

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed for questions submitted by a member of the public who either lives or works in the area of the authority at each ordinary meeting of the Council.

Every question shall be put and answered without discussion, but the person to whom a question has been put may decline to answer. The person who asked the question may ask one relevant supplementary question, which shall be put and answered without discussion.

The following written questions have been received from members of the public.

**(a) Captain David Briggs**

“Brighton & Hove spends £148,300.000 on Housing Benefit, of that £88,200.000 is paid to private landlords or (59.5%).

Many properties owned by private landlords are below minimum standards required by the Housing Act 2004.

Landlords should be made responsible to provide appropriate homes for their tenants and only be allowed recourse to public funds once these properties are brought up to legal minimum standards.

Is it not possible for private landlords to be made to bring these homes up to minimum standards, before tenants end up trapped in homes that are unsuitable, sometimes barely habitable and with very little recourse?”

**Councillor Caulfield, Cabinet Member for Housing, will reply.**

**(b) Ms Helena Joyce**

“My 3 year old son Lawrie will start a local school in September 2011 and I selected Bright Start (2 years ago) as it offered the very best run up to formal education. If the nursery closes where is Lawrie supposed to go for the 5 month period between April and September that will ensure he is not unsettled at this crucial time?”

*Note: Ms. Joyce has agreed to the question being taken as read and therefore the Cabinet Member will be called directly to respond.*

**Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, will reply.**

**(c) Ms Helena Tolinsson**

"How will the council either compensate parents for the loss of earning if no suitable childcare can be found after April or reimburse parents for the additional costs of finding childcare in way of having to pay deposits for putting the child's name on waiting lists for privately run nurseries which in itself is no guarantee of a place being available at the time it's required?"

*Note: Ms. Tolinsson has agreed to the question being taken as read and therefore the Cabinet Member will be called directly to respond.*

**Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, will reply.**

**(d) Mr Oliver Sykes**

"In view of the apparent shortfall of in the region of £260,000 in the Culture and Enterprise budget for 2011 /12, would Councillor Smith please tell us whether he will be making any cuts to the funding of the libraries services?"

**Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation & Tourism, will reply.**

**(e) Mr Christopher Hawtree**

"Would Councillor Theobald please tell us what steps he will be taking, and when, to increase the composting of domestic food waste?"

**Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment, will reply.**

**(f) Miss Tamsin Wright**

"I cried when I heard that Bright Start might be closed down. Children love it, parents trust it, the staff are the best you can find, and the government wants nursery places. How can the Council say they want Brighton to be the best place for children to grow up when they want to close Bright Start down"

**Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, will reply.**

**(g) Mr Robert Jarrett**

"Would Councillor Theobald please report the findings of the officers that he asked to fully investigate the junction of Cromwell Road and The Drive in Hove, with a view to assessing the need for pedestrian crossings?"

**Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment, will reply.**

**(h) Ms Christina Summers**

“Can the council provide a full update on its progress with the redevelopment plans for Preston Barracks on Lewes Road originally set out and agreed in a 2005 planning brief in which it was acknowledged to be a significant landmark as a “gateway to the city?”

**Councillor Fallon-Khan, Cabinet Member for Enterprise, Employment & Major Projects, will reply.**

**(i) Mr Ed Titheridge**

“For clarity and transparency in decision making, what criteria will the Council be using to decide whether Bright Start Nursery should close?”

*Note: Mr. Titheridge has agreed to the question being taken as read and therefore the Cabinet Member will be called directly to respond.*

**Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, will reply.**

**(j) Mr Andrew McKay**

“The Equalities and Human Rights Commission Impact Assessment Guidance states that "EIA should start prior to policy development or at the design stages of the review and continue throughout the policy development" - Can you explain what you (Vanessa Brown) / the committee has done to date about ensuring proper implementation of their Equalities Impact Assessment obligations?”

**Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, will reply.**

**(k) Mr Stephen Guy**

“At the last meeting of the council in October Councillor Brown stated that the proposal to move to academy status at Portslade Community College was to proceed, with the council working in close cooperation with the Aldridge Foundation. My question is in two parts:

- How advanced does this process have to be before there is a genuine attempt to consult with the parents, staff and other stakeholders, in other words all those people in the local community who rely on the college for the services it provides, as well as the education of the children in the locality?

- And will that consultation incorporate a ballot of those stakeholders in order that there can be a genuine opportunity for the parents staff and other stakeholders to have their say on the proposal?"

**Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, will reply.**

**(l) Master Charlie Connaghan**

"Could the councillors please come and visit Bright Start to see for themselves why I love my nursery?"

*Note: Master Connaghan has agreed to the question being taken as read and therefore the Cabinet Member will be called directly to respond.*

**Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, will reply.**

**(m) Mr Colin Wellstead**

"At the last meeting on the 21st October, Councillor Brown stated that, "The state of the building is very poor. It has high windows and little light". I would suggest this is good for a nursery because why would you want low windows? Also, the light is little, well my child is also little. Where is her evidence that the light is little, does the nursery not have lights and high windows? It has been stated that the ceilings are too low, they are about 8 foot, my child is 2 foot. Why do they need altering?"

*Note: Mr. Wellstead has agreed to the question being taken as read and therefore the Cabinet Member will be called directly to respond.*

**Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, will reply.**

**(n) Ms Shelley Hands**

"The 1996 Employment Relations Act states that "consultation" regarding job losses must be "meaningful". Why was an £87,000 saving in nursery provision, confirmed subsequently as Bright Start, published in papers for cabinet meeting for 9<sup>th</sup>/12/2010, and "the Argus", 3/12/2010, while the consultation period of 30 days hadn't even finished?"

**Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, will reply.**

**(o) Ms Juliet Bruce**

“In the Argus on 15/11/2010 Councillor Brown stated that the council has “a statutory duty to protect the most vulnerable children in the city”.

Does the councillor not agree that all children are, by definition vulnerable, that no assessment has made of the numbers of “most vulnerable” children in the Bright Start area, and that all children deserve the kind of “high quality” childcare provided by Bright Start?”

**Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, will reply.**

**(p) Mr Dave Jones**

“In response to my previous question to full council at 21/10/2010, Vanessa Brown stated that “more information about the feasibility study (re. Bright Start building work) will be included in the consultation document”. Why did the said document continue to wrongly claim that £230,000 was needed to bring “the building up to a good standard” and then exclude the information from Informal Cabinet, 12/5/2010 which said “ the scope of the works could be reduced to cost£160,000...(and)...could be reduced further by only addressing the most urgent issues”?

Can Vanessa Brown give an accurate figure for necessary building work now essential work is completed?”

**Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, will reply.**

