

**WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS**

The following questions have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answer detailed below:

**(1) Councillor Yates – Parking in Coombe Road area:**

Since the introduction of the residents parking scheme in the coombe road area (zone U) parking pressures have eased considerably, and residents are truly relieved. Could the Lead member please advise how residents can contribute to a review of the impact and have their proposed improvements to layout incorporated into this? These ideas include additional bays, enhanced access for motorcycles and the introduction of paid on street cycle storage facilities.

**Reply from Councillor Heley, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Thank you for your written question regarding parking in the Coombe Road area (Zone U). We are really pleased to hear that parking has eased considerably and residents are relieved. There are some small changes still to incorporate including 9 new motorcycle parking bays which we hope will be introduced in the next few months. We are also planning to review the zone in the next 12 months, and this will give residents the opportunity to comment for any additional changes.

**(2) Councillor Platts – Educational Outcomes in East Brighton:**

Class Divide is a grassroots campaign fighting to draw attention to the deeply unjust educational attainment gap for young people from the communities of Whitehawk, Manor Farm and Bristol Estate in East Brighton. East Brighton is an area that is economically disadvantaged with a high level of child poverty. The campaign highlights the lower rates of attainment at GCSE's in a range of subjects including English and maths and the higher rate of exclusions and referrals to special schools. This has a negative effect on children's life chances, embedding disadvantage through to adulthood and perpetuating the cycle of poverty. Will the Council commit to meeting the five demands of the campaign? In summary:

1. An annual report to the Children, Young People and Skills Committee on the school outcomes and attainment of children living Whitehawk, Bristol Estate and Manor Farm.
2. To publish a plan that specifically addresses what actions will be taken to reduce the identified educational inequalities experienced by children, young people and adults this area.
3. To make training on the experiences of working-class children in education compulsory for all school leaders and teachers in Brighton and Hove.
4. To take action to reduce the rate of school exclusions and the placement of children in alternative schools
5. To give local people a second chance by providing local learning and training opportunities and develop advocacy support for parents struggling to keep their children in school.

### **Reply from Councillor Clare, Chair of the Children, Young People & Skills Committee**

Thank you for raising this important issue. The Green Administration has made it clear that improving the lives of disadvantaged young people in our city is a priority – one that has for too long not progressed as far as it should have.

In doing this, we are fully committed to working together and co-producing our response to this challenge with communities, schools and other partners to narrow the gap in achievement for young people from these communities. We will do this for young people living in all deprived areas of the city – which includes Whitehawk.

We are committed to getting the very best education for all of our children and grateful to our schools for the hard work they do.

I'll be responding to this further when we look at the deputation on the agenda today.

### **(3) Councillor Platts – Safety on Madeira Drive:**

Since the latest lockdown, Madeira Drive has once again become unsafe for pedestrians and cyclists, especially those with small children. The re-opening of Madeira Drive with one-way traffic has led to cars speeding between the Sea Life Centre, Duke's Mound and Black Rock. Drivers have used this space to speed even when the five lanes on Marine Parade have been clear of traffic. On the weekend of 9th and 10th January, a combination of lockdown and sunny weather saw hundreds of people circulating in this area to get some fresh air and exercise after a week indoors. The volume of people was such that pedestrians were walking in the road to socially distance and were taken by surprise by vehicles. Some drivers were aggressive in trying to get through the crowds and the area was unsafe. Will the Council take urgent action to ensure there is sufficient space for people by either dedicating the area between the Sea Life Centre and Duke's Mound or Duke's Mound and Black Rock to pedestrians and cyclists whilst lockdown continues? From the Council's own figures produced in response to my previous written question, Black Rock car park is little used during the winter months.

### **Reply from Councillor Heley, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

Madeira Drive was initially closed between Dukes Mound and the Palace Pier Roundabout to facilitate walking and cycling for local residents during the very first lockdown. Although the closure was generally supported there were concerns from traders and blue badge holders as access was limited to changing places facilities and the beach, there were also safety concerns as some vehicles were authorised to access the route without requisite enforcement powers being available to the Police to enforce speeding, conflicts between cyclists and pedestrians or other traffic violations under the closure Traffic Order..

At the 29<sup>th</sup> September ETS committee, last year, approval was granted to commence detailed-design and the Traffic Regulation Order process to re-open Madeira Drive one-way eastbound, to improve Blue Badge access and parking capacity and to relocate the cycle track from the footway promenade onto the carriageway, therefore safely segregating cyclists from pedestrians, to improve both cycle capacity and pedestrian provision.

The first stage in this implementation has seen the re-opening of Madeira Drive one-way to address access issues for traders and blue badge holder as well as some of the immediate safety and access concerns while working towards the ETS approved design.

