

Brighton & Hove City Council

Council

Agenda Item 65

Subject: Written questions from councillors.

The following questions have been received from Councillors and will be taken as read along with the written answer which will be included in an addendum that will be circulated at the meeting:

Date of meeting: 3 February 2022

(1) Councillor Yates:

Can the Chair of Housing please outline, since the introduction of funding and policy to (re)purchase properties for council tenants under a previous Labour Administration.

1. how many properties have been purchased in each financial year?
2. what was the total purchase cost in each year?
3. what was the budget available in each year?

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

(2) Councillor Fishleigh:

Please outline what services NSL has provided to BHCC since 2016 and how much the contracts are valued at?

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

**(3) Councillor Fishleigh
Electric Bin Lorries.**

In September last year, the first electric bin lorry was announced. Please could I have an update on BHCC's progress rolling out all-electric bin lorries. I have these specific questions:

How many EV lorries are now deployed/how many are on order?

What is the make/model of the new lorries?

How much has each lorry cost to purchase or hire? (If hire how long is contract for?)

Where has the money to purchase come from eg Cityclean's annual budget

How much would a replacement diesel bin lorry be?

How does cost/rubbish capacity for EV compare to diesel lorries?

How many hours does each EV lorry take to charge?

Where/how are lorries charged - electric, diesel or other?

How long does the charge last in terms of a round?

Any problems with breakdowns/coping with steep hills?

Any problems with the refuse workers/GMB as a result?

How many rounds have successfully been completed using new EV dustbin lorries?

How do crew complete their round if a lorry runs out of electricity part-way through and how is their time used? Do they revert to a spare or diesel lorry or do they have to wait around for hours for lorry to charge?

Are new lorries proving more or less reliable/efficient than diesel lorries?

Were old lorries sold or scrapped and how much did council receive for the fleet if they were council property?

What is the net carbon saving per electric lorry by comparison and taking all efficiency factors into consideration?

Cllr Lloyd said that changing the fleet over from diesel will save 7,500 tonnes of carbon dioxide over the course of nine years. Please would you tell me how these figures were reached.

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

(4) Councillor Grimshaw:

I have a resident in my ward who has had no shower for 5 weeks. She was told as she had a bath it was not an emergency despite her being disabled and unable to get in the bath. Why are people's disability needs not taken into account when housing repairs are sought? If assessments need to be done, how can this process be speeded up to ensure a waiting time is not 5 weeks plus?

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

(5) Councillor Childs

In view of the anniversary of Bloody Sunday on Sunday 30th Jan, will the administration agree to write jointly on behalf of the City, to His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Ireland and His Excellency, the Right Reverend Archbishop of Armagh, to express our sympathies and solidarity with the people of Ireland, whose unarmed relatives and countrymen were murdered by occupying English colonial forces in 1972?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(6) Councillor Childs

Following repeated requests, when will the Council agree to lend a space for the Albion Community to emplace a self-funded shipping container community bike workshop in the Community Centre Car Park?

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

(7) Councillor Childs

Despite being promised an additional carton recycling bin at the Queens Park Recycling Site over 18 months ago and despite numerous reminders, nothing has transpired. When will the promised receptacle be provided?

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

(8) Councillor Childs

Following repeated requests, when will funding be made available to renovate the listed Queens' Park Drinking fountain?

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

(9) Councillor Childs

Will the Council agree review the possibility of a footbridge over Edward St by the Amex redevelopment?

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

(10) Councillor Childs

Why does the Council continue to ignore the residents of Freshfield Road and refuse to install a crossing for St Luke's children and genuine speed abatement measures on this dangerous stretch of road?

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

(11) Councillor Childs

Will the Council join us in sending solidarity to teachers at Brighton Girls in dispute with their employer the Girls Day School Trust who have proposed to end their access to the Teachers' Pension Scheme and will they agree to write to the Trust requesting they withdraw this proposal?

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

(12) Councillor Childs

Will the Administration join us to give thanks to Mr Mark Wall, for his exemplary long service and commitment to democracy and civic life in Brighton and Hove and wish him well when his coming retirement?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(13) Councillor Childs

Is the apparently close relationship the Council has with the Clinical Commissioning Group / Sussex Integrated Care Board in the best interests of Brighton & Hove patients?

Will the Council insist in an fora to which it belongs or makes representations to, relationship or agreement that it reaches that:

- a. Sussex ICS guarantee an A&E in the City free for all (something the NHS Bill doesn't offer) and
- b. guarantees free face-to-face appointments with a GP and,
- c. a comprehensive health service equal to that currently provided.

