

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The following questions listed on page 25 of the agenda have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answers listed below:

(a) Councillor Cllr G. Theobald

“Will the lead Member for Finance specifically detail how the £228k savings agreed for the Human Resources department in the 2012/13 Budget are being delivered and explain why the Administration is proposing to exempt them from any further savings in 2013/14?”

Reply from Councillor Littman.

“The Human Resources service started 2012/13 with an underlying budget overspend of approximately £300,000 which needed to be addressed. In addition a further £228,000 saving was brought forward to 1 January 2013 from its original planned start date of 1 April 2013 giving a part year saving of £57,000. A number of posts are being removed from the staffing structure to deliver the total savings requirements and a more efficient approach to commissioning training courses agreed. In addition the service has piloted the council’s new systems thinking methodology and an implementation plan has been drawn up. The priorities for the service for 2013/14 include pay modernisation and implementing job families, supporting the introduction of a new values, behaviours and performance management framework, continuing to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the payroll function and enabling the council’s broader modernisation programme, including further Workstyles rollouts. The combined impact of both bringing forward planned 2013/14 savings and the need for the service to support large change programmes across the organisation means that further savings are not considered to be deliverable at this time.”

(b) Councillor Wealls

“Will the Chair of the Children & Young People Committee please provide an update on the proposed acquisition of the Holland Road Police Station for use as a new school?”

Reply from Councillor Shanks.

“It was agreed that the council and Police Authority would jointly appoint a company to undertake a red book valuation of the site. This has been done and the draft report sent to both the Council and the Police Authority. The Council has confirmed that it is happy with the report and is awaiting confirmation from the Police that the final report can be issued.

This is a thorough and well researched report taking into account all known information pertinent to the site. It complies with the valuation brief issued

jointly by the Council and the Police and is an independent objective assessment of the value of the site.

The report to Policy and Resources Committee in July 2012 authorised the Strategic Director People jointly with the Strategic Director Resources to proceed to acquire the freehold of Hove Police station, without planning consent in place, for the express purpose of providing primary school places in Hove. The same report noted the likely purchase price of the site.

The initial draft of the report confirms that the value of the site is within the ranges mentioned in the P & R report mentioned above. Once the report is accepted by the Police and issued negotiations on the actual price to be paid will commence.”

(c) Councillor Brown

“Will the Chair of the Transport Committee tell me what the impact of the new cycle lane has been on bus journey times along, and in the vicinity of the Old Shoreham Road?”

Reply from Councillor Davey.

“Thank you for your question. Brighton & Hove Bus Company has reported some delays on bus journey times for school bus services which operate in the peak and have now adjusted timing and routing of services accordingly.

It is important to understand that journey times are mostly influenced by junction capacity and in this case journey times along Old Shoreham Road are mainly influenced by the junction capacity of Upper Drive. When the council introduced the new cycle lane we also took the opportunity to improve safety for pedestrians at the Upper Drive junction, particularly school children. This was at the request of local residents and ward councillors who had been voicing concern about safety at the junction for some time. The pedestrian crossing facilities were therefore upgraded and additional crossing time introduced which has had a slight impact on bus journey times. It is always difficult to balance the needs of all modes of transport at junctions but the safety of children is paramount if they are to be encouraged to walk to school.

As part of the post scheme monitoring, officers are further looking at the phasing of the traffic signals to ensure they are providing maximum benefit to all pedestrians while ensuring that buses and general traffic are not unnecessarily delayed.”