If the road was to be closed again this could lead to more confusion and be viewed as a knee jerk reaction that will likely be required to be reopened again in the short to medium term leading to uncertainty about the status of the road and footway creating an unsafe environment. We would encounter strong criticism from our stakeholders, including blue badge users and businesses, who again would be affected by the access restrictions and have worked with us anticipating the introduction of the ETS approved design.

We would also need to consider the implications of a further legal process required to close the road under another Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) shortly after two previously TROs that could invalidate a final TRO required to implement a permanent solution. This could lead to subsequent legal challenge that could invalidate future attempts to re-design the road layout and delay eventual re-opening of Madeira Drive.

Finally, a further temporary road closure will incur further expensive stewarding costs required to maintain the closure.

There are benefits of advancing the design proposals for Madeira Drive as opposed to closing the road altogether. Not least to honour the commitments made at ETS but also as it has attached funding from the Department for Transport's Active Travel Fund, Tranche 2 and support from stakeholders.

The agreed scheme will provide a clearly dedicated two-way, accessible cycle facility on the southside of the carriageway with reallocated parking and better pedestrian facilities enhancing social distancing opportunities. This will include clear signing and lining to ensure there are clear and designated cycle facilities, separated pedestrian areas and vehicle running lanes.

The scheme can be implemented imminently and to further address immediate social distancing requirements additional signage will be provided to remind users of the need to maintain distances. The scheme construction will take into account the current lockdown situation and will be phased to reduce disruption as much as possible. Social media and communication channels will also be used to inform the public of which areas will be available or limited for use during construction.

On balance the most advantageous solution would be to deliver the ETS Committee approved scheme that has been developed with stakeholder

engagement, equality of access and safety at its core. We will support delivery of the scheme with Citywide messaging to discourage visitors during national lockdown and similar situations combined with higher profile Police enforcement to encourage social distancing generally. This will provide a longer term purpose build solution to support the needs of local residents, Blue Badge users and businesses through the current Covid lockdown and beyond.

**(4) Councillor Platts – Food Supplies in the City:**

Can the Council confirm the dates on which they have written to supermarket managers in our City asking them to take action to prevent panic buying since the start of the pandemic?

**Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council**

On 18<sup>th</sup> March last year the then leader of the Council wrote to all local supermarkets requesting that they implement measures to ensure that their customers who are vulnerable members of the community have equal access to stock which might be subject to hoarding. This was then followed up by Regulatory Services linking in with the national supermarkets on a local, regional and national level with regular dialogue.

This work has continued through the residual and ongoing risks associated with the Covid pandemic. After initial issues associated with limiting customer capacity and reduced stock was overcome during the course of the first lockdown, the focus is continuing on Covid control measures to protect staff, customers and the wider public. It is important to note that often local branches do not have any discretion to implement different systems at a local level, but instead have to follow head office guidance

To ensure then that there is ongoing liaison and support with supermarkets, and moving beyond a letter, Environmental Health Teams and Covid Information Officers are in daily contact with local supermarkets. This provides greater and real-time feedback on the issues and means we can engage directly.

Covid Information Officers are currently partway through a programme of visiting all the major supermarkets and the smaller local national supermarket outlets in the city to assess the implementation of the control measures against company policies and good practice. They are then RAG rating what they find, Red being of concern, advice given and follow up visit, Amber being minor concerns where we feel the manager will act to rectify. Both of these would then receive a revisit to check progress. Once they the initial visits to the larger chains are completed the team will move onto the convenience stores as a project, too.

In addition this team is also working closely with identified officers from the Food Safety team who will engage with regional managers, Head Offices and Primary Authorities.

In addition to this we have been made aware that the pressures on supermarkets from the lockdown which started in December has not been the same as the first national lockdown. Our feedback has been that Supermarkets

have increased delivery services and have not come under the same pressure with regards to in-store customer capacity or any specific lines of stock. While a further letter to all businesses, not only supermarkets, is proposed, to help alight on issues, supermarkets have been included in general email updates, and further updates are planned. In addition a more proactive approach is being taken through the deployment of Covid-19 marshals. Feedback can be provided on any response we receive as a result of this letter and on any further insight from the Covid marshals.

**(5) Councillor Platts – Food Supplies in the City (2):**

Can the Council confirm what action is being taken to ensure the City has a sustainable food supply now that we are experiencing the impact of Brexit in addition to the public health crisis?

**Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council**

The Council had been preparing for Brexit for a number of years, with considerable uncertainty around the UK's future trading relationship with the EU. In August 2020 it was agreed by the Brexit Working Group and the Recovery and Renewal Board that it would be sensible to review Brexit related risks through the COVID working groups to ensure the overlap of potential issues was being considered by the right people and ensure contingencies were developed where necessary and possible.

