

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The following questions have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answers which will be included in an addendum that will be circulated at the meeting:

(a) Councillor A. Norman

“What is the cost of the Budget consultation work currently being carried out for the Council by the New Economics Foundation?”

Reply from Councillor Littman, Deputy Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee (Responsible for Finance).

(b) Councillor A. Norman

“The latest Audit Commission Annual Governance Report for Brighton & Hove City Council once again identifies serious weaknesses in the operation of the Council’s Human Resources Payroll System which creates a ‘risk of misstatement and fraud’. Can the Leader of the Council please tell us what steps are being taken to address these serious shortcomings and does he agree that the length of time it has taken to sort out these problems is simply unacceptable?”

Reply from Councillor J. Kitcat, Leader of the Council.

(c) Councillor K. Norman

“Section 269 of the Public Health Act gives local authorities powers to control the use of movable dwellings and to license the use of land as a site for such a dwelling. If the land in question is to be used for more than 28 days in total in any calendar year, planning permission must be obtained. Furthermore, a site which is used for more than 42 days consecutively or 60 days in total in any consecutive 12 months must have a site licence. Can Cllr. West please confirm whether planning permission has ever been sought, or a site licence obtained, for the ‘tolerated’ traveller site at 19 Acres, given that it has been occupied for well over 28 days on 3 separate occasions in the last 18 months?”

Reply from Councillor West, Chair of the Environment & Sustainable Committee.

(d) Councillor C. Theobald

“Nationally, £200 million of taxpayers’ money is lost due to fraud and error in the council tax benefit system. Localisation of council tax support will give councils a greater incentive to clamp down on fraud and error as they will get to keep all the savings made. Can the Administration’s Finance Spokesperson give an estimate of how much is currently lost through fraud and error in Brighton & Hove and what steps are being taken to cut down on that from next year?”

Reply from Councillor Littman, Deputy Chair of the Policy & Resources Committee (Responsible for Finance).

(e) Councillor Bennett

“Residents are becoming increasingly concerned about the state of the tennis courts in Hove Park. Some work was carried out on the courts 2 or 3 years ago to improve drainage but this has not proved effective. Whenever there has been rain the courts flood and pools of water sit on them instead of draining away. This makes them dangerous to play on, but even worse is the fact that the courts become very slippery because they are never cleaned. Dirt carried in on shoes turns into mud after even a little light rain, and with poor drainage the mud is never washed away. Will the Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee please ensure that this situation is addressed as a matter of urgency before one of our residents has a serious accident as a result of the state of the courts?”

Reply from Councillor Bowden, Chair of the Economic Development & Culture Committee.

(f) Councillor Cobb

“Can Cllr. Davey confirm when the last structural survey was carried out on the Hove Town Hall Norton Road car park? I am concerned that the many leaking drain pipes are undermining the structural integrity of the cement blocks of which the car park is built.”

Reply from Councillor Davey, Chair of the Transport Committee.

(g) Councillor Simson

“At the beginning of this year, the Green administration made the decision to divert £175K from the Community Development budget to Neighbourhood Councils. This was despite the fact even following extensive consultation showing that there was little or no appetite for it in the communities and meant that vital community development work in both Woodingdean and Hollingbury was completely cut causing detriment to both neighbourhoods.

Can Cllr Duncan please tell me whether:

- he still considers this was the right thing to do or has the administration made a mistake?
- this is producing value for money, as community development work does?
- he is considering diverting funds from other budgets causing those programmes to also suffer?"

Reply from Councillor Duncan, Chair of the Community Safety Forum Committee.