Reply from Councillor Shanks, Chair of the Health & Wellbeing Board

(14) Councillor Childs

Will the Administration agree to negotiate with Patcham and Dorothy Stringer High Schools to facilitate the use of the Council owned Patcham and Surrenden swimming pools for the public?

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

(15) Councillor Childs

Will the Council consider changing the crossing opposite Brighton College from a zebra crossing to traffic lights or a installing a footbridge to ease traffic jams?

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

**(16) Councillor Barnett
Benfield Valley**

In letter correspondence to Hangleton & Knoll Councillors, the Sussex Wildlife Trust has said that Brighton and Hove City Council has incorrectly included Benfield Valley as a site for development in City Plan part 2. The letter states:

The NPPF is clear that Local Plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the locally designated sites such as Benfield Valley LWS and as such the existing designation should protect the site. Unfortunately BHCC have not complied with this, so our Conservation Policy & Evidence Team is awaiting the publication of the Inspector's Matters, Issues and Questions for the Examination in Public (EiP) of the CPP2 and will submit further representations at this time and will attend the EiP hearings.

Will the Administration now remove Benfield Valley as an urban fringe development site in City Plan Part 2, as it has done for Horsdean Recreation Ground in Patcham?

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

**(17) Councillor Lewry
Speeding in Hangleton & Knoll**

Residents are concerned about more cases of speeding cars in Hangleton and Knoll, including in the following streets:

- Amberley Drive
- Downland Drive
- Poynings Drive
- Hangleton Road
- Hangleton Way

Can the Chair advise:

- a) Is the Council aware of any plans to install speed cameras in these roads?
- b) Would the Council support the rollout of community safety initiatives similar to those in operation in other local authorities where local Residents' Associations are provided with speed guns and training to help monitor speed and provide feedback.

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

**(18) Councillor Peltzer Dunn
Platinum Jubilee programme of events**

- a. In an answer to my previous written question of 15 July 2021 (Question 29, Civic Honours Competition), the Leader of the Council stated that he was considering whether the city would participate in the Platinum Jubilee Civic Honours Competition.

The Leader of the Council stated there were three areas of this programme that the city was eligible to apply for, including:

- i. Investment;
- ii. The granting of existing cities with Lord Mayoralty;
- iii. Tree Planting initiatives.

Can the Leader of the Council please provide an update on whether the Administration decided to proceed with participation in the above categories of the Civic honours' competition?

- b. Please can the Administration provide a timetable of events in Brighton and Hove for celebrating the Platinum Jubilee, including,
 - i. Events organised by the Council
 - ii. Events planned in partnership with the Council or that the Council is aware of.

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

**(19) Councillor Theobald
Madeira Terraces restoration delays**

Following funding secured in previous City Budget rounds (including £4.1535m last year) and fundraising efforts of members of the public, Brighton and Hove City Council currently has around £12,000,000 available dedicated to the restoration of the Madeira Arches.

This funding is enough to complete the first two phases of the work and restore 80 of the 150 arches along Madeira Drive.

Work was meant to get underway last year, however the start date for the restoration appears to have again been delayed, with the Council's website now stating work will not begin until Autumn 2022.

Can the Leader of the Council advise:

- a) Why the start date for the Madeira Drive project has been delayed for a year?
- b) Why other projects along Madeira Drive such as road layout changes and cycle lane installations have been prioritised over the Madeira Terraces restoration.
- c) What the revised timeframe is for Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the Madeira Terraces restoration.

This is a very important project for our City with many residents wanting to see this get underway and be treated as a priority project from the Council, particularly after Madeira Terraces were recently added to the 'at risk' register by Historic England.

It would be a boost for residents and local groups such as Save Madeira Terraces Campaign if the work got underway as soon as possible during this Platinum Jubilee Year.

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

**(20) Councillor Theobald
Pavilion Gardens Public Toilets**

The public toilets at Pavilion Gardens are in a terrible state and antiquated.

Many residents have complained over the past few years as have I (and I have submitted questions at Council), but their appalling state has not improved by the Council.

These facilities are in Brighton's main tourist and heritage zone which is visited by many people and the continuing poor state of the public conveniences reflects very badly on the City.

The toilets have been targeted by antisocial behaviour; however the Council has recently received a Safer Streets Fund Round 3 Grant of £69,969 for improvements to lighting and the installation of CCTV in Pavilion Gardens.

Can the Chair advise:

- a) Whether the Council has a plan to upgrade the Pavilion Gardens public toilets?
- b) If not, will the Council commit to developing such a plan?
- c) What is the timeframe for the rollout of the Safer Streets Fund Round 3 grant project in Pavilion Gardens?

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

**(21) Councillor Mears
Saltdean Beach**

Residents in Saltdean have reported a need for additional signage at Saltdean Beach to advise residents about the seasonal conditions.