In light of this the Food Cell developed an EU Transition Food Action Plan focussed on preparing the city for potential food supply and security issues emerging at the beginning of 2021 related to Brexit and with a particular focus on a no-deal scenario and its impact on vulnerable/low income residents. As well as engagement with local food networks and highlighting potential risks and necessary planning the Food Cell sought funding for two contingency arrangements as outlined in a report to P&R on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020.

The Brexit Working Group agreed allocations from the Council's Brexit fund to specific actions that built on developments made during the COVID response and enabled contingency measures to be in place from the 1st January 2021 including:

- One off £20,000 grant funding to the Sussex Food Depot to scale up operations in time for responding to potential supply chain disruption at the beginning of 2021. The Depot is a social enterprise and innovation developed during the COVID response by Brighton Food Factory to source locally grown produce and donations for distribution to city food businesses and the emergency food network to reduce reliance on national/international supply chains and meet local need with local produce. The Depot is a partnership including Brighton Food Factory, Brighton & Hove Food Partnership, Hisbe, One Church and Gleaning Network.

The Council's one-off funding has enabled vehicles and staff to be ready to respond to emerging challenges from 1st Jan and is in addition to the Council's Property Team assisting with provision of a location for the depot itself.

Although this measure is related to food resilience in the event of a disruptive EU Transition, it also has the potential to support the Council's own sustainability agenda in the long-term. The Depot distribution model aims to ensure locally grown and sourced produce can be more widely accessed across the city and region whilst reducing onward costs to consumers. The Sussex Food Depot also want to grow to support local and regional food procurement including public services, large employers and local food businesses as well as community food projects.

- A £20,000 grant had also been allocated for purchasing food supplies if there is supply chain disruption at the beginning of the year that will directly impact on emergency food provision. Learning from COVID suggests that any disruption to the 'just in time' supermarket supply chains and potential for stockpiling can mean supermarkets are able to ration and meet most demand but that surplus food supplies dry up which impacts on the emergency food network reliant on that surplus.

Currently no major disruption to local food supply is being reported as a consequence of either COVID or Brexit however there are some accounts of price rises for certain produce which if sustained or exacerbated could lead to more local residents falling into food poverty. This is currently being monitored through the Food Cell and as well as the £20k emergency food fund, further funding to assist with mitigating potential impacts could be sought through the funding assigned to the Local Outbreak Plan.

**(6) Councillor Platts – Disadvantage:**

Trade union Usdaw has recently negotiated an increase in minimum pay for Morrison's workers and will become the first UK supermarket to pay at least £10 an hour from April. This is just over the current Brighton & Hove Living Wage of £9.50 per hour. Will the Council write to the Head Offices of other supermarkets with stores in Brighton & Hove urging them to do the same and help tackle disadvantage in our City?

**Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council**

Local employers will clearly take their own position when entering into pay negotiations with their staff and unions. In this council, we have committed to pay the Voluntary 'Real Living Wage' and have been operating this for many years to help staff on lower pay. The council would therefore encourage all employers in the city to offer the Real Living Wage as a minimum within their pay structures and, in particular, stipulates this requirement in any services it procures externally from private sector providers.

For organisations to offer a higher award will clearly be a matter of policy and/or affordability for each organisation and, in this respect, we welcome the decision by Morrison's. I would be happy to write to all Head Offices to ask them to follow suit with the council and pay the Real Living Wage, as a minimum, and to note the example set by Morrison's to go further.

**(7) Councillor Platts – Community Wealth Building:**

Will the Council commit to writing to all supermarket chains represented in the City to ask them how much local produce they stock; if they will increase their range and ensure such goods are prominently displayed and clearly labelled as being produced locally? This would support local producers to grow their businesses, create local jobs and contribute to a sustainable food supply as well as reducing food miles.

**Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council**

The Council is currently in the process of securing additional capacity within the Economic Development team to work with the city's food sector and all related local, regional and national stakeholders to develop and deliver the city's food goals.

Part of this role may require engagement with businesses and Government, where necessary, to effect change that will strengthen the sustainability and resilience of the local food system as it continues to adapt to the immediate challenges of COVID and the longer term impacts of Brexit and the climate crisis. Opportunities will be sought to engage with the development of the Government's National Food Strategy and highlight the benefits of investing in sustainable locally sourced produce.

This renewed focus on food policy for the Council will also build on the work that awarded Brighton & Hove the status of the UK's first 'Gold' sustainable food city.

