the Council wished to consider as the plans progressed.

5. Sarah Gorton was not present at the meeting to ask the question.**6. On behalf of Sheila Rimmer, David Gibson asked:**

The council's reserves have been run down so much and the number of homeless households in temporary accommodation has risen costing an estimated £5 million this year alone. All

this has led to pleas to government to bail the council out to rebuild reserves and pay for homeless overspends.

Given that government says that austerity is over, please can you explain which of the following factors and council decisions have contributed to the deterioration in council finances?

Excessive cuts to council staff leaving insufficient capacity to deliver council services damaging income collection.

Reduced council housing allocations to homeless households in temporary and emergency accommodation contributing to soaring numbers and costs.

Falling HRA rent collection rates currently costing around £1.5 million a year.

Selling off too many council assets, “family silver” which previously provided a steady income for the council coffers.

Reply from Councillor Williams:

The council is facing sustained and growing pressure across its services, driven by rising demand, increasing complexity of need, and costs that have risen faster than available funding. These pressures are most visible in homelessness, where more households are seeking help, staying longer in temporary accommodation, and requiring more support, at a time when the supply of affordable housing is severely constrained.

Meeting these statutory duties has increasingly relied on short-term, high-cost solutions, particularly nightly-paid accommodation, which has placed significant strain on the council's finances and reduced resilience. The challenge is not simply the scale of demand, but the cost of responding to it under existing arrangements.

In response, the council is reshaping how it meets need so that services are both effective and financially sustainable. This includes reducing reliance on the most expensive forms of temporary accommodation, increasing access to more stable and lower-cost options such as council-owned and block-booked homes, and improving how costs are recovered. At the same time, the council is strengthening prevention, supporting people to move on more quickly into settled housing, and improving income collection to reduce ongoing pressure. Together, these actions are designed to manage rising demand, control costs, reduce reliance on reserves, and put the council on a more sustainable footing while continuing to protect vulnerable residents.

David Gibson asked a supplementary question:

Other councils affected by the move to Universal Credit appeared to be improving rent collection, and further explanation was requested about the rise in homelessness and the factors contributing to it.

Councillor Taylor replied:

He said reserves were being rebuilt through the recently agreed budget. Homelessness demand had increased locally and elsewhere, with one contributing factor being landlords

leaving or selling in advance of changes to Section 21 under the Renters' Rights reforms. The Council was seeking to purchase more properties and expand council-owned social and temporary accommodation.

7. Diane Montgomery asked:

I met a young couple who in good faith bought a share of a one-bedroom home in Lewes Road Brighton. They diligently saved the £6000 deposit, along with help from family. Their service charge rocketed from £130 to £450 per month in three years. Both have average income jobs and have since had a child and need a larger home. They can't sell as who wants to buy a part of a property with an ever-growing service charge, pay rent and a mortgage on top. They are under stress due to the increase, being trapped in a property that no longer meets their needs. This is not what they were promised.

Given the council agrees that shared ownership is not an affordable housing offer, and doesn't reduce housing waiting lists, will you publicise the risks, so others do not become trapped like this couple?

Reply from Councillor Williams:

I am sorry to hear of the difficulties this family have experienced. Shared ownership can be a good option for some households who want to get onto the housing ladder but service charge increases can be a concern and it is important that prospective buyers are aware of potential costs and can factor this into their decision making. Some Registered Providers operating in Brighton are now changing their approach to setting service charges to avoid sudden increases and improving their communication to residents. In addition, in June 2025 the Shared Ownership Code was launched which is a voluntary set of standards to improve consumer protection, service quality and transparency with the shared ownership sector in England. A key feature of the code is service charge transparency and highlights that a service charge intervention document should be issued which details initial charges, projected increases and asset management plans. It's important that Registered Providers communicate early and transparently about charges and we would expect them to offer guidance and support if a resident is experiencing financial difficulty.

Diane Montgomery asked a supplementary question:

Would shared ownership cease to count towards developers' affordable housing requirements, and would developers be prevented from using viability arguments to avoid providing genuinely affordable housing?

Councillor Williams replied:

She explained that the detailed planning questions were outside her portfolio and asked for them to be submitted in writing so that they could be forwarded to the relevant officers.

