



**Brighton & Hove
City Council**

**CABINET
ADDENDUM
ITEM 9 – WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM
COUNCILLORS**

4.00PM, THURSDAY, 21 MAY 2009

COUNCIL CHAMBER, HOVE TOWN HALL

ADDENDUM

ITEM	Page
9. WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS	1 - 4

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

The following questions have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answer to be circulated the meeting. The Councillor asking the question may then ask one relevant supplementary question which shall be put and answered without discussion.

(a) Councillor Kitcat

"Can Cllr G Theobald provide detail on the cost of the metal stoppers being added to the non-foot pedal communal bins? In particular:

- The cost per bin of adding the stoppers;
- The total cost to the council of adding the stoppers;
- How this cost will be met and from which budget."

(b) Councillor Kitcat

"Can Cllr G Theobald explain why a small number of non-foot pedal communal bins have rubber seals on the flaps which reduce the noise of closure whilst most do not?"

(c) Councillor Kitcat

"Does CityClean have any plans to expand the use of communal bins in the city?"

(d) Councillor Kitcat

"Could Cllr G Theobald update the meeting as to current versus previous recycling and waste tonnages in the city centre where communal bins are used?"

Response from Councillor Theobald, Cabinet Member for Environment, to all four questions.

"Thank you for your questions Councillor Kitcat.

As you are aware, beginning with the Council meeting on 4 December, you have asked some 30 questions at Council and Cabinet meetings. Notwithstanding my reservations and the pressure it was putting on officers, I have, up to now, endeavoured to answer all your questions in the hope that they are the last ones. I have a list of all your questions with the answers supplied if anyone wishes to see them. However, as is obvious to any fair minded, objective and impartial observer, this number of questions coming from a single Member about a single issue is excessive by any standards and certainly unprecedented in the history of this authority

Given the number, frequency and nature of the questions, a disproportionate amount of officer time and resources has been spent in doing the research and preparing the answers. I firmly believe that the interests of the hard working Council Tax payers of Brighton & Hove is better served with officer time and resources being spent in delivering the service rather than having to research and answer an endless list of questions that add no value to the service.

I have always treated questions from Members and the public with respect and answered them. However, given what I have just said, and having taken advice, I do not feel it would be appropriate to continue to reply to a constant and endless list of questions on this subject from one Member.

As you are no doubt aware, at the Environment CMM on 7 May, I extended an invitation to all Members to meet Officers to share any concerns they have about waste and recycling issues. I repeat that invitation again. I do not therefore intend to answer your questions on communal bins as I believe that, for anyone genuinely interested in helping to improve the service, taking the invitation that I have again extended to all Members is a more appropriate way of making a difference than constantly tabling questions after questions at Council and Cabinet.

Thank you.”

(e) Councillor Kitcat

"Can Cllr Smith provide details on the usage of the Jubilee library meeting rooms? What percentage of the total bookable time for these rooms is used?"

Response from Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation & Tourism.

“The three rooms that are available for hire in Jubilee Library are occupied approximately 75% of the time. The bookings range from educational activities such as adult learning sessions, to meetings and conferences run by external organisations, through to council internal meetings or training sessions. We are looking to increase the occupancy levels during optimum times such as targeting the main conference periods in the spring and autumn.”

(f) Councillor Kitcat

"Can Cllr Smith provide a list of the books on sale in the Jubilee library shop to the meeting?"

Response from Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Culture, Recreation & Tourism.

“There are approximately 70 titles held in stock at any one time, and these vary according to current trends and themes. For example, at the 40th anniversary of Hungary Caterpillar we increased the number and range of editions to meet different customer needs.

The books can be grouped into a number of different categories, and here are some examples of titles under each:

Classics - including Dickens/Lawrence/Chaucer/Austen etc. (we offer 'buy 3 books and get the cheapest free')

Local History Titles (including tourist type guides) - Brighton Explorer/City Breaks/Brighton Boozers/Local Street Atlas/Pevsner Architectural Guide (B&H)/Seaside Album/Spirit of Brighton George the Pavilion Cat etc.

Children's non fiction & interactive style titles - complete range of Miffy (board and paperback)/ Elmer (Early years board and Paperback) / Spot / Hungary Caterpillar (board/interactive & paperback) / Princess & Fairy cookery and many other interactive and instructional titles assisting reading writing etc, stickers & cookery.

Children's Classics - C.S.Lewis/Lewis Carroll (board & paperback) Fairy Tales

Miscellaneous & Learning – Encyclopaedia of Immaturity (for adults!) Use The Book! Know It All/Sets of classics e.g. Narnia in presentation boxed sets / Sudoku / Pocket Guides various games/quiz books.”

(g) Councillor Kennedy

“It is a matter of record that schools admissions continue to be a controversial issue for many families in Brighton & Hove, and one which can create profound disruption and suffering for those children and parents who find themselves vulnerable to the vagaries of the current system. This is particularly so where (as can happen in admission schemes with a geographical element) there are instances of fraudulent representations of residential addresses which fall within certain favoured catchment areas.

“Can the Cabinet Member for Children & Young People tell me what the penalties are for the falsification of personal information on Schools Admissions Forms, and how many identified culprits have been or will be prosecuted by this local authority for this offence during 2007 – 2009?”

Response from Councillor Brown, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People.

“In the course of the admissions process any address record discrepancies or allegations concerning false information are investigated. In many cases it is actually found that the details provided were correct and somebody has misunderstood another family's situation. Where we have good reason to believe that false information has been given the Council's anti-fraud team can be asked to access records that they have or investigate further. They will then advise us whether there is a case to pursue and as to the measures they advise. To date we have not had a case where the anti-fraud team or the Council's lawyers have recommended legal action. What we have done is to withdraw the offer of a place, or if the matter is discovered before the places

are allocated, change the offer in line with the correct address. In all cases we must make a school offer if the parent is resident in the City. There are no real options of sanctions or penalties open to the Council except prosecution. If that was recommended by lawyers or the anti-fraud team then with their help we would pursue that course of action. Councillor Kennedy may be aware of the case highlighted in the press recently where a parent allegedly gave a false address to obtain a school place in Harrow and that Council is taking forward a prosecution. So far as we aware that is the first such case to go to court.”