Will the Council commit to:

- a) Installing more obvious signs to show that Saltdean beach is a dog free beach in the summer.
- b) Putting in place clearer information to show when the sea at Saltdean Beach is polluted.

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

**(22) Councillor Mears
Beach Hut Feasibility Plan**

In the City budget the Conservatives secured a number funding for measures for beach huts in the city, including:

- a) £0.250m capital investment including for Beach Hut infrastructure and replacement
- b) £0.010m one-off resource to support a feasibility study for new beach huts

Can the Chair advise the current status of the above funding measures (a) and (b)?

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

**(23) Councillor Simson
Drink-spiking in the City**

Can you please advise what the Council is doing over the following?:

1. Raising awareness publicly and amongst licensees and door supervisors at our pubs and clubs in Brighton and Hove of:
 - a) The prevalence and increase in drink-spiking in the City
 - b) How they can recognise that a person may not be drunk but may have had their drink spiked; and
 - c) The availability of drink-spiking test kits and the possibility of being stocked with such kits in their venues.
2. Ensuring that Safe Space, Beach Buggy and other similar initiatives are provided with test kits.

Reply from Councillor Deane, Chair of the Licensing Committee

**(24) Councillor Bell
Council's policy for re-instating pavements.**

There have been several recent examples across the city where pavements are being poorly reinstated by the Council or by the Council's contactors under the direction of the Council's policy.

Examples include:

- McWilliam Road in Woodingdean, where half of the attractive pavement slabs have been removed and replaced by tarmac, upsetting local residents; and

- Preston Park Avenue, where the Brighton Society have raised concerns about paving slabs being replaced by tarmacking in a conservation zone.

In the case of Woodingdean, the contractor has said that the tarmacking that took place followed a Council policy.

Can the Council advise:

- a) What is the Council's current policy on the re-instatement of pavements?
- b) Where have these pavements slabs been taken after they have been removed?
- c) Given recent controversies, will the Council reconsider its pavement re-instatement policy and re-issue advice to its contractors and its Department?

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

(25) Councillor Brown

Anti-social behaviour (football-related)

Residents in the King George VI Drive/Woodland Avenue/Three Cornered Copse area have reported a number of issues that occur on matchdays when football matches are being played at the AMEX stadium, including:

- The residential streets in the area are being used for parking by supporters to access the bus network across Dyke Road Avenue to get to the AMEX with many instances of bad parking in the area, which also leaves local roads cluttered and residents unable to park;
- Rubbish is being dropped and left behind in the area on match days, particularly in the Three Cornered Copse, leaving the area in a bad state for several days.
- There has been a recent occasion where offensive graffiti was painted on a garden wall on the day of the Crystal Palace match, upsetting the affected residents and the Residents' Association.

I have had the graffiti removed; however it does seem that the Council needs to put in place a plan to deal with this growing problem.

Can the Council advise:

- a) Does Brighton and Hove Albion FC have a community liaison officer that could liaise with the local Goldstone Valley Residents' Association on issues such as this?
- b) Will the Council proactively work with the local Goldstone Valley Residents' Association and Brighton and Hove Albion FC to investigate this issue and put in place a plan to ensure that it stops occurring in the area on match days?

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

(26) Councillor Miller

Budget measures progress

Can the Chair provide an update on the progress of the following Budget measures, agreed to at the City Budget in March 2021:

- a) £0.080m capital investment for the upgrade and refurbishment of seafront shelters
- b) £0.008m revenue to create a capital pot of £0.104m for the climate assembly action plan.
- c) £0.075m funding to remove, for a period of 3 years, the £0.025m savings proposals in the Schools Standards and Achievements service as shown on page 85 of the agenda to support post Covid recovery and attainment in schools.

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(27) Councillor Bagaeen

Getting the Council back to work

What Covid rate would the administration and council leadership consider a reasonable rate that would convince them to get back to the town halls and back to work?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(28) Councillor Bagaeen

Hove Park

At the previous meeting on 16 December, in response to my Oral question, the Leader of the Council indicated that he would provide an answer in writing to me.

This answer has yet to be provided.

Please could this written response now be provided?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(29) Councillor Nemeth

Beach Hut Licence Fee

What consultation was carried out with Hove Beach Hut Association, which exists to ensure a great working relationship between the Council and hut owners, over the proposed 10% licence fee rise?