This work and the collaborative efforts of the Food Partnership, local food organisations and community groups as well as support from the Council has highlighted, among other goals, the steps that can be taken to embed sustainable and circular economy principles in food waste and food growing locally. This has included the #Goodtogrow campaign, a pledge for food businesses, which includes consideration of sustainable food practices, work to increase the amount of locally grown produce available to community food projects, and to create opportunities for people to buy affordable healthy and sustainable food through markets and mobile pop-up shops and restaurants, particularly in areas with no existing provision. National retailer Lidl, BHCC and the University of Brighton worked in partnership in 2019 to better understand the circumstances and potential barriers facing low-income families in East Brighton with regards to eating veg. Recommendations from the research fed into Lidl's National Healthy Eating Strategy.

In December I was proud to join cities around the world signing the Glasgow Declaration [1] which ahead of the COP26 climate talks, calls on national governments to play their full part in securing sustainable food and farming at the heart of the global response to the climate emergency.

The promotion of sustainable locally sourced produce will continue to be considered as part of this work going forwards.

[1] [HOME | Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration \(glasgowdeclaration.org\)](https://glasgowdeclaration.org/)

**(8) Councillor Allcock – Estate Development Budget:**

The Estate Development Budget (EDB) is a scheme that was set up to respond to suggestions from Council tenants and provides money for ideas that can make a positive difference to their neighbourhood.

The requirements are that EDB projects:

- Involve and be supported by as many neighbours as possible
- Should be completed in the same financial year
- Do not cost more than £10,000 for main bids and £1,000 for quick bids
- Are not be something that could be done as a repair or as part of a larger maintenance programme

What performance management processes does the Council have in place for the EDB scheme?

Since the scheme was established, how many and what percentage of EDB bids/project:

- Have been completed within the same financial year as the bid was agreed?
- Are not completed and still outstanding?
- Could reasonably be construed as being a repair or part of the Council's Housing estate planned maintenance programme?

What is the monetary value of these bids/projects?

**Reply from Councillor Gibson/Hugh-Jones, Joint Chair of the Housing Committee**

Thank you for your question on the performance management process in place for the EDB scheme and for details of EDB bids.

The engagement of residents, marketing and communication, bidding and review processes are supported by the Community Engagement Team and the implementation of the projects and management of the budget is through the Repairs & Maintenance service. Prior to April 2020 this function was commissioned to Mears.

There is a resident led EDB Panel in place that reviews the delivery of all EDB bids with council officers. The panel meets 6 times a year.

A new bid evaluation criterion has been produced, which the EDB panel refer to when voting on bids. This will be available for bidders' reference when completing applications. Bids for projects which benefit council residents on land owned by other parts of the council are considered for EDB funding, providing they have permission from the relevant directorate.

The Community Engagement Team supported the EDB Review group to identify key areas of social value which could be gained from an EDB project. They agreed additional questions to be included on the bid form which would allow an evaluation on these aspects to be carried out after the work was completed, based on feedback from residents. This process was implemented

on the application forms in 2020/21. This means we will begin to look at the impact of EDB in 2021/22.

Bidders are now notified and acknowledged when their application is received, they are informed on the outcome of their bids, and they are given a follow-up on reasons for the outcome of their bid by the Community Engagement Team. In addition, from April 2021, an end of financial year report will be produced. This will involve all stakeholders of the year's program and will include: the number of bids, what was funded, impact, and changes needed to the guidelines for the following financial year. This evaluation will also include qualitative information on how residents have measured the social value of their projects.

A new Engagement Strategy is planned for consideration at Housing Committee in March 2021. This will include proposed changes to the EDB process as identified through the EDB Review.

In terms of the bids outstanding from previous years, officers are working with residents to progress the delivery of the following outstanding bids:

- 2018/2019 – 7 bids with a total value of £8,000
- 2019/2020 – 22 bids with a total value of £28,000

For the current year of 2020/21:

- 37 main bids were agreed and 14 have been completed. 23 bids are outstanding with a total value of £125,000
- 17 quick bids have been agreed and 3 have been completed. 14 bids are outstanding with a total value of £13,000

We anticipate that the new review arrangements will identify potential delays more promptly in future. We do review bids through our resident engagement team and look to identify any works that would be picked up through our Repairs & Maintenance service or planned works programmes. We have worked with residents to improve this and establish clearer guidance around the EDB. Unfortunately, it is difficult to review historic information to identify which bids this would apply to.

**(9) Councillor Grimshaw – Assisted Bin Collection Service:**

Can it be confirmed how many residents use the assisted bin collection service and what are the figures regarding complaints? Is there a dedicated officer to coordinate assisted collections and how do the teams ensure that recycling, garden refuse and general waste are all aware of the need for assisted collection?

**Reply from Councillor Heley, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

There are currently:

- 3156 assisted collections for recycling
- 3391 assisted collections for refuse
- 231 assisted collections for garden waste

It is not possible to breakdown the number of formal stage 1 complaints received about assisted collections.