8. Alison Woolfenden asked:

The Council's new Constitution requires public questions be submitted two days before agenda and reports are published. Effectively, residents are expected to ask questions about decisions and reports they have not seen.

That doesn't enable scrutiny; it turns public participation into guesswork. It risks excluding residents —those who want to read reports, understand proposals, or who aren't familiar with council procedures. A system that only works for insiders isn't an inclusive one.

Until recently, residents could submit questions 48 hours after the agenda was published—I did so myself last year. The Council has already acknowledged that this rule is flawed for Scrutiny Committees and has corrected it.

If the rule is recognised as flawed elsewhere, why is Full Council—the city's highest decision-making body—still operating under it, and will you commit tonight to restoring the 48-hour post-publication deadline and confirming when the Constitution will be amended?

Reply from Councillor Sankey:

Many thanks for your question.

As you have highlighted, there are a range of opportunities for members of the public to engage with the Council decision making in our Committee, Cabinet and other meetings.

At Cabinet and Scrutiny, we have ensured that the publication deadlines enable public questions to relate to items on the agenda of the meeting. For full Council, we receive a very wide range and number of public representations and these do not need to relate to items on the agenda. Our longer deadlines for this meeting are in place to ensure we have time to prepare full responses and manage the volume of representations received.

However, I do support your request to review these deadlines to allow for public questions to be raised on reports on the agenda for full Council. I have therefore asked officers to bring forward proposals to enable this adjustment to be made. I anticipate we will have a report to address this at our next ordinary full Council meeting in July. My aim is to ensure that members of the public feel fully able to engage in all of our public Council meetings and I am grateful to you for bringing this issue to full Council today.

Alison Woolfenden asked a supplementary question:

Could the timeframe for changing the public question deadline be confirmed?

Councillor Sankey replied:

A report proposing the necessary constitutional change would be brought to the next ordinary Full Council meeting in July 2026.

9. Lynora Knott asked:

Recent figures show that under the current administration the number of homeless households in temporary and emergency accommodation has increased by over 250. Life in private temporary and emergency homeless accommodation is insecure and unhealthy. It is very costly. Recent estimates of cost to the council are around £5m and have caused the council to ask government for bailout loans. As a critical friend the Living Rent Campaign welcomes that the council is looking to increase the allocations for homeless households and is continuing with and expanding the previous approach buying of blocks for temporary homeless accommodation. No stone should be left unturned which is why we are asking the council to further alleviate this crisis by designating a greater percentage of home purchase purchases as temporary accommodation until the number of households in temporary accommodation have fallen back to the levels inherited in 2023 will this be considered?

Reply from Councillor Williams:

Supplying new council owned temporary accommodation is one of a number of ways we are tackling the crisis. We continue to buy back homes for temporary accommodation where purchases are viable and also deliver new homes. In 2025/26 we have delivered 43 homes including 11 new homes through refurbishing a former office block at Palace Place. In 2026/27 we are increasing our target with initial plans to deliver 70 homes through a mixture of buy backs and block purchases and will be utilising the Local Authority Housing Fund to support some of these purchases and the £10m of seed funding for temporary accommodation acquisitions agreed at October Cabinet. We will in addition be reviewing other ways for us to accelerate our acquisitions programme.

Lynora Knott asked a supplementary question:

What safeguards were in place for particularly vulnerable people housed in temporary accommodation?

Councillor Williams replied:

The Council had policies and safeguards in place and assessed the circumstances and vulnerability of people presenting as homeless carefully when considering appropriate placements.

10. David Gibson asked:

When asked about the need for step change increases in social housing grant, the Housing lead, Gill Williams stated that the £39 billion housing investment from over 10 years was exactly what we are wanting. Sadly if she looks at the detail, it isn't. The £39 billion spread over 10 years fund is not solely for more council homes and only provides for a maximum of 18,000 social homes a year. Yet since the Right to Buy around 45,000 council homes have been sold on average each year in England. To make an impact we need 90,000 additional homes a year. This could be actually achieved if the money already earmarked for social housing was brought forward to years 27/28-28/29. I know you agree with the need to urgently increase social housing to tackle the housing crisis. Will you raise this with government so they can make a real difference?

Reply from Councillor Williams:

Increasing the supply of council homes and other affordable housing in the city is a Housing Strategy and Council Plan priority.