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

(30) Councillor McNair

Loss of trees in Braypool Lane

Trees suffering from Dutch Elm disease were recently felled in Braypool Lane, Patcham, seriously affecting residents with increased noise and air pollution. This loss of trees has not only affected residents' health but also their mental health and security, with graffiti artists now targeting their properties. National Highways and Kier have been very forthcoming in trying to listen and help residents replace their trees, which we are very grateful

for. However, residents feel the Council could also help with this dire situation:

- a) Can the Council provide residents with a detailed map of land ownership of Braypool Lane and its surrounding area? This will reduce confusion between National Highways and the Council, and help residents ask the right body in matters such as this, expediting help.
- b) Can the council provide the report they sent last year to National Highways and Kier regarding the latest round of tree-felling in Braypool Lane?
- c) Can the council provide a detailed report of tree-felling and Health & Safety pruning plans over the next year for Braypool Lane residents, and Patcham & Hollingbury residents in general?
- d) Can the council assure residents that the Council will contact residents in good time, that is at least a month in advance, of any tree-felling, and not leave it to National Highways and Kier to do the messaging?
- e) Can the Council reassure residents that it will support them in their request for a sound barrier in Braypool Lane to reduce their noise and visual pollution?
- f) Can the Council assure residents than any trees felled on Council land will be replaced, and that the Council will support residents with requests for tree-replacement on land connected with National Highways?

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

(31) Councillor Wilkinson

Nottingham City Council has had a Workplace Parking Levy since 2012. This has raised more than £64m towards sustainable travel. Nottingham now has the highest public transport use rates in the whole of Britain, something that has contributed to taking the equivalent of 2.5 million car journeys off its road networks every year. Not only has this resulted in a 33 per cent fall in carbon emissions, but it has also led to more businesses wanting to locate their premises in Nottingham due to its improved environmental credentials. A number of UK cities are considering the introduction of a Workplace Parking Levy (WPL). These include Leicester, Bristol, Reading, Oxford and Birmingham. In London, it is hoped that introducing WPLs will contribute to the city's goal of ensuring 80% of journeys are made through walking, cycling or public transport.

Does the Administration have any plans to introduce a Workplace Parking Levy in Brighton and Hove and if not, can it do so in order to fund sustainable travel and/or public transport initiatives in the city?

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

(32) Councillor Wilkinson

Back in January 2021, The ETS Committee noted analysis and outcomes of initial feasibility work on creating a Liveable City Centre and expanded Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) options for the city. It agreed that it should be developed further through more detailed, quantified assessments, which will

include the development of business cases and plans for engagement and consultation to identify preferred options for each project.

- a. What progress has been made with this and are there any plans for an expanded ULEZ to cover the whole city for all vehicles and not just buses?
- b. Will the administration explore initiatives to introduce differential parking charges for vehicles emitting higher levels of pollution?

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

(33) Councillor Wilkinson

Brighton and Hove's first climate assembly brought together a representative group of the city's population to explore how we combat climate change over the next decade. The first session looked at Transport and will be used to inform our carbon neutral programme and our approach on how to make transport work for everyone in the city, reduce carbon emissions and address the climate emergency.

Will the Administration be holding any further sessions on other important topics related to the climate emergency?

Reply from Councillor Mac Cafferty, Leader of the Council

(34) Councillor Wilkinson

Can the Administration provide details of missed collections of refuse and recycling across Brighton and Hove on a ward-by-ward basis for the last year?

Can you supply reasons for missed collections and how the missed collections were remedied?

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

(35) Councillor Wilkinson

Can the Chair inform me if the council is currently in a contract to supply gas and if so, who that contract is with? When did it begin and when will it expire? If the council is in a gas supply contract, is it based on brown gas or the more expensive, environmentally friendly green gas?

Reply from Councillor Davis / Heley, Joint Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee

(36) Councillor Wilkinson

How many affordable or social homes to rent have been approved across the city on a ward-by-ward basis over the last year through the planning process, and how many of these have been built?

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

(37) Councillor Wilkinson

The number of people sleeping rough in the UK has multiplied since 2010. Shelter revealed 274,000 people were homeless in England alone in December 2021.

But in Finland's capital Helsinki, rough sleeping has been almost eradicated thanks to a groundbreaking scheme. There is a principle that Finnish local authorities must stick to – at least a quarter of homes within each housing project must be genuinely affordable. Brighton and Hove City Council must be brave enough to follow this example.

What is the administration currently doing to eradicate homelessness in Brighton and Hove and in doing so explaining the plans they are making to get families out of temporary accommodation?

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

**(38) Councillor Grimshaw
School bullying**

There has been a posting on social media about the bullying of an autistic child at one of our local academy schools, it was very distressing to read. The school in question does not appear to be dealing with the matter and other parents commented that their child has also suffered bullying which has gone unchecked. What influence can BHCC have as the local authority on bullying issues within academies in our city?

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