There is not one dedicated officer, rather a team that support requests for assisted collections, as well as the crews that collect from these properties.

To obtain an assisted collection, residents are required to complete a form on the website or contact Cityclean for one of the Contact Centre team to request it on their behalf.

The completed form is sent to a dedicated mailbox where a Project Development Officer the request to a "beat sheet".

A beat sheet is a list of roads given to crews each day for them to empty the refuse, recycling or garden waste.

On the beat sheet, there is a column that indicates which houses on each street have an assisted collection and where the bin is situated.

Operatives will put the bin back to where they retrieved it from.

**(10) Councillor Williams – SWEP:**

There have been concerns raised by community groups that the council are operating what has been termed as 'Secret SWEP'. This is because arrangements for SWEP are not announced publicly thus difficult discover.

It is recognised that due to the pandemic, specific strategies to help rough sleepers have been put in place, and a lot of good work is being done. However, it is important concerned people, groups, and councillors are kept informed to enable people to actively help the homeless in bad weather. This is particularly important to make sure no one is left out.

The public wish to know what is the rationale for SWEP method of operation at this time, is the everyone in policy being implemented compassionately and sufficiently to include everyone in need and can we find a way to better inform when SWEP is triggered?

**Reply from Councillor Gibson/Hugh-Jones, Joint Chair of the Housing Committee**

We are also keen to ensure people know how to access our services and, as you know, during the current pandemic. The response to the pandemic means that rough sleepers get offers of accommodation 7 days a week, whatever the weather and as a result there are less than 30 people estimated to be rough sleeping at present. A very different set of circumstances. In this context for SWEP We had to reconsider how we reach out to people whilst striking a balance so that we don't want to attract people who already have accommodation as that could overwhelm services which are at full stretch particularly as we are currently unable to provide congregate accommodation.

As previously reported to Housing Committee, SWEP has not been secret. Information on how to support people to access SWEP has been shared in local media, via social media and is on our website. All organisations working with homeless people have had this information shared with them through the VCS and Operational Forums.

We have made a lot of accommodation available since the start of the pandemic for people who are assessed as at risk of rough sleeping in addition to those who are verified rough sleepers. There is no need for anyone to therefore be sleeping rough in the city. However, we recognise that there are a few people who have found it difficult to come in, and for those people when SWEP is triggered, we have made provision through our Street Outreach Services who are identifying anyone who is rough sleeping and in addition the public can report anyone they see or are concerned about through Streetlink. The Street Outreach Service are carrying out outreach shifts 7 days a week including bank holidays and over the full Christmas period.

This winter so far as at 22nd January 2021, we have been open on 31 separate occasions including being open every day from the 24 December 2020 to date 8 January 2021. We offer hot meals, snacks, drinks and support. We have provided 173 units of accommodation with an average of 8 people each night we have been open. We are ensuring that where someone will accept engagement, we have a clear onward accommodation offer in place and nobody needs to return to rough sleeping. It is pleasing to report that 22 people brought in through SWEP moved onto longer term emergency accommodation and remained housed when SWEP closed

This year due to the pandemic, we are unable to use congregate sleep space arrangements or offer open access to a single hub as in previous years. Instead we have acquired 14 units of self-contained accommodation to meet the needs of people who would otherwise rough sleep. Referrals therefore need to be managed but we do not turn people away, and if the 14 units are full, colleagues in Housing Options and St Mungo's No Second Night Out Service work together to ensure that everyone in need is offered safe accommodation during periods of severe weather

The trigger for us to open SWEP is the same this year as it has been for the previous two years: a predicated "feels like" temperature of 0 degrees Celsius or an Amber Weather warning. We also always open across the Christmas period regardless of weather. Due to the current pandemic and advice from Public Health England, local Public Health colleagues and the MHCLG SWEP could not be delivered as it has been in previous years. Anyone seen rough sleeping by a member of the public can be referred to the SOS team via Streetlink or can be supported to access housing by calling the Housing Options duty line (available 24 hours 7 days a week including Bank Holidays).

**(11) Councillor Childs – Planning:**

I note with alarm the Government's new method for calculating house building targets which place the majority of the burden on the largest 20 English cities to

fulfil national needs thus relieving Tory rural authorities of the need to build sufficient housing.

Will the Administration, take up with the Secretary of State, as a matter of urgency the new proposed housing targets that would require Brighton & Hove to increase its new housing target by over a third - placing more Green Field land at risk of development - and will they condemn the blatantly political method proposed by the Government that favours Conservative-led Councils?