We regularly engage with Government to increase access to funding streams that support the delivery of social housing in the city. For example, this ongoing engagement has enabled us to secure additional funding through the next phase of the Local Authority Housing Fund, increasing our allocation from £5 million to £9 million. This will help deliver much-needed homes for temporary accommodation and for families resettling from Afghanistan.

We are also working closely with Homes England on the Social & Affordable Homes Programme. They have expressed a strong interest in receiving bids for homes deliverable by 2029, which aligns well with our current development pipeline.

We will continue to pursue capital grants, enhanced concessionary borrowing rates, and greater financial flexibilities to ensure the council can deliver on its housing ambitions.

Delivering additional council homes continues to be supported through the Housing Revenue Account Capital Investment Programme 2026/27 to 2030/31. The budget forecast includes the council's commitment to a further 496 homes over the 5-year period in total. The council anticipates above target delivery of 140 additional council homes in 2025/26. This includes homes acquired through our successful Home Purchase scheme where we buy back ex-RTB homes.

David Gibson asked a supplementary question:

It was suggested that government should make very low-interest lending available directly to councils, rather than only to private registered providers, to help increase social housing delivery. No further response was requested.

11. Ian Needham asked:

Key worker housing is clearly needed, given that private rents in Brighton and Hove are comparable to those in London (and given that government in England is still refusing to bring in rent controls). The Living Rent campaign argues that key worker housing must be truly affordable and swallow no more than a third of income after tax. Given that typical incomes for key workers would be approximately:-

Nurse 35 K, Teacher 40K refuse collector 28K, and a care worker earns around 25K. Do you agree that rents for these key workers should be set at levels less than the Local Housing Allowance?

Reply from Councillor Williams:

Key workers play a vital role in keeping communities functioning — delivering essential services and ensuring they have access to stable, affordable homes helps maintain the resilience of these frontline services and strengthens the wellbeing of the wider community. Ensuring rents are affordable is essential to achieving this. Recent Build to Rent schemes in the city have offered discounted market rent homes and the council have set local criteria for who can benefit from these homes. This criteria includes local residency, incomes caps, people with a disability or those in a eligible profession which includes essential workers.

Ian Needham asked a supplementary question:

If the principle of genuinely affordable key-worker rents was supported, when would that position be put in writing?

Councillor Williams replied:

She reiterated that she had already written to the Secretary of State for Housing requesting a Rent Commission to address issues of rental affordability.

101 DEPUTATIONS

101.1 The Mayor reported that two deputations had been received from members of the public.

101.2 Clare Jones presented a deputation concerning the 'Community Campaign for the Brighton General Hospital Site'.

Councillor Taylor, Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Finance & City Regeneration, replied:

The administration wanted the Council to acquire the Brighton General Hospital site and deliver a significant amount of social housing on it.

He confirmed that he had already spoken to the city's MPs about the site and would continue to press the case for social and affordable housing.

He was willing to work with the community campaign on the development of a people's plan. He also referred to the Council's recently agreed planning guidance favouring social and affordable rented housing over shared ownership, while noting that the final tenure mix would depend on the planning process unless the Council acquired the site itself.

He also agreed that considering the health impacts and health inequalities associated with different development options was a useful approach and undertook to explore how a health impact assessment might be taken forward.

101.3 The deputation was noted.

101.4 Patrick Ward presented a deputation concerning 'Urgent Concerns Regarding the Effect of Southdown/UOK Service Redesign on The Wellbeing Hub at Preston Park'.

101.5 As the deputation concerned the same subject as the first petition for debate under Item 102, the Mayor agreed that the response and debate would be taken together with that petition.

102 PETITIONS FOR DEBATE

102.1 The Mayor stated that two petitions had reached the threshold for debate at Full Council.

102.2 Ali Reeves and Cheryl Collins presented the petition for debate titled 'Petition to Save Our Service, SOS, the Wellbeing Hub'.

Councillor Alexander, Cabinet Member for Communities, Equalities, Public Health & Adult Social Care, replied to the deputation and petition:

Thank you for your petition to save the Wellbeing Hub at Preston Park. We have had correspondence from residents, and we do understand the concerns.

