

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 Janio

“Following the Electoral Commission review of electoral fraud, will the Leader of the Council be encouraging the Leaders of all political parties to sign up to its recommendations, especially those related to postal votes?”

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

“The Electoral Commission has published a Code of Conduct for campaigners which covers postal votes:

http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0006/154176/Code-of-conduct-campaigners-2013.pdf

The code has been agreed with parties at the national level.

The Regional Returning Officer will be drawing attention to the code in his briefings for candidates and agents at the European Elections. The Local Returning Officer will also reinforce the code in Brighton & Hove.”

(b) Councillor Simson

“Whilst travelling around the city recently, I have noticed a very large number of trees being felled; often those that are well established or older and in one case what appeared to be a whole row of trees in one road. Bearing in mind that residents often have to apply for planning permission to carry out such an operation, could Cllr West please reassure us that this cull of trees is entirely necessary and that all checks and consultations are carried out before work is even considered.”

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

“All our city’s trees are regularly inspected, and remedial arboricultural works are allocated to those that need them. A large majority of the city’s trees are of an ageing stock and are succumbing to decay fungus, which can result in mechanical failure of the stem base or root plate and sadly results in their loss.

For example it was sadly necessary to fell four trees in Clermont Road following an inspection which found they were either dead or colonised by the decay fungus Ganoderma.

February meant that a high number of our trees have suffered wind throw and root plate movement rendering them either unstable or requiring heavy pruning.

When significant trees are to be felled officers normally let ward councillors know before works commence. In emergency situations it is not always possible to inform ward councillors in advance of taking any action. However, a system has been put in place to advise ward councillors when prominent trees or a large number of trees in one location are to be felled.

I'm sure residents will want reassurances that where trees are found to pose a risk to people, property, or other trees, our officers act to make them safe. Where possible lost trees are replaced through our replacement programme, which plants hundreds of new trees a year. This budget was maintained as part of the 2014/15 budget-setting process, so we hope to continue this important work to support biodiversity, clean up the air we breathe and improve our streets."