**Reply from Councillor Littman, Chair of the Planning Committee**

In December the Government announced without any warning, evidence or consultation, it would add a further 35 per cent to the city's housing needs. Our housing needs will increase from 924 new homes needs per year to 1250. For a city that incredibly constrained.

This change was largely in response to the backlash the Government received to their proposals, last summer, to use a housing algorithm to calculate housing needs across the country. You are quite right - objections to this were strongest from rural districts where the increased needs would have been highest. The result of the announcement for us though, and the other 19 cities, is that we will have additional pressure for development on our valuable open spaces and employment space. And we will also have a reduced ability to use our locally adopted policies to assess applications for housing. With the risk of more decision overturned at appeal.

Matters will be further worsened if the government goes ahead with its proposal to allow office, commercial and community uses - that contribute to the economy and the vibrancy and character of the city - to change to housing without needing planning permission. Once again, if this comes into force, we won't be able to use our locally agreed policies which further undermines local democracy.

I can confirm that the Administration will be writing to the Secretary of State to object in the strongest terms. I invite both Labour and Conservative colleagues to sign the letter so it can be a joint letter sent on behalf of all Groups.

**(12) Councillor Wilkinson:**

What measures are the Council taking to reduce vehicle speeds, improve pedestrian and cycle safety, improve air quality and encourage reduced car use in the Central Hove area?

**Reply from Councillor Heley, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

As opposition spokesperson on the ETS committee you are very up to date with the council's work in tackling vehicle speeds, improving pedestrian and cycle safety, improving air quality and encouraging reduced care use across the city, which will all impact on central hove ward.

### **Speed reduction**

As you know, The Council works positively with the Police and are supporting their efforts with speed reduction throughout the city but more recently in Hove with the use of a Speed Indicator Device (SID) and our use of 9 mobile Vehicle Activated Signs (VAS) that have also been deployed in several roads in the area and beyond. The SID tells the drivers what speed they are doing and the VAS give a reminder of the speed limit with an accompanying legend SLOW DOWN. You are also seconding a Notice of Motion to this same full council meeting that encourages a more modern approach to road safety in the city, so I refer you the content of that motion you are seconding with my colleague Cllr Hills. You will have more detailed knowledge of the specific issues in central Hove, so I would urge you to let me and officers know of any particularly bad areas that can be improved.

### **Walking and cycling**

As a member of the LCWIP task and finish group, you are already aware of our work on this and have had the opportunity to give feedback regarding particular areas of improvement needed in your ward of central Hove. This feedback will input into the process.

At the junction of Eaton Rd/The Drive, improvements have been made to the existing pedestrian facilities and additional crossings have been added so that all arms now have a safe crossing movement. We have also introduced an early cycle start stage at this junction with low level cycle lanterns and modified the stop line to discourage vehicles from entering the advanced stop line.

Central Hove also benefits from direct access to the new temporary cycle facilities on the seafront that were introduced as part of the Emergency Active Travel Fund programme, which we have worked together on in a lot of detail. This scheme is due to be extended further in the coming year including the introduction of further low-level cycle signals along the route as you know.

We are also trialling the use of a system called SmartCross. The primary aim of this system is to empower disabled pedestrians, particularly wheelchair and mobility impaired users who find it difficult to get to the push button. It will make it possible to trigger the wait box using an online app. Additionally it has a Covid related function where the wait can be triggered by passing your hand under the push button box without having to actually touch it. If this trial proves successful, then it will be rolled out to a wider area.

### **Air quality & reducing car use**

In January 2020, you seconded a motion that I proposed called “car free city centre by 2023” and last week at the ETS committee we both voted to advance this project further. This also includes plans for a city wide ultra low emission zone in order to radically improve air quality in the city, which will include central Hove.

All new traffic signals in the City are ELV & LED so 90% saving in power consumption. We are also taking steps to improve remote monitoring of signals to avoid unnecessary visits (by car) to the signal faults plus the engineers are now being issued with hybrid or electric vehicles.

We are continuing to roll out the Citywide Spend-to-Save programme of replacing street lighting with LEDs to reduce power consumption and to reduce maintenance requirements.

Other measures being introduced as part of the Tranche 2 Emergency Active Travel programme will include a series of Active & Healthy Travel campaigns as well as more bikeshare hubs, Park Active schemes to encourage people to travel actively in the last mile of their journey as well as other incentive schemes such as use of the Better Points app, which you are aware of through our extensive discussions at the ETS committee.

### **Access and School Travel**

Through the Access Fund for Sustainable Travel, we've provided in-depth help to 12 Central Hove residents to support them into work by providing financial support for cycles, cycle fixing and training or paid their first month of travel using public transport.