The Preston Park Wellbeing hub is mainly funded by the NHS (over 80% of funding), however BHCC (via Public Health) funds community development, communications and training (approximately 20% of the contract).

In 2024 the funding for the hub was higher, with a total of £2.4m, of which 16% (£400k) came from the council's adult social care and public health departments combined, and £2m from the NHS.

When the contract was tendered out in 2025 the NHS reduced its funding, and as a council we also had to reduce funding. The new total value (for the contract starting October 2025) was £1.83m, made up of £1.5m from the NHS ICB (over 80%), and £270k from BHCC (under 20%, solely from the public health grant).

We do understand resident and service user concerns, but due to intense funding pressures – in particular for adult social care - in the council, we could not maintain the previous levels of support to the overall contract. We do have a range of other mental health support in the city, which can be viewed here: [Finding help for your mental health in Brighton & Hove](#)

We as a council acknowledge the serious problems facing mental health services, both in the NHS and in adult social care, as these services care for the most vulnerable in society.

Councillor Alexander additionally confirmed that the administration would raise the concerns with the NHS Integrated Care Board and would discuss with the Chairs of the Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the Health & Wellbeing Board the most appropriate route for further consideration.

102.3 Councillors Pickett, Hogan and Earthey spoke on the matter.

102.4 Councillor Alexander responded to the debate.

102.5 The recommendation to note the petition was carried unanimously. Council also agreed to note Patrick Ward's deputation.

102.6 Cathy Cooper presented the petition for debate titled 'Save Wellington House Learning Disability Day Centre in Brighton & Hove'.

Councillor Alexander replied:

Thank you for your petition highlighting your concerns about the proposal to close Wellington House Day Centre.

I understand that Wellington House is a longstanding and highly regarded service that provides activities for people with learning disabilities and much valued respite for families, and I realise that the prospect of potential change will be very unsettling for all involved. I must emphasise that the Council has taken a preliminary decision in relation to its budget only, fully aware that no decision will be made to close the service or otherwise, until a full consultation and detailed impact assessment have been undertaken, which will include an evaluation of the impact on those affected that attend the service, their families and carers, the services where people live and the staff that work at Wellington House. A consultation would not take place before the budget setting proposals have passed. The budget proposals did pass and so now we are preparing for the full consultation, which will launch in April and will run for 12 weeks.

102.7 Councillors Hill, Theobald and Earthey spoke on the matter.

102.8 Councillor Alexander responded to the debate.

102.9 RESOLVED:

That Council noted the petition.

103 CALL OVER FOR REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

103.1 The Democratic Services Manager undertook the call over.

103.2 The following items were reserved for discussion:

Item 106 - Appointment to Outside Bodies and Partnerships

Item 107 - Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2026-2029

Item 108 - Pay Policy Statement 2026-27

104 WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

104.1 The Mayor noted that written questions from Members and the replies from the appropriate Councillor were taken as read by reference to the list included in Addendum 5.

105 ORAL QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

105.1 The Mayor noted that 18 oral questions had been submitted and that 30 minutes was set aside for the item.

1. Councillor McNair asked:

asked why the Council had not identified and disclosed sooner that an email about school admission changes had failed to reach a number of parents, and why a resident's Freedom of Information request had been needed to uncover the issue.

Reply from Councillor Taylor:

He explained that the email had been sent but the size of the distribution list exceeded the system limit, causing some messages to bounce. The bounce-backs were then filed by another member of staff and the sender did not realise what had happened. He apologised for the error and said the team had learned from it.

Councillor McNair asked a supplementary question:

Would the admissions process be run again in case parents had made different school choices with the missing information?

Councillor Taylor replied:

No. The adjudicator's decision related only to two published admission number changes and did not affect the admissions process itself.

2. Councillor Fishleigh asked:

asked about the process for extending the bus Ultra Low Emission Zone to the Old Steine and St James's Street.

Reply from Councillor Muten:

He said he intended to recommend through the Enhanced Bus Partnership that buses operating through the city's Air Quality Management Areas should meet at least Euro 6 standards, including routes through the Old Steine, St James's Street and other identified corridors.

Councillor Fishleigh asked a supplementary question:

Could pollution be measured at the Old Steine and the operation of low-emission or electric buses adjusted so that cleaner operation covered the more polluted area?