The council's School Travel Team have engaged Early Years and Schools in Central Hove, including providing support to St Andrew's Primary with their road safety issues with more A-boards and on-going site visits at this school. The first Meerkat Trail to promote walking and scooting to nursery and school as part of the Access Project (Access Year 1) was focused around this area of Hove.

More recently, we supported West Hove Infants School through the implementation of an Emergency School Streets closure from Sept – October half term, which enabled social distancing outside the school when they returned during the Covid-19 pandemic. This also supported wider objectives of School Streets by encouraging families to use sustainable, active travel to and from school and deterring parking near the school gates, making it safer for children.

Several Early Years in CH have received Modeshift STARS accreditation including:

- Honeycroft Centre nursery achieved Gold and we financed a bespoke buggy/bike shed for them
- Helped Each Peach Childcare achieve Silver
- Working with Dolphins Pre-school to move from Bronze to Silver
- Working with Footsteps Day Nursery to maintain Gold
- Have started working with Shirley Street Day Nursery and Hopscotch Nursery (Hove Station) on Bronze

Hundreds of school children in CH have taken part in Walk to School Week:

- October 2020: St Andrews took part – 622 children
- May 2019 : West Hove Connaught took part - 630 children

Six CH schools participated in the SMILE project with Reception children 2020:

Aldrington CE Primary

Brunswick Primary  
Cottesmore St Mary's RC Primary  
St Andrew's CE Primary  
West Hove Infant - Connaught Road  
West Hove Infant - School Road

**(13) Councillor Mears – Contracts and Accountability (Spend Tables):**

The Council's website states that payments over £250 are to be published each month on the council website in 'spend tables':

"Each month we publish all the payments over £250 that we've made. They include payments to suppliers, grants to voluntary organisations and payments to individuals.

We reduced the threshold of publishing payments from £500 to £250, following changes introduced by the government."

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/council-and-democracy/council-finance/payments-over-%C2%A3250>

Despite this policy, the last spend table uploaded by the Council for scrutiny by the public was for June 2020.

At a time when so much Government funding is being provided and spent there is a need for accountability and transparency.

Can the Finance Chair advise why no spend tables have been uploaded since June 2020?

Can the Finance Chair please provide the spend tables for the missing months in the response?

**Reply from Councillor Gibson, Joint Deputy Chair (Finance) of the Policy & Resources Committee**

I am aware that there is currently a technical issue regarding the upload of this information to the council's website. Unfortunately, the advent of the pandemic has meant that the team, which has suffered staffing shortages due to cases of isolation and illness, has had to prioritise its primary function, which is to pay the council's many providers and suppliers promptly.

As you will be aware, cash flow is absolutely critical for local business, particularly small businesses, and in response to this we removed our standard payment terms of 30 days and effectively set this to zero so that we could get payments out to businesses as fast as possible and help them survive. This policy is still in place. This has obviously put very significant additional pressure on the team, and they have, quite rightly, prioritised paying our suppliers and providers as quickly as possible.

To give Members some further context, we have only had one Freedom of Information request in relation to the on-line payment data in the whole of last year. I am therefore happy to support the team in prioritising payment of suppliers and providers over production of this information. However, I fully

agree that residents have a right to understand where government funding is deployed and would point to the many publicly available committee reports which detail the council's decisions as to how each and every allocation of grant funding is to be used.

The team have advised that the over £250 payment information should be available on-line within two weeks.

**(14) Councillor Mears – Housing Repairs**

The then Administration made a policy decision to insource the Housing Repairs Budget prior to last election.

Paperwork from the time estimated the cost of this policy decision would be nearly £10 million – to be incurred by the Housing Revenue Account.

What has been the additional cost of this policy to date beyond the original estimate, including costs associated with ongoing industrial action?

Bearing in mind that when this policy was presented prior to an election that very clear indications of the cost were provided, can the Chair confirm that the Housing Revenue Account, which is made up of tenants rent, will not be used to incur any ongoing additional costs going forward.

**Reply from Councillor Gibson / Hugh-Jones, Joint Chair of the Housing Committee**

For clarification, the decision made to bring the repairs and Maintenance Service in house has not cost the council £10m. The previous service had a cost comparable with the current service. Due to organisational changes in the wider repairs service including property and investment services, and impact on service of the COVID10 pandemic, it is difficult to make a like for like comparison with the costs prior to the service coming in-house. This is a wider piece of work which will take more time and will be reported to Housing Committee as requested by Councillor Mears. However, for information, the 2020/21 budget for the Repairs and Maintenance service is £10.315m. This includes one-off Programme Team funding of £0.410m, leaving a core budget of £9.905m for the in-house Repairs and Maintenance service.