Councillor Muten replied:

He said the ambition was broader than changing where individual buses switched modes: the aim was to secure compliant buses across all relevant Air Quality Management Areas, supported by incoming electric and other low-emission vehicles.

3. Councillor Asaduzzaman asked:

asked what preventative measures the Council and community partners could take to reduce racism, online hate and community tensions before incidents occurred.

Reply from Councillor Daniel:

She emphasised active civic leadership, allyship, partnership working and community cohesion, including the role of the One Voice partnership, and said the Council should challenge hateful narratives while improving awareness of reporting routes.

Councillor Asaduzzaman asked a supplementary question:

How could small businesses be better supported to report hate incidents and protect staff and customers, particularly where language barriers existed?

Councillor Daniel replied:

The Council would continue working with the Police and business networks to simplify and publicise reporting routes, including information in accessible formats and different languages, and would use trusted community groups and business associations to help overcome barriers.

4. Councillor De Oliveira asked:

asked what formal process had been put in place to reassess the risks of glyphosate use in public areas following the 2025 Global Glyphosate Study.

Reply from Councillor Rowkins:

He said the study's findings were concerning but needed to be understood in context, including the form and duration of exposure tested. The Council's policy was to reduce and minimise glyphosate use, with fewer applications, an expanded opt-out scheme and trials of alternatives.

Councillor De Oliveira asked a supplementary question:

What legal advice had been obtained about potential liability following subsequent challenges to research previously relied upon in assessing glyphosate safety?

Councillor Rowkins replied:

Local authorities relied on regulatory, safety and legal advice from the relevant national bodies, including agencies such as the Environment Agency and Health and Safety Executive, rather than creating separate local regulatory standards.

5. Councillor Meadows asked:

asked what the Council's consideration of a local-authority-led academy trust would mean for local authority schools.

Reply from Councillor Taylor:

He clarified that the Council was not seeking to become an academy. In light of the Government's direction towards stronger trusts, the Council was exploring whether a Brighton & Hove place-based trust initiated by the local authority could be available to schools that wished to join, while other schools could remain maintained by the Council.

Councillor Meadows asked a supplementary question:

Would schools entering such a trust enable the Council to close schools and release school land for housing?

Councillor Taylor replied:

No. That was unrelated to the proposal. Falling pupil numbers remained a wider strategic issue for the city, but the proposed trust was not about releasing school sites.

6. Councillor Earthy asked:

What progress had been made on mitigating serious flooding in Ovingdean, Rottingdean and Saltdean.

Reply from Councillor Muten:

He outlined continuing engineering investigations and drainage work across the affected locations, including proposed works in Ovingdean, priority drainage cleansing in Rottingdean and liaison with Southern Water on condition surveys and sewer infrastructure.

Councillor Earthey asked a supplementary question:

Would local councillors, residents and other stakeholders be consulted as the affected areas appeared to be widening?

Councillor Muten replied:

Yes. The information would be circulated and engineers would continue to engage with ward councillors and other stakeholders as the work progressed.

7. Councillor Bagaeen was not in attendance and the question was not taken.

8. Question 8 had been withdrawn.

9. Councillor Davis, on behalf of Councillor Sykes, asked:

Why had the administration interpreted 'involved companies' in the earlier divestment Notice of Motion as companies operating in illegal settlements in the West Bank, thereby limiting the scope of the motion?

Reply from Councillor Sankey:

She said the matter had been addressed through the February Cabinet report implementing the Notice of Motion. The administration had interpreted the motion as referring to companies active in the West Bank, had written to the relevant East Sussex Pension Fund bodies and had subsequently identified pension-fund exposure to companies on the relevant list. She had written to members of the Pension Committee and would continue to consider how the investment strategy could be influenced as pension arrangements changed.

Councillor Davis asked a supplementary question:

Councillor Davis indicated that the response had addressed the point he intended to raise and did not pursue a further supplementary question.

10. Councillor Lyons asked:

When would councillors receive a list showing the priority order for road repairs and the assessment used to determine that order, noting that Bramble Rise had been described as priority 511?

Reply from Councillor Muten:

He referred to the backlog of highway repairs, increased Government funding and the expansion of repair teams. He said the Council had significantly increased pothole repairs during January and February and was continuing to address the backlog.

Councillor Lyons asked a supplementary question:

Could councillors be provided with the list of roads ahead of Bramble Rise and the assessment criteria used to prioritise each road?

Councillor Muten replied:

He said the highways programme for the coming financial year had been presented to Cabinet and that roads had been assessed and scheduled. He also thanked residents for reporting defects so that repairs could be programmed.

105.2 The 30-minute period for oral questions then expired. A motion to extend the time for oral questions was moved and seconded and was put to the vote.

105.3 The motion to extend the time was lost. Questions 11 to 18 were therefore not reached.

106 APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES AND PARTNERSHIPS

106.1 Councillor Parrott introduced the report.

106.2 Councillors Shanks, Meadows and Earthey spoke on the matter.

106.3 Councillor Parrott responded to the debate.

106.4 RESOLVED:

1) That Council appointed Members/representatives to various bodies as listed in Appendix 1 and Addendum 3 to the report.

2) That Councillor Sam Parrott be appointed as Chair of People Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3) That the Chief Executive be granted delegated authority to make any necessary in-year changes to appointments to Outside Bodies and Partnerships, following

consultation with the Leader (and any additional Member consultation considered appropriate).

4) That the Monitoring Officer be granted delegated authority to update the Constitution to reflect recommendation 2.3 above.

107 COMMUNITY SAFETY AND CRIME REDUCTION STRATEGY 2026-2029

107.1 Councillor McGregor introduced the report.

107.2 Councillors Shanks, Lyons, Wilkinson, Hill and Hogan spoke on the matter.

107.3 Councillor McGregor responded to the debate.

107.4 RESOLVED:

1) Approves the Community Safety and Crime Reduction Strategy 2026–2029, attached in Appendix 1.

2) Agrees to delegate authority to the Corporate Director for Families, Children and Wellbeing, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Youth Services and the Community Safety Partnership, to make minor amendments required to ensure alignment with any relevant new legislation (e.g., Crime & Policing Bill) and devolution-related governance, that may come into force during the lifetime of this strategy.

108 PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2026-27

108.1 Councillor Sankey introduced the report.

108.2 Councillors Hill, Meadows, Cattell and McNair spoke on the matter.

108.3 Councillor Sankey responded to the debate.

108.4 RESOLVED:

- 1) That Full Council adopts the pay policy statement for 2026/27 attached at Appendix 1.

109 AFFORDABLE HOUSING ON THE BRIGHTON GENERAL HOSPITAL SITE

109.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Rowkins and formally seconded by Councillor Winder.

109.2 Councillors Lademacher, Theobald, McLeay, Galvin, Meadows and Earthey spoke on the matter.

109.3 Councillor Rowkins responded to the debate.

109.4 The Mayor put the motion to the vote and confirmed that it had been carried unanimously.

109.5 RESOLVED:

This council notes:

- 1) The ongoing housing crisis in the city, and the dire need for more genuinely affordable homes.
- 2) The lack of readily available sites for housing development to meet this need.
- 3) That the Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust are revisiting plans to build a new Health Hub on the Brighton General Hospital site and intend to vacate much of the rest of the site.
- 4) That many public sector “key workers” are priced out of the city.

This council resolves to:

- 1) “Express support for the principle of prioritising social housing on suitable public sector land”
- 2) Request a report to Cabinet that assesses the viability of acquiring the site and developing social housing, either on a standalone basis, or via the Joint Venture with Hyde.
- 3) Request that this notice of motion is sent to the Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust for information.

110 3G PITCHES - USE OF CRUMB RUBBER INFILL

110.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor Earthey and formally seconded by Councillor Fishleigh.

110.2 Councillor Fowler moved an amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor Robins.

110.3 Councillors Pickett, Lyons and Davis spoke on the matter.

110.4 Councillor Earthey responded to the debate and did not accept the Labour Group amendment.

110.5 The Mayor put the Labour Group amendment to the vote and confirmed that it had been carried.

110.6 The Mayor put the motion as amended to the vote and confirmed that it had been carried.

110.7 RESOLVED:

This council notes:

- 1) The importance of 3G Artificial Grass Pitches (AGPs) for physical wellbeing and the significant gap between demand and provision in Brighton & Hove.
- 2) The use of Crumb Rubber Infill (CRI) in UK 3G AGPs
- 3) The disparity in the legal position on CRI between the UK/EU;
- 4) The growing concerns about the human/environmental health risks posed by CRI in AGPs;
- 5) Sport England's funding for 3G CRI contradicts its commitment(1) to carbon neutrality/microplastic reduction;
- 6) BHCC Policies SU3 (Water Resources and their Quality), Policy DM43 in the Local Plan.
- 7) That there are currently no proven alternative materials to CRI or alternative surfaces that provide the same or similar levels of durability.