For 2021/22, the budget proposals allow for an additional net increase of £0.436m for inflationary pressures and to reflect the updated staffing establishment costs when compared to estimates at budget setting for 2020/21. So a total budget of £10.341m for 2021/22. There is also a further proposal for a one year cost of the programme team of £0.437m.

It is difficult to express whether there are any additional costs as a result of the industrial dispute as it is impossible to distinguish between the effects of the pandemic and the dispute. However, as you will be aware, the industrial action was contained to two occasions. What is more, any additional costs would need to be offset against the reduction in staff pay as a result of the strike and the possible reduced pay costs if recruitment was delayed. In the meantime, you will no doubt be pleased to hear that the council's proposal to bring the dispute

to an end has been accepted by the GMB and we can now move forward with the harmonisation process.

**(15) Councillor Barnett – Begging in the City**

In an article in *The Argus* on 14 November 2020, Brighton Housing Trust's Andy Winter said that begging was the elephant in the room that needed addressing by the council and that a great opportunity has been missed to address these problems.

Mr Winter works very hard in Brighton and Hove and is well respected. He says that unless we actively challenge begging we won't effectively address addictions, and without addressing addictions, we won't end rough sleeping.

I wholeheartedly agree and so would most of Brighton and Hove in my opinion. In my ward of Hangleton and Knoll I often speak to beggars to understand the situation they are in. Several have told me they live in accommodation provided by the council and receive food and benefits but continue to beg on the streets due to their addictions and because they feel nothing will be done to stop them.

We must take heed of Mr Winter's advice.

Please could you provide advice on the following?:

- a) The number of people the council estimates are currently begging in Brighton & Hove
- b) What efforts the council are making to end begging and aggressive begging on the streets of Brighton & Hove City Council
- c) Whether the Council would support a Cashless Donation Scheme such as that recently introduced in the Royal Borough. The Cashless Donation Scheme encourages residents to support a rough sleeper pathway as opposed to giving spare change to beggars in order to provide more effective help to people.
- d) If so, whether the council would use its Communications programme to support a Cashless Donation Scheme in the City with the aim of providing better care and ending begging on the streets.

Supporting information:

<https://www.sloughexpress.co.uk/news/maidenhead/164657/council-to-launch-cashless-support-for-rough-sleepers.html>

Supporting information: <https://www.theargus.co.uk/news/18871492.brighton-housing-trust-boss-prevention-key-ending-homelessness/>

**Reply from Councillor Gibson / Hugh-Jones, Joint Chair of the Housing Committee**

I am afraid that we do not have details of the number of people begging in the City. It is worth noting (especially in the context of everyone in) that some people begging are accommodated and should not be understood as homeless. However the Council works with partners such as the police and outreach services to ensure that those identified are offered opportunities to engage with

support services to address issues such as substance misuse, which can lead to the need to beg. Police colleagues will take enforcement action where individuals are identified to be causing particular and persistent concern. The council and partners already have in place a donation scheme, 'Make Change Count' ([Make Change Count 2020: support for homeless women and men - JustGiving](#)) which we encourage residents to give to rather than directly to those begging and donations will be used by charities supporting those individuals who feel the need to beg. The Council comms team promote this through the website.

**(16) Councillor Simson – Public Space Protection Orders**

Can the Chair of the TECC Committee please advise:

- a) Why has the Council not renewed PSPOs on the City's Parks?
- b) When and by whom was this decision taken and was there a vote?
- c) When did PSPOs for city parks expire?

**Reply from Councillor Osborne / Powell, Joint Chair of the Tourism, Equalities, Communities & Culture Committee**

The PSPOs for Parks and Open Spaces expired in December 2019 and a report went before the TECC committee in November 2019 where a vote was taken by the committee not to extend them.

**(17) Councillor Theobald – Patcham Roundabout**

Thank you for your answer to my written question at the last council meeting.

In your answer you advised the following:

Work is in progress to reach an agreement between Highways England, the council and a contractor for these works to go ahead. The roundabout is owned by Highways England and therefore a 3-way contractual arrangement is required which is agreed by all parties. Negotiations and due diligence and progressing and we hope this will be finalised shortly so that works can start in the New Year.

Can you provide any update since the last meeting on the status of this project including whether negotiations and due diligence have now been finalised?

Is there a start date for works yet?

I have been asking these questions for at least the last five years and had a number of incorrect answers.

**Reply from Councillor Heley, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee**

I appreciate that it has taken a very long time to find a solution to improve this roundabout. This is because of the complexity of the location, there are underground tanks and it will be costly for any contractor to get on and off the roundabout in order to be compliant with health and safety and traffic

management regulations given its location. Officers are still progressing the 3-way agreement and a lot of the work has been completed by it is not yet final. All being well the project should be signed off and started soon. I have asked officers to brief ward councillors as soon as we have a date.