- 8) The trials being undertaken by the Football Federation to test alternative infill materials.
- 9) The Petition to Parliament to ban the use of CRI on all new 3G artificial football pitches (2).

This council resolves to:

- 1) To request a report from Officers to Cabinet outlining:
 - a. the health and environmental risks of CRI as, for example, expressed by the UK EA, DEFRA, EU ECHA, and some academic institutions;
 - b. the current guidance/policies of relevant bodies such as the UK Government, Sports England, this Council, and other relevant bodies allowing the construction of new 3G pitches using CRI;
 - c. the alternative materials to CRI that could be used in future 3G pitches in the City;
 - d. the legal and practical options open to BHCC for the use of CRI in Council-owned/supported 3G pitches.
 - e. the extent to which planning policy can be used to influence the materials being used in future non-Council-owned 3G pitches

2) To support calls for the alignment UK law with EU law on intentionally added microplastics, including the use of CRI in 3G AGPs.

Footnotes

1. *Sport England "Every Move" (2024) strategy*
2. <https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/752679>

111 FOODBANK FREE CITY - FROM PARCELS TO COMMUNITY SUPPORT HUBS

111.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor De Oliveira and formally seconded by Councillor Hill.

111.2 At the four-hour point of the meeting, the Mayor moved a motion under Council Procedure Rule 15 to terminate the meeting subject to voting on the remaining business. The motion was not carried and the meeting continued.

111.3 Councillor Alexander moved an amendment on behalf of the Labour Group which was formally seconded by Councillor McGregor.

111.4 Councillors Hogan and Fishleigh spoke on the matter.

111.5 Councillor De Oliveira responded to the debate and did not accept the Labour Group amendment.

111.6 The Mayor put the Labour Group amendment to the vote and confirmed that it had been carried.

111.7 The Mayor put the motion as amended to the vote and confirmed that it had been carried.

111.8 RESOLVED:

This council notes:

- 1) Reliance on food banks is driven by low incomes, high living costs.
- 2) Emergency food parcels cannot be a permanent substitute for food and financial security.
- 3) The city's community food organisations have the trust and reach in providing dignified, non-stigmatising support.
- 4) Food is a matter of dignity and social rights, not charity or "deservingness".
- 5) Organisations committed to end food poverty such as the Child Poverty Action Group state that links between advice services and food banks should be increased.

This council resolves to:

- 1) Support the principle of achieving the goal of a Foodbank-Free Brighton & Hove, by reducing poverty and strengthening preventative support.
- 2) Request officers continue to take a preventative and long-term approach in tackling food poverty and continue to work with community food organisations to support the aim within the Brighton & Hove Food Strategy Action Plan '25–'30 to help foodbanks, when appropriate, move into affordable food hubs that combine dignified food access with advice on, benefits, housing, debt, health and employment support.

3) Request officers to continue to work with residents on building financial resilience, giving advice and signposting to community food organisations when appropriate.

4) Request members take note of the Crisis & Resilience Fund report which sets out how the council is working to increase resilience for residents in poverty, working with community food organisations and the Community & Voluntary Sector to ensure those in food crisis receive immediate support alongside advice to prevent future crisis.

112 POST-BUDGET CHANGES TO THE TOILET TAX

112.1 The Notice of Motion as listed in the agenda was proposed by Councillor McNair and formally seconded by Councillor Meadows.

112.2 Councillors Hill, Thomson, Shanks, Sheard and Meadows spoke on the matter.

112.3 Councillor McNair responded to the debate.

112.4 The Mayor put the motion to the vote and confirmed that it had been lost.

113 CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting concluded at 9:45PM.

Signed

Chair

Dated this day of

2026